



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

EUROPOS HUMANITARINIO UNIVERSITETO VEIKLOS VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW REPORT OF EUROPEAN HUMANITIES UNIVERSITY

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The review of the European Humanities University (hereafter referred to as EHU or the University) was organised by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) and carried out in 2014 by a Team of international experts (the Team). It was conducted in accordance with the Procedure for the External Review of Higher Education approved by Government Resolution no. 1317 of 22 September 2010 and the Methodology for Conducting an Institutional Review in Higher Education approved by Order no. 1-01-135 of the Director of the SKVC of 25 October 2010 (the Methodology).
2. At the preparatory stage of the review, the Team received EHU's Self-Evaluation Report (SER) with annexes, most of the additional documents requested, and the results of the evaluation of EHU learning resources and associated infrastructure carried out by MOSTA (Research and Higher Education Monitoring and Analysis Centre) (Decision of 14 August 2014). The University did not provide its 2014-2015 Annual Plan (which was expected to be approved during the week of the site visit) as it needed more time for internal discussions. The new plan would have shown to the Team whether and how the very recently revised mission of EHU had shifted the focus of its activities, and how it intended to build on various recent changes in its further development and address new challenges, in the context of the fact that a new strategic plan is to be drafted by the end of the year.
3. The site visit was undertaken after a briefing session and a preparatory meeting at the SKVC. The Team visited the University between 14 and 16 October 2014 where it had meetings with EHU's internal and external stakeholders. Subsequently, the Team met to agree review conclusions and recommendations. The review report was finalised by correspondence and submitted to the SKVC.
4. The SER contained accurate descriptions of many aspects of the University's activity, but it tended to dwell on unnecessary details in some sections, while failing to provide some relevant details or a clear and / or complete overview in other sections (e.g. no information on who EHU's Part-Owners / Founders are and their relationship with the EHU Trust Fund; a list of programmes which required revision to show their current status; unclear information on which elements of the Quality Management System were actually in place, etc.). The report did include some self-critical comments, as well as references to some self-analyses, though it focused more on the conclusions and recommendations of SKVC and EUA external review panels, and of external consultants hired by the University in the recent years. Thus, it was not entirely clear to the Team that the current self-evaluation was fully exploited by the EHU community as an opportunity for self-reflection, and whether and how it contributed to recent changes within the University.
5. In line with the Methodology, the review focused on four areas covered by the evaluation criteria (and related sub-criteria): strategic management, academic studies and lifelong learning, research and / or art activities, and impact on regional and national development. In analysing the evidence collected, the Team also gave due consideration to the recommendations of the previous review (2009).
6. The Team consisted of the following members:
 - Prof. David Timms (Team leader), United Kingdom: higher education consultant, Chair of many European reviews, including those of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and the SKVC;
 - Prof. Andrew Goodspeed (Team member), United States: Provost and Vice-Rector for Research of the South East European University (SEEU), Macedonia; QA expert for the Kosovo Accreditation Agency;
 - Dr Irene Mueller (Team member), Austria: higher education consultant, Chair / member of review panels in Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Slovakia, Spain and Switzerland;

- Dr Aleksandras Abišala (Team member, social partner representative), Lithuania: Director of JSC '*A.Abisla ir partneriai*', a consulting company;
- Matthew Kitching (Team member, student representative), United Kingdom: reviewer for the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), Membership Services Manager at Bucks Students' Union, MA student at Birkbeck College;
- Ewa Kolanowska (Team secretary), Poland: higher education consultant, secretary to ENQA and SKVC review panels (Poland and Lithuania).

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSTITUTION

7. The European Humanities University is a non-state university currently situated in Vilnius. It was established in Minsk, Belarus, in 1992 and relocated to Vilnius in 2004 after its forced closure in Minsk for political reasons (though it has maintained some of its structures and services in Belarus, including advisory and outreach services and the Centre for Language and Pre-University Preparation). Registered in 2006, the University is now part of the Lithuanian higher education system and operates in accordance with Lithuanian legislation. Its current Founders ('Part-Owners') are organisations active in Central and Eastern European countries and instrumental in re-establishing EHU in Lithuania: the Eurasia Foundation, the Open Society Foundation and the Institute for International Education (a Lithuanian public institution).
8. Over 67% of EHU's total income comes from donors; other sources of funding include tuition fees (28%) and income-generating activities (5%) (Annual Report, 2012-2013; SER, Annex 13). Major donors such as the European Commission, the Nordic Council of Ministers, European and US governments and NGOs provide funding via the EHU Trust Fund, established on the initiative of the European Commission and managed by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Trust Fund distributes donor funds which represent a considerable proportion of EHU's total income (54% in 2012/13, 2012-2013 Annual Report; 63% in 2014/15, the figure provided by the representative of the Fund interviewed by the Team), while contributions from the Part-Owners account for approximately 8.5% of the income.
9. Until recently the mission of EHU, as defined in its Strategic Plan 2012-2019, was 'to facilitate and deepen the contribution that its students, graduates, and faculty can make to the quality and potential of their own lives and to their respective civil societies. By so doing, they contribute to Belarus and its integration into the European and global community.' In its new mission statement, included in the Statutes revised in mid-September 2014, the University aims 'to promote research-based university higher education in accordance with present-day levels of knowledge and technology'.
10. EHU currently offers the following programmes in humanities and social sciences:
 - 11 first-cycle / Bachelor's degree programmes, comprising six old programmes which are being or will soon be phased out (Theory and Practice of Contemporary Art; International Law; Media and Communication; Media and Visual Design; Political Science and European Studies; Cultural Heritage and Tourism); and five new ones established between 2012 and 2014: Media and Communication; Visual Design and Media; Cultural Heritage; World Politics and Economy; and Sociology (no enrolments on the last two by the time of the site visit);
 - a long-cycle (integrated) / Master's degree programme in International and EU Law;
 - six second-cycle / Master's degree programmes established between 2012 and 2013: International and European Law; Culture Studies; Public Policy; Business Administration; Existential Psychology; and Historic and Cultural Heritage;
 - a third-cycle / PhD programme in Philosophy established in the academic year 2011/12.

11. The University does not offer any specific stand-alone lifelong learning (continuing or adult education) courses, but those provided as part of Bachelor's degree programmes may be taken by learners on an individual basis. Upon completion, learners receive a certificate which is recognised as bearing credit towards a degree, if they enrol as regular students on EHU programmes.
12. Bachelor's programmes are delivered in campus-based ('high-residence') and distance-learning ('low-residence') modes. Master's programmes are offered in a blended learning format which combines campus-based classes and distance learning.
13. Most courses are taught in the Russian language, 5-10% in Belarussian and about 20% in other languages, mainly English, as well as Lithuanian, French and German.
14. The academic structures of EHU comprise four main units, the Departments of Law, Social and Political Science, Media and History, and the Foreign Language, Business Education and Low Residence and Distance Learning Centres. Research is conducted by the academic departments and nine research units of the Research Division.
15. In the academic year 2013/14¹, the University had 1,455 students, including 1,281 enrolled in Bachelor's degree programmes (62% on low-residence and 38% on high-residence programmes), 166 in Master's degree programmes and 8 in the PhD programme (SER, Annex 14; Interim Report 2013-2014, Table 1.1). Total enrolments had risen from 1,731 in 2008/09 to 1,937 in 2010/11 and gradually fallen since then to the current level. This reflects, in particular, a steady and marked decline (31%) in Bachelor's degree high-residence programmes between 2008/09 (713 students) and 2013/14 (490 students) (though some students moved from high- to low-residence programmes). A downward trend was (much) less visible in the other types of programmes, with enrolments in Bachelor's degree low-residence programmes, first rising (from 824 in 2008/09 to 1,224 in 2010/11) and then falling in recent years (791 in 2013/14), and varying over the years in Master's degree programmes (from 194 in 2008/09 to 139 in 2010/11, 177 in 2012/13 and 166 in 2013/14).
16. EHU students are mainly Belarusians (96% in 2012/13): most of them come from Minsk and a smaller group from other regions of Belarus. Others are Lithuanian and international exchange students from various countries. The majority of EHU graduates (over 60%) live and work in Belarus, and a large proportion of others continue their studies at the University or other institutions abroad. (Annual Report 2012-2013)
17. The total number of staff was 270 (178.3 FTE) in the academic year 2013/14, including 167 academic staff (89 FTE), as compared to 223 (111 FTE) in 2009/10, and 103 administrative and academic support staff (89 FTE) (SER, Annex 12). Among the academic staff, there were 22 Professors, 59 Associate Professors, 60 Lecturers and 26 Assistants, with 50.5% of the staff holding a PhD degree (as compared to 56.8% in 2009/10). Belarusian teachers represented approximately 85% of academic staff; others came from Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Ukraine and the United States (2012-2013 Annual Report).
18. As a result of the previous institutional review (2009), it was recommended that EHU should, in particular, revise its mission and vision in order to meet the needs of Belarus and its society; streamline its governance arrangements and its organisational structures (a reduction in the number of departments), while ensuring greater involvement of students in management; establish closer links with a wider range of external stakeholders; increase the number of full-time teaching staff; increase its research outputs and improve the quality of research; and establish an internal quality assurance system for education and research.

¹ Data for 30 September 2013. The enrolment process for low-residence students is normally completed at the end of October.

FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM

General comment

19. Throughout the review process the Team has been aware that EHU is in a unique position as an institution which was forced to 'emigrate' from Belarus after over a decade of efforts to offer an alternative to Soviet-type education, which now operates as a Lithuanian university, and where most students and staff are Belarusian, with a large proportion of both based in Belarus. All this has posed enormous challenges and created tensions as well as practical problems which could not be avoided when moving not only to a country with a different culture and language, but also to a different culture of higher education. The Team also understands that it takes time for an 'emigrant' institution to settle into a new environment, in particular since the new environment was originally thought to be only temporarily a host country, and has now become the home country as hopes of returning to Belarus are fading, certainly in the short and medium term.

Nonetheless, the Team's role is to judge the University against a specific and explicit set of criteria, established by the SKVC, which are uniformly applicable to all higher education institutions in Lithuania. The criteria are inherently Lithuanian. They also ask primarily for judgement about what is there, rather than what is under development. On both counts EHU is in a difficult position, still being in some fundamental ways a Belarusian university, and also in the process of change following a major strategic review conducted on the initiative of its Governing Board at the beginning of 2013.

In particular, aside from recent changes in the organisational structure of the University, a reform of governance and quite radical changes in human resources management are under way. Linked to this, other new arrangements in various areas of the University's management and activity have recently been or are being put in place, or are being considered and discussed. This is all taking place in parallel with personnel changes at the top management level, with the former Rector, who has led the institution for over 20 years, now taking up a new position of President, an interim Rector only recently appointed, and a permanent Rector expected to be appointed in early 2015. In the meantime, the interim Rector has been entrusted with the task of drafting a new strategic plan for EHU by the end of the year.

The Team has sought to follow the SKVC criteria as strictly as possible. It has, however, factored in the 'unique case' features of EHU where this has bearing on how far the criteria can now be met. It has also taken into consideration the University's potential for further development where the progress made to date is sufficient to indicate how effective new arrangements may be.

III. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

STRATEGIC PLANNING

20. The mission of EHU has very recently been revised (see par. 9). Focusing exclusively on the needs of Belarusian society, the previous mission was specifically tailored for a 'Belarusian university in exile' that expected to return to its home country in the not-too-distant future. It also defined the University's distinctive identity within the Lithuanian higher education landscape. The new mission identifies EHU 'only' as an institution aiming to provide state-of-the-art education; promoting 'the relationship of the Belarusian nation with the global community' features in the new Statutes alongside several general aims of the University. As the Team learned during the site visit, this reflects the awareness across the EHU community that the University's foreseeable future is in Lithuania, and shows its determination to settle in there.

21. At the same time, it seems that the mission is understood by senior managers and academic staff in different, possibly even conflicting ways. The Team found that among those it met there (still) were contesting views of EHU's *real* mission and identity. The Team was told that EHU is 'a Belarusian university in exile', and also that it is now 'a Lithuanian university, not only in legal terms'. It is also 'a European university bringing the best of Belarus to Europe and Europe to Belarus'. In addition, the purpose of the University's current efforts is to make it 'a normal university', one that 'does the best for its students'. These contesting views may be seen as three overlapping circles in a Venn diagram. The area where they overlap may be seen as the place where, in line with the new mission in the revised Statutes, 'a normal university' 'that is doing the best for its students' (in the words of staff members) may be located. However, the contesting views have the potential to pull the University in different directions, depending on the relative importance given to EHU's 'Belarusian focus'. The confusion over the real identity and mission within the EHU community seems to indicate that the new mission may be too broad, is not (yet) entirely clear or not (yet) fully acceptable to, and / or not (yet) embedded in, the community. Some of the Team's discussions during the visit suggest that more could have been done to arrive at a general consensus. The Team believes that to enable the University to move forward, it must more precisely bring its mission and identity into focus. It is only at that point that it will be possible to identify the market for EHU, bring strategic planning and mission into alignment, and ensure that the entire EHU community is on board and committed to reforming the University.
22. In the context of the mission, the documents provided to the Team and its discussions during the visit show that EHU defines its stakeholders as including only all members of the university community (students, staff and governance bodies) and donors. Employers and other social and business partners, a key group with a genuine interest in the activities of any university, do not feature among external stakeholders. The Team understands that during its first decade in Lithuania EHU was, unavoidably, more inward than outward looking as an institution struggling to survive and identifying itself (only) as a Belarusian university in exile, isolated from its environment. The focus on donors is also understandable in view of the University's reliance on their funding. However, as EHU now seems to seek to become 'a normal Lithuanian university', it needs to identify its external stakeholders, including social and business partners, who will help it settle in its new environment, as well as those who may be instrumental in preserving links with its original environment. This will not necessarily be easy until the real mission of the University is agreed across its community.
23. **Recommendations:** The Team recommends that EHU revisit its mission and identity, and then articulate a clear statement of mission that recognises its present position and views of all of its constituencies and / or a more detailed statement on how the mission is understood across the EHU community, which will be included in the new strategic plan to be drafted by the end of 2014. In defining its mission, the University should also identify clearly its external stakeholders beyond the circle of donors, in particular giving due consideration to Lithuanian and, insofar as possible, Belarusian social and business partners. (See also related recommendations in paras 61, 91, 111 & 121).
24. As mentioned in the SER and confirmed during the visit, the current 2012-2019 Strategic Plan is no longer considered valid as the institution urgently needs to become more strategically focused, push forward the governance and management reforms which have been initiated, and pursue new avenues to generate income. A new / revised plan is to be drafted by the interim Rector by the end of this year, and the Team agrees that EHU does need a new plan to address various tough challenges. No discussions about the plan had been held within the EHU community by the time of the site visit, but the management of the University shared some ideas for the new plan with the Team. In this context, the Team notes that the University is caught between contradictory imperatives. In particular, on the one hand, the University needs to diversify its offering as well as target students outside of Belarus to be able to diversify the sources of income; on the other hand, if it loses the Belarusian focus it may invalidate the reason why many of its donors provide funds. Similarly, it needs to consolidate staff in Lithuania to create the necessary academic critical mass to sustain a Western-style

institution, but there are large added costs in creating such a community. The management of EHU has accepted that it must adopt one alternative, and that this will mean unpalatable choices. Some relevant decisions have already been taken (e.g. up to 25% of non-Belarusian students to be enrolled on Bachelor's and Master's programmes). In broad terms, the direction now to be taken seems to be understood by most academic and administrative staff, though the scenarios ultimately chosen should still somehow accommodate the contesting views on EHU's real mission discussed above. And, as the Team learned from the representative of the EHU Trust Fund, the University's strategic choices do not have the *unconditional* support of key funders, in particular where they carry major financial implications.

25. As the new strategic plan is yet to take shape, the current Strategic Plan and related documents are the only documents which the Team can use to comment on EHU's approach to strategic planning according to the SKVC evaluation criteria. The Team hopes that the comments below will also be helpful in the development of the new plan.
26. The current Strategic Plan was developed through a series of self-reflective workshops, bringing together the EHU community, and finalised by the top management. This was a largely informal process, with no SWOT analysis conducted and strategic goals emerging from discussion, a huge list of tasks to be prioritised and conclusions not always formalised on paper. The Statutes, revised in mid-September 2014, clearly define the roles of the University's governing bodies (the Rector, President, Senate, University Council and Governing Board) in the development, review and approval of strategic plans. Aside from this, as the Team learned during the visit, EHU does not have any formal procedure describing a process for developing and reviewing strategic plans and identifying all stakeholders to be involved, and the life-cycle of strategic plan development is not determined. It was also quite clear to the Team from the SER and confirmed during the visit that in the past the University had a reactive approach to reviewing its strategies, adjusting them in response to recommendations from external reviews and suggestions from the Governing Board. This could be, at least partly, explained by the imperative to survive in exile which took precedence over the need to provide strong leadership in institutional development. The approach seems to be changing now as the EHU management is determined to make the University more strategically focused.
27. **Recommendations:** The Team recommends that EHU devise a formalised process for compiling and reviewing strategic plans and set fixed periods for both the development and review of plans. Both processes should be a collective effort where the plan to be approved by the Governing Board is drawn up by the Rector based on consultations with all groups of internal and external stakeholders, including donors as well as social and business partners. (See also a related recommendation in par.72).
28. The existing Strategic Plan does not provide any background information to set EHU's strategic goals in national and European contexts. Nonetheless, it is broadly consistent with both the old and new missions, and the priorities of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA). Given the University's Belarusian focus, the Plan could not be fully aligned with the Lithuanian higher education and research policies, though its very strong focus on the three-cycle structure and internationalisation of education and research brings it in line with EHEA and ERA priorities in these areas, as well as with the Lithuanian policies.
29. The Plan covers the key areas of the University's activity, and includes three strategic goals, more detailed objectives for each goal together with their short descriptions and outcome indicators. This is definitely an improvement on the previous plan, which the 2009 review found to be too general and lacking quantitative indicators. However, the Plan does not contain any analysis of EHU's internal and external environment which would justify the goals and objectives set. Such an analysis would also show whether the University has chosen viable options to respond to its challenges. Some objectives are not very clearly defined or described (see, for example, par. 98). It would also be difficult to judge how realistic the Plan is as there are no activities leading to the achievement of the goals and objectives (aside from

few in 'objective descriptions'), and all goals and objectives are to be achieved by 2019, with no milestones and related timeframes. (This has not helped EHU monitor and measure progress in the implementation of the Plan.) Finally, as there is no reference to resources required to implement the Plan, it is by no means evident that the Plan was financially realistic, especially in view of EHU's financial fragility and reliance on donors. The existing Plan could not, therefore, be considered fit for purpose.

30. In the context of resourcing, EHU explained that the representative of the Trust Fund, which represents major donors, was present for all financial and budgetary discussions with the Governing Board, and participated in all Board meetings; therefore, he is present for review and approval of proposed annual budgets. However, the Team heard from a representative of the Trust Fund that the University did not always consult the Fund before taking decisions which have significant financial implications. The decision given as an example (related to the University's human resources policy) had a major impact on the overall funding from the Fund available for EHU's operations. (For more detailed comments and related recommendations, see paras 27, 71 & 72).
31. The SER and discussions during the visit suggest that EHU is aware of some of the flaws highlighted above, as it is intended that the new plan will be based on a serious SWOT analysis and findings of other analyses, and contain clear priorities and realistic timeframes, as well as procedures for reviewing implementation.
32. **Recommendation:** The Team recommends that EHU's new strategic plan be a comprehensive document which includes an analysis of its external and internal environment, strategic objectives, expected outcomes and related indicators, activities leading to the achievement of the objectives, milestones and related timeframes, and an estimation of resources necessary to implement the plan. (See also a more detailed recommendation on indicators in par. 38.)
33. As stated in the SER, Annual Plans are developed in compliance with 31 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and the Strategic Plan. The 2013-2014 Action Plan provided to the Team is structured according to the KPIs which broadly correspond to the Plan, but were not developed specifically for it, are also meant to serve quality assurance purposes, and in some cases do not appear to the Team to be strategically relevant (see par. 36). The KPIs in the Annual Action Plan are not explicitly connected to the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan and the Strategic Plan itself has major flaws (see par. 29). Thus, it is not easy to link the Strategic Plan with the Annual Action Plan and see how the former is operationalised through the latter, or whether the Annual Action Plan has a strategic focus.
34. **Recommendation:** The Team recommends that EHU devise its Annual Plans explicitly in relation to the Strategic Plan, to ensure that activities undertaken lead to the achievement of strategic goals and objectives.
35. The documents provided to the Team included two sets of indicators: the Outcome Indicators (in the Strategic Plan) and the Key Performance Indicators (in a separate table). The Team was informed during the visit that the Outcomes Indicators had been replaced by the Key Performance Indicators (see par. 33). Although, as mentioned above, most of the KPIs correspond broadly to the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan, it is not clear which indicators are used to gauge progress towards the achievement of which goal and objective. Regardless of this, the usefulness of the indicators in practical terms is yet to be established. They were used for the first time to collect data for the academic year 2012/2013. However, no target values were set for the KPIs in the first two years; thus, as confirmed during the visit, progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan was not really measured. Work in this area is underway and target values are now set for the academic year 2014/15; this is definitely a step in the right direction. Setting targets only for the current academic year is reasonable as a new plan is to be developed soon. However, the new plan should set target values for indicators that the University will seek to achieve by the end of the whole period covered by the plan in order to enable measuring progress towards strategic objectives.

36. The Key Performance Indicators are quite numerous. On the one hand, this is understandable as EHU is aware that it needs to improve its performance in various areas. On the other hand, the KPIs appear to lack strategic focus – it is not clear which of them are genuinely ‘Key’. The Team is not convinced that all of them do indeed help to measure performance in what is important (e.g. ‘alumni donations’ which, though symbolically important, represent a negligible percentage of EHU’s income and would, therefore, make little impact in relation to financial fragility).
37. The 2013-2014 Action Plan seems to be an attempt to measure progress towards ‘results’ linked to each KPI (rather than to strategic goals and objectives) and shows the extent to which a given result has been achieved. However, as the Team was informed during the visit, ‘% Completeness’ estimates in the Plan are largely the subjective assessment of the responsible person.
38. **Recommendation:** The Team recommends that, in order to measure progress against strategic objectives, EHU include in its new strategic plan a coherent set of quantitative and qualitative indicators for strategic objectives and set target values for each indicator that the University will seek to achieve by the end of the strategic planning period. In doing so, it is also advised to concentrate on a smaller number of indicators directly related to its strategic imperatives.
39. As stated in the SER and confirmed during the visit, the Annual Report is the main ‘tool’ for monitoring the implementation of the Strategic Plan; additionally, mid-year Interim Reports (shorter documents with key facts and figures, including selected KPIs) are prepared. Data is collected from EHU units and compiled by the Strategic Planning and Quality Control Unit. The 2012-2013 Annual Report provided to the Team does indeed give a comprehensive overview of activities, achievements and the main problems, as well as various statistical data, including current KPI values. However, it does not analyse progress made towards the achievement of the strategic objectives at institutional and departmental / unit levels. This would have been difficult before KPIs were given target values. The flaws in the Strategic Plan (par.29), combined with the focus on the KPIs rather than on the strategic objectives in Annual Action Plans (par.33), do not make monitoring any easier. Further, a clear and formalised procedure for follow-up in the case of deviations from annual or strategic plans is yet to be put in place, though there is an established practice where the Rector is informed about any problems arising and expected to take action. EHU is aware that its monitoring procedures need to be improved.
40. **Recommendation:** The Team recommends that EHU revise its procedures for monitoring the implementation of the strategic plan (including a mechanism for taking action in the case of deviations from the strategic and annual plans) and the current format of Annual and Interim Reports so that they clearly focus on progress towards the achievement of strategic objectives.
41. The Strategic Plan, Interim and Annual Reports are published on the University’s website (in four languages, which is commendable), and thus available to the EHU community and the general public. They are also provided to the Rectorate, EHU Governing Board, General Assembly of the Part-Owners (GAPO) and donors. Representatives of the Governing Board and GAPO that the panel met are satisfied with the information received, and any additional information requested is swiftly provided by EHU. The Team feels that the two governing bodies could have asked for more strategically relevant information, and this might have helped the University become more strategically focused in recent years. The Team met the administrator of the EHU Trust Fund, who stated that while he received all the necessary information, he was not party to the financial rationale of the University’s current planning. On the other hand, EHU stated that its current financial situation and immediate priorities had been fully and consistently discussed with the Fund administrator, and the steps proposed had been endorsed when presented. Considering that the University’s current financial plans (may) have significant implications for its future, the Team believes that it would be advisable to adopt a consultation arrangement which is fully satisfactory to both parties. (For more detailed and / or related comments and recommendation, see paras 30, 71 & 72.)

42. Asked how they were informed about progress towards EHU's strategic objectives, teaching staff mentioned a monthly newsletter with an overview which included greatest achievements of staff, discussions at Senate meetings (Senate members only), internal documents and occasional newsletters from the Rectorate. They are also sometimes informed about institutional development through Heads of Departments. Staff appeared satisfied with the information they received. The Team feels that institutional development or progress towards strategic objectives is not yet an area of particular interest to individual staff members. This would be perfectly understandable as until recently the overwhelming majority of staff were on short-term and / or part-time contracts; this attitude is likely to change as a core of academic staff have recently been employed on a full-time basis and for a longer period as part of the staffing reform. Another reason could be that staff are yet to appreciate the importance of institutional development of a 'normal Lithuanian university' operating in a competitive environment. The Team endorses EHU's current strategic objective to build a tight-knit community of committed permanent staff. It would assist this strategy to keep all staff updated (through regularly distributed materials and regular face-to-face or online meetings at departmental / unit level) on progress in the implementation of the University's strategy. This can be done as part of its current efforts to establish normal 'communication lines' and is likely to be facilitated by the recently established University Council which includes Heads of Departments.

43. **Recommendation**: The Team recommends that EHU:

- put in place mechanisms for keeping all staff regularly updated about progress in the implementation of the strategic plan, as part of its current efforts to establish effective internal communication mechanisms; and
- publicise its success as a way of building a close-knit academic community and encouraging staff to get involved in activities leading to the achievement of strategic objectives.

(For a related recommendation on training in university management, see par. 66)

EFFECTIVENESS OF MANAGEMENT

44. The 2009 review recommended that EHU establish an integrated internal quality assurance system for education and research. Since then a Quality Control Specialist has been appointed; quality assurance documents (in particular, the Regulations for Quality Management System of the European Humanities University and the Quality Manual) have been approved and updated; and, as stated in the SER, efforts have focused on the establishment of the quality assurance system and on building a quality culture. Improved quality of education and research is one of the three strategic goals in the current Strategic Plan and includes the development and implementation of a Quality Management System (QMS) as an operational objective. The SER acknowledged that the system had not been fully implemented yet and this was confirmed by EHU during the visit.
45. The Team was provided with the two key QA documents mentioned above. As stated in the Quality Manual, the QMS aims to integrate the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG), TQM principles and ISO standards. The Regulations, structured according to the ESG, give an overview of procedures and processes and explicitly cover all of the ESG. The Quality Manual, though structured in a different way (resources, processes, etc.), is, overall, consistent with the ESG, though some guidelines could be provided to users on how the procedures and processes described in the Manual map onto the ESG as the latter are now recognised as 'a common reference framework' in the EHEA. The Manual clearly defines the main procedures and processes, but it does not describe in adequate detail how procedures should be carried out; hence, as the Team found during the visit, different approaches are taken by the individual departments.

46. When fully implemented, the QMS is likely to enable EHU to achieve the aims set in its quality assurance policy, and to support strategic management of the institution. As it stands, it is not yet a system, but rather a number of separate elements which need to be supplemented by others and linked to make a coherent whole. The Team is convinced of EHU's good intentions but feels that its concentration to date on the development of a rather nebulous 'quality culture' has delayed the establishment of a coherent set of procedures.
47. So far the only procedure fully in place is for student feedback (a survey each semester). Though student feedback is an important element of any quality assurance system, the Team considered the University over-reliant on student feedback as a measure of quality. At the same time, as the Team was informed during the visit, students do not receive 'global feedback on how they are doing'. Low-residence students (over half of all EHU students) told the panel that they did not get information about survey findings; few students attended the open meeting organised to discuss the findings. In general, EHU needs to do more to encourage students to get involved in quality assurance, and face-to-face meetings should be combined with other ways of informing students, especially those on distance-learning programmes. Online meetings and student newsletters could also be a way of building a close-knit community, in line with one of the current strategic objectives. On the other hand, examples of changes in programmes given by students show that EHU does respond to their feedback.
48. EHU has some way to go, in particular, in relation to the approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes. A few elements are in place; in particular, the process for approving new programmes is clearly defined in the Statutes; programme committees have been established for programme development and review; and a new certification procedure with standardised requirements for distance learning courses is in place. However, there is no clear institutional procedure for the development of new programmes, which would also define minimum comparable evidence that needs to be collected for EHU to take a decision to develop each new programme. The SER refers to statistical data on the Belarusian labour market as a factor taken into account. As the Team learned during the visit, new programmes are developed mainly on the basis of teachers' 'local knowledge' – their knowledge of what the young generation in Belarus needs now and will need in the coming years. Some EHU departments consult social and business partners insofar as possible, but feedback is not collected in a structured way. The fact that recent years have seen quite significant changes in EHU's offering (programmes closed or being phased out now, new ones established) may suggest that the University is responsive to needs. It may also suggest that the market for programmes in Belarus would need to be more systematically researched to be sure that there is indeed sufficient demand for a given programme. The Team is aware that, for obvious reasons, EHU cannot 'properly' assess potential demand for a new programme in Belarus, but it considers that the current arrangements are far too informal and varied across the departments to guide the University's strategic decisions about its portfolio of programmes. A clear procedure for assessing potential demand and developing programmes is even more necessary now, when EHU is expanding its programmes to enrol more non-Belarusian students.
49. As explained by teaching staff during the visit, ongoing programmes are reviewed ('self-analyses') only as part of SKVC external programme review; a procedure for monitoring or more frequent reviews as part of the internal QMS is not yet in place. Like in the development of new programmes, approaches to 'self-analyses' of existing programmes vary, at least to some extent, between the individual departments. Although they seek to involve social and business partners in 'self-analyses', it is not always possible to do so extensively, on a regular basis and / or for all programmes; this is because EHU is 'in exile' vis-à-vis Belarusian partners, and there is a language problem in communication with Lithuanian partners (partly solved by using English and Russian). The Team also learned from students that below the Senate level there was no mechanism for consultations with them on the structure of courses.
50. Procedures for quality assurance of research are not yet in place. The recently introduced Research Planning and Reporting System is a step in the right direction, but the system could

not yet serve as a quality assurance instrument (for more details, see par. 103). Research staff confirmed during the visit that the University was lacking ‘institutional quality control’ in the area of research, and that the quality of research outputs was ‘a big problem’. The willingness to make improvement was certainly there, and the Team felt that the Senate Research Committee and the Research Division might benefit from greater involvement of staff in discussions on quality assurance arrangements for research.

51. An appraisal system as an element of quality assurance of teaching and research staff is not yet in place (see par. 63 and a related recommendation in par. 66).
52. Even though the QMS is yet to be fully implemented, EHU collects some data (e.g. student progress, achievements, dropout; research productivity) relevant to quality assurance. However, the Team found no evidence that the available data is analysed with a view to improving the performance of the institution as a whole and, comparatively, of its individual units or programmes; this also reflects a more general weakness in data management. Aside from Annual and Interim Reports, only those covering selected elements (e.g. reports on student evaluation surveys, and very brief and general reports on research) are produced. Annual or Interim Reports do not really discuss quality at institutional and / or departmental / unit level, though they provide some quality-related statistical data. This weakness is likely to be addressed soon as the revised Statutes contain clear provisions on the roles of the governing bodies as regards reports on the quality of education and research.
53. In this context, the Team also notes that an IT-based student management system is not yet fully in place to process and analyse the available data. EHU has considered various options, some too costly and others not good enough. This matter is to be considered further in the next few months.
54. Implementing fully the QMS is a huge task and, at the moment, EHU has only one Quality Control Specialist to cope with the task. The Team considers that this is inadequate, even if the QC Specialist is supported by colleagues in the Strategic Planning and Quality Control Unit. The Team also feels that until now the EHU management did not provide sufficiently strong leadership in quality assurance, perhaps at least partly because this was ‘no man’s land’, with none of the governing bodies explicitly taking responsibility for quality in the old Statutes. This weakness is also likely to be addressed soon as the revised Statutes assign specific roles to the main governing bodies in this respect.
55. **Recommendations:** The Team recommends that EHU:
 - provide more detailed descriptions of procedures for internal approval, monitoring and review of programmes in the Quality Manual, including a mechanism for assessing demand for new programmes and a mechanism for collecting structured feedback from social and business partners / employers on existing and prospective programmes;
 - define more clearly and in greater detail procedures for quality assurance of research;
 - expedite progress in the implementation of its Quality Management System;
 - establish a fully-fledged student management system;
 - ensure that its governing bodies provide strong leadership in quality assurance and strengthen management oversight of the Quality Management System in line with the revised Statutes;
 - devise ways of encouraging greater involvement of students in quality assurance, and of informing students, in particular those on low-residence programmes, on findings from student evaluation surveys and on how their feedback is used for quality improvement;
 - consider establishing a team for quality assurance.
56. In recent years, EHU changed its previous structure, where a layer of Schools of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies ‘separated’ the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs and departments providing programmes; now the latter are directly supervised by the former. The Team agrees with EHU that the previous structure was too complex for an institution of its size, and that this was a good first step towards improving communication and streamlining

decision-making with regard to programmes. The Team is less convinced that EHU needs nine research units (which exist now as a result of recent changes), considering that it is yet to develop its research activity, and that it seeks to follow a collaborative research model which is expected to maximise its research potential and ensure more efficient use of resources.

57. More recently, the University has been in the process of quite fundamental reform to make it more strategically focused, decentralise management and ensure greater involvement of departments, make decision-making more efficient and improve communication. Overall, the Statutes revised in mid-September 2014 define quite clearly the powers and responsibilities of EHU's governing bodies (the General Assembly of Part-Owners / GAPO/, Governing Board, Rector, Senate, the President as a new body, and the University Council, formerly the Executive Council whose remit was not specified in the old Statutes). It is not evident from the Statutes how the Senate is involved in programme development, review and approval, but the Senate members interviewed seem to have a clear idea of what they are expected to do. GAPO could normally be expected to be more directly involved in governance, but the Team understands that it has a 'specific status' as a body established to comply with the requirements of Lithuanian law. The Governing Board has a strong position in governance, and the Team feels that it has had to take a more managerial role than was desirable (e.g. in initiating a strategic review in 2013). To make the University less hierarchical, some of the Rector's powers have been recently delegated to the Executive / University Council (somewhat confusingly referred to in the Statutes as an advisory body as it has some decision-making powers). The establishment of the Council, which brings together the Rector, Vice-Rectors, Heads of Academic Departments and the Head of the Finance Department, all as voting members, is indeed a big step towards decentralisation, and is likely to integrate the institution, streamline decision-making and ensure that management at departmental level is more strategically focused. In this context, EHU is **advised** to specify more clearly the powers and responsibilities of (Heads of) Departments. The membership of the Senate has recently been doubled, with all faculty members on contracts of at least 75% of full-time workload becoming automatically voting members and a larger number of students – another crucial step towards broadening participation in governance. Hopefully, this will also invigorate Senate committees responsible for programmes, research or ethics which, the Team felt, were not yet as active as they could be.
58. It is evident to the Team from the SER and discussions during the visit that the changes recently introduced were necessary to put EHU on the right track, and that much progress had been made. It is also clear that 'normal working relations' and 'communication lines' are being established, and these indeed need to be in place if EHU is to build a viable academic community. However, it is too soon to assess the impact of the changes on strategic planning and institutional management.
59. The 2009 external review recommended that EHU ensure greater involvement of students in university management. As stated in the SER, members of the Student Representation or Students' Union, a self-governance body, are involved in various working groups and committees (e.g. the SER Group, the Committee on Distribution of Financial Aid). Moreover, five students are now members of the newly elected university Senate, and two students are present at Governing Board meetings and participate in discussions. The students that the Team met felt that, through the Students' Union, they had a say in academic matters (even though there was no formal mechanism for consulting them on course structure except through the Senate) but did not have much power in university management or influence on 'the course EHU is taking'. It was also said that besides being provided with information on programmes, low-residence students were not involved in university management or the University's life in any way and, thus, 'it is hard to build a community'. As they now have a larger representation in the Senate, students are **strongly encouraged** to get more extensively involved in governance at the institutional level. Heads of Departments are **strongly encouraged** to ensure greater involvement of students in management at their level. The EHU management and Student Union are equally **strongly encouraged** to devise ways of

integrating low-residence students in the University's activities when they come to Vilnius and through 'virtual participation'.

60. The Governing Board, composed of representatives of international educational institutions and experts, brings an external perspective into decision-making. As did the 2009 review team, this Team believes that the Board should also include social and business partners, in particular Lithuanian ones, as they could be instrumental in helping EHU, as 'a normal university', establish or extend links with its local environment. One new member is to join the Governing Board soon. The representative of the Board that the Team met agreed that Lithuanian links would also help involve students in local life. The representative of GAPO interviewed was confident that the present Board members had all the necessary expertise, as well as business connections, but was not, in principle, against expanding the Board.
61. **Recommendation:** The Team recommends that the membership of the Governing Board be extended to include social and business partners, in particular Lithuanian ones, to help EHU establish links with its local environment. (See also a related recommendation in par. 23).
62. Human resources management features strongly in the current Strategic Plan, in particular under the objective of developing 'sustainable human resource capacity' (creating a core of full-time staff; developing and implementing a comprehensive human resources policy with transparent remuneration rules and a financial incentive scheme; putting in place staff training and motivation mechanisms). EHU has recently 'invested' much effort (and money) in staffing reform. Until recently, most of academic staff were on short-term and part-time contracts, commuting from Belarus to Vilnius; this created enormous problems for staff themselves, and they could hardly be expected to engage fully in their teaching and research activities and, even less so, in any other activities supporting institutional development in one way or another. It is, thus, a big leap on the way from 'the temporary' to 'the normal' that a core of 57 staff have recently been employed on a full-time basis (though this involves additional substantial staff costs that would now need to be balanced by higher income). As emphasised by the Human Resources Unit, recruiting the core staff through an open competition procedure was also a dramatic 'cultural' change for EHU. Further, the remuneration system has recently been finalised and job descriptions have been revised to define responsibilities more clearly. Work is in progress on a staff satisfaction survey to be conducted as from the academic year 2014/15, in addition to 'a general satisfaction barometer'. The staff interviewed felt that they were sufficiently involved in decision-making, though it was not entirely clear to the Team whether there was any mechanism or established practice for staff who are not members of the Senate to present their views or initiatives that could be considered by the management at departmental or institutional level.
63. Much would still need to be done in human resources management to achieve the objectives of the current Strategic Plan. In particular, EHU does not yet have a performance appraisal system for academic and administrative staff. Departments are expected to assess performance on an annual basis and report to the Human Resources Unit but, as explained during the visit, this is not always the case and depends on arrangements at departmental level. There is no timeframe yet for the development of an appraisal system for academic staff. The new Research Planning and Reporting System (RPRS) for academic staff (with minimum research output defined as a target level and 'grades' given to staff for productivity) is a step in the right direction and will need to be integrated with the appraisal system for academic staff in the future. However, the Team considers that to be effective, the RPRS would need to set qualitative targets in addition to quantitative ones, clearly define possible consequences of underperformance and be combined with a scheme of incentives for performance exceeding targets (see also comments in par. 103 and a related recommendation in par. 105). An appraisal system for administrative staff is being developed, and the first appraisal is expected to take place in a few months.
64. EHU also needs to develop urgently a scheme of incentives, in particular for research staff, and to encourage all staff to engage in internationalisation (a current strategic objective). As mentioned above, it would be unrealistic to expect that the above-mentioned RPRS can gain

full acceptance and function effectively if it is not combined with an incentive / reward system for those who exceed targets (and with clearly defined consequences for underperformance). The research staff interviewed expressed serious concern about the lack of incentives or even 'everyday recognition'. As the Human Resources Unit admitted, introducing an incentive scheme would be a tough task as, given the University's dependence on donor funding and limited resources available, it does not have much to offer. This is indeed a constraint, but the Team believes that, besides offering much more in terms of non-financial recognition, EHU could do much more to help staff find research as well as consultancy opportunities which would bring additional income to both staff themselves and the institution.

65. As the Team found during the visit, EHU does not yet have in place an institutional training policy and an institutional mechanism for identifying staff training needs (e.g. through a regular survey or structured interviews). Individual departments / units have their own ways of establishing what training their staff need. A fixed percentage of the budget is allocated for staff training and distributed by the Human Resources Unit and the Research Division on a case-by-case basis, and it is assumed that departments / units use funds in line with their development needs. The staff interviewed were satisfied with training opportunities offered. Judging from the examples given in the SER and during the visit, training activities are broadly in line with the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan. However, the Team considers that EHU should adopt a more strategic approach and put in place a more formalised and institutional mechanism to ensure that staff skills and training opportunities do indeed match the needs of institutional development. In this context, since decentralisation and wider participation in governance are very recent developments, the Team believes that staff, not only members of various governing and other bodies (University Council, Senate and its committees), and the Students' Union would benefit considerably from training in university governance and management.
66. **Recommendations:** The Team recommends that EHU:
 - make progress in putting in place performance appraisal procedures for both academic and administrative staff;
 - put in place an incentive scheme for staff, in so far as possible within its limited financial resources, and devise ways of providing non-financial incentives for staff;
 - adopt an institutional staff training policy, including mechanisms for training needs analysis, to ensure that staff skills and training opportunities offered are matched with institutional development needs;
 - consider providing training in university management to staff, not only those who are members of the governing bodies, and the Students' Union.
67. With regard to change management, as mentioned earlier, EHU has been reactive rather than proactive as until recently changes were made mainly in response to external reviews rather than institutional self-reflection and self-analysis (and self-analyses started quite late). It seems that EHU could not really rely in this respect on strategic leadership of its senior management; the recent governance reform is likely to help address this problem. Mechanisms for institutional self-analysis are yet to be developed, put in place and supported by an effective data management system. Due to various weaknesses discussed above (the KPIs not enabling progress measurement until now; the QMS not yet fully implemented; a staff appraisal system yet to be put in place; staff satisfaction surveys yet to be conducted, etc.), EHU does not yet collect sufficient data that would encourage self-analysis and show where change is necessary or desirable. Available data is not yet analysed with regard to progress towards the achievement of the strategic objectives and, thus, does not feed into change management. Comments from some of the staff interviewed in the context of EHU's recently revised mission suggest that mechanisms for building consensus over proposed changes need to be improved as well. However, although there is no formal mechanism for risk analysis, it is clear to the Team that EHU has identified correctly the risks it faces (in particular those related to its reliance on donor funding and competition from institutions in

the region), and it is considering ways and taking action to mitigate them (see examples in par. 69). Overall, while there is a lot to be done, all recent changes, in particular the governance reform and the fact that they are gaining acceptance and support within the EHU community, show that there is considerable potential for, and strong commitment to, change, and that the University is on the right track.

68. EHU's learning resources fall short of the MOSTA requirements concerning the floor area of premises per student, the upgrading of equipment, and the number of study places and of computer work stations in the library. The Team had a tour of learning facilities during the visit. EHU rents premises from, and shares its library with, the Mykolas Romeris University. Aside from a big room for official ceremonies, meetings and exams, it has rooms for classes where overhead projectors are used, three computer laboratories, a multimedia facility (the EHU Media Hub established under an EU project) for Media programme students, and a Legal Clinic for practical training of Law students. The representative of the Governing Board admitted during the visit that students had limited space and few facilities, and explained that a gift received by the Trust Fund could be used, for example, to buy a building for student lodging. She also said that EHU probably needed more space than the new buildings currently being renovated would provide. The students interviewed consider learning facilities to be 'quite decent', though computer equipment, especially in the library, would need to be upgraded; also, all of them would like to have access to high-tech equipment in the EHU Media Hub. Students use both the EHU library shared with the Mykolas Romeris University and the library of the Vilnius University, and seem satisfied with the resources available. Living conditions in some halls of residence could, however, be improved. The Team confirms that, overall, EHU's learning facilities are very limited. However, it is asked primarily to comment on how resources are managed, and EHU's ability to make great deal of educational revenue from limited capital resources for learning suggests effective management in this area. Nonetheless, the University **is encouraged** to seek project funding to upgrade its resources for students following all programmes.
69. EHU is financially fragile as over 67% of its budget comes from donors, including a substantial proportion from the EHU Trust Fund (see par. 8) which has been established for the period 2008-2016. All of the stakeholders that the Team met are aware of the risks involved, even if some are more optimistic than others, and committed to securing funding for the University. Various scenarios to improve EHU's sustainability are being considered. The EHU governing bodies and the Trust Fund seem to be in agreement that the University should both broaden the pool of donors and increase its income from tuition fees by opening up to non-Belarusian students as the income from tuition fees paid by Belarusian students is unlikely to increase; an endowment fund is another option on the table. Some ideas have already been put into action: the EHU management and the Trust Fund are looking for new donors; up to 25% of non-Belarusian students will soon be enrolled on Bachelor's and Master's programmes; a new programme (Transformation Studies) will be established in the coming years to become 'the EHU brand'. Other ideas such as expanding other existing or establishing new programmes / courses (e.g. law and languages) and offering them to tuition-paying students are still being considered. Both lines of action (more donors and higher income from tuition fees) seem very reasonable to the Team. However, as mentioned earlier, there still are contesting views of EHU's real mission, and the balance between 'the Belarusian focus' and 'the normal Lithuanian university' concept is yet to be determined. Thus, the Team has recommended (paras 23 & 27) that the EHU management should have wider consultations with the academic community to ensure that there is general consensus about the course taken. It may also be necessary to have discussions with the main donors on how far EHU, as a political and academic project, could go away from its 'Belarusian focus' and still count on their support. (See also related recommendation in paras 27 & 72.)
70. Due to their flaws (paras 29 & 33), the Strategic Plan and Annual Action Plans do not provide a sound basis for detailed budget setting in line with strategic objectives. Nevertheless, the 2012-2013 Annual Report and discussions during the visit show that a large proportion of funds have been effectively used in line with the strategic objective of improving EHU's

sustainability (broadening the pool of donors and creating a core of full time staff), even if more consideration could have been given to financial implications of some recently taken decisions. Although the budget is limited, the Strategic Plan was not necessarily devised realistically and some prioritisation has been necessary, the Team believes that more resources should have been allocated for activities related to ‘improved quality of education and research’ as one of the three goals in the current Strategic Plan (for comments on the Quality Management System, see paras 44-54).

71. Funding provided via the EHU Trust Fund represents a substantial proportion of the University’s income (see par. 8). The Trust Fund specifies only the type of expenses that its funds may cover, but otherwise the use of funding is unrestricted. EHU explained that while many day-to-day operational financial decisions did not involve Governing Board members or the Fund administrator, all financial issues were brought to the attention of the Board and the Fund administrator was present at its meetings; the administrator also communicates and works closely with EHU’s Vice-Rector for Development and Communication. At the same time, the Team heard from the administrator of the Fund during the visit that the Trust Fund was not always consulted in advance about EHU decisions which had major financial implications, and that some decisions might not necessarily have the unconditional support of the donors where the financial sustainability of the University was at risk. There also seem to be tensions between the University’s strategic decisions and financial imperatives that have not yet been fully resolved (par. 24). The Team considers that, though there is no requirement to do so, it is unwise not to consult the Trust Fund about decisions carrying considerable financial implications as it poses additional risks for the institution which is, in any case, financially fragile. Consultations would not interfere with EHU’s academic freedom and would show that it is becoming ‘a normal university’ accountable to those who provide funding for its activities. Discussions with the EHU management indicate that there is an increasing awareness that the University needs to ‘demonstrate why it deserves support’ from donors.
72. **Recommendation:** The Team recommends that EHU consult the EHU Trust Fund and other major donors prior to taking strategic decisions which have major financial impact.
73. There is space for improvement as regards academic ethics. EHU has a written Code of Conduct, published on its website. However, the Code of Academic Ethics is still at the stage of development, . Thus, issues such as plagiarism have been only informally discussed among staff and with students. The Ethics Committee of the Senate has not been very active but, as the Team was told, this is likely to change in the newly elected Senate.
74. **Recommendation:** The Team recommends that EHU urgently develop and implement the Code of Academic Ethics and ensure that staff and students are fully familiar with, and respect, its provisions. EHU may consider providing training in academic ethics to staff and students.
75. **In summary**, the real identity and mission of EHU would still require some crystallisation based on a consensus across its academic community; this will determine strategic choices to be made by the University and to be reflected in its new strategic plan.

The current Strategic Plan could not be considered really fit for purpose due its own flaws and, in any case, is no longer considered by EHU to be relevant to the new realities; a new one was not yet available to the Team. There are no formal processes and no fixed periods for devising and reviewing strategic plans, and plans have so far been revised in response to external recommendations rather than self-analysis. Procedures for monitoring the implementation of the current Strategic Plan are not yet effective, largely due to the flaws in the set of indicators developed, and thus progress towards strategic objectives has not been measured; this weakness has been addressed on an ad-hoc basis for the current academic year and should be addressed strategically in the next plan. In general, monitoring and self-analysis would need to be supported by an efficient data management system. Internal and external stakeholders are satisfied with the information about the implementation of the current Strategic Plan, though the Annual and Interim reports available to the Team do not analyse

progress towards strategic objectives (and the indicators available did not provide the basis to do so).

The Quality Management System, consistent with the ESG in the key documents, is still far from being fully operational and, thus, cannot yet feed into strategic management. Changes in the academic structures are well justified, but the research structures could still be streamlined to make more efficient use of limited resources. Until recently, process management was hindered mainly by a rather unclear division of powers and responsibilities among the governing bodies, centralised decision-making and a lack of strategic leadership. These weaknesses seem to have been successfully addressed by a recent governance reform, but it is still too recent to see its impact. While until recently EHU responded to rather than initiated change as a result of self-analysis, the governance reform, other changes and action now being taken to mitigate major risks show strong commitment to change.

A number of desirable improvements have recently been made in the management of human resources, but staff appraisal and incentive systems are yet to be designed and / or put in place, and an institutional staff training policy needs to be developed to ensure that training is geared towards institutional development needs. Learning resources are limited, but EHU makes good use of what it has. Despite flaws in the Strategic Plan and Annual Action Plans, funds seem to be used broadly in line with strategic objectives, even if some objectives are prioritised at the expense of others. While EHU is financially fragile, various scenarios are being considered and action is being taken to improve its financial sustainability; consultations with donors about strategic decisions with major financial implications would be advisable in this context. The issue of academic ethics needs to be given more consideration and the Code of Academic Ethics is yet to be finalised and implemented.

Overall, EHU is aware of many weaknesses discussed above, has recently introduced quite radical changes and has shown both the potential and strong determination to reform itself. The changes made are likely to make the University more strategically focused and more effectively managed, but it is too early for the Team to see their impact, more could have been done after the 2009 review and much still needs to be done.

Judgement on the area: Strategic Management is given negative evaluation.

IV. ACADEMIC STUDIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING

76. EHU provides Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes and a PhD programme. The qualifications awarded are fully aligned with both the previous mission, revised in mid-September 2014, and the new one (par. 9), and with the Strategic Plan where further development of the University's three-cycle structure features quite strongly. In line with its strategic objectives, EHU has developed its portfolio of Bachelor's and Master's programmes and established its first third-cycle programme (par. 10). In terms of the areas covered, the choice of programmes was also evidently guided by the previous mission which focused on the needs of Belarusian society; the new mission is very broad or generic and, thus, can accommodate all existing and any new programmes.
77. The relevance of programmes to the needs of the national economy, social and cultural development is one of the evaluation criteria where EHU's double, Belarusian and Lithuanian, face puts it in a difficult position. It is evident that EHU has chosen its programmes so that they are geared towards the needs of Belarusian society; hence, the areas which are underdeveloped in Belarusian higher education (social sciences, humanities, law and media). In this context, the PhD programme in Philosophy which enables 'cross-border' doctoral dissertation defence is also particularly well chosen. Having said that, as mentioned

earlier (par. 48), quite frequent changes in EHU's portfolio of programmes (with some recently closed as there was no demand) may suggest that it is responsive to needs, but also that there is some mismatch between EHU's perception of needs and what prospective students are looking for. Obviously, focusing on specific Belarusian needs, the programmes could not be at the same time equally relevant to the needs in Lithuania. The shift in the mission towards 'a normal university' in Lithuania is a very recent development, and EHU is already opening up its programmes to non-Belarusian students and contemplating various options (e.g. expanding / establishing law and language programmes) to make its offering relevant to Lithuanian needs. In this context, considering the competing views of the University's identity (par. 21), the Team encourages EHU to map out a more detailed strategy for the development of programmes based on a consensus within its academic community. The Team is quite confident that EHU will become more responsive to local needs as the discussions during the visit show that it is determined to gain recognition in Lithuania for what it can offer and, more pragmatically, its sustainability hinges, at least to some extent, on its ability to attract tuition-paying, Lithuanian and other, students.

78. The Team had no way of collecting feedback from Belarusian employers on how relevant EHU's programmes are to their needs as, for obvious reasons, they could not attend meetings. However, according to a survey conducted by EHU in 2013, over 90% of graduates are employed, more than 60% live and work in Belarus, and approximately 50% work in the private sector, including independent media, non-profit organisations and private companies. This clearly shows that EHU graduates' knowledge and skills are highly valued in the labour market. The social and business partners that the Team met (representing Lithuanian and Vilnius-based international organisations) offer practical placements or involve EHU students in various projects. Depending on the profile of the organisation, they value exceptionally strong motivation of students, their knowledge of 'what is going on in the world' or their practical skills. Opinions on their English language skills vary, though the majority feel that English competence is good. Their knowledge of Russian is considered to be very useful, especially for business companies, and a big advantage over Lithuanian students. EHU, social and business partners and the Team agree that the fact that most students have no or very little knowledge of Lithuanian is a big problem. This has been to some extent addressed by EHU via a course in Lithuanian language and culture, though, as explained by a student during the visit, it is offered only on an optional basis and, thus, it tends to be taken by those who wish to continue study or stay in Lithuania only. The graduates that the Team interviewed online had no doubt that what they had learned at EHU helped them find good jobs where their knowledge and skills were much appreciated.
79. There is a degree of variety in the kinds of tuition that EHU offers, in that most of its Bachelor's degree programmes are offered in both low-residence and high-residence modes. As the Team learned during the visit, students also appreciate the variety of courses within their programmes (e.g. international law, Belarusian law and Lithuanian law in the Law programme). Where relevant and possible, programmes combine theory and practice (e.g. the EHU Media Hub, Legal Clinic). Undergraduate students following the Political Science programme may be awarded a 'minor' degree in Economics; a joint interdisciplinary programme in World Politics and Economy is offered in cooperation with the Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas; and another joint programme (Transformation Studies) will be offered together with German and US partners in the near future – this is all commendable as expanding choices available to students. The Team would also like to complement EHU for the wide variety of language courses available (English, French and German, in addition to a large proportion of courses taught in Russian) and its strong emphasis on language training. This is very much appreciated by students, and the Team was impressed by their language skills during the visit.
80. Student-centred learning features quite strongly in EHU's approach to education, in particular in low-residence programmes. Students can follow individual study programmes and pathways; individual support is available; and programmes include a big component of project- and problem-based learning. There are regular online meetings with teachers, and

special training in distance learning is regularly provided to teachers. EHU also intends to appoint local mentors for students in Belarus, which is an excellent idea. By contrast, as mentioned earlier (paras 47 & 59), much more should be done to help low-residence students integrate in the EHU community. Further, as the Team found in its discussion with social and business partners, individual EHU departments are involved in the monitoring of student practical placements to varying extents, and feedback is collected only through informal discussions. The Team found no evidence that there are any institutional arrangements for the monitoring of student placements.

81. **Recommendation**: The Team recommends that EHU put in place a clear procedure for the monitoring of student practical placements, including mechanisms for collecting feedback from host organisations on students' knowledge and skills and from students on the organisation and usefulness of placements.
82. The University is rather underdeveloped in terms of attracting students who do not fit the conventional model, such as adult learners. It does not offer any specific and separate continuing / adult education or non-formal education courses. The SER only briefly refers to some Bachelor's degree courses which may be taken on an individual basis by students and other learners. As the Team found during the visit, selected courses are taken by 80-100 students per year, and a continuing education / in-service training course in human rights was provided as part of an international project. EHU has not done any market research to find out what it could offer to adult learners, in particular in Lithuania, but it has identified some potential areas for development (e.g. courses in international law for Russian and Belarusian participants, language courses). As the Moodle system for low-residence programmes seems to be working well, there is no technical constraint to provide distance learning courses to adult learners. The Team understands that for various reasons discussed in this report EHU has focused so far on degree programmes as its 'Belarusian legacy'. However, it believes that a wider range of adult education courses offered to various target groups in Lithuania would help the University settle in there and gain the recognition which it seeks. Fee-paying courses would also be a way of improving its financial sustainability.
83. Learners taking selected courses at EHU receive a certificate of completion which is recognised as bearing credit towards a degree when they enrol as regular students on EHU programmes. As the Team found during the visit, there is, however, no formal system for the recognition of credit earned elsewhere, whether by academic or experiential means. Recognition of prior learning is still a new concept even in Lithuania, but the lack of a methodology for assessing knowledge, skills and competences acquired elsewhere diminishes the University's ability to meet its strategic intention of widening its student base, and to attract adult learners.
84. **Recommendation**: The Team recommends that EHU consider expanding its course portfolio and making it more attractive, and develop a methodology for the recognition of prior learning, as a step towards diversifying its student base in line with its strategic intentions, and in order to offer wider lifelong opportunities, in particular, to adult learners in Lithuania.
85. EHU has appointed a Careers Service Officer (as the Team learned during the visit, ca 0.5 FTE specifically for career guidance; other responsibilities as well) who helps students find companies for practical placements and prepare CVs. Though very modest, the resources available seem to be adequate for the current tasks of the Careers Service. As explained during the visit, the Careers Service Officer based in Lithuania can provide only limited support to Belarusian students or graduates seeking host organisations for placements or employment in Belarus; only a small proportion of Belarusian students undertake placements in Lithuanian companies as few speak the language and those on low-residence programmes do not have a residence permit. The Careers Service Unit will, however, need to be strengthened when EHU enrolls more non-Belarusian, in particular Lithuanian, students to help them find organisations for placements and employment after graduation.
86. The career monitoring system at EHU is still in the early stages. The first survey among graduates was conducted in 2013. This is quite late, considering that the University was

registered in Lithuania in 2006. On the other hand, it is also quite understandable since, as explained during the visit, EHU established its register of alumni ‘from scratch’; it was not easy to locate them, and, as there is no tradition of alumni networks in Belarus, they were initially reluctant to respond and provide their contact details. Surveys are to be conducted annually. During the visit EHU explained what kind of questions were asked in the survey. The Team felt that the questionnaire could be improved so as to collect more detailed feedback on the content and structure of programmes, including the balance of theoretical and practical training and the relevance of student practical placements, and the relevance of programmes to employers’ needs. In the future, feedback from graduates should be used to improve programmes as part of a procedure for regular internal programme review (see also paras 49 & 55).

87. EHU does a lot to keep in touch with its graduates and make them feel part of its community, though a large proportion of them are based in Belarus. Alumni reunions and other events are regularly organised in both Belarus and Lithuania (and even one in the US). An Annual Distinguished Alumnus Award was established and given for the first time in 2013. An Alumni Scholarship Fund to support current EHU students was created and first grants were awarded in 2013. EHU has also recently created a section for alumni on its website, and groups of alumni meet online in social networks. There is a general mailing list (790 names) to keep graduates posted. An alumni association is to be established soon. This is all very promising. The Team believes that the alumni network is a valuable resource and could now usefully serve non-social functions, in particular provide academic and career guidance, not only on an ad-hoc basis.
88. **Recommendations:** The Team recommends that EHU:
 - improve its questionnaire for graduate surveys to collect more detailed feedback on the relevance of programmes offered to employers’ needs, and use findings in the development, monitoring and review of its programmes; (see also a related recommendation on the Quality Management System in par. 55);
 - use its alumni network to provide academic and career guidance to graduates and prospective students on a regular basis.
89. Examples given in the SER and during the visit show that EHU cooperates quite extensively with academic institutions (a joint programme delivered with the Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas; a joint programme in Transformation Studies now being developed with US and German partners; Lithuanian and international academic partners involved in EHU final thesis defence committees; training for EHU teaching staff provided as part of joint projects). Collaboration with social and business partners, in particular those in Lithuania, is, however, quite limited. For obvious reasons, EHU can hardly be expected to maintain extensive and strong links with Belarusian social and business partners, though it does ‘keep in touch’ with some partners there through student practical placements (e.g. NGOs in the tourism and heritage sector, independent media and SMEs). There is also some collaboration with Lithuanian social and business partners in the context of practical placements but, as EHU acknowledges, it is not yet very extensive as a relatively small number of students are placed in Lithuanian companies due to the language and legal barriers (the latter for low-residence students who do not have a residence permit). The Team believes that now, when EHU intends to expand its programmes and attract non-Belarusian students, more active cooperation with Lithuanian social and business partners would be quite vital to ensure that programmes do indeed respond to the needs of potential employers. It may also help EHU find local adult students interested to follow its courses (e.g. the Master’s programme in Business Administration, ‘MBA’) as part of lifelong learning (see also paras 82-84).
90. There is some evidence that partners are consulted about new and existing programmes. However, as mentioned earlier (see also paras 48-49), these are rather informal discussions and approaches vary among the EHU departments. Although some examples of curricular changes made in response to external feedback were given by EHU, it is difficult to see clearly what impact, in particular, social and business partners have on its programmes. There is no

formal institutional mechanism for collecting structured feedback from social and business partners, and for using the feedback collected in the development and review of programmes. These are weaknesses of the Quality Management System which should be addressed at institutional rather than departmental level (see related recommendations in par. 55). Further, while EHU could usefully engage more in lifelong learning, it does not yet consult social and business partners on what courses it could offer to them.

91. **Recommendations:** The Team recommends that EHU:
 - establish links with a wider range of Lithuanian social and business partners to consult them on new and existing programmes;
 - put in place a formal mechanism for regular collection of structured feedback on new and existing programmes from social and business partners, in particular Lithuanian; (see related recommendations in par. 55);
 - consider consulting Lithuanian social and business partners on what courses EHU could offer to them as part of lifelong learning.
92. EHU's key strategic documents clearly commit it to the alignment of its academic programmes with the principles underlying the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The Team is not, however, convinced that EHU's assurance about the alignment of practice with the EHEA priorities is always fully justified. On the one hand, a lot of effort has been and is being taken to establish PhD programmes as part of the three-cycle structure, curricula are based on learning outcomes and ECTS, and there is strong emphasis on student-centred learning, in particular in low-residence programmes. On the other hand, the University does not yet really offer opportunities for lifelong learning, especially to adult learners (paras 82-84), and closer links with employers, especially in Lithuania, are yet to be established (paras 89-91, 110-111 and 122). Much still needs to be done to meet EHEA standards in quality assurance (ESG) (paras 45-55), and there is definitely space for improvement in the recognition of study periods (par. 95).
93. The University has been involved in the Lifelong Learning / Erasmus Programme, Campus Europae, Eurasia and Fulbright programmes since the academic year 2011/12. The number of international cooperation agreements increased significantly from 18 in 2009 to approximately 180 in 2013 (including some with faculties of the same university) (SER and annexes), though it was not entirely clear to the Team that partnerships had been established in line with strategic institutional (rather than departmental) priorities. The number of outgoing students dropped from 51 in the academic year 2011/12 to 38 in 2012/13 and 27 (1.9% of all EHU students) in 2013/14, which is not, obviously, a welcome trend. However, as the number of incoming international students grew from 6 in the academic year 2011/12 to 23 in 2012/13 and 27 in 2013/14, EHU has at least been able to balance the outflow and inflow of students. Trends in staff mobility are similar, though it is not as 'perfectly balanced' as student mobility: the number of outgoing teachers declining from 16 in 2011/12 to 10 in 2013/14, and that of incoming staff growing from 13 in 2011/12 to 16 in 2013/14. Mobility has encouraged EHU to increase recently the number of courses delivered in English. There is also evidence that the experience of EHU staff gained at institutions in other countries and the expertise shared by incoming staff is being well exploited to improve courses and teaching methods. This can be seen, in particular, in distance learning, the University's 'core business'.
94. On the one hand, there are some external constraints and barriers inherent in the way that EHU operates which limit outward mobility. The level of funding allocated by the National Agency for Erasmus mobility in a given year is based mainly on the volume of mobility in previous years; hence, limited space for growth, and grants recently available to less than half of applicant students. EHU has a large proportion of part-time students and staff who live in Belarus and have other commitments there and, thus, could hardly go abroad for longer periods (though the core of academic staff recently employed on a full-time basis can now make a difference in this respect).
95. On the other hand, EHU does not yet do enough to encourage mobility, and this, again, reflects a lack of strategic approach. As the Team found during the visit, students and staff

agree that the University provides them with all necessary information about mobility opportunities, and there is a Club d'Europe which promotes student mobility (though not all students are fully aware of its activity). The language barrier (which does not seem to be a big problem) has been or is being addressed by language training for both students and staff. However, although there is a relevant Order of the Rector (No. 01-249, 201310-21), the recognition of study periods abroad is still a problem. As stated by the students interviewed, outgoing students have to 'repeat' courses upon return; this issue has been raised by students but has not been addressed yet. Students express interest in having more classes taught by international teachers; a discussion with teachers and the management about EHU's internationalisation policy would be welcome. As explained by teaching staff, it is more difficult for younger staff to negotiate leave for going abroad, and a procedure clarifying how postdocs 'can go abroad without losing a five-year contract' and clear regulations for sabbaticals would still need to be developed. Many in the EHU community seem to be aware that there still is much to be done on the way to internationalisation, especially that 'the internationalisation of programmes, students and faculty' has been one of the three goals in the current Strategic Plan. The Team believes that in this respect, as in some areas discussed in this section, EHU would benefit from stronger strategic focus and leadership provided by its management Team.

96. **Recommendation:** The Team recommends that EHU do more to facilitate and encourage outward student and staff mobility, and in particular adopt internal regulations ensuring full recognition of study periods abroad and clarifying conditions for taking sabbatical leave.
97. **In summary,** all EHU qualifications are aligned to both its previous, very recently revised, and new missions and its strategic documents. Programmes are evidently geared towards the development of Belarusian society and, given the shift in the mission, may only now evolve towards addressing needs in Lithuania. Commitment to the principles of the EHEA is evident in the strategic documents, but EHU still needs to turn it into action in areas such as lifelong learning, quality assurance and recognition.

The University offers much to its undergraduate and postgraduate students in terms of the variety of degree programmes, but little in terms of lifelong learning opportunities, especially for adult learners in Lithuania. It does cooperate with various organisations, but links with a wider range of Lithuanian social and business partners would still need to be developed. Partners could have much stronger impact on the University's programmes and courses if institutional mechanisms were in place for regular collection of their structured feedback and its use in the development and review of programmes. This would require the University to address more general weaknesses of the Quality Management System. The growing numbers of international agreements, incoming students and staff indicate that EHU is on its way to internationalisation. However, it needs to take a more strategic approach to the development of international cooperation, and put in place a number of institutional arrangements facilitating mobility to help reverse the downward trend in outward student and staff mobility.

Overall, while there is definitely space for improvement, the Team's judgement is, on balance, positive as EHU's partial compliance with some of the evaluation criteria for Academic Studies and Lifelong Learning results, to some extent, from its very specific, only recently revised, mission and, to a large extent, from its weaknesses in Strategic Management.

Judgement on the area: Academic Studies and Lifelong Learning is given positive evaluation.

V. RESEARCH AND (OR) ART

98. EHU's research activities are aligned with its current mission (though it refers to research only in very broad terms) and documents specifically related to research. The previous, recently revised, mission did not refer to research, but in its vision defined in the current Strategic Plan the University seeks to become a recognised centre of research. The Plan focuses on the objective of improving the quality of research, with the development of fundamental and applied research, self-financed and recognised research centres, international recognition and efficient research activities listed as 'objective description' (together with related indicators). These seem to be a mix of activities and expected outcomes rather than a description of the objective and, as mentioned earlier (par. 29), the Plan does not include any real implementation measures. Thus, it is not clear how the strategic objective was intended to be achieved and to what extent and how EHU's research activities are aligned with the Plan.
99. Although not envisaged in the current 2012-2019 Strategic Plan, various changes have been introduced in the area of research in recent years, in line with the 2009 review recommendations. Eight research centres within a Research Division were established (currently, nine centres). A Research Planning and Reporting System was introduced to encourage, monitor and evaluate research (for more, see paras 103-105). Contracts for staff were revised so that they now cover both teaching and research (only teaching earlier and, hence, no basis for research). Regulations were adopted to improve student research (research requirements for Master's degree students) and encourage students and staff to take up PhD study (a sabbatical leave system for PhD thesis). Some incentives were also introduced for students and for staff seeking a doctoral degree (student research grants; scholarships for students' academic and research achievements; financial support for faculty PhD defence). In line with a policy paper, some initiatives, including periodic calls for research project concept notes assessed by the Research Division, have been recently undertaken to move from an individual to collaborative research model.
100. This shows that EHU is committed to improving its research activity and is on the right track, but the Team believes that it still needs to take a few major steps not to lose what it has achieved and develop it further. In particular, it does not yet manage strategically its research activities. EHU adopted several documents related to research in recent years, but none of them can be considered a fully-fledged strategy, and they are not explicitly linked with the Strategic Plan. One of them identifies three areas of research, referred to as 'priorities' (Liberal education in the contemporary world; sociocultural transformation in Eastern Europe and European integration; conceptual grounds of European culture and the logic of globalisation). However, they are very broad and, as the Team learned during the visit, 'descriptive' (reflecting the specific profile of the University) rather than strategic. They are defined 'more precisely' at departmental or centre level rather than in line with the strategic objectives at institutional level. They do not appear to affect the distribution of the University's modest funds for the development of research projects. The recently introduced Research Planning and Reporting System (paras 103-105) and periodic calls for research project concept notes are commendable as a step towards institutional focus, but they would need to be underpinned by an institutional research strategy, clearly linked with the new strategic plan (to be devised soon), to ensure a strategic focus.
101. **Recommendation:** The Team recommends that EHU devise a coherent institutional strategy for the development of research, which includes clearly defined priorities and is linked to its new strategic plan, to ensure that its research activity is geared towards its strategic objectives.
102. When developing a research strategy, EHU **may consider** whether it does indeed need nine research centres. As mentioned earlier, the Team believes that this does not help introduce a

collaborative research model and make efficient use of resources in line with strategic objectives.

103. Some of the departments obviously need strong encouragement to be more active in research as their output is below the minimum quantitative targets set by EHU (see par. 108) and, as mentioned earlier, the research staff that the Team met consider that quality is a big issue. The above-mentioned Research Planning and Reporting System (RPRS) is intended to encourage high-quality research and to be the main tool for the monitoring and evaluation of research. It includes quantitative and qualitative parameters applied by the Lithuanian Research Council and the University's own minimum quantitative (research productivity) targets for staff. The Team is not convinced that the RPRS as it stands now is likely to be effective in terms of increasing productivity and / or improving quality. It sets only quantitative targets and, thus, can hardly encourage quality improvement. If qualitative targets are set, the system will need to be integrated with procedures for quality assurance of research which are not yet in place (for comments on the Quality Managements System and related recommendations, see paras 50 & 55). Further, the RPRS does not seem to comprise clearly defined 'sanctions' for failure to meet targets (it was only briefly mentioned during the visit that this may have consequences for employment). Similarly, the Team believes that the system cannot effectively increase productivity or improve quality if no incentives or rewards are offered to those who exceed targets (see also comments and a related recommendation in paras 64 & 66). As mentioned earlier, the lack of financial or even non-financial recognition is a major issue for research staff.
104. The Strategic Plan refers to increasing research efficiency in the context of the strategic objective of improving research activity. The Team believes that EHU could give more consideration to accounting for income and spending on research. This aspect does not really feature in its Annual Reports or research reports produced by the Research Division.
105. **Recommendations:** The Team recommends that EHU consider:
- setting qualitative targets, in addition to quantitative ones, as part of its Research Planning and Reporting Systems to encourage quality improvement in research; (for a related recommendation, see par. 66);
 - including a method of accounting for income and spending on research in its Research Planning and Reporting System, and measures of income and spending on research in its reporting.
106. As the Team found in its discussion with research staff, little is done to share available data on research. Reports based on the RPRS are not available to all research staff, though they would be very interested to know 'how they are all doing'. There is no section on the EHU website for research staff to share information and knowledge or put together ideas for new projects. (Indeed, at the time of the review, the Research section of the website included only information about the tasks of the Research Division and a very short and general Annual Report on research activity.) Thus, staff who are not members of the Senate occasionally talk about their research at department meetings and mainly exchange information informally. Addressing this communication problem would not be costly.
107. **Recommendation:** The Team recommends that, in line with its recently adopted collaborative research model, EHU create a section on its website, including all available data on research conducted in the University and a discussion platform for research staff, to facilitate their collaboration.
108. Regardless of the issues discussed above, which reflect more general weaknesses in strategic management, the evidence collected shows that the University is quite extensively involved in research and related activities, including projects, conferences organised each year and publication activities (six regularly published academic journals). It does also involve students in research activities (projects, research project competitions, annual conferences, with grants for research projects awarded from the EHU budget). External grants are the main source of funding and no seed funding is available but, as mentioned above, EHU provides modest

funds for the development of research projects and participation in conferences. EHU's research budget has grown tenfold since the academic year 2008/09 ('List of introduced changes in accordance with the recommendations of SKVC in 2009 for the research sphere'). Research productivity, including the number of publications in English (rather than in Russian, as recommended in the 2009 review) has been increasing in recent years as well. However, there are significant differences among the four academic departments (with the two leading ones exceeding by far the minimum targets set in the Planning and Research Reporting System, one clearly above and one below the target level) (2012-2013 Annual Report).

109. It is also evident to the Team that EHU's research activities are aligned with the priorities of national and regional economic, social as well as cultural development. In this context, the Team understands 'national' and 'regional' as referring to both Belarus and Lithuania. The Belarusian and Lithuanian strategies and their priorities quoted in the SER identify some common areas of interest, and these are exactly the areas (social and political sciences) where the University is most active in its research (though it is fairly certain that the content of EHU research publications is not viewed as being fully aligned with the priorities in all quarters of Belarus). There is also evidence that, in line with the Lithuanian legislation and priorities ('unity of research and education'), research findings are used in programme development and improvement (e.g. findings as the basis for a new programme in Sociology; a new specialism introduced in the Media and Communication programme; media courses integrated into other programmes). At the same time, as the Team was told by research staff during the visit, EHU, though eligible for, has 'limited access' to, grants awarded by the Lithuanian Research Council as writing a proposal in Lithuanian is a problem for some staff. Thus, obviously, it misses a good opportunity to do research addressing specific Lithuanian priorities.
110. The impact of academic, social and business partners on research activities is one of the evaluation criteria where EHU's uniqueness puts it at a disadvantage. It no longer has its wide network of Belarusian partners; it is yet to create a network of Lithuanian partners as its previous mission, focusing exclusively on Belarus, did not encourage it to involve Lithuanian partners more extensively in its research. Nonetheless, the Team has seen some evidence that there is a degree of impact of EHU's academic cooperation with, for example, Lithuanian and Polish partners through activities such as research colloquia, conferences and exhibitions in the area of arts. Some examples given also show that, despite constraints, EHU seeks to integrate topics relevant for Belarusian social partners (e.g. human rights organisations) into its research. The Lithuanian social and business partners that the Team met commented positively on the contribution of EHU's research in general terms and on its willingness to support their activities through its research. More detailed discussions on what the University could offer in this respect are yet to take place. The Team was unable to find evidence that the University's Lithuanian social or business partners influence its choice of research activities. However, it believes that this is likely to change soon since, as mentioned earlier, the new broad mission provides space for much wider cooperation with local partners and the EHU community is aware that its future depends on its responsiveness to local needs.
111. **Recommendation:** The Team recommends that EHU:
 - broaden the participation of Lithuanian academic, social and business partners in its research activities; (for related recommendations see paras 23, 91 & 121);
 - provide institutional support, including more extensive Lithuanian language training, to research staff in developing project proposals to be funded by the Lithuanian Research Council.
112. As mentioned above, EHU's research priorities are as yet more descriptive of what it does than tools to manage its research strategically. However, its various strategic documents, including those specifically related to research, are, overall, aligned with the priorities of the European Research Area (ERA). One of the priority areas ('Europe in a changing world – inclusive, innovative and reflective societies') of the new Horizon 2020 Programme, supporting the establishment of the ERA, fits perfectly into the University's research profile.

In a fully-fledged research strategy, which the Team feels EHU should develop, more consideration could, though, be given to the ERA horizontal priority of ‘developing strategies to support the career development of researchers’.

113. Considering various constraints discussed here and in other sections, EHU is quite extensively involved in international projects which cover a fairly broad spectrum of areas in line with its profile. It has not been involved in EU Framework Programme projects, but research staff are now drafting a project proposal under the Horizon 2020 Programme in cooperation with European partners. The new staffing arrangements (a core of full-time staff created) are likely to increase further the involvement of EHU staff in international research projects.
114. There have been external barriers to the mobility of research staff. In particular, as Belarusian citizens, they are not eligible for certain kinds of EU research funding, and until very recently most of them were on part-time contracts, commuting between Belarus and Lithuania. This explains why outgoing research staff have so far represented roughly one-third of incoming staff. Visits to EHU are indeed exploited as an opportunity not only to internationalise its research but also to share their quite unique knowledge of ‘the post-Soviet landscape’, as well as to undertake new joint initiatives (examples of workshops and projects given during the visit). The data provided also shows that, despite difficulties, EHU staff have made good use of available mobility opportunities, engaging in various research activities, including internships, as part of international exchange programmes, mainly in Central and Eastern European countries, France and Germany. Here as well, the new staffing arrangements are likely to mitigate earlier difficulties and help EHU increase its outward mobility. In its discussions with research staff, the Team found that the strong intention exists to exploit to the full new opportunities for mobility. Unlike other groups that the Team met, the research staff interviewed feel that they are encouraged by the University to engage in international activities. The Team believes, however, that internal regulations clearly specifying conditions for sabbatical leave (see comments and a related recommendation in paras 95-96) are, in any case, necessary to facilitate and encourage mobility.
115. **In summary**, EHU’s research activities are aligned with its mission and the priorities of economic, social and cultural development in both Belarus and Lithuania, but there is no clear link between the Strategic Plan and research activities. In more general terms, the University lacks a strategic focus in its research activities, and the existing mechanisms would need to be improved to be more effective in terms of increasing the productivity of research and improving its quality. EHU’s research integrates, insofar as possible, topics relevant to Belarusian partners, in line with its mission which until recently focused on Belarus. It does not yet have a wide network of Lithuanian partners, in particular social and business ones, and the current partners do not yet have impact on its research activities. However, EHU’s new mission provides ample space for research collaboration with Lithuanian partners, and for the development of joint projects which specifically address Lithuanian priorities and could be funded by the Lithuanian Research Council.

The University’s strategic documents are aligned with the priorities of the European Research Area. Considering various barriers, it is quite extensively involved in international projects and makes good use of mobility for further internationalisation. The new staffing arrangements are likely to increase further the participation of staff in international mobility and projects and, thus, also help it achieve a better balance between outward and inward mobility, currently tilted too much towards the latter.

There are, definitely, areas for improvement in Research and Art, but, as in the Academic Studies and Lifelong Learning section, the Team makes, on balance, a positive judgment as these reflect to a large extent the weaknesses in Strategic Management and the Belarusian focus of EHU which may only now shift towards Lithuania.

Judgement on the area: Research and (or) Art is given positive evaluation.

VI. IMPACT ON REGIONAL AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

116. 'Impact on regional and national development' is the area where it is most evident that EHU, as a unique institution and focusing to date on the culture and society of Belarus, simply cannot (yet) fit the evaluation criteria as intended, designed as they are specifically for Lithuanian institutions.
117. In its previous mission, revised only a few weeks before this review, EHU aimed to have an impact on Belarusian society and contribute to its integration with the European and global community. It is clear from the current Strategic Plan, where the mission was defined, and other documents that the University has sought to serve Belarusian needs primarily through its higher education programmes and research. These 'measures' to achieve impact have indeed been effectively implemented: Belarusian students representing over 95% of all EHU students; programmes focusing on areas underdeveloped in Belarus; and research conducted in line with Belarusian development priorities. Additionally, insofar as possible, EHU staff and students have been involved in various activities in Belarus supporting its social and cultural development; for example: *Artes Liberales*, an art and educational festival devoted to European values, organised every year in Minsk by EHU in cooperation with art, education and media organisations; monitoring elections in Belarus as observers; the LitPro project promoting intercultural dialogue and cooperation between Belarus and Lithuania since 2007.
118. Being in exile and for obvious political reasons, EHU could not assess in any systematic way the impact that its education or research has had on the development of Belarus. Thus, the Team could rely only on limited facts and figures and on anecdotal evidence concerning the education that EHU provides. It appears to the Team that the impact of EHU's education does indeed align with the priorities for national and regional economic, social and cultural development, unrecognised by the present authorities in Belarus. It is also evident that in representing Belarus to Lithuania, to Europe and indeed the world at large, EHU is performing an important national service. 'Facts and figures' such as over 90% of graduates who are employed, over 60% of graduates living and working in Belarus, and about 50% working in the private sector (independent media, non-profit organisations and private companies) (2013 EHU survey) are a good indicator of the relevance of EHU education to the expectations of Belarusian employers. They also indicate that EHU graduates can inspire change in various spheres where Belarus needs it. As mentioned earlier, the graduates that the Team interviewed confirm that employers valued highly what they had learned at EHU; the social and business partners that the Team met value their knowledge and skills. The social and business partners believe that EHU exerts a huge impact in terms of providing 'an important resource for Belarusian society'. In particular, Belarusian NGOs need competent staff but do not have resources to train them, while graduates of conventional Belarusian universities are not prepared to contribute to building a free society. Some of the partners consider that EHU could have a still bigger impact on Belarusian society if it engaged even more in education and research relevant to Belarus. This would, however, be in conflict with what seems to be now EHU's 'strategic imperative' of opening up to Lithuanian society in line with its new broad mission.
119. Although EHU has focused so far on Belarus, some of its activities are or may also be relevant, in one way or another, to economic, social and cultural development in Lithuania. It conducts research in areas identified as a priority in Lithuanian national strategies, though, as mentioned earlier (par. 110), not yet in response to any specific needs of Lithuanian social and business partners. Its programmes are now opening up to non-Belarusian, including Lithuanian, students. It has been involved in various initiatives benefiting Lithuanian society. These include, for example, periodic 'EHU Public Conversations' with well-known people sharing their knowledge in humanities; Belarusian culture and language courses for Lithuanians, public events and charity actions in Vilnius as part and outside of the LitPro

project mentioned above; events for secondary school students. Since until recently most staff were on part-time contracts and commuting between Belarus and Vilnius, they could hardly be expected to engage more in 'extra-curricular' activities. This barrier is no longer there as a core of full-time staff have recently been employed on a full-time basis. EHU can build on all this in its future development as 'a normal Lithuanian university'.

120. The new mission of EHU, directed at becoming 'a normal Lithuanian university', provides more space for activities – whether this means education, research or any other activities – which may be intended specifically to contribute towards the economic, social or cultural development of Lithuania. The Team believes that EHU's broader focus and determination to open up to, and have impact on, Lithuanian society should be reflected in some specific measures in the new strategic plan to be devised in the following months. In seeking to operate as 'a normal university' in Lithuania, EHU would also need, as mentioned earlier, to redefine its concept of 'stakeholders' (par. 23) and establish strong links with Lithuanian partners, in particular social and business ones, whose involvement in its education and research will ensure that what it offers is indeed relevant to the needs and can have significant impact (paras 90-91, 110-111).
121. **Recommendation:** The Team recommends that EHU include in its new strategic plan specific measures (e.g. programmes, adult education courses, research projects or voluntary activities) which aim to have impact on regional and national development in Lithuania.
122. Most students undertake practical placements in Belarus and, thus, topics of placements are chosen so as to be relevant to the needs of their host organisations there (the Team could not get feedback on the relevance of topics from Belarusian host organisations as they were not represented among the social and business partners that it met). Nearly one-fifth (18% in 2013/14) of students are placed in Lithuanian public and private organisations. However, placements in Lithuanian organisations are often 'problematic' as most students (Belarusians) speak only basic Lithuanian, though EHU provides a mandatory course in the Lithuanian language and culture. As the Team found in its discussion with social and business partners, not all EHU departments take as much effort as others to make sure that topics of placements are relevant to what Lithuanian companies really need, and more frequent and detailed discussions would be most welcome. The Team has made some recommendations concerning EHU's cooperation with Lithuanian social and business partners in this and previous sections (paras 91 & 111). In this context, EHU is **strongly encouraged** to give more consideration to the specific needs of its Lithuanian partners when discussing placements. This will be even more important when more Lithuanian students enrol on the University's programmes in the coming years.
123. As stated in the SER and explained during the visit, there is a list of suggested topics of final theses, related mainly to regional development, and in particular the development of Belarus, though students are free to choose other topics as well. Those that they choose are indeed relevant either to regional development in broader terms (e.g. migration, gender, fight against drugs, political and social issues) or to the development of Belarus and / or Lithuania (e.g. development of tourism; cross-border cultural programmes).
124. The SER shows that EHU staff are very active as members of various Belarusian and international organisations (but not yet Lithuanian ones, except for the Lithuanian Research Council) and are involved in a variety of voluntary activities. Most of the organisations listed are professional bodies and most of the activities are related to the professional profiles of staff. Other examples of EHU staff's engagement, not only in professional but also various other civic activities, given during the visit and found by the Team in the internet seem to suggest that there is much more going on that EHU could be proud of than it shows. Staff are evidently recognised for what they do by various international bodies (a list of awards provided) and, as the Team found during the visit, are both recognised and encouraged by the University to participate in voluntary activities.
125. **Recommendation:** The Team recommends that EHU make and regularly update a register of voluntary activities undertaken by its staff.

126. **In summary**, due to its uniqueness and Belarusian focus, EHU cannot (yet) meet the evaluation criteria in this section insofar as they refer to national and regional development in Lithuania. However, in line with its mission, valid until recently, and strategic documents, its activities have had real impact on, and are aligned with the priorities for, economic, social and cultural development of Belarus. Topics of student practical placements and final theses also appear to be relevant to Belarusian developmental needs. EHU staff are involved in various voluntary activities, and this is encouraged and recognised, though not yet fully documented, by the University.

Some of EHU's activities are or may also be relevant to economic, social or cultural development of Lithuania. This, is, however, definitely an area for further development, and there is space for such development in the University's new mission which no longer focuses on Belarus.

Judgement on the area: Impact on Regional and National Development is given positive evaluation.

VII. GOOD PRACTICE AND ENHANCEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Team recommends that EHU:

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

- revisit its mission and identity, and then articulate a clear statement of mission that recognises its present position and views of all of its constituencies and / or a more detailed statement on how the mission is understood across the EHU community, which will be included in the new strategic plan to be drafted by the end of 2014. In defining its real mission, the University should also identify clearly its external stakeholders beyond the circle of donors, in particular giving due consideration to Lithuanian social and business partners (par.23);
- devise a formalised process for compiling and reviewing strategic plans and set fixed periods for both the development and review of plans. Both processes should be a collective effort where the plan to be approved by the Governing Board is drawn up by the Rector based on consultations with all groups of internal and external stakeholders, including donors as well as social and business partners (par. 27);
- ensure that its new strategic plan is a comprehensive document which includes an analysis of its external and internal environment, strategic objectives, expected outcomes and related indicators, activities leading to the achievement of the objectives, milestones and related timeframes, and an estimation of resources necessary to implement the plan (par. 32);
- devise its Annual Plans explicitly in relation to the Strategic Plan, to ensure that activities undertaken lead to the achievement of strategic goals and objectives (par. 34);
- in order to measure progress against strategic objectives, include in its new strategic plan a coherent set of quantitative and qualitative indicators for strategic objectives and set target values for each indicator that the University will seek to achieve by the end of the strategic planning period. In doing so, it is also advised to concentrate on a smaller number of indicators directly related to its strategic imperatives (par. 38);
- revise its procedures for monitoring the implementation of the strategic plan (including a mechanism for taking action in the case of deviations from the strategic and annual plans) and the current format of Annual and Interim Reports so that they clearly focus on progress towards the achievement of strategic objectives (par. 40);

- put in place mechanisms for keeping all staff regularly updated about progress in the implementation of the strategic plan, as part of its current efforts to establish effective internal communication mechanisms (par. 43);
- publicise its success as a way of building a close-knit academic community and encouraging staff to get involved in activities leading to the achievement of strategic objectives (par. 43);
- provide more detailed descriptions of procedures for internal approval, monitoring and review of programmes in the Quality Manual, including a mechanism for assessing demand for new programmes and a mechanism for collecting structured feedback from social and business partners / employers on existing and prospective programmes (par. 55);
- define more clearly and in greater detail procedures for quality assurance of research (par. 55);
- expedite progress in the implementation of its Quality Management System (par. 55);
- establish a fully-fledged student management system (par. 55);
- ensure that its governing bodies provide strong leadership in quality assurance and strengthen management oversight of the Quality Management System in line with the revised Statutes (par. 55);
- devise ways of encouraging greater involvement of students in quality assurance, and of informing students, in particular those on low-residence programmes, on findings from student evaluation surveys and on how their feedback is used for quality improvement (par. 55);
- consider establishing a team for quality assurance (par. 55);
- extend the membership of the Governing Board to include social and business partners, in particular Lithuanian ones, to help EHU establish links with its local environment (*a recommendation for the Governing Board*) (par. 61);
- make progress in putting in place performance appraisal procedures for both academic and administrative staff (par. 66);
- put in place an incentive scheme for staff, in so far as possible within its limited financial resources, and devise ways of providing non-financial incentives for staff (par. 66);
- adopt an institutional staff training policy, including mechanisms for training needs analysis, to ensure that staff skills and training opportunities offered are matched with institutional development needs (par. 66);
- consider providing training in university management to staff, not only those who are members of the governing bodies, and the Students' Union (par. 66);
- consult the EHU Trust Fund and other major donors prior to taking strategic decisions which have major financial impact (par. 72);
- urgently develop and implement the Code of Academic Ethics and ensure that staff and students are fully familiar with, and respect, its provisions. EHU may also consider providing training in academic ethics to staff and students (par. 74);

ACADEMIC STUDIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING

- put in place a clear procedure for the monitoring of student practical placements, including mechanisms for collecting feedback from host organisations on students' knowledge and skills and from students on the organisation and usefulness of placements (par. 81);
- consider expanding its course portfolio and making it more attractive, and develop a methodology for the recognition of prior learning, as a step towards diversifying its student base in line with its strategic intentions, and in order to offer wider lifelong opportunities, in particular, to adult learners in Lithuania (par. 84);
- improve its questionnaire for graduate surveys to collect more detailed feedback on the relevance of programmes offered to employers' needs, and use findings in the development, monitoring and review of its programmes (par. 88);

- use its alumni network to provide academic and career guidance to graduates and prospective students on a regular basis (par. 88);
- establish links with a wider range of Lithuanian social and business partners to consult them on new and existing programmes (par. 91);
- put in place a formal mechanism for regular collection of structured feedback on new and existing programmes from social and business partners, in particular Lithuanian (par. 91);
- consider consulting Lithuanian social and business partners on what courses EHU could offer to them as part of lifelong learning (par. 91);
- do more to facilitate and encourage outward student and staff mobility, and in particular adopt internal regulations ensuring full recognition of study periods abroad and clarifying conditions for taking sabbatical leave (par. 96);

RESEARCH AND (OR) ART

- devise a coherent institutional strategy for the development of research, which includes clearly defined priorities and is linked to its new strategic plan, to ensure that its research activity is geared towards its strategic objectives (par. 101);
- consider setting qualitative targets, in addition to quantitative ones, as part of its Research Planning and Reporting Systems to encourage quality improvement in research (par. 105);
- consider including a method of accounting for income and spending on research in its Research Planning and Reporting System, and measures of income and spending on research in its reporting (par. 105)
- in line with its recently adopted collaborative research model, create a section on its website, including all available data on research conducted in the University and a discussion platform for research staff, to facilitate their collaboration (par. 107);
- broaden the participation of Lithuanian academic, social and business partners in its research activities (par. 111);
- provide institutional support, including more extensive Lithuanian language training, to research staff in developing project proposals to be funded by the Lithuanian Research Council (par. 111).

IMPACT ON REGIONAL AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- include in its new strategic plan specific measures (e.g. programmes, adult education courses, research projects or voluntary activities) which aim to have impact on regional and national development in Lithuania (par. 121);
- make and regularly update a register of voluntary activities undertaken by its staff (par. 125).

VIII. JUDGEMENT

European Humanities University is given negative evaluation.

Grupės vadovas:
Team leader:

Prof. David Timms

Grupės nariai:
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ANNEX. EUROPEAN HUMANITIES UNIVERSITY RESPONSE TO REVIEW REPORT



Centre for quality assessment in higher education
Division of institutional assessment
Acting director Mrs. Nora Skaburskiene

19-01-2015 No. 118-04

COMMENTS ON FACTUAL ERRORS OF THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW REPORT OF THE EUROPEAN HUMANITIES UNIVERSITY

We would like to express our gratitude to the International Team and its leader prof. dr. David Timms and also the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education for the highly professional and thorough institutional review of the European Humanities University.

Our University community was extremely impressed, not only with the quality of the review, but with the thoughtful competence of the experts who comprised the team and dedicated so much of their energy to assisting our community as it faces the extraordinary challenges of the years ahead.

Following careful review of the evaluation, we offer a few corrections of emphases and factual information. The task of thoroughly understanding the life and story of an academic community is significant, thus our comments are intended to merely bring greater clarity to the history and workings of our University.

Paragraph 8: It is stated "The Trust Fund is itself the major donor (63% of EHU's total income)", but the truth is that *The Trust Fund is a distributor of donor funds, not a major donor. As such it is an administrative entity.* And there is a factual error indicating percentage that Fund distributes. 63% should be replaced by 54% (Annual Report, 2012-2013).

Paragraphs 24, 69: It is stated "e.g. up to 25% of non-Belarusian students to be enrolled on the MBA programme"; "up to 25% of non-Belarusian students will soon be enrolled on the MBA programme". *MBA programme* should be replaced by *BA and MA programs*.

Paragraph 30: It is stated "In the context of resourcing, the Team was concerned to hear from a representative of the EHU Trust Fund that the University does not consult the Fund, a major donor, before taking decisions which have significant financial implications (for more detailed comments and related recommendations, see paras 27, 71 & 72).". We would like to add few more sentences to this statement that *"The representative from the Trust Fund is present for all financial and budgetary discussions with the Board of Governors and is present and participates in all Board Meetings. He, therefore, is present for the review and approval of proposed annual budgets."*

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Paragraph 41: It is stated "The Team met the administrator of the EHU Trust Fund, who stated that he was not party to the financial rationale of the University's current planning. The Team took the view that it would be advisable for the University to consult the Trust Fund on these plans, given their implications for the University's future." We would like to clarify this statement. *The current financial situation of the university has been fully and consistently discussed with the Trust Fund administrator, as have the steps being taken for addressing the institution's immediate priorities. These proposed steps received endorsement at the time of presentation. This has also occurred during the major donor meetings convened by the administrator.*

Paragraph 57: It is stated "The establishment of the Council, which brings together the Rector, Vice-Rectors, Heads of Departments and the Bursar". The *Bursar* should be replaced by the *Head of Finance department*; *Heads of Departments* should be replaced by *Heads of Academic departments*.

Paragraph 59: It is stated "As stated in the SER, members of the Student Representation or Students' Union, a self-governance body, are involved in various working groups and committees (e.g. the SER Group, the Committee on Distribution of Financial Aid). The students that the Team met feel that, through the Students' Union, they have a say in academic matters (even though there is no formal mechanism for consulting them on course structure except through the Senate) but do not have much power in university management or 'the course EHU is taking'." We would like to add few more sentences to this statement that *"Beyond the addition of five students belonging to the Faculty Senate, there are two students who are present at Board meetings and fully participate in all discussions."*

Paragraph 68: It is stated "The representative of the Governing Board admitted during the visit that the space available was limited and the cost of renting premises cumulatively high (but extra funding had been raised to buy a building)", but the actual statement of the Governing Board representative was: *"we had had a gift to the Trust Fund which the donors had encouraged us to think about more broadly and that one possibility could have been to buy buildings for student lodging, thus 'banking' the capital and being able to offer more help to student accommodation needs in Vilnius"*. She also said *"we probably need more space than the new buildings currently being renovated will provide"*.

Paragraphs 69, 71: As being stated in the paragraph 8, Trust fund distributes 54% of EHU's total income (Annual Report, 2012-2013).

Paragraph 71: It is stated "Funding from the EHU Trust Fund". As already noted, the Trust Fund is not a donor. In addition to this paragraph we would like to include *"While many day-to-day operational financial decisions within the University properly do not involve members of the Board of Governors or the Trust Fund administrator, all financial policy issues are brought to the Board where the Trust Fund administrator is present. The Trust Fund administrator also works very closely and communicates regularly with the Vice Rector for Development and Communications."*

Paragraph 73: It is stated "However, the Code of Academic Ethics has only recently been approved (though, as the Team found, not all staff are fully aware of this), and as yet there are no procedures in place to ensure that it is fulfilled." This is not correct. The Code of Academic Ethics is not approved yet. We suggest the following statement "The Code of Academic Ethics is under the process of development".

Paragraph 95: It is stated "However, outgoing students have to 'repeat' courses upon return; this issue has been raised by students but has not been addressed yet." This is not correct. Outgoing students don't have to 'repeat' courses upon return (rector's order No.01-249, 2013-10-21).

Paragraph 95: It is stated "As explained by teaching staff, it is more difficult for younger staff to negotiate leave for going abroad, and a procedure clarifying how postdocs 'can go abroad without losing a six-year contract'". *Six-year contract* should be replaced by *five-year contract*.

Paragraph 122: It is stated "Placements in Lithuanian organisations are 'problematic' as most EHU students speak only basic Lithuanian; more could be done to encourage Belarusian students to take the Lithuanian language and culture course offered by the University". This is not correct. Lithuanian language and culture course is obligatory for all EHU students.

Respectfully,

Acting Rector

Prof. Dr. G. David Pollick

