

## Summary of the National Survey LATVIA

National survey on joint study programmes implementation in Latvia describes issues regarding the national higher education system, legislative aspects of the joint study programmes in Latvia, internationalization and other programmes implemented by the higher education institutions as a source of the joint study programmes in Latvia. National survey also describes national situation of the participation in Erasmus Mundus programme as well as indicates conclusions and suggestions for further steps in implementation of the joint programmes and Erasmus Mundus programme.

The Latvian educational system comprises pre-school education 9-year basic education, upper-secondary education and higher education. Post-secondary education belongs to secondary level. Upper-secondary education comprises two types of programmes: general secondary and vocational secondary.

Accreditation of higher education institutions takes place according to the Law on Higher Education Establishments adopted by Saeima on November 2, 1995. Law stipulates the general accreditation principles of higher education institutions. Only those higher educational establishments who have received credence (been accredited) and which offer state accredited study programmes have the right to issue certificates of higher education recognised by the state to its graduates. The accreditation proceeds in accordance with the regulations on accreditation approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. Study programmes are accredited no less often than once in six years.

The current existing legislation does not mention joint degrees at all. This situation creates problems and limitations to these higher education institutions, which would like to participate in joint degree programmes.

As a result, it is not forbidden to establish joint programmes, but the ways of awarding degrees after completion of such programmes can only take place as awarding one (or several) national degrees of the partner institutions or a national certificate plus an unofficial certificate in the name of the whole consortium.

Legislation explicitly allowing and encouraging joint degrees has been drafted as part of the draft law on higher education which has been submitted for adoption. It will introduce joint higher education programmes and joint degrees into Latvian legislation. Adoption of law on higher education will make it possible to establish nationally recognized joint degrees.

As joint programmes are not introduced by law yet, it is premature to speak about accreditation of joint programmes. In Latvia accreditation is organized for separate study programmes.

Joint degrees are not yet introduced in Latvia; however, universities started development of joint programmes.

Internationalisation is part of almost all higher education institutions strategies. Cooperation projects tackling Master level programmes enhance interest about common programmes and joint degrees.

Higher education institutions of Latvia for past two years were participating in Tempus 2008 programme, Nordplus higher education programme and Atlantis Programme.

Participation in Erasmus Mundus programme EMMC for period 2004-2008 was partial. For Action 1 there were no higher education institutions participating from Latvia, as well as for Action 3. For Action 4, two institutions were selected and participated in 3 projects.

One institution participated in the Erasmus Mundus programme External cooperation window.

In selection round for EMMC for 2009, University of Latvia was successful and coordinates EMMC project MISCO „Joint European master in international migration and social cohesion“. There will be 2 master courses implemented together with 8 universities.

In selection round for EMJD for 2009 there are no successful Latvian applications.

### **Conclusions**

-In Latvia the wider use of joint degrees is limited due to missing legislation. Today Latvian universities could officially participate in projects where qualifications of two or more partner institutions with two or more separate diplomas are issued.

- In the period 2004-2008 Latvia as new member state had weak participation in Erasmus-Mundus actions.

- At the moment Erasmus-Mundus projects has limited impact to internationalisation of Latvian higher education

### **Suggestions**

- Adoption of legislation regarding joint degrees in Latvia
- More extensive promotion of Erasmus-Mundus activities
- Training for higher education staff regarding Erasmus-Mundus applications