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**Consolidating the European dimension - Teacher education, dissent and reinstatement**

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## **1. Growth and/or decline in the Macedonian teacher education and training**

The guiding idea is that organized in-service teacher education expanded in Macedonia after 2000. But is this true throughout the country and for all sectors of provision? Further discussion on productive factors implicated in the process of expansion implies elaboration on these two questions as a starting point. The following statement provides an illustration:

“Central to life-long learning approach is the adoption of the “3 Is” – initial, induction and in-service teacher education concept as an established policy. If teaching is regarded as a life-long career, teachers, more than any other group, should be lifelong learners. The only possibility to achieve this is through a major shift towards emphasis on education and professional development whereas pre-service teacher education provides the foundation for later upgrading and professional development through education. This does not imply juxtaposition of in-service and pre-service education or merely economic “exchange” but the contrary, the two are inherently complementary (Education International, 1996; Kuzmanoska & Janevski, 2007). As such training becomes a long-term process and a part of continuing education instead of a remedy for deficiencies in initial training. This is a fully recognized concept in most of the countries and is also becoming more complex as a process of lifelong learning” (Kuzmanoska & Janevski, 2007).

Teacher education and training which have made a progress over the last decade in Macedonia are now faced with major challenges. From “linear lump”, taken full-time, in regulated sequence, and with choice confined to specialist subjects or options, towards interdisciplinarity, new subjects, modularity and widespread adoption of credit accumulation and transfer schemes opening a new world of portable credit, intermediate qualifications, flexible pathways, potential mixed-mode study and transitional points.

During the last years the conception and national policy for teacher education have shifted from remedial and supply based approaches towards demands led and competence based approaches, from recurrent mode to life-long learning mode. The rising emphasis on accountability, choice and markets for learning, individual demand instead of social demand, have all implications for the accreditation and certification issues.

Having set the stage in this way in the after Bologna trend has for the most part aimed to increase mobility and inter-institutional co-operation. The main rule of behavior, the co-operation as in the vogue within the national policy documents, is even stronger at the international level where the diplomatic rules of conduct prevail. This is especially viable among states that are trying to define their common future in the European Union. Under such a scenario, the tensions between the traditional institutional arrangements on one side and the quasi-market arrangements, competitive behavior and the economic potential of non-traditional providers from the other side are challenged.

## 2. Trends and factors explaining recent changes

### 2.1 Education policies and priorities

The development pattern of national policies process warrants a place in the garbage can of abandoned best practices in terms of alternative policy formulations, a basis to rely on and a little use for the operational. What do we want it to provide: change or occurrences?

The interaction of different legal and policy instruments and the changing relationship with the reform process implies a few possible relations between reform, policy and legislation. National Government, education institutions and stakeholders have their own interpretation of the issues at stake. Such interpretations and stakeholders' perspectives, their power positions and their interactions dynamically interact and lead to particular answers to challenges in the particular national context thus enabling specific domestic problems to find their way to the political agenda as well. The following is a breakdown of most relevant national policy documents shaping and influencing the reality:

- Program of the Government of Macedonia (2006-2010)  
The main national policy framework predating the major issues and recent developments for the aforementioned period.
- National Strategy for the Development of Education 2005–2015 (2006) was approved by the Parliament and Action Programmes are due to be developed. Parts of this particular document would have to be revised as to become congruent with the new national policies.
- As a specific tool of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAP), the European Partnership Agreement with Macedonia (June 2004) has established short- and medium-term priorities for further integration with the European Union. Structural reforms and sectoral policies that are envisaged include the areas of employment and social policy, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) as well as higher education.
- The Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2005-06 sets out the priorities for Community assistance for Macedonia in the period 2005-2006 (total budget 80 million Euro), more particularly referring to higher education, employment and lifelong learning.

(Kuzmanoska et al., 2007)

Provision of change in reforms influenced by subsequent legislative processes:

- Bologna Declaration,
- Lisbon Declaration,

The two programmes, Bologna and the Lisbon Declaration have the same dateline for completing their initial goals, though fulfilling very different objectives. To summarize these parallel processes, in reference to Bologna, the "European Union university policy may well lead to a new phase of 'Europeanness' of the European universities" (van Vught, 2007). Lisbon, however, stands as a more transparent programme the purpose of which is to harness the universities in Europe as instruments of policy across a very wide domain indeed: Science and Technology policy, innovation policy, aspects of social policy and employment (Neave, 2006).

As signatory to the Bologna Declaration, Macedonia through the Ministry of Education and Science has committed itself to achieve the core Bologna reforms by 2010, a commitment that certainly requires targeted incentives from the responsible authorities in the national context as backstopping for genuine take-up of the reforms rather than superficial compliance with the standards.

➤ National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility

The Parliament has passed the Law for establishing the National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility in September 2007 as a legal entity incharged to carry out the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013 and the Youth in Action Programme 2007-2013. The Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013 consists of several sub-programmes: Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Gruntving, Jean Monet, and the Transversal Programme. The financing of the National Agency is provided from the Budget of Macedonia and from the European Commission, in accordance to the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Ministry of Education and Science and the European Commission. Participation in these European Union programmes will become the main driver of mobility of learners.

➤ National Qualification Framework (NQF)

Following the recommendations from the 2005 Bergen conference of European Ministers responsible for higher education, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Government have committed themselves to propose a legal basis for the development of National Qualification Framework, to be effectuated with the new Law on changes and amendments of the Law of higher education, by the end of 2007 at latest. The Bologna follow up working group included the general and vocational education and training in compliance to the aligned National Qualification Framework with the "Overarching Framework for Qualifications in the EHEA" and with the broader qualifications framework for lifelong learning. Study programmes will have to be organized in cycles thus enabling possibilities for intermediate qualifications, with defined generic descriptors for each cycle, based on the results on the learning outcomes and acquired competencies, as well as credits for the first and second cycle.

➤ Law on Adult Education

Lifelong learning policies as seen through the lenses of formal, in-formal and non-formal education, call for comprehensive analysis of pathways and transitions throughout the entire life cycle. Lifelong learning is stipulated to perform at least three functions with regard to transitions from life to work (i) to provide the foundations of the values, knowledge, skills and qualifications that facilitate initial access to the labour market, (ii) offers a way to obtaining new skills and qualifications that improve re-entry possibilities for those who have become unemployed or underemployed, or who have voluntarily left the labour market for a while, (iii) provides the conditions and means for the continuing formation and updating of the skills of the employed labour force and in some cases facilitating within-firm and job-to-job mobility. Lifelong learning provides the balance between general and vocational education, both in initial and in further education and training.

➤ The new Law on Higher Education –in the Parliamentarian procedure

The analysis of the new governmental policies gives a telling account of policy modification. The general change in the political climate set the stage for the “heroic” ministers or members of the Government to act and carry policies into practice. Although the best available option for achieving excellence in teacher education and training is flexibility, most current institutional arrangements discriminate against this and favour “now or never” initial schooling.

The increase of investment in education as % of GDP, new funding arrangements, public funding for (private) providers can be viewed in terms of justification, password and/or buzz word. The currently predominating responses to changes in the global education market system move mostly within a production-oriented paradigm of economic development, preparing teachers for work in hierarchical organizations. Such an approach generates an interpretation of the current crisis screening out the most important and most troubling aspects of the crisis. The link between education, training and work, in most cases troublesome, complex and contradictory has been mystified into a simple, direct, cause-effect relationship, drawing education increasingly into the narrow sphere of bottom line thinking. Such model of education derives the primary legitimation from its direct individual or economic pay-off appeal.

Although the shift from recurrent mode to lifelong learning mode has been a priority for a longer time, the case has not been stated in powerful terms such as development of action plan and development of strategy for lifelong learning. As far as securing accessibility to all types of post-secondary education and training specifically is concerned, the main identified approach is: equal opportunities, enhancing employment and career building, teacher training and re-training as harmonious coordination between the training activities and focus on a continuous professionalisation of teachers (Kuzmanoska, 2004a, Kuzmanoska & Janevski, 2007). While the primary focus is on the formal education and training systems, the importance and the status of non-formal and informal learning are also recognized. Different implementation patterns concerning the specific nature of the national system are underway thus representing a point of departure from the usual rhetorical platform.

## **2.2 Activation measures – a paradigm shift: market principles in teacher education**

Teacher education is regarded as one of the most important national activity with a lot of corporative rhetoric and practice. The answer to this was setting up a system for in-service teacher education that changed the life of teachers in this decade. Although legally but mostly professionally compulsory, in-service teacher education attendance becomes an inherent part of being a teacher. The most important steps were development of national system of multiple high quality providers, creation of a specific funding system, the formulation of a legal framework and setting up of an accreditation board.

### **2.2.1 Milestones in Teachers education**

The formal education for primary and secondary education teachers is prescribed by the Law for primary education and the Law for secondary education and is given at the higher education institutions at the universities in Macedonia. Reforms corresponding to flexible and modernized curricula in this instance are binding by Bologna declaration but another approach to effectively address changes in teacher and trainer competences due to changes in the tasks teachers and trainers are expected to perform and in the issues they have to deal with is, alterations in the organisation of learning processes and in the learning outcomes to be achieved. Randall's (2002)

observation what matters is the fitness-*of*-purpose and not only the fitness-*for*-purpose judgment, portrays the case regarding teacher education institutions and programmes.

During the past 10 years, enormous development of the large "machinery" of in-service teacher education has been witnessed in R. Macedonia. In-service education in Macedonia was more driven by the supply than by the demand and has been largely influenced by the supply provided by various trainers than by the demands formulated by the teachers. The in-service teacher education was provided by different public and private providers though ad hoc and with programmes with limited territorial coverage of teachers.

### **2.2.2 Market mechanisms and competition**

Converting "side-tracks" to "high-roads" implies big challenge for the national educational policy. The identified characteristics in traditionally offered in-service education are considered unfavourable for effective teaching, teacher empowerment, and development of professional status for teaching. As a result, restructuring in order to produce conditions that address these concerns will make new demands on teachers, as well as provide them with new opportunities. Just as systemic reforms are an unrealized goal of the reform movement, reformed in-service education is also a goal rather than a reality (Kuzmanoska, 2004a). The change in the once "protected market" towards an "open" market; launching of the "missing training": ongoing training; certification/licensing of training products and processes is taking place, decision makers and planners working in the field of education face the issues of accounting teachers as a particularly interesting group of workers, since their stock of human capital is generally very specific and since their (re) training takes a long time.

In most of the EU countries the main tendencies in the teacher professional development (TPD) area are multiple public and private providers offering TPD where the higher education institutions have increasingly important role and establishment of quality assurance procedures, guided by the central education administration (Zafeirakou, 2002).

Accordingly, the following questions could be impetus or running counter to the development of the Macedonian market place:

1. The realm of the emergence of a market for teacher professional development,
2. The match of the demand and supply,
3. The improvement of links between the need, demand and supply.

(Dutto, 2003)

Although with low level of involvement in the training activities, the Macedonian higher education institutions for initial teacher education have the capacity to provide both training of trainers and in-service teacher education whilst the introduction of a free market of providers will create incentives towards further strengthening of these capacities. For teachers' education and training in terms of a service with such a long lead-time between process and product, surprisingly little has been directed towards understanding the long term effects of current policies and actions. Redressing the habit of identifying current problems and producing a solution for the momentum starts with searching with futures problems and the efforts for preventing (Hunter, 1998).

The assumption underlying Bologna Declaration is that the Macedonian Government retains the responsibility for higher education or in other words, sets the rules of play for higher education

institutions in the country. Bologna Declaration statements are not just rhetoric but actual basis of higher education policy: biggest providers are public one or striving to become. At the same time, by clearly formulating the objectives for support of establishment of private universities and highlighting the economic potential in attracting world-renown universities to open their branches in the country, the Government started moving beyond this public service rhetoric by introducing quasi market arrangement in higher education. The deliberate introduction of market mechanisms and competition is a novelty as a steering concept. Public good arguments are still supported and continuing public commitment to funding of higher education in order to provide the basic security can be explained from a political and value based perspective. Pursuing rather more co-operative approach is the other side of the co-operation and competition coin under the circumstances where co-operation is the main rule (written) behavior in Bologna Declaration. *"Closer connection between domestic faculties and respective foreign faculties and institutes through joint activities, such as international projects, student and teacher exchange, workshops, seminars and congresses"* (Government's programme, 2006) is even more strongly advocating the international level, especially that the state is trying to define its common future in EU. Bologna Declaration's institutional arrangements lack the view on competitive behavior and to narrowly focus on co-operation between governments which is rather constraining when co-operation is the name of the game. The crucial challenge the country is facing in providing sufficient public funding for higher education and the further expansion into Lifelong Learning are excluded from Bologna Declaration's focus (Kuzmanoska et al., 2007).

### **2.2.3 Flexible pathways and transition points - implementation, consultation and dissemination**

The Ministry of education and science set out the priorities in terms of content and type of action and the accredited in-service teacher training providers applied for funding with concrete teacher education actions. There is specific funding system supplied thorough school improvement grants where "at least 30% of total amount of the grant" has to be spent on procuring accredited programs offered by accredited providers. Following the Open call for expression of interest and pre-qualification of in-service teacher training providers from 2004, the range of providers for in-service for education is wider, ranging from public and private organizations, for profit and non profit to local and international consortium and individuals who want to work as providers linked to a public or private company or organization. In-service teacher education is generally carried out through short term actions, the form of which have been defined: a) courses, b) modules, c) attendance on higher education single subjects, d) workshops, e) seminars, f) projects, g) study groups.

Universities and other higher education institutions in the role of providers for in-service teacher education would have offered several innovative forms, such as thematic courses, research grants for teachers, and research projects that would involve teachers. Certain in-service teacher education programmes with the accumulation of credits they offer could lead to degree/certificate or other award bearing programmes. One of the ideas that has been promoted is the development of professional development portfolios (PDP). The accreditation of professional development portfolios towards higher education awards foresees development of questionnaire to higher education institutions that are in position to award portfolio based credit. Higher education institutions will need to reach a common agreement as a set of common inter-award and inter-institutional criteria for accreditation. These criteria have to be established as public definitions.

As Bologna signatory, certain measures were taken in a way of revising the curricula and programs within the higher education by enhancing the concept of learning outcomes.

Transformation of the academic degree structure in Macedonia requires changes in the content of the educational programs, moving from the teacher-oriented to a student-oriented study process and making relation between new academic degrees and labor market closer. Implementation of European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is well underway since the introduction started in 1998, however, the establishment of an internal credit accumulation and transfer system as a policy is a much more fundamental and difficult change for Macedonian universities. It may be combined with European Credit Transfer System above, but they are quite different activities. The introduction of the credit system such as ECTS is a focal point for earning credits outside higher education, including lifelong learning, provided that the admitting university recognizes the same (National Programme for Development of Education, 2006).

The other deficiency regarding the European Credit Transfer System is that it is not linked to key competences the students should gain at the end of the course / study program. The absence of European Higher Education Area (EHEA) National Qualification Framework resulted that the European Credit Transfer System did not ensure any mobility of students, neither on a faculty / university level, not internationally. Consequently, Macedonia had nothing to report on the key E&T 2010 indicator of cross-national mobility of students in higher education. Although the National Qualification Framework (NQF) was completed in 2002, after a series of consultations and seminars in 2006 the working group has restarted working within Ministry of Education and Science in September 2007. The development of National Qualification Framework as established coherent of qualifications in the vocational and higher education and the need to include the non-formal learning is among the priorities in the educational policy.

Higher education institutions mostly regarded as the driving force in the in-service teacher education activities, unexpectedly, had no significant engagement in the new tasks, in assuming new responsibilities and modes of work. The catalog for accredited providers from 2006 revealed that out of 150 accredited in-service teacher education providers 15 were coming from the university sector, 3 from the social sciences and 15 from the faculties or institutes for IT and communication. Slaughter and Leslie (1997) assert that "faculty and professorial staff expend their human capital stock increasingly in competitive situations" (p:9) however, the capacity of the universities as providers and their services offered to the teacher training market did not match the expectations of the potential customers. The institutional and professorial market or marketlike behavior failed in the corporate quest for new products converged with higher education institutions efforts to secure outside source of revenue. Faculties as subset of academics that by and large have the monopolies on degrees and in most cases on training and credentials of other professionals have been more insulated from the market than the other professionals. By working for institutions that were mostly non-profit and state funded and with the autonomy from the market and the state, they did not have the opportunity to become fee-for-service practitioners. During the last decade of the twentieth century, the academics gradually become more involved in the market in the advisory capacities and as consultants in government ministries and related bodies, industry and commerce, although this is an activity carried out by individuals and in some rare cases departments or institutes, not of the faculties and of the universities as a whole (Kuzmanoska, 2004b). The priorities for higher education set in Governmental programme in 2006 are a turning point for market incorporation of the academia where the work is patterned differently, the special treatment of the universities, the professional privilege and the contract between the academia and the state are challenged by the emphasis on client welfare.

### 3. Conclusions

The Macedonian University is in a state of flux or in other words in a state of institutional confusion and search. The traditional social contract between higher education and society is deemed to be no longer valid, and there is not yet a new pact (Maassen & Olsen, 2007). This is to a large extent caused by far-reaching change processes in the environments of higher education institutions, the growing complexity of the governance mode and the European integration efforts (Neave 2003). As a consequence, there is a growing imbalance between demands from environmental actors on higher education institutions and the institutional capacity to satisfy these demands (Clark 1998). In addition, many changes taking place in higher education institutions are a result of processes and decisions from within the private, internal life of academia. Some scholars still hold the view that this far-reaching changes go fast and are comprehensive while the others argue that they are stepwise and incremental (Birnbaum, 2000). The traditional underlying idea of the university as a public, social institution is clashing with the instrumental vision of the university as a professionally managed, autonomous "enterprise", operating in various markets as a service industry.

The changing educational policy context of the recurrent education poses "double challenge": vertical and horizontal (Papadopoulos, 1994). The two other tensions that need to be resolved is: the first between educationists who consider themselves guardians of quality, and those outside the profession who influence education policy and practice, such as the politicians. The other tension is between modernity and post-modernity that calls for reforms and revolutionizing development. The country has decided the priorities within an achievable strategic framework thus more structured decisions can be made in certain sectors in order to identify key targets rather than an attempt to solve all problems at once, policies and market failures can be measured and new policy interventions targeted. The step from intention to implementation is almost a quantum leap. The forthcoming years will show whether the positive intentions will genuinely be translated into practices which actually affect and serve individuals and all interested groups in general.

The extent to which processes of European integration affect the higher education institutions; the (im)perfection of markets in higher education and the balance between the quest for quality and low prices; the Europeanisation and the changes are all areas for further elaboration in the agenda of "modernization" of the higher education.

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