



Executive summary

Review of Tempus Structural Measures

A comprehensive survey of Tempus Structural Measures (2003-06) was carried out to analyse their links with national policy developments in higher education, to assess their impact and analyse the main issues they addressed. The Bologna Process remains the main area of interest for Tempus partner countries, although it does not cover the whole of the European higher education agenda.

1) Key developments in the three Tempus regions

Higher education in the region of the **Western Balkans** (“**Cards**”) is characterised by a disintegrated university with faculties acting as separate legal entities. All countries in the region have passed major changes in their legislation which provided a framework for the introduction of Bologna-inspired reforms. Tempus in the region has concentrated on capacity building: Tempus projects are often mentioned in the Bologna National Reports as valuable input supporting higher education reforms.

Higher education in the **former Soviet Union** (“**Tacis**”) has a strong centrally planned tradition. Many universities are overstaffed and under-funded with poor equipment and building maintenance. University management needs to be modernised and democratised. The major strategic goals of higher education reforms in the region are inspired by Bologna although many higher education institutions are not yet ready for this challenge.

Countries from Maghreb and Mashrek (“**Meda**”) joined Tempus in 2002. Although the region lies outside the European Higher Education Area, interest for the Bologna is also visible in this region where the degree reform was launched, National Quality Assurance agencies are established and in some countries like Egypt, Tempus used as an integrated instrument within the higher education development strategy.

In general some positive changes between earlier and later projects have been identified, indicating that the Tempus community was “growing”. More than half of the Structural Measures belong to the “Tacis region” (former Soviet Union) while the share of the Meda countries remains the smallest (below one-fifth). The Cards region received about a third of all projects, with a special mention to FYRoM which was particularly active with almost one quarter of the Cards cooperation for Structural Measures. Russia and Ukraine, having very large higher education systems are represented in three quarters of the projects implemented in the Tacis region.

2) Involvement of the EU Member States

It will not be a surprise that the largest EU countries have the biggest share in the structural cooperation: Germany (14,7%), Italy (10,2%), France (9,5%), UK and Spain (8.3%). Some of the medium size higher education systems have been quite actively engaged as well: Belgium (7.3%), Austria (6.4%), Sweden (6.1%) and the Netherlands (5.2%). Relatively close neighbourhood and traditional cooperation between countries are the main building factors of Tempus project consortia. In the Tacis region, and in particular in Russia and Ukraine, cooperation is mainly with large EU countries while with the Meda group, Spain, Italy and France are involved in three quarters of the projects (10 EU countries are not involved at all in any Meda projects).

870 “international contacts” (i.e. co-operation between national teams within Structural Measures) were established: mainly with Russia (10,5%), Ukraine, then surprisingly FYRoM (both 9.1%) Serbia (8.5%), Bosnia Herzegovina (8.2%), Croatia (7.6%), Kazakhstan (5.4%), etc.

3) Reform areas

With almost one third of the total, the most frequent area of cooperation on which projects have focused is the modernisation of teaching, learning and assessment, although one could think that these types of projects are not typical Structural Measures. A flagship project in this field is the Tuning project (“Tuning educational structures in Europe”). The Bologna promotion and national and institutional reforms were the second most popular area of cooperation (about one fifth) while governance modernisation seems to be quite marginal (below one tenth).

In the Cards region, modernisation of teaching, learning and assessment is by far the most popular topic (one third of the total) while governance is the least developed area. Institutional and national reforms and Bologna promotion are at a similar level. In the Tacis region, most of the cooperation also concentrates on teaching, learning and assessment, and is very close to institutional (at university level, mainly through staff development) and national reforms (both one quarter of the total). The Bologna promotion is less popular than in the Cards region, and again governance modernisation attracts less than one tenth of all projects. Finally, in the Meda region, national reforms come first (over one third of the total), followed very closely by teaching, learning and assessment. Institutional reforms and Bologna promotion receive only one half of this interest each, while again governance is at the bottom. The reason might be because governance is mainly a governmental concern in which universities do not have a say.

4) Thematic areas

The survey shows that Structural Measures have had quality assurance as the most frequent theme in all the regions (over one quarter of the total) followed by the credit system (one fifth and most popular issue in the Cards region) and degree structures (below one fifth). Implementation of ECTS is seen as a handy issue to deal within a Tempus project. Unfortunately it seems that there is scarce record of students

participating in these projects, and little consideration of the fact that the student workload approach should be brought closer to the students themselves. Even less weight is put on the subsequent monitoring of the attributed ECTS points.

Discussions on the degree structures are often limited to single-subject areas (there is a tendency to organise projects by professional fields) but are covering the issues of flexibility, comparability, compatibility, employability, learning outcomes and student workload. Less attention was paid to mobility, qualification frameworks, employability, lifelong learning and recognition. Employability and university/ enterprise cooperation is often tackled as a side issue, often addressing one professional field only, and mainly by countries not involved in the Bologna process (Meda and Central Asia), or with little experience in it. It could seem strange as in general governments encourage employers to cooperate more closely with universities.

Quality assurance is the most popular area but there are projects which take into account relatively narrow aspects of quality assurance (limited to questionnaires or software) while others have a much broader scope. Some projects are more informative while others focus on quality assurance standards in one field of study.

In countries that are not formal Bologna members, lifelong learning, recognition and mobility attracted little or no attention at all. In the Bologna countries and Maghreb, mobility is quite attractive. It is rarely addressed on its own, but is connected to the overall promotion of Bologna, and rarely to recognition. Lifelong learning did not attract many projects, but projects focusing on this area brought concrete results such as legislative changes or new study cycles.

5) Projects' concrete outcomes

The most typical concrete project outcomes included publications, conferences, seminars, visits and training courses. Project websites were established as a rule and in most cases are still accessible. Around 400 publications were published within Tempus III Structural Measures.

6) Conclusions

Tempus Structural Measures have a rich and diverse content. They are by definition international cooperation projects and one should not forget the potential that they have to promote cooperation between partner countries and not only with EU partners. The mode of cooperation that involves large groups of EU and partner countries can only bring higher added value. Some Tempus III Structural Measures have built broad arenas where this added value was produced and disseminated, and incorporated into key national developments.