



Higher Education Reforms in Poland

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During last 30 years we have implemented 3 fundamental reforms in polish higher education system, each time in relation to introduction of new act on HE:

1982

- initiative of academic community,
- project prepared by the Main Council for Higher Education and Science, in the period of Solidarity Movement,
- enacted during marshall law

1990

- initiative of the government,
- project prepared by the representatives of the academic community in cooperation with the Ministry, in the early stage of postcommunist transformation

2005 (last change)

- initiative of the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (CRASP),
- project prepared by the team of experts established by the President of the state, including representatives of CRASP and the Ministry,
- proposer to the Parliament – President,

Our experience



From the changes made during last 30 years we can learn that:

- Projects of acts on science were prepared by the Ministry and then representative bodies of academic and scientific community were asked to give an opinion and cooperate
- Projects of acts on higher education were prepared by, or with leading role, representative bodies of academic community
- This is the case of acts enacted in 1982, 1990 and 2005.
- it is worth keeping in mind!

Present situation

The law from 2005, prepared in 2003, was a result of the conditions and trends we have observed in European and Polish HE during the period of 1990-2000 (after 2-3 years of reflexion)

In the years 2010/11, as a result of dynamic changes in the environment in which higher education system exists, minor changes in the law on HE will have to be implemented

After the decade of 2000-2010, around the year 2013 (after 2-3 years of reflexion) , it will be right time for preparing major amendment of the law from 2005, so it can be implemented in the year 2013

Present situation

As a preparation for the second step (minor amendment) the Ministry has prepared in 2008/09 several documents with various proposals of changes and is currently working on the amendment

As a preparation for the third step (major amendment) – two teams of experts are working simultaneously on strategy for higher education system development till 2020

Selected ministerial proposals 2008/2009 and CRASP opinion

Introducing the most modern management methods into HEIs.



Forging closer ties between higher education institutions and the economic sector by offering research programmes and degree programmes in fields of study to order and involving representatives of the economic sector in managing higher education institutions (through membership in the obligatory institution council, or *konwent*).



Internationalization of higher education institutions through international research programmes, suitable employment policies and greater enrolment of foreign students.



Commencement of efforts to limit multiple employment in Polish higher education institutions



Selected ministerial proposals 2008/2009 and CRASP opinion

Simplification of the academic promotion procedure through abolishment of the higher doctor's degree (*habilitacja*) colloquium.



Increasing academic staff mobility through obligatory internships and employment based on contracts of employment.



Promotion of younger academic staff, introduction of a system of academic achievements assessment based on questionnaire polls and internationalization.



Retaining the title of professor entitling its holders to employment based on appointment (tenure) and to the emeritus status.



Selected ministerial proposals 2008/2009 and CRASP opinion

Modification of the higher education institutions financing algorithm to place greater emphasis on quality and innovativeness in the institutions' development process.



Modification of the scholarships system to provide greater assistance to less affluent students and introduction of tougher requirements for students benefiting from academic scholarships.



Introduction of procedures for the Minister of Science and Higher Education to request the provision of degree programmes in specific fields of study and for the award of scholarships to students attending those programmes.



Selected ministerial proposals 2008/2009 and CRASP opinion

Development and simulation testing of a new algorithm for degree programme financing, applicable to both public and nonpublic higher education institutions with only minor differences.



Introduction of higher education financing with state warranted credits (education coupons).



Adaptation of degree programmes and accreditation methods to common European Higher Education Area requirements.



Selected ministerial proposals 2008/2009 and CRASP opinion

Reduction by Ministry of the number of degree programmes and achievement of greater flexibility of the system by constructing degree programmes in relation to domains of science rather than to disciplines.



Creation of an accreditation system tied to European accreditation systems and relying on committees set up by interested academic communities.



Introducing National Qualification Framework, European accreditation, evaluation of the quality of teaching/learning on the basis of learning outcomes



Selected ministerial proposals 2008/2009 and CRASP opinion

Introducing by Ministry
enrolment limits for
stationary (full-time),
free of charge studies



Option for the Minister
to replace rector with
commissioner, in case of
budget deficit in the HEI



Changing the status of
the founder of HEI to
owner



Introducing major
amendment of law on
HE before the strategy



Response of CRASP to ministerial proposals

Facilitating consolidation processes leading to the new status of federal university (flagship or research university)

More flexible employment and payment policies

Facilitating international cooperation (joint diploma, transnational education, 7th FP, networking) for strengthening international position of polish HEIs

LLL and informal education

Contract-based funding

Deregulation (less micromanagement by Ministry) and greater autonomy of the HEIs in creation of internal models based on the statute

Response of CRASP to ministerial proposals Conclusion

Strategy



Amendment

No amendment of the law on HE before strategy!

Developing the strategy

As a preparation for amendment two projects of strategies are being developed: one by the consortium CRASP-PRF-CRVSP (insider point of view), second by consulting companies (outsider point of view)



We can expect, that the first project will be more strategy oriented and the second one will concentrate more on the diagnosis of higher education system (of course both of them will consists of diagnosis and strategy)

Developing the strategy

Both projects are expected to be finished till December '09- January '10

After public consultation period we expect that the government will accept final strategy, which will be the basis for the new plan of legislative changes for the period 2011-2015 (next term of office of the parliament)

As both projects of the strategy are being currently developed it is too early to discuss details, however some directions of our work can be found in documents published by CRASP

Conclusions

1. **Changes in higher education system have to come from a strategic plan**
 2. **The best way of implementing changes in the legislation:**
 - Amendments**
- **Changes in the law are needed because:**
 - Environment in which higher education exists is changing dynamically,
 - Academic Europe is changing,
 - Poland needs to accelerate development of the knowledge sector, as important condition for development of knowledge society

Conclusions

Amendments are needed, however not in case of:

- less important matters,
- matters, which can be managed by minister's regulation or regulated by codes of conduct,
- editorial changes.

Changes in higher education system: evolution - not revolution!

Conclusions

- For academic HEIs are important not only proposed range and timetable of law changes but also the way in which they are being prepared
- Consultation with conferences of rectors at the early stage of development of new acts is a necessary requirement for mutual trust and pragmatism (see for example *Education today* by OECD on how to introduce HE changes - lessons learned)