

UPDATE

Progress Report on Higher Education Reform

ALBANIA

Field	Proposal	2016 State of Play	2017 State of Play	2018 State of Play
<p style="text-align: center;">Quality Assurance (QA)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Further development of QA mechanisms</p>	<p><u>Assessment and certification of quality of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs):</u></p> <p>On 29.02.2016 a contract between the Ministry of Education and Sport of Albania and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) of UK was signed.</p> <p>Aim: provide expertise for the Institutional review of the HEIs, for accreditation purpose based on State Quality Standards, the best European and international practices for all HEIs (public and private) which operate in Albania.</p> <p>The accreditation process is predicted to end in October 2017 and will take place in several phases including: preliminary preparation of documents and guidance for HEIs, selection and training of experts for external assessment, internal assessment by HEIs, assessment based on documents provided and on the site visits in HEIs, drafting of preliminary and final external assessment reports and their handling for decision-making to the Accreditation Council/Board.</p>	<p>The Agency of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (AQAAHE) and the Accreditation Board (AB) have been established by Decision of Council of Ministers no. 109, date 15.02.2017, by transforming the former Public Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (PAAHE). The new Law on higher education and scientific research no 80/2015 provides the AB the power to reach the final decision on the accreditation of HEIs and the programs they offer.</p> <p>Based on the Overall Project Contract between the Ministry and QAA-UK for the provision of quality assurance expertise to support the external review of 35 HEIs in Albania, AQAAHE with the backing of QAA-UK has compiled the <i>Guidebook of the institutional review of HEIs in Albania 2016 - 2017</i>, taking into consideration the Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). The guidebook encompasses all details and information about the review process and its steps: HEI prepares the self-evaluation</p>	<p>The Institutional Review of Higher Education Institutions in Albania was completed in January 2018. The process was designed following the Albanian Government Initiative for the Institutional Review of Albanian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) with international expertise, pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Education and Sport of Albania and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in the UK, and The Overall Project Contract between QAA and the Ministry of Education and Sport.</p> <p>This process involved all 37 HEIs in Albania, both public and private.</p> <p>13 public institutions underwent an institutional review for the first time in their history. 10 private HEIs entered the process voluntarily, including those which already had institutional accreditation.</p> <p>The overall aim of the Institutional Review is to verify institutional quality as a legal obligation provided by the Law 80/2015 and as conditions for issuing diplomas by HEIs.</p> <p>The resulting reports informed not</p>

			<p>dossier according to requirements of the legislation in force, QAHE and QAA-UK experts compile the first draft review report based on the assessment of HEIs self-evaluation dossier, external review team of experts visits the HEI and collects and examines the proofs needed for the external review report, the group of experts compiles the final positive/negative review report and presents it to the AB for final decision taking.</p> <p>QAHE has finalized the external review reports for the first six following HEIs: Polytechnic University of Tirana, Agricultural University of Tirana, University “Aleksander Xhuvani” Elbasan, University “Aleksander Moisiu” Durres, non-public HEI “Marin Barleti”, non-public HEI European University of Tirana and in April 2017 the AB has decided positively on the institutional and/or periodic accreditation of these institutions.</p> <p>During April-July 2017 QAHE and QAA experts have carried on several onsite visits in the remaining HEIs and drafted respective reports.</p>	<p>only the HEI, but also the Albanian government, the public, and students of how each HEI met the standards. Another purpose of the review process was to encourage HEIs to work towards Quality Assurance.</p> <p>The institutional reviews were conducted according to a Handbook written jointly by QAHE AL and British QAA, considering also part of the ESG 2015. The procedure included three phases: Self-evaluation, external evaluation and accreditation decision.</p> <p>The review teams were composed of QAA-UK and Albanian experts, with a majority from QAA-UK. The external evaluation consisted of a desk-based evaluation phase, a review visit at the institutions, and preparation of the review reports. The review reports and accreditation decisions have been fully published on the QAHE website.</p> <p>The legislation framework on External Quality Assurance System has been completed by issuing the Regulation of the Accreditation Board (February 2018), the Handbook of External Review of QAHE (November 2017), and the Handbook and Questionnaire for</p>
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				Student Survey (March 2018).
	Develop an <u>efficient</u> monitoring and reporting mechanism within the HEIs and raise accountability and responsibility of their managers.			Instruction of MESY Nr. 5, Date 19.02.2018 “ <i>On the elements of annual report and deadline of HEI s reporting</i> ”.
	<u>Strengthen</u> the mechanism for monitoring the quality and credibility of academic titles			
Managing resources & reforms in HE	<p>Increase capacity in HE staff</p> <p>Reforming the HE curricula</p>	<p>A working group for the preparation of the bylaws on standards has been set up with representatives from the Ministry of Education and Sport and its agencies, representatives of the public and private HEIs.</p> <p>In this group are invited also representatives from other Ministries (ministry of health, MSWY, etc.) for the bylaws that have to do with the field of competence of these other ministries too.</p>	<p>The Law no. 80/2015 foresees numerous bylaws dealing with i) institutional aspects (new agencies to be established), ii) academic content, iii) financial aspects. Subsequently three working groups established by Minister’s orders and consisting of several members with different backgrounds from various departments and HEIs,</p>	<p>Some working groups are set up to reform HEI curriculum in the Faculty of Education in order to adapt it to the new curriculum of the pre-university and to modernize it by referring to the law 80/2015. The law 80/2015 defines similar curricula at the national level for the same study program (80 % in case of teaching) and 70% for other</p>

		<p>After a period of negotiations with MIUR Italy has been decided that the Italian Conference of Rectors will send some experts to assist this WG on the preparation of the bylaws that have to do with the curricula, quality code, academic career, evaluation of the scientific research, etc. based on the Italian experience on these fields.</p> <p>For what concerns the curricula 70% of the content of the curricula (80% for the teaching curricula) will be set at national level. The LO will be part of the new curricula.</p>	<p>throughout 2016-2017 have carried on drafting and preparing the entire range of bylaws resulting from this law. Until June 2017 following bylaws (Decisions of Council of Ministers/DCM) have been finalized by the working groups and approved by the Council of Ministers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DCM no. 607, 31.08.2016, "On establishment, structure, organization and performing of the Nation Agency of Scientific Research and Innovation (NASRI)"; 2. DCM no. 903, 21.12.2016, "On defining the qualifying criteria attaining scholarships from students' support fund for excellent students, students registered in priority study programmes and students in need"; 3. DCM no. 397, 3.5.2017, "On organization and performing of the National Agency of Financing the Higher Education (NAFHE)"; 4. DCM no. 66, 03.02.2017, "On defining the criteria and the procedures for the establishment of medical university services and structures"; 5. DCM no. 109, 15.02.2017, "On organization and performing of the Agency of 	<p>programs.</p> <p>The implementation of the ERASMUS+ Project "Developing teacher competences for a comprehensive VET system in Albania" (TEAVET) has started. The faculties of education involved within this project are developing 16 training modules according to the needs of teachers. The modules have to be accredited by MESY and will be developed for all teachers in pre-university education.</p>
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			<p>Quality Assurance in Higher Education (AQAHE) and Accreditation Board (AB) and defining the fees of quality assurances processes in higher education”;</p> <p>6. DCM no. 329, 12.04.2017, “On the position and preferential treatment of the academic staff”;</p> <p>7. DCM no. 370, 26.04.2017, “On the organization and performing of the high professional college”;</p> <p>8. DCM no. 371, 26.04.2017, “On some changes in the DCM no. 1013, date 10.12.2010, “On the establishment of the National Agency of Exams”” (transforming it into the Centre of educational services);</p> <p>9. DCM no. 418, 10.05.2017, “On standards, criteria and procedures of opening, reorganization, merging and closing of higher education institutions and its branches”;</p> <p>10. DCM no. 424, 10.05.2017, “On defining the qualifying criteria of selection procedures and nomination of heads of services at medical university structures”.</p> <p>Further draft DCMs concerning codification of study programmes,</p>	
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			<p>elements of study programmes, quality code, methodology of evaluation process by NASRI, financing mode of higher education and scientific research, students' loan scheme and its qualifying criteria, etc. are prepared and are in the pipeline to be approved by the Council of Ministers.</p> <p>Various instructions (bylaws approved by Minister of Education and Sports) concerning admission procedures in HEIs, recognition of foreign diplomas, services offered by the Centre of Educational Services, etc. based on Law 80/2015 have been approved and further ones regarding the working time of academic staff, establishment and closing of HEIs, codification and reorganization of study programmes, etc. are being prepared.</p> <p>Several joint activities undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Sports of Albania with foreign donors and stakeholders have made a valuable contribution to the preparation of the bylaws concerning the academic standards and academic organization, in details:</p> <p>-TAIEX Experts' mission named "On the standards of the accreditation of the HEIs" (INT</p>	
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			<p>MARKT IND/EXP 63275) during 24–26 October 2016 in cooperation with the Ministry of Higher Education of Italy and Rector’s Conference of Italy, -Study visit in Italy named “On the accreditation of HEIs”, (INT MARKT IND/STUD 63412) during 21–24 November 2016.</p> <p>-The conference “Digitalization of higher education system in Albania: national databases” in cooperation with British Council and the British Embassy in Tirana during 27-28 September 2016. It focused on various presentations from foreign experts about databases of HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency of United Kingdom), CINECA (non-profit Consortium made up of 70 Italian universities, 8 Italian Research Institutions and the Italian Ministry of Education), treatment of personal data, data exchange of this institutions with HEIs, etc., as well presentations of data elaboration actual situation in Albania and provisions to this regards in the new law of higher education.</p> <p>-Webinar with HESAs experts and members of the Working Group preparing the bylaws on standards on 31 October 2016 at MoES about statistics to be collected by HEIs as a legal obligation in the framework on</p>	
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			annual reports.	
	Establish a National Institute for HE	The Ministry of Education and Sport has established working groups in charge to draft the legal acts for the establishment of these agencies.	<p>1.DCM "On the Establishment, Composition, Organization and Functioning of the National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation (NASRI), approved by Decision no. Nr. 607, date 31.8.2016.</p> <p>2. DCM "On the Establishment of the Centre of Educational Services ", approved by the Council of Ministers Decision No.371, date: 26.04.2017.</p> <p>3. DCM "On the organization and functioning of the National Higher Education Funding Agency (NHEFA), approved by DCM No.397, date 03.05.2017.</p> <p>5. DCM "On the organization and functioning of the Quality Assurance Agency in the Higher Education and Accreditation Board and the establishment of fees for quality assurance processes in Higher Education", approved by DCM no.109, date 15/02/2017.</p>	
	Establish career centres for students	Centers for Career Orientation have been established in some HEIs.		

	within HEIs and integrate them with alumni services			
	Development of data bases on employment of graduates, opportunities for internships and jobs			
	Review and reorganization of the academic workload to ensure a balance between teaching, research and services	The new law is flexible regarding the types of academic staff in order to create researchers and teachers profiles.		
Links with labour market	Develop 2-year post-secondary VET study programmes	The Law 80/2015 “On Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions” which entered into force on 6 October 2015, foresees the development of 2-year post-secondary VET study	In process.	With the aim to develop professional education, MESY has encouraged and supported HEIs to offer more professional study programs. There are 28 approved

		<p>programmes. It is predicted that till the end of 2016, it will be developed the quality standards for the 2-year vocational programs, which will be included in the Quality Code as well.</p>		<p>study programs with a two-year professional profile, applied by public and private HEIs. These study programs are mainly oriented in the fields of agriculture, food, economy, hotel, tourism, veterinary, social services, computer networks, etc.</p> <p>Albania is part of the “Graduates Advancement and Development of University capacities in Albania” (GRADUA) Project, funded under Erasmus+. The project will mainly accompany and support Albanian universities in interfacing with society's needs with a special focus on sustainability, capacity building and sharing best practices. The activities planned will enhance university staff's skills on supporting graduates' career development, developing professional traineeships and structured cooperation with the business world, and provide staff with effective tools for career guidance, advanced and competitive research tools for higher education monitoring and Albanian labour market analysis, etc.</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">Research</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Develop further and invest in third cycle</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Agency for Research, Technology and Innovation (ARTI) has organized various <i>Information days</i> and training sessions in the Albanian public and private universities and Institutions, with the aim of supporting, assisting and promoting Horizon 2020 and updating Albanian researchers on national and EU research funding programs, their latest activities, achievements and news. • ARTI has established a researchers' database in Albania and updates it regularly. The researchers are informed on a regular basis via e-mail about respective calls launched by Horizon 2020 and other EU programs, conferences, trainings, etc. • On 25 – 26 November 2015, ARTI in cooperation with TAIEX, organized the event “Horizon 2020 Projects”. The aim of this activity was to offer assistance in drafting project proposals and the implementation of the projects approved and funded by Horizon 2020. Three foreign experts in the field of the project proposals were invited to share their knowledge and experiences with Albanian researchers. • On 5-6 April 2016 the TAIEX workshop “Expert Mission on Horizon 2020” was organized and two experts in legal & financial fields for the Horizon 2020 	<p>NASRI</p> <p>During the period June 2016 - June 2017 the main developments in the field of scientific research are related to the completion of the legal, strategic and institutional framework of scientific research according to Law 80/2015 of 22.07.2015 "On Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania".</p> <p>An inclusive working group to draft the National Strategy of Scientific Research, Technology and Innovation 2017-2022 was approved by Minister's Order no. 296, date 01.06.2016 and a series of preliminary steps have been undertaken, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The evaluation of the National Strategy of Scientific Research, Technology and Innovation 2009-2015; - Initiated by NASRI in cooperation with ANA (Albanian Academic Network and INSTAT (Institute of Statistics) for the first time a National Science Census aiming to identify human, infrastructural, archive and library capacities on national level was carried out. MoES contracted three local experts for its first scripting, funded by the Swiss Government's PERFORM Program. 	<p>NASRI</p> <p>During the period June 2017-June 2018, work has continued to complete the last bylaws and documents related to scientific research pursuant to Law 80/2015 of 22.07.2015 "On Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania".</p> <p>On 1st of December 2017, the Decision of Council of Ministers No. 710, approved the National Strategy of Scientific Research, Technology and Innovation 2017-2022.</p> <p>The National Strategy of Scientific Research, Technology and Innovation 2017-2022 is in the beginning of its implementation. It is designed and supported on the principles of ERA –European Research Area.</p> <p>The Action Plan defines important tasks for implementation of the National Strategy of Scientific Research, Technology and Innovation 2017-2022, and aims to concentrate on three major pillars designated to encompass the EU's Research and Innovation Program model H2020.</p> <p>Actions document and target the intended goals:</p>
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		<p>Programme offered their assistance and interacted with Albanian researchers with regard to project applications.</p>	<p>The Working Group arranged five meetings with interest groups of academic and research institutions belonging to five different fields of scientific research according to the division of research areas of OECD Frascati Manual.</p> <p>The draft Strategy 2017-2022 was sent for consultation to 35 public and non-public HEIs and about 20 research institutes and centers. The final version of the Strategy for 2017-2022 was submitted for approval to the Council of Ministers in April 2017.</p> <p>The Working Group and the Experts have drafted the Strategy 2017-2022 based on the 6 Principles of the European Research Area (ERA), UN Agenda 2030 and the priority areas of social economic development of the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2015-2020 as well as on 45 other sectoral strategies directly or indirectly related to aspects of scientific research, technological development and innovation.</p> <p>The Action Plan of the Strategy 2017-2022 aims to concentrate on 3 major pillars under the EU's Research and Innovation Program model H2020 here activities focus on:</p> <p>-Excellence in Science (supporting and strengthening the human capacities of research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellence in Science (supporting and strengthening the human capacities of research infrastructure in the country); • The role of science in business development and their interaction; • Providing solutions for social, environmental, health, public security, social cohesion and cultural identity challenges by promoting the Open Society-related approach to the citizen and the community. <p>Also the following Decisions of Council of Minister(DCM) related to research have been approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCM No. 75, dated 12.02.2018 "On the Approval of the Financing Model of Public Institutions of Higher Education and Scientific Research"; • DCM No. 112, dated 23.02.2018 "On determining the criteria for obtaining the "doctor" scientific degree and the state standards for obtaining academic titles "associate professor" and "professor"; • DCM No. 165 dated 21.03.2018 "For the methodology of the evaluation process of the research activity of the basic units at the higher education institutions".
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			<p>infrastructure in the country);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The role of science in business development and interaction with it in the benefit of innovation; -Providing solutions for social, environmental, health, public security, social cohesion and cultural identity challenges by promoting the Open Society-related approach to the citizen and the community. <p>During June 2016 - June 2017, the work on the adoption of sub-legal acts related to the new institutional structures provided by "On Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania" has continued.</p> <p>Through the Decision of the Council of Ministers Nr. 607, dated 31.08.2016, "On the establishment, composition, organization and functioning of the National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation - NASRI", the transformation of former ARTI - Agency for Research, Technology and Innovation (2009-2016) into NASRI . Meanwhile, with the Prime Minister's Order No. 48, dated 12.04.2017, the new structure and organization of the National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation - NASRI was approved as a public agency subordinated to the Ministry of</p>	<p>Through the TOP III-Euraxess project, with the researchers of public and private Universities, on 5 of October 2017, an event on EURAXESS Promotion and EURAXESS Network services was organized.</p> <p>New Euraxess Albania portal and the Euraxess Contact Points have been updated.</p> <p>During the period September 2017-January 2018, NASRI carried out around two info days and seven workshops on the behalf of EU H2020 Programme, in more than four public and non-public universities with the support of the Technical Assistance Project EU programs. In cooperation with the European Commission and TAIEX Technical Assistance and International Expert Exchange program, NASRI has managed to organize two workshops focusing on capacity building of scientific researchers.</p> <p>During the reporting period the following activities were organised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 26 September 2017 - a thematic workshop on Horizon 2020 with the University of Medicine, was organized by NASRI with the support of the Technical Assistance for Union Programmes in Albania; • On 05 October 2017- an Event
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			<p>Education and Sports-MES. In this framework, the bylaws for a number of other institutional structures such as DCM No. 109, dated 15.02.2107, “On the organization and functioning of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and Accreditation Board for setting tariffs for Quality Assurance processes in higher education” and DCM no. 397 dated 03.05.2017 “On the organization and functioning of the National Agency for Higher Education Financing – NAHEF” have been approved.</p> <p>Supporting the improvement of the status of scientific researchers for the period 9 June 2016 to 9 June 2017 a number of bylaws have been approved in their support such as: Council of Ministers Decision No. 651 dd. 14.09.2016 “On implementation of Law No. 10139 dd. 15.05.2009 “On supplementary State Pensions for Employees of Universities, Faculties, Center for Albanological Studies, Academy of Science and all other research institutions in Republic of Albania that have academic titles“ changed with Council of Ministers Decision No. 329 dd 12.04.2017 “On the status and special treatment of the academic personel”.</p> <p>On the other hand, during the period June 2016 to June 2017,</p>	<p>on Euraxess Promotion and EURAXESS Network services, organized by NASRI in Tirana;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 27 October 2017- a workshop <i>Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowships</i>, H2020-MSCA-IF-2018 organized by NASRI with the support of the Technical Assistance for Union Programmes in Albania; • On 6–7 November 2017 a TAIEX workshop on “Building Mechanisms for Better Participation in Horizon 2020” organized by NASRI in Vlora; • On 8 –9 November 2017- a TAIEX workshop on “Building Mechanisms for Better Participation in Horizon 2020” organized by NASRI in Tirana ; • On 14 November 2017 – a thematic workshop on Horizon 2020 about <i>Health, demographic change and wellbeing</i>, spreading excellence and widening participation, in the Albanian University organized by NASRI with the support of the Technical Assistance for Union Programmes in Albania; • On 21 November 2017 – Horizon 2020 Info Day in Logo University organized by NASRI with the support of the Technical Assistance for Union Programmes in Albania; • On 04 – 05 December 2017,
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			<p>the National Agency for Scientific Research of Innovation has carried out around 20 INFO DAY on the EU H2020 Program in more than 15 public and non-public universities with the support of the Technical Assistance Project EU programs where Albania participates. Around 150 scientific researchers have expressed interest in participating with their applications on calls announced by the H2020 Program. Meanwhile, as a project partner of the European Enterprise Network - EEN funded by the EU Program COSME, the National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation through the Technology and Innovation Sector has conducted 8 workshops in Tirana and districts with business representatives, the academic world of public institutions hastening and promoting the Triple Helix approach.</p> <p>In cooperation with the European Commission and through applications in the EU TAIEX Technical Assistance and International Expert Exchange program, the National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation has organized 5 workshops, workshops, seminars focused on capacity building of scientific researchers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5 December 2016 - Event 	<p>Horizon 2020 Info Days organized by German Aerospace Center, NASRI & EU Delegation to Albania.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 10 January 2018, on Calls with forthcoming topics 2018-2020, Horizon 2020 on organized by NASRI with the support of the Technical Assistance for Union Programmes in Albania; • On 8 Mars 2018 Horizon 2020 Info Days organized by NASRI with Support of Italian Institute of Culture, EU Delegation to Albania; • On 27 Mars 2018 Horizon 2020 Info Days organized by NASRI at POLIS University. <p>The Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth - (former Ministry of Education and Sports) of the Republic of Albania and the National Research Center -- CNR, signed on 19.05.2017, the Agreement and the Co-operation Program. In this context, the National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation - NASRI, as executive agency, referred as such also in the document, "Cooperation Program", signed on 19.05.2017, is entitled to carry out the process of announcing calls for bilateral scientific cooperation projects, inviting the academic staff of public and non-public institutions of higher education and scientific research in the Republic of Albania,</p>
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			<p>“Opportunities for funding within the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions; How to submit a successful MSCA project, MSCA Fellow testimony, Research and Innovation Staff Exchange - Success Story; How is a MSCA project evaluated, tips and tricks for a successful proposal”.</p> <p>2. 01 February 2017 - Training H2020 NCP- “Capacity Building workshop with Albanian NCPs of Horizon 2020 – Sharing Best Practices;</p> <p>3. 10 April 2017 – Workshop “Networking Workshop “Funding Opportunities under Marie Skłodowska - Curie Actions.</p> <p>4. 03 May 2017 Event Top III Logo Hr HR Excellence in Research, “Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) and a Policy Pensions for Researchers”.</p> <p>5. 24-26 May 2017 TAIEX Expert Mission on Building Mechanisms for Better Participation in Horizon 2020 Undersecretary and National Contact Point for Legal and Financial Issues in Horizon 2020, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Slovenia.</p> <p>Another important activity</p>	<p>to submit their project proposals.</p> <p>The opening of this call aims to promote academic mobility between Albanian and Italian researchers, focusing on exchanging experiences and strengthening co-operation for long-term projects within ERASMUS +, or HORIZON 2020.</p> <p>The research fields that are covered in these project proposals are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and Albanological Science • Information Technology and Technology • Agriculture, Food and Biotechnology • Water and Energy • Biodiversity and Environment • Health care • Materials <p>Upon completion of the application and prior review of the submitted proposals, it was noted that the total number of project proposals submitted was 27. Out of 27 project proposals submitted, 3 were from private higher education institutions and 24 from public higher education institutions. Out of 27 projects, only 10 projects will be funded from the state budget of the Ministry of Education Sports and Youth. The allocated funds to NASRI from MoESY are foreseen to be around</p>
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			<p>undertaken with TAIEX support was the workshop “Smart Specialization and Innovation” (ETT 26317) at which participated a wide range of HEIs and stakeholders interested in compiling a strategy and a working plan to this regard.</p>	<p>5,000 EUR per project for two years period.</p> <p>On 8 April 2018, the Second Call for Proposals for Scientific Cooperation Bilateral Projects 2019-2020 between Albania and Austria was launched.</p> <p>NASRI initiated and completed the process of full membership of Albania in COST Programme by April 2018.</p>
<p>Qualification and Competences (NQF/EQF)</p>	<p>Establish a NQF linked to EQF</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The task-force for reviewing the national framework of regulated professions law is established by joint order of Ministry of Education and Sport and Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth. • The task force is compound by MES and MSWY representatives, representatives of National VET and Qualification Agency, representatives of higher education institutions, business association and aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the law for Albanian qualifications framework (AQF) and propose the respective changes and bylaws in its compliance according to best practices and requests of EHEA; - Draft a manual for AQF that will serve as a Roadmap for sustainable implementation of the law enabling its referencing with EQF; 	<p>The Task Force of the Albanian Qualifications Framework has organised three events implementing the biannual work plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kick-off workshop named “Reference process of Albanian Qualifications Framework with European Qualifications Framework in Albania” during 8-9 September 2016 in cooperation with ETF (European Training Foundation); 2. Workshop named “Procedures and criteria to include qualifications into the Albanian Qualifications Framework” during 24-25 January 2017 in cooperation with ETF; 3. Workshop named “Quality Assurance in the Albanian 	<p>On 10.05.2018, the Parliament of the Republic of Albania passed the Law no. 23/2018, "On some amendments and additions to law no. 10247, dated 4.3.2010, "On the Albanian Qualifications Framework", which aims to define the levels of the AQF, the types of qualifications, objectives, functions and areas where it extends its jurisdiction to the AQF according to the definitions in this law, in cooperation with relevant ministries, various central or local government institutions, social partners and non-profit organizations, acting for the development, delivery and use of the AQF qualifications, as well as the linking of the AQF with the European Qualifications Framework and the Qualifications Framework</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare the legal and bylaws framework and reorganization of the institutional scheme for management and implementation of AQF, for establishment of sectoral committees including the piloting of this organism in at least one sector of economy, for review of levels and respective descriptions, classification and qualification aspects, to enable population of qualification levels of AQF with the relevant qualifications, other aspects quality guarantee of assessment and certification including the match with Diploma Supplement, credit system, etc.; - Preparation of a yearly working plan for issues to be treated by the task force etc. - The current activity of both ministries on AQF is assisted also by ETF, which will also assist the task force. • The task force has organized several meetings for each working group on different aspects. The task force has agreed on the activities for the two following years. ETF has sponsored a local expert to assist and cooperate with working groups for the drafting of the respective manual. A roadmap and a time sheet has been defined regarding the completion of this manual which is due to finish on December 2016 in 	<p>Qualifications Framework” during 10-11 May 2017 in cooperation with ETF.</p> <p>The Task Force has concluded the amendments’ of the Law no. 10 247, date 4.3.2010 "On the Albanian Qualifications Framework (AQF)", with ETF assistance and in consultation with all representatives of interested stakeholders. The draft law has been signed by Minister of Education and Sports and is awaiting the signature by the Minister of Social Welfare and Youth responsible for vocational education in order to follow legal procedures for its approval in parliament.</p> <p>The AQF task force with ETF support has compiled and approved its respective manual. Furthermore it has organised several events and trainings during the preparation of reference report with EQF.</p> <p>Law no 15/2017 “On vocational education and training in the Republic of Albania” has been approved in February 2017 (MSWY).</p>	<p>of the European Higher Education Area.</p> <p>The task force set up to develop and further implement the Albanian Qualifications Framework through a Joint Order of MESY and MFE extended its mandate in the function of the preparation of this law and sub-legal acts envisaged by this new Law.</p> <p>In this context, there are three technical working groups that are working on the drafting of three bylaws:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Establishment of Sectoral Councils; b) Inclusion of lifelong learning qualifications in the Albanian Qualifications Framework; c) detailed descriptions of AQF levels. <p>ETF, Turin, supported and continue to support the Task Force work. On 20 and 21 June 2018 task force with the support of ETF organized 2 workshops for the a) and b) bylaws in order to discuss the draft DCM prepared by the task force with relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>For the c), DCM task force is going</p>
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		<p>parallel with the revised law on national qualification framework from the task force.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 22 April 2016 a meeting of the Task Force together with field experts who are part of the working groups and representatives of the European Training Framework has been held in Tirana. In this meeting the experts have discussed the draft version of the manual. Meanwhile each chapter was discussed in advance by the experts of the working groups. • In September will be held a workshop on the referencing with the support of ETF. This will assist the task force and the working group experts to prepare the report for the referencing to EQF 		<p>to organize a 3rd workshop on 28 June for which it has applied for TAIEX support (currently awaiting an answer).</p> <p>Pursuant to the order no. 115, dated 13.03.2018 of the MESY, a Working Group was established for amending the Law no. 10171, dated 22.10.2009 "On Regulated Professions", regarding the part related to university academic qualifications. This Working Group is working to align this Law with Directive no. 2005/36 of the European Commission and the European Parliament.</p>
Other reforms implemented?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoES took the necessary measures to appoint the students of these closed institutions with the necessary documents for transferring their studies to other HEIs. • Proposals for detailed measures were accompanied by the drafting of relevant sublegal acts. These acts preclude the procedures to be followed by respective HEIs whose licences were suspended or removed, as well as the procedures to ensure continuity and for transfer of students in other institutions and other definitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The non-public HEI "New generation" has been closed down with DCM no 181 date 8.3.2017 due to non-fulfilment of the legal criteria. • The non-public HEI "ISSAT" has been closed down with DCM no 611 date 31.8.2016 due to non-fulfilment of the legal criteria. • Legal procedures to close down the non-public HEI "Justitia" are in process. 	<p>By the Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 216, dated 20.4.2018 "On determining the average grade criterion for admission of candidates to first cycle programs and integrated cycle programs or the transfer of studies in the intermediate years of these programs to institutions of higher education for the academic year 2018-2019 ", for the students who will be admitted to study programs in the field of teaching, the average grade has increased from 6 to 7.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In these context the Council of Ministers approved its Decision nr. 716 date “On the quotas of study transfers and tuition fees concerning students transferring their studies from HEIs whose licences have been removed in academic year 2014-2015”. 		<p>Through this criterion, the aim is to improve the academic quality of candidates aspiring to practice the regulated profession of teacher.</p> <p>The Smart Specialization process in Albania started in September 2016 through a TAIEX supported conference in which numerous representatives from Higher Education Institutions, businesses and business associations, regional agencies municipalities, etc. participated. The Working Group tasked to draft the Research and Innovation Smart Specialization Strategy (RIS3) is currently working on its development.</p>
Administrative	Cooperate with the Ministry of Finance to help Albanian universities open accounts in Euro	According to legal acts and bylaws, based on authorization by the Ministry of Finance, public higher education institutions are authorized to open accounts in Euro. Most higher education institutions possess such accounts.		
Human Resources	Review of the career development schemes for academic staff			The Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 112, dated 23 February 2018, “On the criteria for obtaining scientific title "Doctor" and the state standards for

				acquiring the titles "Associate Professor" and "Professor" was approved.
	Regulation of the flow of academic staff from public to private HEI			Based on the Higher Education Law 80/2025 (Article 3 ç), higher education institutions have the right of organizational autonomy and staff selection. Organizational autonomy basically gives each HEI the opportunity to designate independently the number of staff, the criteria and procedures for its selection, as well as to determine the staff salaries in accordance with the institution's form. In the past, the numerous teaching hours carried out by all academic staff affected the teaching quality. As decided by law, in order to avoid the high number of teaching hours and aim to increase the teaching quality, the academic staff actually cannot be employed in more than one other HEI as part time staff.