



European University Association
Institutional Evaluation Programme

South East European University of Tetovo

Follow-up Visit Evaluation Report

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1. Introduction

This report is the result of the follow-up evaluation of the South East European University (SEEU) in Tetovo, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The University has been evaluated by the Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) in summer and autumn 2004, and the evaluation report was issued in February 2005. The follow-up evaluation took place in May 2009.

1.1 Institutional Evaluation Programme

The IEP is an independent membership service of the European University Association (EUA) that offers evaluations to support the participating institutions in the continuing development of their strategic management and internal quality culture.

The distinctive features of the Institutional Evaluation Programme are:

- A strong emphasis on the self-evaluation phase
- A European and international perspective
- A peer-review approach
- A support to improvement

The focus of the IEP is the institution as a whole and not the individual study programmes or units. It focuses upon:

- Decision-making processes and institutional structures and effectiveness of strategic planning
- Relevance of internal quality processes and the degree to which their outcomes are used in decision making and strategic planning as well as perceived gaps in these internal mechanisms.

The evaluation is guided by four key questions, which are based on a 'fitness for (and of) purpose' approach:

- What is the institution trying to do?
- How is the institution trying to do it?
- How does it know it works?
- How does the institution change in order to improve?

The aims of a follow-up evaluation are to allow institutions that were evaluated by IEP two to four years before – and IEP - to identify the changes at the University and the impact that the initial evaluation has had on the institutions' development, to investigate the experiences gained from changes implemented after the initial evaluation and to give further impetus for change.

1.2 SEEU and the national context

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has four state universities, the earliest one from 1949 and the most recent one established in 2007. The State University of Tetovo, the only higher education institution besides SEEU that offers all study programmes in Albanian, was accredited in 2004. There are three private universities in the country, and SEEU is a 'private-public' university. Additionally, there are several foreign universities and faculties.

SEEU was established in 2001 from international funds with the aim to provide higher education to the Albanian community in Macedonia. At the same time, it is a multi-cultural institution whose language of teaching is not only Albanian but also Macedonian and English, and to a lesser extent German and French. The University draws tuition fees. SEEU was originally set up as a private university, which did not exist in Macedonia but was made possible with the Law on Higher Education of year 2000. With the 2008 Law on Higher Education, SEEU's status changed to a 'private-public', non-profit institution. That allows the

funding through SEEU's foundation to continue, while making it possible to get public funding also. Unfortunately, public funding for activities in which SEEU is contributing to the society, creating public value as are in the field of the Public Administration, Pedagogical and Methodology Faculty in creating graduates to serve as teachers in the High Schools of the Public System mainly, and other similar programmes, has not been forthcoming until this time. It would be all the more warranted because SEEU seems to the Team to be a model university for Macedonia in several respects, as will be described in this report. The new legal status also created the possibility to establish stronger partnerships with public universities.

The new law of higher education from 2008 prescribes student representation in university bodies, which at SEEU has been the practice from the beginning. The law introduced the bachelor/master structure in Macedonian universities. SEEU had set up its curricula according to this structure from the start; however it followed the U.S. scheme where bachelors have a duration of four years. At the time of the follow-up evaluation team's visit, many bachelor curricula had been restructured to three-year programmes to be compatible with the common 3+2 Bologna scheme (15 study programmes for first cycle and 23 for second cycle, according to the Self-Evaluation Report) while the earlier 4+1 programmes are allowed to come to an end (14 second-cycle programmes).

In the past, and in its strategy for the future, SEEU is keen to balance its mission of being a multi-cultural, multi-lingual higher education institution and its aim is to provide access for students in the form of scholarships and work-study programmes with ensuring financial sustainability. It is a fully autonomous institution within the framework of the higher education law, answerable to an external University Board that is at once the Foundation Board. The responsiveness of the University leadership to ensure long-term financial sustainability is matched by a flexible strategy for securing income by catering to student and market needs. A recent move was to open a branch in the capital Skopje, where many of the same classes are taught as at the main campus in Tetovo, and which is considered so successful in recruiting students that further expansion in Skopje is under discussion. The expansion is not only a way for the University to ensure financial sustainability but also fulfils its multi-cultural mission in providing dual- or even triple-language teaching beyond the Albanian-inhabited areas.

1.3 The Self-Evaluation Process

The self-evaluation process was undertaken by the University's Self-Evaluation Group, headed by the Pro Rector for Academic Issues and including the Quality Advisor, the quality officer, the deans of the five faculties and the Secretary General.

Given that the quality assurance mechanisms at SEEU have been very well developed and have been refined since the IEP evaluation in 2004, the self-evaluation process for the follow-up evaluation seems to have run smoothly. The Group dealt systematically with the recommendations in the IEP report, looked at progress and obstacles in fulfilling the recommendations, and based the process on its existing multi-faceted quality mechanisms and University strategic and detailed plans, with support from the database. As a result the Group was able to identify the University's strengths and constraints.

The Team would like to note, however, that it learned in an interview with students that although they were among the groups consulted after the self-evaluation report was written, in accordance with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG), students should be involved from the beginning of the process.

1.4 The evaluation team

As is usual in the follow-up evaluation procedure of IEP, the Team included two members (the chair and the secretary) who had participated in the first evaluation, to ensure continuity, and two new members, including a student member, for fresh insight.

The self-evaluation report of the SEEU along with the appendices was sent to the evaluation team in April 2009. The visit of the follow-up evaluation team to Tetovo took place on 13-15 May 2009. Following the Self-Evaluation Report, the Team requested and was provided additional documentation, including the University Strategic Plan, the Budget analysis and Plan, and the Quality Report.

The evaluation team consisted of:

- Henrik Toft Jensen, former Rector of the University of Roskilde, Denmark, chair
- Edward Jezierski, former Vice rector for Education of the Technical University of Lodz, Poland
- Bruno Carapinha, member of the Executive Committee of the European Students' Union, from Portugal
- Christina Rozsnyai, programme officer at the Hungarian Accreditation Committee, Team secretary

The Team thanks all those who prepared and participated in the visit for their excellent organisation, kind hospitality and open and informative discussions during the interviews. It also thanks the Self-Evaluation Group for their report, and the critical analyses and the transparency in the report and in the discussions with the Team, which reflect the overall attitude of the University. The Team also appreciates the excellent language skills by most individuals interviewed, and the translation provided for those individuals who are not proficient in English.

2. Achievements since the 2004 visit

Student numbers have risen from 5330 quoted in the 2005 Evaluation Report to 6978 full-time and 813 bachelor part-time students in the academic year 2007/08, according to the business plan from April 2009. While the 2005 Evaluation Report had recommended that SEEU set a ceiling for expansion in order to ensure quality, the expansion that has taken place, including the new and planned campuses in Skopje, seem to fit into SEEU's business strategy, especially since, according to the 2009 business plan, tuition fees constitute 82% of the University's income. The student increase is coupled with an expansion of total full-time staff from 210 to 272 between fall 2004 and spring 2008 (with a slight reduction from 152 to 137 in part-time staff in light of the University strategy to increase the full-time share). Together with careful and elaborate quality assurance measures the Team learned about in interviews and the Annual Quality Report for 2007/08, the University seems to be very conscious of not sacrificing quality to quantity. (Stagnation in new enrolment was reported during the Team's visit, which is of concern to the University, and which could have quality implications that SEEU is well aware of. The expansion in Skopje should offset the student decline.)

The Evaluation Team was impressed by SEEU's careful analysis and use of the recommendations from the 2004 evaluation report in developing the University. It has a well developed strategic planning, which is evident from the updated strategic plans and the derived shorter term plans for faculties and departments, research plans, financial and budget plans, quality reports and plans and various other related documents. Organisational structures are in line with the long-term strategy.

SEEU has also been successful in fulfilling its mission concerning ethnicity and the two regional languages. All study programmes are available in either Albanian or Macedonian, with many classes mandatory and additional ones optional in the other than primary language as well as in English. Some German and French courses are also offered. Progress toward the original goal when SEEU was established, to bring higher education to the Albanian community in Macedonia, seems to be well underway. The Team learned that their earlier 2% graduation rate in higher education has increased significantly, to which SEEU is contributing considerably.

The campus, facilities and services, already impressive four years earlier, have developed even more. There is now a business and education centre with the rectorate offices. SEEU has opened a new branch in Skopje in 2008 for full-time and part-time study programmes at bachelor and master level, which seems to be an important strategic move. In this area with a predominantly Macedonian but also a considerable Albanian population, SEEU offers teaching in both Macedonian and Albanian under the same philosophy as at the main campus. The international outlook is strengthened by SEEU employing a number of staff from abroad, on both short-term and long-term contracts. As described in its Self-Evaluation Report and its website, as a model for the region, SEEU is spearheading ecologically responsible construction through the use of eco-friendly construction material at the new building in Skopje, water recycling and other initiatives.

With the addition of a new dormitory building and the new rental flats in the vicinity of the campus in Tetovo, student housing is no longer a problem. Indeed, the Team learned that they were used to only 80% of capacity at the time of its visit, and there were plans to convert the surplus to income-generating hotel rooms. There are eating, recreational and sports facilities on various parts of the campus. The University noted that it also has mentoring programmes, including for disabled or disadvantaged students, various scholarships and work-study schemes. In 2007/08, 110 merit-based and 570 financial support scholarships were issued, and a 15-25% reduction of tuition fees for second and more children from one family at SEEU, according to the Annual Quality Report for that year. Other services include courses to improve language and IT skills. The Team was able to talk to the head of the new Career Services Centre and learned that the SEEU graduate employment rate exceeds the regional average. Students receive assistance in searching for work for three years after graduation.

As for advancing SEEU toward its long-term goal of becoming not just a teaching but also a research University, the Team heard that SEEU is involved in numerous research projects and staff have publications also in international journals. It has established a journal 'The SEEU Review' to provide a medium for publication by academic staff. Copies of the journal can be viewed on the SEEU website. SEEU continues to mentor younger staff to attain masters and PhD degrees, several at foreign universities, with 40 PhD candidates reported at the time of the IEP visit. (The new higher education law set a deadline for associate and full professors to acquire doctorates by 2013, but as the SEEU staff enrolled for PhD work under the old, independent research-based system, they are able to continue their teaching assignments.) Since 2004, SEEU has introduced the provision of masters programmes at all faculties, and three-year third-cycle programmes are planned to be launched in the autumn semester 2009.

With the introduction of the Bologna-type bachelor/master structure, study programmes have been redesigned to focus on learning outcomes. The Team has had a chance to view a model curriculum from the Law Faculty. These programme specifications follow the Bologna concept. At the same time, the Team heard that there are opportunities for staff development in new teaching methodologies, and the internal quality assurance mechanism tracks

teaching performance. As in other countries, it will take time for all the University's staff to internalise the concept and translate their method of instruction to this end.

The Team heard that SEEU has continued to develop its IT system and database. The central administration at the main campus in Tetovo is linked to the one in Skopje. Students communicate for various services electronically, class registration and grading is done electronically, various facets of the quality assurance system are electronic, to name just a few aspects.

SEEU seems to have made great effort to find a mode of collaboration with Tetovo University, the Albanian-language public institution that was accredited shortly after the first IEP visit in 2004, Tetovo University has not been responsive. The result is that the two universities are competing in some of the same fields of study for a limited student population. To prospective students, SEEU seems to be competitive qualitatively and less so financially, at least as far as up-front tuition fees are concerned, but the obstacles appear to have to do with the external environment rather than objective reasons. SEEU can only be encouraged to continue its efforts to establish links with Tetovo University, and the support of Macedonian decision-makers would be helpful in this regard.

The Rector, Alajdin Abazi, and a good many of the academic staff, although some promoted to other positions, were the same as those the Team encountered in its earlier visit. This indicates that the academic community of SEEU constitutes a dedicated team, which has grown over the life of the University itself under a capable and strategically purposeful leadership.

3. Structure: University faculties

One of the topics of discussion at SEEU has been the University structure. Historically in Macedonia, faculties have had considerable autonomy as legal entities, while SEEU has followed the centralised model now common in Europe. It is also the model set down in the new higher education law in Macedonia. The questions to be asked in this context are: How to balance between a centralised and a decentralised structure and how to couple these structures with responsibility and accountability? Are deans ambassadors of their faculty or are they members of the rector's management team? As faculty autonomy creates the need for more administrative personnel at faculty level, would a reduction at central level be feasible?

In the interviews during the visit, the Team found that while satisfaction may vary depending on the faculty – whether it is large or small, drawing more students or generating more income than others – there is approval in general of the current structure. Faculties have full autonomy in academic matters but in line with Senate decisions (in which they participate) and the University strategy. It was expressed that there is a 'balance of power' with designated levels of responsibility. In fact, faculties receive budget allocations according to a formula and also negotiated with central management. They use this budget for research and staff development. Salaries, however, are allocated centrally. The Team believes that the current model is feasible for SEEU, however, if the University decides to reconsider the model in its future strategy it should keep in mind the balance of needs between all faculties and central tasks. A reduction of the central budget will normally result in a reduction of centralised common services creates differences between faculties and reduces economy of scale and competences. Services provided centrally help to avoid duplication and are overall cheaper and more professional. Faculties, like other university entities, should function within a university structure with flexibility. At the same time, central service organisations need to plan services with the needs of the faculties in mind.

4. Quality assurance and quality culture

The Team was impressed by the elaborate quality assurance system at the University. The 2005 IEP report recommended to SEEU 'to develop a coherent, long-term quality assurance strategy in line with the University's overall strategy'. SEEU has made good progress towards this end, and seems to be well in concordance with the ESG.

For a higher education institution the ESG entail that it has

- policy and procedures for quality assurance
- approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards
- assessment of students
- quality assurance of teaching staff
- learning resources and student support
- information systems
- public information.

It was evident from the interviews and documents, particularly the Annual Quality Report for 2007/2008, that SEEU meets each of these standards and that it has elaborated measures to ensure that a quality culture becomes well established. Indeed, a quality awareness was perceptible in all groups the Team interviewed. SEEU has made much progress in this regard since 2004. The cited Quality Report states a 54% response rate to student questionnaires, which is quite high in international comparison. The outcomes are used as part of staff evaluations and for staff development. Feedback to pertaining staff is provided also on a face-to-face basis, and other methods, such as staff observation (which extended to 97% of the staff as stated in the Annual Quality Report 2007/2008). The specific approach is under the authority of the deans, but all faculties have to provide quality plans to the rector and have feedback and improvement mechanisms.

All levels of the University, including e.g. facilities maintenance and services for disabled students, are involved in the quality assurance process, and relevant findings have been acted upon. As a form of external evaluation, in addition to the EUA/IEP evaluation, SEEU received ISO certification for quality management as an outcome of its participation in a TEMPUS project. SEEU was a participant in the EUA Quality Culture III project. Accreditation of new study programmes is mandatory in Macedonia.

In the interview with students there was some complaint about specific issues. SEEU is a relatively small university in which the members of the community are closely in touch with each other, and some of the issues are solved through direct and informal contact. The students mentioned that they have no knowledge about a formal complaint procedure. The Team was later sent the University's official complaint procedure and concludes that perhaps more publicity and a partnership with the student representatives is needed to ensure that all students are aware of their possibilities for recourse.

The Team was told that the first Quality Champion will evaluate the current system and produce a report with recommendations. All in all quality culture seems to be pervasive throughout the University. A quality strategy is in place, and the feedback and action measures with annual analyses of the trends ensures that the so-called 'quality loop' is operational.

The Team's recommendations with respect to quality assurance are that the University continue refining its overall quality strategy and detailed actions. At the same time, quality management tools should constantly be developed to ensure that they do not become routine. Quality results, including the outcome of the student questionnaires, should be presented and discussed in face-to-face meetings with student representatives and faculty members. A University policy to ensure that actions are followed through is necessary.

5. Education and teaching

As noted, in order to act in accordance with the Bologna process, SEEU has converted its study programmes to the 3+2+3 bachelor/master/PhD structure. It has been meticulous in rethinking and redesigning the curricula and to adapt them to the ECTS system of study credits.

The Trends V (2007) report, produced biannually by EUA to assess progress on the implementation of Bologna measures at higher education institutions in the European Higher Education Area, elaborates on

- degree structures
- employability
- student-centred learning
- the 'Bologna tools' ECTS and
- the Diploma Supplement
- student services
- quality
- mobility and
- life-long learning.

Among other measures, these are the ones in which higher education institutions can take the initiative. Degree structures, ECTS, and quality have been discussed in the Evaluation Report.

The 2009 Bologna process country report for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia states the new law requires universities to issue the Diploma Supplement at no charge. SEEU has prepared the model of the Diploma Supplement and the system for supplying it to all graduates free of charge in English, Albanian and Macedonian, but cannot deliver it since the Ministry of Education still has not provided the official description of the national education system in the Republic of Macedonia, as one of the basic requests of the Diploma Supplement. Student services have also been mentioned in the Evaluation Report. It should be added here that the students interviewed expressed satisfaction with SEEU in this regard. The Team would like to underline that it considers the implementation of this aspect at SEEU not only exemplary, as noted earlier, but appreciates that the emphasis the University puts on student services in the realisation that it has implications for the quality of education and for cultivating a sense of good citizenship in its students.

Two elements related to study programmes are employability and student-centred learning.

The Team was told that SEEU makes efforts to establish contacts with employers in the larger area, primarily through the Career Services Centre, which contributes to the two-thirds employment rate of graduates. While the various departments respond differently to this question, in general, academic staff is encouraged to establish contacts for student internships. The University Self-Evaluation Report points out that the ALUMNI association analysed and discussed the current curricula and is expected to provide feedback on them. Moreover, SEEU offers already incoming students pre-first-year training in IT skills and languages, which greatly enhances their employability. Where some faculties could strengthen the employability of their graduates is in consulting with employers in curriculum design, and bringing in more external lecturers from regional business and industry to speak to students.

That relates also to the question of student-centred learning. The Team appreciates that – as it was told and as the sample curriculum reveals – great care was taken in reconsidering the learning goals to focus on learning outcomes, including skills and competences. At the same time, international experience shows that it takes great effort to translate this new approach

to current teaching practice. In SEEU's case this was corroborated in the interview with students, where the Team was told that much of the teaching is conducted in lecture form, rather than in an interactive way. As projects and a research culture develop and expand more within SEEU, it will be desirable that students have contact with research-related activities, enhancing their critical thinking and competences.

The Team learned that the university uses external examiners. The Team appreciates this practice because it believes that it promotes fairness in student assessment.

The Team realised at various meetings, as it also is reflected in the Self-Evaluation Report and the Quality Report, that SEEU is keen on staff development and offers a variety of staff training courses, organised through the Instructional Support Centre. The Team believes that there are still challenges in pedagogic training for academic staff and that SEEU should continue its efforts in this regard.

Additionally, the availability of textbooks seems to be a concern. The Team has heard in this and the earlier visit that SEEU is making great efforts to translate and publish textbooks. Much expenditure is allocated to translations, and the question was raised how financially feasible it is. At the moment, however, it is in line with the University mission and the intention is to continue the practice. The Team believes, however, that care must be taken that students have availability to a broader range of literature, and that not all need to be in all languages. A greater emphasis on requiring students to read in English would give them access to a range of literature through the Internet – and at the same time develop their research skills. The University notes in its Self-Evaluation Report that more English-language programmes were being introduced. The Team feels that there is a need for more teachers who are able to conduct classes in English in order to fulfil the multi-lingual teaching strategy SEEU offers in its marketing, an issue students raised in the interview.

As regards the question of student and staff mobility, SEEU upholds numerous contacts and has agreements with many foreign institutions. Given the historic background of incoming undergraduate students, internationalisation is a given with the multi-ethnic student body and the requirement to study the other language, either Macedonian or Albanian, plus English. However, student exchange with other European universities should be strengthened and provided more financial and administrative support. Actual mobility is prevalent on the graduate level, first of all on the part of young SEEU staff.

Life-long learning at SEEU focuses for the time being on offering all its study programmes in part-time form. The Team has not learned of a complex life-learning learning strategy, although this would certainly be a niche in the market for SEEU. Courses, even short ones, in languages and IT skills, but also e.g. general business skills or legal knowledge for entrepreneurs, are possibilities that fit into the SEEU profile. To fulfil the concept of life-long learning, these courses will have to be assigned ECTS values and designed in such a way that with further study they can potentially lead to a degree in the future.

6. Research

SEEU is eager to achieve the status of a research university. The Team strongly supports this goal and believes the University is progressing in this direction. One of the reasons why it is important for any university to develop research is to secure a research environment for its students and to enable them to be involved in research projects to develop their research skills.

SEEU is making enormous efforts to develop its staff. The Self-Evaluation Report points out that foreign professors from the U.S. Germany, Japan, Ireland and other countries have been employed to enhance the research environment. As noted, through a variety of contacts, many staff are attaining their PhDs at foreign – European or U.S. – universities. The

experiences and contacts they bring home are laying the foundations for SEEU's expansion in research. The recruitment of new, capable academic staff is a challenge, as is the ongoing development of existing academic staff on all levels. The University needs to have a critical mass of full-time academics and that will take some time. Foreign contacts should be maintained for possible cooperation in the future.

SEEU notes in its Self-Evaluation Report that a research project evaluation system is in place, and that it has an updated Research Strategy and a new Policy of Research Support "favouring partnership projects with external co-financing, public or industrial institutions and those having a direct impact on the economic and social development of Macedonia and the region." The Team would like to add, "favouring partnership projects *with an international perspective*." It believes that the University should explore further funding opportunities and that it would be helpful if the staff had access to centrally organised support of the process of preparing applications for European funding, such as FP7, which is now available also for Macedonia. It is evident that SEEU has taken significant steps toward enhancing its research capacity. The Team encourages further research development and quality, and to follow a research strategy that promotes research primarily in the areas where the University has a relatively strong research capacity.

7. Financing

The mission and aim of SEEU continues to be to provide multi-lingual education for a multi-ethnic community. The mission impacts SEEU's student recruitment strategy, which in turn has financial implications. As noted, most of the teaching and reading material has to be made available in three languages. The additional concern to ensure that not only well-to-do students have the possibility to study at SEEU, motivates the University to run an elaborate scholarship and work-study programme, all of which are costs beyond those incurred by most universities. The University states in its Self-Evaluation Report that in addition to maintaining a quality culture, long-term financial sustainability continues to be the main focus of its new Strategic Plan. The Self-Evaluation notes that 'the new concept of Financial Management, the new Resource Allocation Model and some of the new financial initiatives as the Endowment Fund, investment in alternative energy resources and the initiation of the Risk Management exercise provide solid ground for mid- to long-term financial sustainability within the present national and international financial challenges'.

SEEU has also been careful to secure various forms of commercial income from externally managed service establishments (e.g. dormitories, restaurants, shops), and has set up an Endowment Fund to additionally support the international cooperation and staff development. It was evident to the Team during its visit that SEEU is an important player in the local community. Housing and other buildings and services have sprung in the immediate vicinity of the campus. Inside the campus, the University runs services on a rental basis, thereby providing employment to community members, and has set up some premises as a small incubator for young entrepreneurs. It seems important to the Team that SEEU expand its links to the community via a range of services to the region, e.g. special workshops, know-how dissemination, or possibly consultancy on environmental issues through the recently established Institute for Environment and Health. These would extend its financial income and fulfil its public commitment as a university.

While a drop in student numbers was experienced in 2006/07 for various reasons (e.g. new private universities opened, the secondary-school graduation age was raised), the numbers overall have increased steadily until the time of the IEP Team visit. The opening of the teaching site in Skopje was reported to the Team to have been very successful, and further expansion is foreseen. However, the retention of a reliable enrolment is crucial, given that, as noted, 82% of the University's income comes from tuition fees.

SEEU seems to be managing its finances with circumspection and an awareness of various financial management techniques. The University Board and Foundation Board have guided the University from the beginning and most likely are effective as external control mechanisms to ensure financially sound management. On the other hand, the status of SEEU as a private-public university establishes its not-for-profit approach while acknowledging its public service function in education of future public servants (teachers, lawyers, etc.) and a skilled labour force for the country. The Team believes that the Macedonian government should contribute financially to the fulfilment of this public function.

8. Challenges

To sum up the Team perceives that SEEU faces the following main challenges in the near and mid term:

- competition from private universities in the region and state universities in Macedonia, and especially the University of Tetovo
- expansion in the existing building and a possible new campus in Skopje
- striking a balance between decentralisation and centralised common services
- retention of a critical mass of students to sustain high quality
- recruitment and retention of qualified staff, including the promotion or recruitment of full professors and increasing academic staff which PhDs
- expansion in the volume and quality of research
- offering attractive third-cycle programmes
- financial sustainability in the short, mid and long term
- dissemination of quality culture among all staff and students
- continuing to teach in the three main languages while continually improving the quality of provision

9. Recommendations

The Team sums up its evaluation by putting forward the following recommendations:

- promote faculty autonomy in well-defined academic – and to a limited extent, financial – areas to strengthen creativity and initiative in academic and research matters, and ensure that it is coupled with responsibility and accountability
- at the same time, keep in mind that a strong university can exist only if it sustains unity and cohesion
- use the results of staff evaluation in all faculties for academic staff development
- use the quality results for discussion among the staff and students to create an ownership of quality assurance
- develop your quality assurance initiatives in such a way that they will never be perceived as routine
- present and discuss quality results in face-to-face meetings with students and faculty members
- ensure in the quality assurance policy that actions are followed through
- develop a University teaching and learning strategy involving more interactive teaching methods
- continue staff development in new teaching methodologies
- involve or consult with employers to identify the needed learning outcomes to improve employability of graduates
- ensure that students have access to a wider variety of literature, not just through costly translations of textbooks but by improving their reading abilities in English
- strengthen student exchange with other European universities by exploring additional financial sources and providing more administrative support
- promote research primarily in the areas where the University has a strong research capacity

- ensure an increase in full-time academic staff to secure research development
- support for preparing applications for funding from the European region (e.g. FP7)
- consider providing more services to the region as part of your responsibility as a university. This should be supported by the government
- explore ways of providing life-long learning for the external community beyond the part-time study programme offer
- it continues to be necessary to find a solution concerning the cooperation and division of labour with the University of Tetovo
- secure recruitment of some international staff, including Macedonian or Albanian with international experience, with a good command in English to ensure the third language at the University

10. Conclusions

The EUA/IEP Team congratulates SEEU and its capable leadership for the progress it has made since the last visit in 2004. The progress is visible on campus and in many of the internal structural developments described in this report. The Team found that SEEU complies with the European Standards and Guidelines in its well thought through quality assurance mechanisms, based on which the University will be able to continue its positive development. The Team found that SEEU has made great efforts to establish collaborations and contacts with local, regional and international higher education institutions. The Team appreciates the maturity of SEEU's business planning and believes that the University can serve as a model for the region in its overall operations and outlook. The Team hopes that its recommendations will be helpful for SEEU's ongoing development. The Team offers a final advice by saying that SEEU should try to create more independence from the inevitable political ups and downs by never losing sight of the importance of fostering a stable and strong profile and reputation at all times.