



Erasmus Mundus Action 3 project: Erasmus Mundus Active Participation (EMAP)

**NATIONAL SITUATION SURVEY ON JOINT STUDY PROGRAMMES
IMPLEMENTATION IN LATVIA**

Riga, 2010

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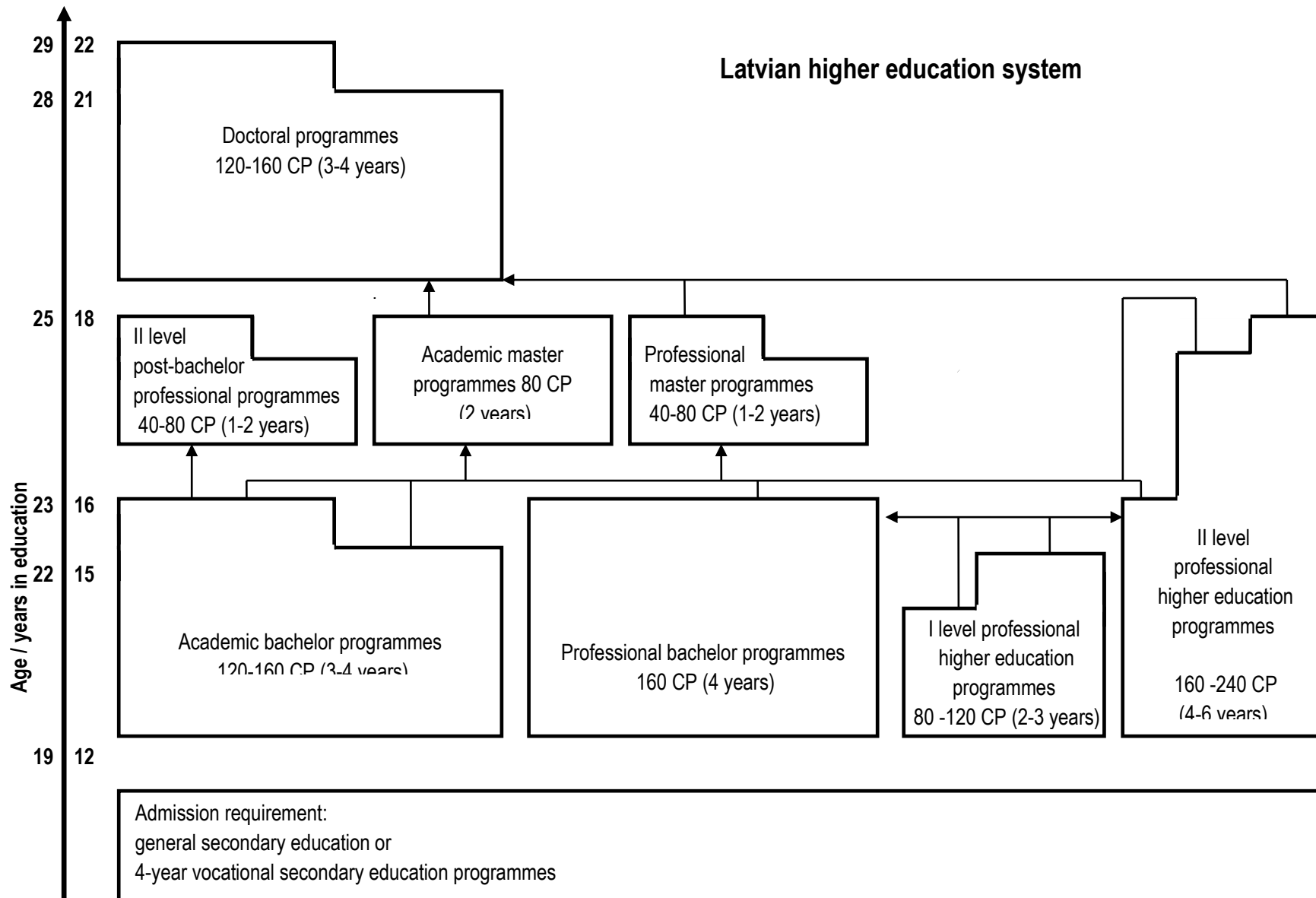
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1. NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

<p>Latvian Education System</p>	<p>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</p>
<p>Higher Education Programmes</p>	<p>In Latvia is a difference between academic and professional higher education, nevertheless, it is not institutionalised. Universities and other higher education institutions run both academic and professional programmes, e.g. lawyer, teacher, translator, marine mechanic etc. <i>Bachelor (bakalaura)</i> and <i>master (maģistrs) degrees</i> are awarded in both, in academic and professional higher education programmes. A Master's degree is awarded after the second stage of academic/professional education and requires at least 5 years of university studies. Graduates of both types of <i>the bachelor degree</i> have access to master studies, graduates of the <i>master degree</i> – to doctoral studies.</p>
<p>Credit Point System</p>	<p>Latvia is using national credit point in higher education. National credit point is defined as a one-week full-time study workload. An average workload of a full-time study year in most higher education programmes is 40 credits. Latvian credit point system is compatible with ECTS. The number of ECTS credits is found by multiplying the number of Latvian credit points by a factor of 1.5</p>
<p>Quality assurance</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Admission to Higher Education Institutions</p>	<p>The admission to higher education establishment comprises application, entrance exams, registration for studies and matriculation. The right to study in a school of higher education is granted to every citizen of Latvia and to persons who have received the non-citizen passport of the Republic of Latvia, as well as those</p>

	<p>who have received the permits for permanent stay in Latvia. In order to be enrolled in a school of higher education, a document certifying to the acquisition of secondary education is necessary.</p>
Academic higher education	<p>The objectives of academic higher education are to prepare graduates for an independent research, as well as to provide theoretical background for professional activities. Academic education programmes are implemented according to the state standard of academic education.</p>
Bachelor degree	<p>Academic programmes, leading to a <i>bachelor degree</i>, comprise 120 – 160 national credit points (160-180 ECTS), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Compulsory part – not less than 50 national credit points (75 ECTS), -electives not less than 20 national credit points (30 ECTS), -thesis not less than 10 national credit points (15 ECTS), -and the rest is left for students as free choice. <p>Duration of full-time studies is 6 – 8 semesters (3-4 years).</p>
Master degree	<p>Academic programmes, leading to a <i>master degree</i>, comprise 80 national credit points (120 ECTS), of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Thesis not less than 20 national credit points (30 ECTS), -compulsory part of the programme includes theoretical aspects of the specific field of scientific discipline not less than 30 national credit points (45 ECTS) - and their practical application in solving of actual problems not less than 15 national credit points (22,5 ECTS). <p>Duration of full-time studies is 4 semesters (2 years) and requires at least 5 years total length of bachelor and master studies.</p>
Professional higher education	<p>The objectives of professional higher education are to provide in-depth knowledge in a particular field, preparing graduates for design or improvement of systems, products and technologies, as well as to prepare them for creative, research and teaching activities in this field.</p>
Professional bachelor degree	<p>Professional programmes, leading to a professional <i>bachelor degree</i>, comprise at least 160 national credit points (240 ECTS) of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -general courses not less than 20 national credit points (30 ECTS), -theoretical courses of the chosen field not less than 36 national credit points (54 ECTS), -specialization courses not less than 60 national credit points (90 ECTS), -optional courses not less 6 national credit points (9 ECTS), - practical placement not less than 26 national credit points (39

	<p>ECTS), and state examinations including thesis not less than 12 national credit points (18 ECTS). Duration of full-time studies is 8 semesters (4 years).</p>
Professional master degree	<p>Professional higher education programmes, leading to a professional <i>master degree</i>, comprise no less than 40 (60 ECTS) credits, of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -up-to-date achievements in the field – in theory and in practice ≥ 7 (10,5 ECTS) credits, - practical placements ≥ 6 (9 ECTS) credits, - state examinations including thesis ≥ 20 (30 ECTS) credit - research training, courses of design, management, psychology etc. <p>Duration of full-time studies is 2-4 semesters (1-2 years).</p> <p>Studies in medicine, dentistry and pharmacy professional studies (5 and 6 year studies), are equal to the <i>master degree</i> and the graduates can continue their studies in doctoral level programmes.</p>
First-level professional higher education	<p>First-level professional higher education (college) programmes comprise 80–120 national credit points (120–180 ECTS) credits. These programmes are targeted mainly to the labour market. Graduates of the first-level programmes can continue their studies in second-level professional programmes.</p>
Second-level professional higher education	<p>Second-level professional higher education programmes can comprise either at least 40 national credit points (60 ECTS) for holders of the bachelor degree or at least 160 national credit points (240 ECTS) for secondary school leavers. In both cases programmes should include a practical placement of at least 26 national credit points (39 ECTS) and graduation examinations including thesis not less than 10 national credit points(15 ECTS).</p>
Doctoral studies	<p>The degree of master or equivalent is required for admission to doctoral studies. Doctoral degree is awarded after public defence of doctoral thesis and successfully passed exams in the chosen scientific discipline. The doctoral thesis has to include original results of the research and new cognitions in the scientific discipline. Duration of doctoral studies is 3-4 years</p>



2. LEGISLATIVE ASPECTS OF JOINT STUDY PROGRAMMES

Existing legislation

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.

Recognition of joint degrees

There is no problem to recognise a foreign joint degree in Latvia on condition that it is recognised in those countries whose HEIs have issued it.

Recognition is based on The Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region Recommendations on recognition of joint degrees (2004): holders of joint degrees should have adequate access, upon request, to a fair assessment of their qualifications.

Expected legislation

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.

The draft law states that higher education institutions can organise joint programmes with other higher education institutions in country and abroad. Law states that joint programmes are characterized by:

- Joint entrance requirements,
- Joint conditions for programme implementation, final assessment, qualification award,
- Joint higher education programme quality provision system
- Students mobility within joint programme
- Academic staff mobility within joint programme
- Only recognised higher education institutions and programmes are participating in joint programme
- The qualification could be awarded in following ways: 1) as qualifications of two or more partner institutions with two or more separate diplomas, 2) joint qualification and one joint diploma.

Accreditation of

As joint programmes are not introduced by law yet, it is premature

joint study programmes

to speak about accreditation of joint programmes. In Latvia accreditation is organized for separate study programmes.

Changes connected with the Bologna principles implementation

Implementation of Bologna principles in Latvia is taking in account issues raised by Bergen communiqué, which states importance of the awarding and recognition of joint degrees, including at the doctorate level; and Leuven communiqué, which says that joint degrees and programmes as well as mobility windows shall become more common practice.

Joint programmes

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

Three higher education institutions: Riga International Economics and Business Administration institution, Banking College and Ventspils Higher Education Institution created and already implemented inter-universities doctoral study programme in business management. The programme unites scientific research, academic and technical equipment creating new academic cooperation synergy.

Two regional higher education institutions - Ventspils Higher Education Institution and Liepaja University created joint doctoral programme in Latvian linguistics. Also one joint master programme in food science is realized by University of Latvia, Latvian Agriculture University and Riga Stradins University.

3. INTERNATIONALIZATION AND OTHER PROGRAMMES IMPLEMENTED IN LATVIA AS A SOURCE OF JOINT STUDY PROGRAMMES

Internationalisation

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

Tempus 2008 programme

Within **Tempus 2008 programme** – Latvia was involved in 4 projects dealing with development of master programmes and curricula development.

New Masters Programme On Library And Information Science (11 partners), Curricula Reformation and Harmonisation in the field of

Biomedical Engineering (25 partners), Master "Interopérabilité / Sécurité / Certification" dans le domaine du Transport International Ferroviaire en Ukraine et en Asie Centrale (10 partners), International networking for modernization of tourism education and developinacademic mobility (INTOUR) (11 partners).

Riga Technical University is involved in 2 projects, Information Systems Management Insitute and Rezekne Higher Education Institution in 1 project.

Nordplus programme.

Some contribution to the development of joint programmes and joint degrees is done by **Nordplus programme**. First of all – through creation of universities cooperation networks; secondly – trough elaboration of common master level study courses and study programmes.

Nordplus higher education

In 2008 27 projects was approved within **Nordplus higher education** programme with participation of Latvian higher education institutions.

Latvian higher education institutions was coordinating bodies in 4 projects - Stockholm School of Economics in Riga for 1 project and Latvian Agriculture University for 3 projects.

The projects was focused on master level study programmes, e.g. master programme in creative industries, master level intensive course in forestry, master level intensive course in quality assesment of poultry and eggs, master level intensive course in renewable energy.

Remaining 23 projects was dealing with networking and master programmes, eg. Cooperation network in phylosophy, cooperationn network in environmental education, joint master programme in practical phylosophy, etc.

7 higher education institutions from Latvia applied as coordinating body in Nordplus higher education programme 2009, 5 of them were accepted – Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences (Express Mobility for Tourism Students) , University of Latvia (InterLinks10.Net: Nordplus Network of Journalism Schools) , Stockholm School of Economics in Riga (Masters Degree Curriculum Development for Creative Industries: Structuring of the curriculum content and its approbation with social partners in private and public sectors) , Latvian Academy of Sport Education

(Coordination of higher education structure in physical education and sport in Nordic-Baltic education area), State Border Guard College of the Republic of Latvia (The exchange of experience of teachers of the State Border Guard College of the Republic of Latvia and conducting of lessons for teachers and cadets of Border Guard College of Public Service Academy of the Republic of Estonia).

Several Latvian Higher education institutions are involved in various Nordplus higher education programme 2009 networks as network members:

Higher education institution	Number of networks involved in Nordplus higher education programme 2009
University of Latvia	11
Riga Stradins University	6
Riga Teacher Training and Educational Management Academy	3
Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music	3
Latvian Agriculture University	2
Riga Technical University	2
Latvian Academy of Arts	2
Latvian Academy of Culture	1
Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences	1
Stockholm School of Economics in Riga	1
Daugavpils University	1
Liepaja University	1
Riga Medicine college	1

Atlantis

Latvian Rectors Council was involved in 2007 in Policy-Oriented Measures dealing with the policy project will develop and launch a multi-tiered online survey of U.S. and European higher education institutions, to assess the number and types of existing transatlantic linkages.

4. NATIONAL SITUATION OF THE PARTICIPATION IN ERASMUS MUNDUS PROGRAMME

EMMC (2004-2008): situation in Action 1 and Action 3 – overview of accepted and rejected proposals

Action 1

In the period 2004-2008 from Latvia 21 higher education institution applied for EMMC, no one was selected, it means that in 2004-2008 period Latvia have no accepted projects in EMMC Action 1. Success rate 0%.

Action 3

Latvian higher education institutions did not participate in Erasmus Mundus Action 3.

Action 4

Latvian higher education institutions took part in Erasmus Mundus “Attractiveness Projects” (Action 4) in the period 2004-2008. 11 higher education institutions applied for Action 4 projects. From those 2 institutions was selected and participated in 3 projects; success rate 18%.

School of business administration Turība was coordinating project „Capacity Building and Promotion of Three Business Administration Specializations in Higher Education of Baltic States”; University of Latvia was partner in 2 projects 1) „BalticStudyNet – Promoting Baltic Sea Region Higher Education Worldwide”, and „EXAMPLE: Promotion of Selected Examples of Attractive European Master's programmes to the Wider WorldAT - Interuniversity Consortium for Agriculture and Related Sciences (ICA)”.

Erasmus Mundus External cooperation window

Only 1 university from Latvia – Rezekne Higher School is partner in Erasmus Mundus External cooperation window Lot Nr.6 in cooperation with Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Information source :

- Report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the regions. Report on the Evaluation of the Erasmus Mundus Programme 2004-2008
- Erasmus Mundus Action 2 (External Cooperation Window) Compendium 2007 - 2009

EMMC and EMJD (last results 2009): overview of accepted and rejected applications

In Selection round 2009 – academic year 2010/2011 University of Latvia was successful in application and is coordinating institution of EMMC Action 1 project MISOCO “Joint European master in international migration and social cohesion.” Together with 8 universities two year master course will be implemented and joint/double degree awarded after completion of study programme.

In Selection round 2009 there are no successful Latvian applications in EMJD.

Information source: Erasmus Mundus Action 1 Compendium 2009

5. CONCLUSIONS

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

