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IMPLEMENTATION OF BELARUS ROADMAP FOR HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM

3RD MONITORING REPORT (JUNE - SEPTEMBER 2016)

Prepared by the Belarusian Independent Bologna Committee and
Ad Hoc Commission of EaP CSF Belarusian National Platform

September 2016

The Belarusian Independent Bologna Committee (BIBC) and Ad Hoc Commission of Belarusian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) continued to monitor the Roadmap implementation and analysed what had been done by the Belarusian authorities to fulfil its obligations. This report presents the findings that show where the country stands in terms of the Roadmap implementation.

The used methodology is based on the evaluation of the Roadmap's sections in three directions:

1. Compliance with EHEA principles
2. Compliance with the Roadmap time line
3. Transparency
 - the availability of information on the implementation and its results: implementation information, research and analysis, concepts and projects' documents
 - providing opportunities for interested parties to participate in decision making (public consultations).

I. Structural reforms

a) National Qualification Framework

Belarus has developed a National Qualification Framework (NQF) that aims to correspond with the overarching qualifications framework of the EHEA. The EHEA working group has established eleven criteria for assessing the implementation of the NQF in Belarus. Each of these criteria reflects a particular stage of NQF development and the progress of implementation can be assessed according to the number of criteria fulfilled, thus creating a results assessment mechanism ([The European Higher Education Area in 2015. Bologna process implementation report. P. 67-68](#)).

Based on this and in line with the Roadmap, the current state of NQF implementation in Belarus was assessed as follows:

Progress indicators – National Qualifications Framework		
Enlarged indicators	Steps	Status
The decision to develop NQF adopted fully at all levels	1. Decision to start developing the NQF has been taken by the national body responsible for higher education and/or the minister	Not implemented fully and properly

	2. The purpose(s) of the NQF have been agreed and outlined	
	3. The process of developing the NQF has been set up, with stakeholders identified and committee(s) established	
The components of the NQF have been identified and agreed upon with stakeholders and approved at legislative level or similar.	4. The level structure, level descriptors (learning outcomes), and credit ranges have been agreed	No
	5. Consultation/national discussion has taken place and the design of the NQF has been agreed by stakeholders	
	6. The NQF has been adopted in legislation or in other high level policy	
All major economy sectors and interested parties are involved in the NQF development.	7. Implementation of the NQF has started with agreement on the roles and responsibilities of higher education institutions, quality assurance agencies and other bodies	No
	8. Study programmes have been redesigned on the basis of the learning outcomes included in the NQF	
	9. Qualifications have been included in the NQF	
The NQF is established, certified as compatible with QF-EHEA and posted on public website.	10. The Framework has self-certified its compatibility with the overarching Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area	No
	11. The final NQF and the self-certification report can be consulted on a public website	
Availability of information		No information available
Number of developed/approved qualification standards		No approved and officially available qualification standards

Conclusion

At the legislative level, Belarus has not progressed in terms of creating a National Qualification Framework in accordance with the Roadmap time line and remains in

the early stages of development. According to unofficial information, two drafts of “Qualification Standards in IT” and two drafts of “Qualifications Standards in Management” have been prepared.

b) Quality Assurance

According to the Roadmap, the legal framework for establishing an independent quality assurance agency in accordance with European standards and guidelines (ESG) should be completed by the end of 2017. Belarus should have presented their timeline for this by the end of 2015 so that the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG) could invite experts on quality assurance to assist Belarus in developing the action plan and establishing the agency.

The first table contains an analysis of Belarusian legislation and current practice in comparison with the ESG requirements. (The indicators selected for analysis are taken from the published list of internal and external Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA)

European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance implemented in Belarus		
No.	Indicator	Compliance with the ESG requirements
1.10	Cyclical external quality assurance: <i>Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.</i>	Yes
2.1	Consideration of internal quality assurance: <i>External quality assurance should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance described in Part 1 of the ESG.</i>	No
2.2	Designing methodologies fit for purpose: <i>External quality assurance should be defined and designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it, while taking into account relevant regulations. Stakeholders should be involved in its design and continuous improvement.</i>	No
2.3	Implementing processes: <i>External quality assurance processes should be reliable, useful, pre- defined, implemented consistently and published. They include:</i> - a self-assessment or equivalent; - an external assessment normally including a site visit; - a report	No

	<i>resulting from the external assessment; - a consistent follow-up.</i>	
2.4	Peer-review experts: <i>External quality assurance should be carried out by groups of external experts that include (a) student member(s).</i>	No
2.5	Criteria for outcomes <i>Any outcomes or judgments made as the result of external quality assurance should be based on explicit and published criteria that are applied consistently, irrespective of whether the process leads to a formal decision.</i>	Yes
2.6	Reporting: <i>Full reports by the experts should be published, clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners and other interested individuals. If the agency takes any formal decision based on the reports, the decision should be published together with the report.</i>	No
2.7	Complaints and appeals: <i>Complaints and appeals processes should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to the institutions.</i>	Yes
3.1	Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance: <i>Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities as defined in Part 2 of the ESG on a regular basis. They should have clear and explicit goals and objectives that are part of their publicly available mission statement. These should translate into the daily work of the agency. Agencies should ensure the involvement of stakeholders in their governance and work.</i>	No
3.2	Official status: <i>Agencies should have an established legal basis and should be formally recognised as quality assurance agencies by competent public authorities.</i>	No
3.3	Independence: <i>Agencies should be independent and act autonomously. They should have full responsibility for their operations and the outcomes of those operations without third party influence.</i>	No
3.4	Thematic analysis: <i>Agencies should regularly publish reports that describe and analyse the general findings of their external quality assurance activities.</i>	No

3.5	Resources: <i>Agencies should have adequate and appropriate resources, both human and financial, to carry out their work.</i>	No
3.6	Internal quality assurance and professional conduct: <i>Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality and integrity of their activities.</i>	No
3.7	Cyclical external review of agencies: <i>Agencies should undergo an external review at least once every five years in order to demonstrate their compliance with the ESG.</i>	No

The second table shows the extent of Quality Assurance implementation in line with the Roadmap.

Progress indicators - Quality Assurance		
Enlarged indicators	Steps	Status
Planning	1. An action plan for implementing the legislative framework for establishing an independent quality assurance agency in accordance ESG has been created by the end of 2015. Fulfilment of the ESG by the end of 2017.	Not implemented fully and properly
	2. International experts on quality assurance have been invited by the BFUG to assist in the establishment of the independent agency.	Not implemented fully and properly
Project development	3. Legislative provisions or guidelines on establishing an independent quality assurance agency have been developed.	No
	4. The rules of procedure for the independent quality assurance agencies have been developed.	No
Discussion	5. Public discussions and international consultations have been held.	No
Approval	6. The developed documents have been submitted for approval in accordance with established procedures.	No
	7. The approval of documents and the agency's established rules of procedures. The information is available on public website.	No

Final action	8. The documents and agency's rules of procedures have been approved. The information is available on a public website.	No
Availability of Information		No information available

Conclusion

The Belarusian legislation and practice only partially comply with ESG provisions. In spite of the fact that Belarus provides open access to its regulatory framework for licensing and accreditation, invites independent experts to participate in the accreditation process, and publishes agency assessment reports in a limited format, the ESG standards are not complied with to a great extent - especially with regards to the establishment of an Independent quality assurance agency.

c) Recognition

According to the Roadmap, by the end of 2016 legislation and practice should be reviewed in order to identify any necessary modifications to align them with Belarus' obligations as a party to the Lisbon Convention. By the end of 2017, Belarus should implement any changes in practice that do not require amending legislation and develop a timetable for the implementation of legislative modifications.

The tables below present Belarus' progress based on an analysis of the main documents containing information on recognition procedures in Belarus (The Education Code (art. 102 and art.122) and the Republic of Belarus Council of Ministers Resolution No. 981 of 21/07/2011 - "Regulation on the procedure of documents on education recognition issued in foreign countries, and defining their equivalence (correspondence) to the Republic of Belarus documents on education, recognition and correspondence of the study periods, higher education courses in a foreign states organizations") and the level of compliance with Lisbon Convention provisions. Secondary legislative acts, recommendations and other documents were also taken into account.

Lisbon Convention provisions implemented in Belarus		
No.	Indicator	Compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention
1.	Appointment of an authorized body	Yes
2.	Adoption of national recognition procedures	Yes

3.	Establishment of a National Informational Centre equipped with necessary resources	Incomplete
4.	Established terminology on recognition	No
5.	Absence of discrimination in recognition circumstances	No
6.	Provision of access to higher education	Yes
7.	Application of the evidence discrepancies principle	No
8.	Recognition of the qualifications of refugees and displaced persons	No
9.	Recognition of informal education results	No
10.	The use of "substantial differences" in accordance with European practice	No
11.	Full implementation of the Lisbon Convention provisions for national students studying abroad, including training	No
12.	Application of a "Code of Good Practice" when providing transnational education (6 June 2001)	No
13.	Application of the Convention Committee recommendations on the Recognition of Qualifications related to higher education in the European Region from June 9, 2004 - "On the recognition of joint degrees"	No
14.	Application of the revised recommendations on criteria and procedures for the assessment of foreign qualifications (23 June 2010)	No
15.	Application of the QF recommendations for foreign qualification recognition (19 June 2013)	No
16.	The use of a European guide on recognition for higher education establishments (2016)	No
17.	The application of a framework for qualification recognition for persons without documents (7 March 2016)	No

Belarus has a system for recognising documents on education which functions in accordance with the Lisbon Convention provisions, but only to an extent. The Belarusian system does not consider those documents that were adopted with further development of the Convention, since this requires the significant adjustment of existing national legislation and guidelines on recognition. Belarus' understanding of the substance and specificities of the Convention since its development through amendments and the addition of documents (such as the Convention Committee Strategy) has not progressed. Consequently, the national regulations and procedures on recognition of qualifications are non-compliant with the Convention's requirements as regards higher education in the European region.



Progress Indicators - Recognition		
Enlarged Indicators	Steps	Status
Evaluation, planning	1. Determined implementing agencies for assessment, planning and amendment to legislation and law enforcement practices	Not implemented fully and properly
	2. Analysis of current practices in recognition, legal provisions and other legal documents in recognition as well as Lisbon Convention provisions in order to	Step are not implemented fully and properly
	identify those practices that need to be revised without amending laws and those that require law amendment.	
	3. Consultations with stakeholders including ENIC/NARIC and Committee on Lisbon Convention provisions implementation, making necessary changes	Not implemented fully and properly
Amending laws and law enforcement practices in order to bring them up to the obligations undertaking by Belarus as a state that joined Lisbon Convention on qualification recognition	4. Implementing necessary changes into practice without law amendments	No
	5. Developing laws amendment schedule	No
	6. Amending laws	No
	7. Practice and laws are in accordance with Lisbon Convention	No
Access to the information		No information available

Practices compliance with Lisbon Convention provisions		Not implemented fully and properly
Laws compliance with Lisbon Convention provisions		Not implemented fully and properly

Step 1 - the Ministry of Education authorized the National Institute for Higher Education to carry out evaluation, planning and introduce changes into legislation and law enforcement practices. Step 3 - Belarus consults ENIC/NARIC and Committee on Lisbon Convention provisions implementation but this is hard to assess its effectiveness, as there is no information available for public access.

Conclusion

Although, Belarus developed its documents based on the Lisbon Convention provisions and complied with its requirements to some extent, we don't see any steps taken and revisions made developing it further while the European regulations are constantly updated and distributed as Convention's annexes.

d) Transparency instruments

Belarusian side undertook obligation to prepare a plan on incorporating ECTS into educational process by the end of 2017 based on ECTS Users' Guide and based on learning outcomes, curricula structure, their implementation and evaluation as well as its use for mobility programs. Similar plan is to be developed for Diploma supplement availability (free of charge) in accordance with Council of Europe, EC and UNESCO developed format in commonly used language other than Russian.

Transparency instruments implementation in Belarus The Roadmap implementation status: Transparency instruments

Enlarged indicators	Steps	Status
Introduction of three-tire higher education system in accordance with Bologna model using ECTS and LO.	1. ECTS implementation plan by the end of 2017 developed. Educational levels, descriptors (LO) and credits range (ECTS) approved	Not implemented fully and properly
Decision making entirety, its implementation effectiveness. Information availability.	2. Changes and additions to the legislation and other legal provisions establishing three-tire higher education	



	system in accordance with Bologna educational model made. Development of other legal acts regulating the measurements of higher education complexity in credit units in accordance with ECTS (in cooperation with NIHE during 2016)	
	Gradual folding of existing 5-year I tire and transitioning to bachelor degree that equals to 180-240 ECTS	
ECTS introduction in accordance with ECTS Users' Guide	Implementing measuring students workload in credit units (ECTS) in accordance with ECTS Users' Guide	Not implemented fully and properly
Availability of electronic courses catalogue on higher education institution website.	Revising curriculum and educational programs based on the learning outcomes and SCL (2015-2017), its implementation, assessment and use for mobility programs	
Availability of courses catalogue in hard copy.	programs, cooperation agreement, educational certificate and internships agreement at working place)	
Information access.		
Plan for automated and free of charge Diploma Supplement issuance by the end of 2017 and its implementation. Access to information.	Developing Diploma Supplement sample in accordance with Council of Europe, EC and UNESCO format on common language (other than Russian). Final version of Diploma Supplement should be available for viewing on public website.	No
	Securing the algorithm of Diploma Supplement issuance by laws. Issuing Diploma Supplement (new version) free of charge	
	Developing plan for automatic free of charge issuance of Diploma Supplement by the end of 2017	

Access to information		Not implemented fully and properly
Status indicators		
Number of students with new Diploma Supplements		Not issued
ECTS depth of penetration into the educational Availability websites acts/documents/materials including: process: on universities' local legal - university's programs including awarded qualification, program duration, credit units and learning outcomes; - awarded qualification level in accordance with NQF and QF-EHEA; - curricula, educational courses including credits (60 ECTS/academic year at full-time program), form of learning (full- time, vocational, e-learning); - admission procedure and criteria including language		Not implemented fully and properly

policy and registration procedure; - participation in international academic mobility program;		
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<p>mandatory or complimentary mobility periods;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognition procedures for mobility and prior education (formal and informal); - ECTS credits distribution principles; - individual learning path principles; - conditions for students with disabilities and special needs; - procedures, methods assessment criteria as well as used assessment scale; - information about given documents of education and qualification, Diploma Supplement (joint, dual or multilateral) <p>and</p>
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Conclusion

We can conclude that in Belarus ECTS is still perceived as an instrument to transfer national system to so-called European language and is not used as the main instrument of programme design, delivery and monitoring. According to higher education legal and regulatory framework analysis, Belarusian higher education institutions hadn't begun full transition from calculating students' workload in academic (including classroom) hours to calculating it based on ECTS principles oriented towards students' learning outcomes.

II. Mobility of higher education staff and students and internationalization

In autumn 2015, work began on a plan to facilitate, develop and diversify the international mobility of staff and students as well as from Belarusian higher education institutions. Such a plan would be expected to include changes to the current system of mobility permits, to allow longer periods of mobility within the EHEA for both staff and students, without ministerial approval. The plan is expected to be completed by the end of 2016 and should outline policy measures as well as any legislative measures required to increase and diversify academic mobility from Belarus to its partners in the EHEA, which should be introduced by mid-2017.

The indicators selection or assessing academic mobility and internationalization are based on the corresponding chapter of the Bologna process implementation report

in EHEA. ([The European Higher Education Area in 2015. Bologna process implementation report](#))

Develop and diversify the international mobility of staff and students.

Indicator	Status on 30.06.2016
Process	
Work starts on the plan to ensure development and diversification of the international mobility for faculty and students coming to and going from Belarusian universities	No information available
Information on plan implementation and results (analysis, publishing, plan's concept, etc.)	No
Real opportunity to influence decision making by all interested parties provided (for example, in a form of public consultations and debate)	No
Plan as a whole or certain areas of academic mobility and internationalization development presented in a form of State Development Programs chapters, Ministry of Education programs	Partly
Higher education plan (national internationalization strategy) including qualitative and quantitative indicators accepted in EHEA	No
According to the Roadmap provisions, amendment of the rules and procedures to travel abroad to boost academic mobility: eliminating approval procedures at the Ministerial level	No
Special budget allocated for development of higher education internationalization	Not implemented fully and properly
Joint educational programs	Not implemented fully and properly
Developing centralized website to supply everyone traveling to and from Belarus with all needed information	Not implemented fully and properly
Establishing universities' branches abroad	Not implemented fully and properly
Specific objectives for developing degree mobility	Not implemented fully and properly
Specific objectives for developing credit mobility in accordance with EHEA criteria	No
Some objectives related to students mobility (students coming to study in Belarusian universities)	Not implemented fully and properly

Separate mobility program for faculty and staff mobility	Not implemented fully and properly
Separate mobility program for faculty and staff traveling abroad	Not implemented fully and properly

Conclusion

It is clear from the analysis above that the Belarusian higher education system doesn't correspond to the vast majority of indicators for developing its internationalization. On the other hand, we can note some progress in creating informational channels such as website containing information for student who travel abroad as well as setting specific objectives for internationalization including faculty and staff mobility. However, there is no change in the current system on mobility permits issues, on allowing longer mobility periods for both staff and students, without ministerial approval.

III. Lifelong learning and the social dimension of higher education

The Roadmap set precise objectives and timeline related to acknowledging previous and other forms of education results as well as to reassessing social dimension value in higher education development. It was set that the plan of how to recognize previous or other education results should have been developed by the end of 2015 and implemented by the end of 2017. The Roadmap also stated that mandatory acceptance of the first work place imposed on state supported students should be revised limiting this practice to professions with low demand by the end of 2016. There is also an important element related to the students financial support that needed to be revised in order to ensure social justice regardless of sex, race, color, disabilities, language, religion, political and other views, nationality at birth (country of birth), ethnical or social origin, association with national minorities, estates and other status. Based on these objectives, the indicators were developed to demonstrate how Belarusian higher education accommodated it.

The Roadmap implementation status: Lifelong learning and the social dimension of higher education

#	Indicator	Status
1	2	5
1.	Acknowledging previous and other forms of education results ECTS USERS' GUIDE 2015 "5.2 Recognition of Prior Learning and Experience	No

	Higher education institutions should be competent/able to award credits for learning outcomes acquired outside the formal learning context through work experience, voluntary work, student participation, independent study, provided that these learning outcomes satisfy the requirements of their qualifications or components. The recognition of the learning outcomes gained through non-formal and informal learning should be automatically followed by the award of the same number of ECTS credits attached to the corresponding part of the formal programme.”	
2.	Changing the rules of procedures related to a mandatory work placement: saving/reducing the number of students categories for mandatory work placement	No
3.	Introducing alternative mechanisms to enhance graduates employability (work places quotes and other)	No
4.	Students financial support that needed to be revised in order to ensure social justice regardless of sex, race, colour, disabilities, language, religion, political and other views, nationality at birth (country of birth), ethnical or social origin, association with national minorities, estates and other status: a) Increasing the availability of preferential educational loans for students b) Changing stipends awarding procedures in order to ensure its accessibility for underrepresented groups of students Providing affordable accommodation (dormitory) to students at the rate below market rental prices	No No Yes

Conclusion

The absence of any amendments to the current legislation in terms of Recognition of Prior Learning and Experience and its public discussion shows that Belarus hasn't started the implementation of this Roadmap provision.

The 2015/2016 academic year demonstrated that the practice of graduates mandatory work placement is still in place and there is not much changed in terms of compliance with EHEA principles and requirements. The Ministry of Education didn't offer any platforms for public discussion on graduates mandatory work placement arising problems, neither offered any alternative ways to handle it using other European countries expertise and practices or how to reform the existing system to ease the tension. Besides, if there are any plans in working on this matter, the Ministry didn't seem to involve any public representatives in it. Academic community, independent experts and civil society representatives were not invited to take part in discussing this issue. The timeline for introducing changes into the graduates mandatory work placement may not exist and if it exists, it is not open for public thus

it is impossible to assess whether this Roadmap obligation would be fulfilled or partially implemented at least.

Regarding students financial support schemes, we didn't notice any substantial changes so far.

The criteria for obtaining educational loans remain unchanged. The practice of lending for educational purposes maintained. Presidential Decree No 616 from 17.12.2002 "On providing citizens of the Republic of Belarus with preferential loans for receiving the first higher education degree in State higher education institutions, higher education institution of consumer cooperation and higher education institution of Belarusian Trade Union Federation on a free of charge basis" is discriminatory as it implies the financial support to students who study only at state (non-private) universities and envisage the start of loan repayment right after the graduation irrespective of whether the graduates are employed or not.

The stipends allocation mechanisms and principles have not changed. Stipend is mostly awarded to students who study on a full time basis at state supported places/institutions/universities/schools, which constitutes just above 40% of student population in Belarus who may receive stipends.

Providing students with affordable accommodation in dormitories, which is less expensive to compare to commercial rentals, is another way of financial support for students and is used by 3/4 of students in a need of accommodation including underrepresented groups of students and studying on a full time basis. This could be called as an achievement in providing financial support to students but there are some differences, which depend on geographical location of the university, form of ownership, barrier free access for people with disabilities, etc. It is important not to forget that the university authorities use allocation of dormitory places as an instrument of pressure on students demanding their loyal attitude to them, meaning that discrimination by political views, is still in place.

IV. Fundamental values of the EHEA

The Roadmap sets timelines and framework for education legislative reform. That requires Belarus to fulfil its obligations undertaken at the Yerevan Summit in accordance with the Yerevan communiqué. It also requires an analysis of the national legislation and submission to the Parliament recommendations to amend existing laws to ensure the Magna Charta Universitatum principles as well as the Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec (2012) 7 provisions on the responsibility of public authorities for academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

The Roadmap also sets straight the need to ensure the legal framework which will allow students and faculty to establish organizations and register them freely along with other needed legal acts revision to ensure fundamental academic values.

1. Currently, only 5 Belarusian universities out of 52 signed or will sign the document at the next Ceremony of Magna Charta Universitatum. However, we have to keep in mind that the fact that the Grodno State University is among those universities which is going to sign the Charter is well know for its scandalous academic repressions in the recent past.

2. Indicators listed in Recommendation CM/Rec (2012)7 interpretation were based on methodology that measures European University Association (EUA) institutional autonomy and The UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1997.

Fundamental Academic Values incorporation into Belarusian legislation

	Indicator	Status
1.	Securing in law the rector's election procedure and rector's dismissal procedure as responsibility of the university Collegial governing bodies.	No
2.	Establishing maximum office terms for Rector	No
3.	Powers redistributions in the universities in favour of collegial governing bodies in terms of decision making on financial, academic, human resources and organizational matters:	
03.01.	Decisions on academic structure changes	No
03.02.	Establishing legal entities	No
03.03.	Budget allocation and budget reserves as well as other financial means independently of their origin	No
03.04.	Setting tuition fees for all students	No
03.05.	Establishing recruitment, promotion and dismissal procedures for faculty and staff	No
03.06.	Setting salary range for Rector, academic and administrative staff	No
03.07.	Setting students number and admission procedures	No
03.08.	Opening and closing educational program	No
03.09.	Study language selection	No
03.10.	Selecting quality assurance procedures and their provider	No
03.11.	Curriculum (content) design for all educational levels	Partly
03.12.	Awarding doctoral degrees	No

03.13.	Determining university mission and priorities	Partly
4.	Securing in law budget period for university of 3 to 5 years	No
5.	Securing in law block budget methods for higher education institutions	No
6.	Securing in law university's buildings and other real estate ownership	No
7.	Securing in law fundraising procedures for universities from other than state donors	No
8.	Securing in law a mechanism of constant monitoring of fundamental values implementation	No
9.	Securing in law guarantees for equal social partnership in higher education, stakeholders equality and their rights to participate in university management	No
10.	Applying the rule of law to all university regardless ownership form	No

Securing in law academic freedom		
11.	Cancelling the regulation on positions substitution for faculty that enables the Rector to unilaterally set contract terms and conditions for faculty selected on competitive basis	No
12.	Introduction of unlimited contract (tenure) for faculty	No
13.	Exclude from the article 18 of the Education Code term 'state ideology'	No
14.	Banning equating academic and senior administrative staff to state servant in order to limit their academic freedom	No
15.	Securing in law the procedure to enable student to participate in quality of education monitoring	No

Conclusion

The informational vacuum condition shows that the lack of opportunities to assess the Ministry of Education plans regarding Recommendation CM/Rec (2012)7 provisions implementation as well as other obligations related to fundamental academic values. However, we can confidently state that formal signing of Magna Charta Universitatum by Belarusian universities doesn't prove that situation with academic freedom and institutional autonomy in Belarus has changed.

We can expect certain expansion of the universities' academic autonomy through the right to self-generate up to 50% of the curricula in the first cycle and 70% - in the second one.

There is no public evidence that confirms the legal framework has changed, which will enable students and faculty to establish organizations and register them freely along with other needed legal acts revision to ensure fundamental academic values.

In addition to that, we do not witness evidence of law amendments in respect of state obligations to guarantee academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

Low rating for Belarusian universities academic freedom and institutional autonomy level indicates that Belarusian higher education and Belarusian universities, in particular as public institute, represents other value – regulatory complex than traditional European universities do. Belarusian higher education cultivates other values largely opposite and hardly comparable with academic freedom and institutional autonomy and this value system replacement to another won't happen without poignant conflict.

Conclusions

The monitoring results of the Roadmap provisions implementation were discussed at the International conference “Public participation in Higher Education modernization: civil society role in the implementation of the Roadmap for higher education reform in Belarus” held in Minsk on September 23-24, 2016.

The conference participants endorsed the Belarusian Independent Bologna Committee recommendations to amend the Education Code of the Republic of Belarus in order to implement the Roadmap provisions and accelerate Belarusian higher education modernization.

1. In order to implement the Roadmap provisions related to higher education institutions structure, National Qualification Framework (NQF), transparency instruments (Diploma supplement) we suggest to amend the Education Code, which will:

- commit to transitioning to three-tire educational model and will describe each tire content and graduates qualification in details;
- commit to transitioning to credit system when forming the curricula and taking into account learning outcomes as well as provides its detailed description;
- commit to implementing NQF;
- describes educational standards that are based on ECTS system and NQF including educational program duration and required workload for each educational cycle.

2. In order to implement the Roadmap provisions related to higher education quality assurance we recommend amending the law allowing the establishment of independent Quality Assurance Agency in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). Therefore, a new definition of those parties participating in quality assurance process (Independent agencies, Ministry of Education and Council of Ministers) should be introduced, to outline their authority, to provide their activities description, frequency of those activities, internal quality assurance principles.

3. In order to implement the Roadmap provisions related to academic mobility and higher education internationalization, we propose to prepare a descriptive Development and Diversification Plan (National Strategy) in this area based on the Bologna implementation criteria and indicators. The Education Code provisions should be amended by introducing international cooperation goals, identifying parties involved, adjusting the definition of academic mobility, committing to establish Special Fund for developing Belarusian students, faculty and administrative staff academic mobility.

4. In order to implement the Roadmap provisions related to social dimension, we propose to amend the law that will enable higher education institutions to revise existing practice graduates employment studying at state funded places. Instead of 'forced' employment, we propose to develop a mechanism that will provide all graduates irrespectively of the study form with the first work place based on work places quotes as well as introduce professional orientation system, which will allow graduates to adjust to the situation on the labour market.

5. The commitment to ensure recognition of credits, acquired as a result of learning outside the formal education, should be introduced into the national legislation.

6. The system of preferential loans for education available for all categories of students with the repayment schedule starting in two years time after graduation should be established.

7. In order to implement the Roadmap provisions related to fundamental academic values, a clause based on the Magna Charta Universitatum principles and Recommendation CM/Rec (2012)7 provisions on the responsibility of State for ensuring academic freedom and institutional autonomy should be introduced into the Education Code. Experts' recommendations focused on providing:

- a) Universities independence from political and economic influence;
- b) Inherence of educational process from research in the universities;
- c) Freedom of teaching, research and learning;
- d) Reciprocal learning and multicultural cooperation.

They include exact recommendation on law amendment allowing:

- to guarantee to institutions and individuals the rights of protection against external interference by authorizes;
- to secure higher education institutions organizational, financial, staffing and academic autonomy in full;
- to conduct continuous monitoring of fundamental values implementation;
- to guarantee power redistribution in higher education institutions in favour of collegial governing bodies.

Recommendations of the Bologna Committee experts' include precise articles and points of the Education Code where the amendments should be made. This allows to harmonize the national legislations and to bring it closer to the standards prevalent in European Higher Education Area as much as possible.