Academic Autonomy

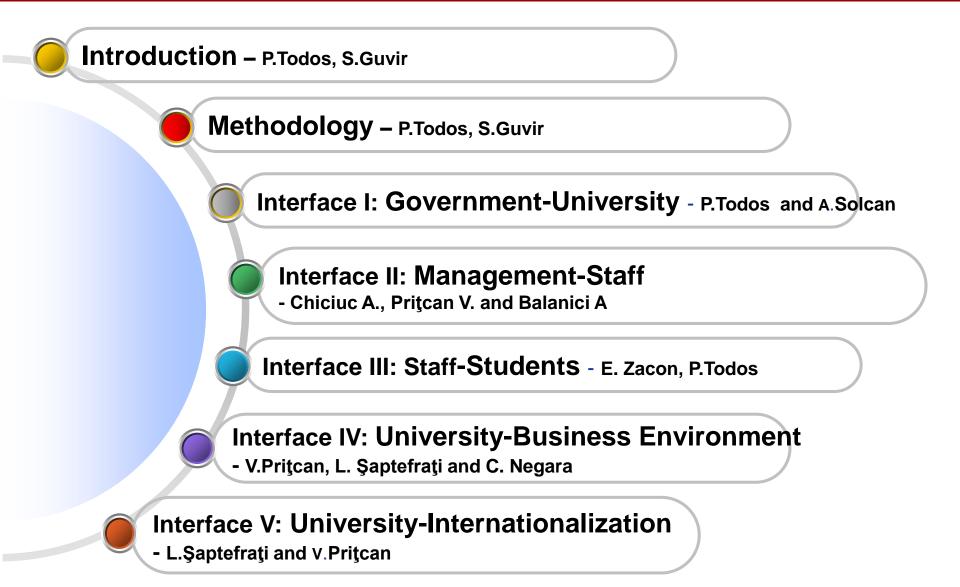**Team leader:**   **Team Members:**

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Distribution of responsibilities

Introduction – P.Todos, S.Guvir

Methodology – P.Todos, S.Guvir

Interface I: Government-University - P.Todos and A.Solcan

Interface II: Management-Staff - Chiciuc A., Priţcan V. and Balanici A

Interface III: Staff-Students - E. Zacon, P.Todos

Interface IV: University-Business Environment - V.Priţcan, L. Şaptefraţi and C. Negara

Interface V: University-Internationalization - L.Şaptefraţi and V.Priţcan

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Definition of the Academic Autonomy

- Autonomy at establishing **study programs**, starting with the society needs, education plans, analytical programs (*syllabus*-es), credits, material base and study groups, according to national and international standards;

- Autonomy at establishing **admission figures,** as well as regulations and measures for the programming, organization and development of the admission and education processes;

- Autonomy at establishing the criteria and systems of the teaching process' **quality self-evaluation**, aligned to national and European requirements of academic assessment and quality assurance;

- Autonomy at developing and practical applying of the own **research** programs and / or in **cooperation** with other local or foreign institutions and / or economic, social agents, etc.;

- Autonomy at defining the organization, completion, evaluation and capitalization means of the **scientific and technological research** results and exercise of intellectual and industrial property rights, according to legal provisions;

- Autonomy at **preparation and publication of textbooks**, courses, research works, magazines and other materials of educational and scientific interest, resulting from the activity of community members.

- The Academic autonomy of universities in this interface is analyzed in terms of obligations, rights and responsibilities of parties involved, referring to the basic compartments of the study process.

- There has been set-up a number of regulatory documents that establish the reports between parties, as well as normative acts that describe the realization means of the respective regulations. Then, the strong and weak sides of these documents have been outlined.

- There have also been outlined the strong and weak sides of these documents, based on which it is possible to determine the consolidation means of the acting legal framework and strengthen the academic autonomy of higher education institutions of the RM.

Governance? The Parliament that issues Laws; the Government that adopts Government Decisions, Ministry of Education – central body of the public administration in the education area of the RM – issues orders, develops policies, strategies, normative acts; resort ministries (for the agricultural, medical and arts education); NCAA – performs scientific accreditation, approves Senate decisions on conferring academic titles and decisions of Councils on Doctor and PhD thesis.

P.Todos

The Study process component	Laws, Regulations, other regulatory acts	Governance responsibilities	Autonomous University activities
Establishing the specialties/ study programs;	EL, NL, NQF	Authorization (ME), Evaluation, accreditation?	Studies the necessity, Conceives the Program, Self-assesses, Approves in the Senate
Education plans	NQF, Framework Plan	Approves	Elaborates according to the QAR and QP requirements, Approves in the Senate
Analytical programs	NQF, Framework Plan	It is checked at external evaluations	It is conceived in Departments, it is approved at Councils.
Admission to studies;	Framework Regulation admission ME; institutional regulations	Supervision fulfillment of normative requirements	Admission according to the own methodology established by the Senate
Organization and development of the study process;	Framework Regulation ME organization of the study process based on ECTS	Supervision compliance to norms	Organizes the process according to its own Regulations
Study quality assurance	EL, GD – creation of the QA structures	Quality assessment, SP accreditation	MC structures, Regulations and Guidelines, SP self-assessment
Institution's structure modification	EL	Approval	Approves in the Senate

Interface 1 „Government - University":
Results, Conclusions

Legislative modifications that are strictly necessary:

- EL – cycle III PhD as component part of the higher education;
- EL – on the creation of the National Agency of evaluation and accreditation of the higher education institutions;
- The Classification Law – completion of the cycle I with new specialties, determination of the PhD specialties with those from cycle I;
- Regulations on the accreditation of the study programs, quality criteria and indicators;
- Staff Status;
- Regulations on the status of foreign students;
- Regulations on admission - admission rules and procedures have to be simplified.

P.Todos

The study process

- The academic staff (AS) plans, organizes and performs educational activities (courses, seminars, labs, consultations, exams etc.) at the subjects distributed for the respective university year.

- Applies efficient teaching means and methods using modern technologies, assures continuous improvement of the teaching process, using scientific achievements in the educational, technologic and informational fields.

- Takes part at the development of the Education plan and curricula of the taught discipline, respecting quality assurance standards and is responsible for their realization according to the teaching plan.

- Besides having rights, the AS has the duty to respect some job obligations, such as time shifts, study hours, records' completion, etc., as well as norms of environment protection and fire requirements.

Scientific research

- Performs scientific research activities, applies research results during the teaching process, assures students' participation at the research activities.

- Has the right to lead (to request the leading) of PhD thesis.

A.Chiciuc

The study process

- Education Law no. 547-XIII of 21 July 1995

- Regulation on study organization in higher education based on the National System of Study Credits, order of the ME no.242-r of 05.04.2011

- Procedures of the Quality Management System

- Regulation on the organization and development of the license exams in higher university education, Decision of the Ministry of Education no. 24.4.1 of 19 March, 1996

- Regulation on the organization of students' learning activity, TUM, 2011, etc.

- Job descriptions (university level).

Scientific research

- Code on science and innovation of the Republic of Moldova no. 259-XV of 15 July, 2004

- Concept of the training policy of the scientific and academic staff, approved by the Government Decision no. 482 of 23 April, 2003

- Regulation on the organization and development of doctorate and post-doctorate studies (Annex no.1 to the Government Decision no. 173 of 18 February, 2008)

A.Chiciuc

Interface 2 „Management - Staff"
Results, Conclusions

1. The Republic of Moldova has clear criteria of academic staff employment and the university is obliged to respect them (lack of autonomy).

2. The employment of the academic staff is done on a contest base, national announcements representing a compulsory element while international ones are not necessary. Thus, the "opening" to the European market of the academic staff is required.

3. Before being elected on a competition base, the academic staff is interviewed, and their ulterior employment is done for a fixed term. Based on the needs, the academic staff can be fired or reduced.

4. The University doesn't have the freedom in determining the salary scales, but it has the right to establish the salary level, additional payments and promotions.

5. At national and university level there is a lack of academic performance assessment indicators of the AS and its hierarchy (*there's some work being undertaken currently in this area*). There's also lack of the academic staff data base, compared to the existent DB (infancy phase) in the research area.

6. The creation of a unique data base for the entire academic staff is required. It will help monitor the academic and research performances of the staff.

A.Chiciuc

The analysis of the existent situation on the relations academic staff-students has been structured into the following compartments:

- Admission;
- Organization of the educational process;
- Rights and obligations of the academic staff;
- Rights and obligations of students

The most relevant normative acts in force, which discuss the academic autonomy, are represented by:

1. The Education Law no. 547-Xiii of 21 July, 1995 with subsequent changes – 64 examined articles;
2. The Regulation on the organization and development of the admission to higher license studies (cycle 1) in higher education institutions of the Republic of Moldova – 36 articles;
3. The Regulation on the organization of higher Master studies, cycle 2, Government Decision no. 1455 of 24.12.2007 – 3 articles.

E.Zacon

The academic autonomy stipulated in these documents, as well as in other normative acts, is, in some cases, followed by various regulations which, practically, limit this autonomy.

Thus, art. 51, paragraph 2, of [2], allows the university to register candidates with license diploma for the 2nd specialty. But they take part at the admission contest only for places planned for secondary education diplomas owners.

As a result, these candidates are registered in the 1st year and their previous credits are not recognized.

E.Zacon

The rights and obligations of the academic staff, examined in the art. 55 (a) of [1], are, lately, developed in the university ethic codes. But due to the lack of elaboration mechanisms of these codes, each university has a different approach on the university autonomy, including the responsibilities of the academic staff.

Conclusions:

1. The relations academic staff-students in Moldovan universities are not fully developed under the aspect of academic autonomy;

2. There is a need of an implementing mechanism of the legal provisions in the university autonomy area.

E.Zacon

Interface 4 „University – Business Environment"
Results, Conclusions

1. Currently, the Republic of Moldova lacks normative acts that would facilitate business environment investments in common research activities between Universities and companies. More frequently, these activities are performed spontaneously on short periods and often only to solve certain problems related to normal functioning of some enterprises or companies.

2. Moldovan Universities have full academic autonomy, while the business environment is less involved in this autonomy. Our view is that business environment has to come with concrete proposals in order to define the future specialist. It should describe the competencies and abilities a future university graduate shall obtain. This would considerably improve the quality of study programs, the content of subjects, as well as the quality of future specialists' training.

3. The business environment should get involved in the creation of new labs with modern equipment.

4. It is very important that students use the equipment and technical means used in enterprises. This would highly contribute to a direct relation with the production environment.

P.Todos

5. Another important thing would be that the business environment creates efficient conditions for the promotion of internships and practice of young specialists during their studies at the University. It would be great if students, during their practice, would go through all production stages in the respective business environment, would get familiar with the whole activity of the organization where the respective internship or practice is taking place. Students shall have access to all types of activity in an enterprise.

6. The business environment would also play an important role in the organization of the formation stages of the university academic staff. The participation of the business men through their involvement in the educational process within young specialists' formation would also be very important.

7. It would also be of a great value that the business environment stimulates the academic performance of students and staff by organizing different contests, scientific events, common scientific and academic activities, etc.

P.Todos

The strategic priority to internationalize the ES is strengthened by the practice of implementing projects financed by such programs as TEMPUS, ERASMUS-MUNDUS, AUF, UNESCO, PESTALOZZI, DAAD, FULBRIGHT, EDMUND S. MUSKIE, CEEPUS, PROGRAMUL CADRU 7 etc., as well as by the practice of encouraging academic mobility and research performance within European and / or international research consortiums.

New tendencies at global level:

- Increase the competition in the university environment and diversification of the academic offer;

- Increase academic mobility (of the academic staff, as well as of students);

- Migration of the qualified labor force.

V.Priţcan

The priority objectives of Moldovan universities aim at:

Strengthening international cooperation in the field of educational activity, scientific research, academic mobility, foreign citizens' recruitment to studies and creation of partnerships with foreign universities.

The internationalization policy of the HE comprises five key areas of the reform:

❖ Increase the number of graduates to fulfill the objective Europe 2020 of 40% from young persons with higher education qualifications by 2020;

❖ Increase the quality and relevance of higher education for job places requirements and society needs;

❖ A better quality study mobility;

❖ Integration of the higher education in the „knowledge triangle" composed of the education, research and innovation;

❖ Improvement of the governance and financing.

V.Priţcan

Findings:

1. Universities of the Republic of Moldova have the right to deliver study programs in other modern languages than Romanian;

2. Moldovan universities have the right to offer honorary titles of "invited professor" and "associated professor" to university lecturers of notorious names from other worldwide university centers;

3. Universities of Moldova promote the policy of academic staff and students' mobility support.

4. The Ministry of Education updated, with the support of Universities, the Regulation on the academic mobility.

5. Based on the principles of the European Space of Higher Education the academic mobility is financially supported through numerous educational and scientific programs of the European Union such as: TEMPUS, ERASMUS MUNDUS, PROGRAMUL CADRU 7, ACŢIUNEA MARIE CURIE, PROGRAMUL JEAN MONNET, AUF, UNESCO, PESTALOZZI, DAAD, FULBRIGHT, EDMUND S. MUSKIE, CEEPUS and others.

V.Priţcan

Partnerships objectives:

1. To develop the abilities of the most motivated and talented students and staff and to offer a good international experience with the aim of increasing their activity on market launching, to improve higher education of the Republic of Moldova and to facilitate the Bologna process.

2. These programs contribute to strengthening of the cooperation in the field of education and science with higher education institutions of the European countries.

Moldovan Universities sign agreements, contracts and collaboration memorandums which provide:

❖ Mutual exchange of university and post-university study data;

❖ Mutual meetings, seminars and conferences;

❖ Mutual invitation of senior specialists for lectures and change of experience in the field of education and methodic work;

❖ Preparation and publication of textbooks, guidelines, common didactic materials;

❖ Staff and students' mobility, experience exchange within educational and scientific research processes;

❖ Post-university and continuous training of specialists;

❖ Other cooperation areas as established by parties.

V.Priţcan

Aiming at internationalization, International Relations Departments have been created within universities and are coordinated by the Vice-rector for International relations

The performance indicators of the respective structures are the following:

1. Increase of the international students' number;
2. Increase of the satisfaction degree;
3. Increase of staff and students' performance level;
4. Increase of young graduates' employment rate within the country and abroad;
5. Increase of university ranking;
6. Increase of visibility, improvement of university image at internal and external levels.

V.Priţcan

International cooperation ensures:

1. Compliance of the study programs to European educational standards and increase of university competitiveness;
2. Compatibility of study programs;
3. Development of common programs at the I cycle level – higher license studies, II cycle level – higher Master studies and at PhD studies level with universities from abroad;
4. Diversification of multi- and trans-disciplinary investigations and increase of the possibility of accessing research labs;
5. Increase of study programs' quality through implementation of innovative, complex and / or inter-disciplinary research according to the research area, specialties and specialization of the University, focused on the increase of international visibility and assurance of a scientific and technological base;
6. Participation of universities at competitions organized by the European Commission for education and research in order to have access to international education and research programs;
7. Organization of scientific meetings of different levels with the participation of students, Masters, PhDs, academic departments of the university and publication of materials of the respective meetings;

V.Prițcan

International collaboration ensures:

8. Facilitation of border research by capitalization of future and emergent technologies;
9. Integration of university periodicals in national and international data bases;
10. Increase of the possibility to reunite resources and knowledge for different professional areas, technologies and disciplines of education, research and innovation areas;
11. Opening of new specialties and / or specialization; expansion of international visibility of the research by increasing publications in ISI rated or scientifically accredited magazines;
12. Improvement of contents, curricula, education plans by focusing on student, study finalities and competencies;
13. Promotion of the social dimension in higher education;
14. Continuous development of the normative framework that would contribute to efficient employment of young specialists on the labor market;

V.Priţcan

General conclusions

1. It has been made a thorough analysis of normative acts, laws, governmental, ministerial and institutional regulations that place higher education institutions within the autonomy context of Moldovan universities, especially those aspects related to the academic autonomy, institutions' role in assuring and respecting this type of autonomy.

2. The analysis of the current situation of Moldovan universities has shown that at the academic autonomy chapter this is situated at a satisfying level, with some problems that need to be solved with the help of decision-making factors of governmental and ministerial levels, as well as with the direct involvement of the higher education institutions and counterparts.

3. The Report presents a series of proposals on the increase of the quality of educational services offered by universities, that would have a considerable impact on the development and commonwealth of the society as a whole, and would contribute to a more consolidated academic autonomy.

4. The completion and accuracy of the respective proposals will be undertaken in the following period based on the thorough study of the existent legislation in the EU countries and on the experience of the European universities partners in the Project.

P.Todos

Sincere thanks to members of the Academic Autonomy team and Project management team

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