

## Republic of Moldova

### Democratization Processes and Social Partners Participation in Higher Education Management

The comprehensive analysis of main higher education regulatory documents (Education Codes, Universities Charters, Rules of Procedures for Senates, for students self-government, Board of Trustees, Public Councils under the Ministry of Education, Rectors Councils, etc.) as well as of institutional and management practices at Moldova Higher Education Institutions and the Ministry of Education, students, faculty and parents organizations including NGOs specializing in educational services was conducted within the project on expert monitoring of democratization processes, social partners and other stakeholders participation in higher education management.

#### Context and Higher Education Reform Stages

Moldova Higher Education reform initiated in earlier 90<sup>th</sup> didn't bring fast and expected results. In 1994 Moldova Parliament passed the 'The Republic of Moldova Education Development Concept and Coordinating Council on education reforms establishment', which represented the state vision of higher education future. Education at large became a national priority and should be based on the principles of democracy, humanism, availability and adaptability, unity and diversity, secular nature of education in state institutions. In 1995 Law on Education was adopted. It defined education system principles, goals and structure. What happened in practice was that some of law's provisions became outdated and didn't meet modern society needs and didn't fall within market economy principles. From 1997 to 2009 the Law on Education had been amended 32 times.<sup>1</sup> Based on experts' evaluation, most of the Concepts and Law provisions were not implemented in reality. The planned reforms aimed on developing and implementing State educational standards, establishing institutional autonomy, creating an independent system to evaluate educational

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Otter, Arcadie Barbăroșie și Anatol Gremalschi, *Educația și dezvoltarea umană: provocări curente și de perspectivă*, PNUD Moldova, Chișinău, 2010, p. 48.





activities results and adopting the faculty official status.<sup>2</sup>

During the last two decades two opposing tendencies in higher education reform processes emerged. On one hand, the state advocated for centralized management system where all important decisions would have been made administratively and the universities would have been obliged to implement given orders. On the other hand, universities wanted decentralized management system based on unlimited universities' autonomy.<sup>3</sup> In spite of the fact that the national regulatory system has been constantly developing till 2009 as well as the country commitment to international conventions and higher education development projects, in practice, intended reforms were often blocked by inertia and narrowed interests of those involved such as Ministry of Education officials, Ministry of Economy and Ministry of labor, social security and family, political parties representatives, Rectors itself, employers. They simply tried to establish their own rules of the games and higher education priorities. The lack of political will to implement reforms aggravated uncertainty. Proclaimed in official documents development priorities, in fact were impeded, turning into formal activities and progress reports. The Law on Education adopted in 1995 envisaged the state program for education development elaboration but this program was adopted only 4 years later (1999). The new program was approved in 2005 without the previous one implementation results monitoring. The program of 2005 was developed for 3 years and ended in 2008 but as in case with the program of 1999, its implementation results were not analyzed. In 2005, the public discussion of Education Code developed by the Ministry of Education and Youth was postponed indefinitely. Another attempted to adopt Education Code was made in 2008 by the Parliament but its final version wasn't supported by President Vladimir Voronin and was withdrawn.

Moldova Education Code was finally adopted in July 2014<sup>4</sup> after the new reformers team headed by Majya Sandu came to the lead the Ministry of

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<sup>2</sup> Same.

<sup>3</sup> Gheorghe Rusnac, Elena Muraru, Vladimir Guțu, Otilia Dandara, Ștefan Tiron, *Aderarea Republicii Moldova la Procesul de la Bologna în viziunea mediului universitar. Studiu*, Institutul de Politici Publice, Chișinău, 2004. [[www.utm.md/edu/legal/strategia\\_rm.pdf](http://www.utm.md/edu/legal/strategia_rm.pdf)]; **Corneliu Ciurea, Veaceslav Berbeca, Sergiu Lipcean, Marin Gurin**, *Sistemul de învățămînt superior din Republica Moldova în contextul procesului Bologna: 2005-2011*, Fundația Soros-Moldova, Institutul pentru Dezvoltare și Inițiative Sociale (IDIS) "Viitorul", Chișinău, 2012, p. 8-9; Cornel Ciurea, Leonid Litra, *Impactul politicilor autori tăților publice centrale asupra sistemului universitar din Republica Moldova*, Institutul pentru Dezvoltare și Inițiative Sociale (IDIS) "Viitorul", Chișinău, Tipogr. "Reșetnicov P", 2009.

<sup>4</sup> №152 from 17 July 2014.

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Education. Code as the state policy and law in education specified legal basis for education system reform and modernization in the context of Moldova European integration and in accordance with Bologna aquis. The Ministry put the provisions of Strategy for education modernization 2020 forward for public discussion in September 2013. The key provisions of new Code were to strengthen the education institutions autonomy along with their public accountability, which should be achieved through establishing congregated institutional management. An absolute novelty for Moldova legislation was the establishment of Strategic and Institutional Development Councils and rules of procedures development for higher education institutions organizational, financial, human resources and academic autonomy.

## **I. Legal Framework Monitoring**

### **a. Moldova Education Code and Other Regulatory Acts**

The new Code sets the main principles on which the education management system should be based, lists management bodies in education field as well as defines its competences. Code settles that Higher Education Institutions in Moldova are autonomous institutions (Article 79, Education Code). In accordance with this postulate, university autonomy is the university community rights for organization and self-governance, for academic freedom without any ideological, political and religious interference, for accepting some competences and responsibilities as set in national higher education development policies and strategies. It also states that university autonomy is directly associated with university management, organizational structure and its smooth functioning, faculty and research activities, management and finance. In practice, the university autonomy shall be implemented through educational process and research activities enhancement, curriculum and analytical programs development in accordance with state educational standards, accepting applicants according to the university profile selection criteria, faculty, teaching and research staff and researchers selection and promotion as well as other university personnel. The Higher Education Institutions within its autonomous rights shall also develop the faculty and research activities evaluation criteria, award academic degree, provide the election of all management personnel by secret ballot, resolve students and personnel social issues, maintain order and discipline in the university space, seek additional revenues sources, establish cooperation with different educational and research institutions, centers and

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organization at national and international level. In financial terms, university autonomy is its financial resources management including state financial allocations as well as use of available funds for statutory activities based on university's own decisions, accumulation of own income from tuition fees, provided services and other specific activities in accordance with the list of services approved by the Government, own property management and ensuring optimal conditions for university's facilities development.

Article 18 states that education system management is conducted on three levels: national, local and institutional thus setting management competences in education on three levels as well: a) central authorities competences regulated by Education Code; b) local authorities competences regulated by local public authorities; c) institutions competences regulated by universities charters, institutional rules of procedures approved in accordance with the law. The Code also envisages that higher education management is based on principles of university autonomy and academic freedom, public accountability, strategic management, effectiveness and management transparency (Para 2, Article 101, Education Code). Based on social partnership principle, the Code encourages social dialogue, partnership between educational and research institutions, trade unions, business community, civil society and mass media implemented in accordance with applicable laws. Thus, the Ministry of Education should develop and apply educational system national development strategies in consultations with central and local public authorities as well as with social partners.

Code dictates separately (Article 102) that higher education institution governing bodies should include Senate, the Strategic Institutional Development Council (introduced by the law for the first time), Academic Council, Faculty Council, Administrative Council and the Rector. Within this administrative structure, Senate must be headed by the university's Rector and endowed with the following powers and functions: ensures compliance with academic and university freedom principles; develops and approves the university charter; approves strategic institutional development plan; approves university budget; develops and approves institution's methodology and rules of procedures for academic, research, artistic and creative activities and programs as well as the methodology and procedures for selection, hiring and evaluating faculty; approves educational institution's organizational and functional structures. In case of military, security and police educational institutions, organizational and

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functional structures are developed by Senate and approved by the heads of corresponding organs under which jurisdictions those institutions fall. The development and approval of rules of procedures for Rector election as well as approval of Strategic Institutional Development Council Members without right to change are also fall under the corresponding organs jurisdictions and based on Ministry of Education framework regulation.

For the first time in practice of Moldova higher education management, the Strategic Institutional Development Councils (SIDC) are established being allotted sufficiently broad powers and functions. New university management body shall coordinate strategic institutional development plan elaboration including institution's vision, mission, development strategy and key activities for the period no less than 5 years. This plan is to be approved by Senate. SIDC should monitor and evaluate the effective use of financial resources and present the institutional budget for Senate approval. The Council also approves the standard contract for educational services and tuition fees, provides institutional management in relations to intellectual property rights and technology transfers, makes decisions based on positive Senate resolution on institution's property development and consolidation, educational programs closure and launch, remuneration methodology and staff stimulation; entrepreneurial activities, public-private partnerships and cooperation with business community, joining consortiums and merger with other higher education institutions, organizes Rector's elections in accordance with institutional rules of procedures on elections. SIDC composition in accordance with the law expands stake of societal participation in higher education management and composed of 9 members appointed for 5 year terms: 3 members are appointed by the Ministries: Ministry of Education -1, Ministry of Finance - 1, competent Ministry -1 (appointed members can't be employed by the respective ministries); 2 members from faculty who do not hold managerial positions and are not Senate members and elected by secret ballot at the general meeting of Faculty Councils members and students representatives in the Senate and Faculty Councils, 2 members delegated to SIDC by Senate who are external experts and are not employed by the respective higher education institution, Rector and Vice Rector for finance. SIDC members according to the law elect the Council's Chairperson. The higher education institutions employees can't be elected to this position. The Code provides that Strategic Institutional Development Council Members should include economists and lawyers and the Ministry of Finance representative should be competent in financial monitoring and audit. The gender equality principle should be observed when establishing SIDC. Members of the Council

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elected by the higher education institution shall receive a monthly fee except Rector and Vice Rector. The fee is paid from the institution's budget. The members nominated by the Founders and competent ministries receive their fees from the Founders' budget. The Code settles that all SIDC Members are responsible for decisions made in accordance with current laws.

Rector provides Higher Education Institution operational management with Vice Rectors and Administrative Council support. Administrative Council is responsible for institution's budget execution and is elected at the general meeting of Faculty, research staff and students representatives in the Senate and Faculty Councils by simple majority vote. In certain cases specified by the Code, Rector can be dismissed before his term in the office expires on the initiative of: the majority of Senate members or the Strategic Institutional Development Council or Founder or by the decision of the general meeting of Faculty, research staff and students representatives in the Senate and Faculty Councils adopted by majority vote. Rector must present the higher education institution activities report to Senate, SIDC and Founders, which is published on official institution website (Article 105, Education Code).

The Article 109 provisions of the Code and Article 136 describe the important milestones in higher education democratization and the expansion of social partners role and other stakeholders in higher education management. The provisions of Article 109 stipulate that the university charter must contain principles of the university cooperation with trade unions and legally established students' organizations. While article 136 dedicated to students and pupils rights and implies the right to be elected to the educational institution governing bodies and participate in assessing and improving the quality of education in accordance with the conditions laid in the Code and institution's regulations as well as to establish students and/or pupils' self-governing organs according to existing normative and institutions' regulations. The Code also specifies that number of students' representatives in Senate and Faculty Council should be quarter of the total number of members of these bodies.

Section on the parents' rights and duties (article 138, Education Code) as their legitimate representatives gives them rights to participate in drafting the educational institution's activities plan and cooperate with the institution on other related to educational process matters, to demand pupils and students rights and freedoms, elect and be elected to administrative and consultative educational institution bodies, establish charitable parents associations aiming to

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assist in educational institution development. However, the Code provisions do not contain a clear mechanism for parents' rights and parents' association participation in higher education institutions management processes. In particular, there is no indication of number or percentage of their participation in specialized committees, Senate and other institution's governing bodies.

Article 145, paragraph 5 and article 152, paragraph "k" order to introduce in 2015 the financial and economic self-governance principles (financial autonomy) in higher education institutions according to the current legislation of the Republic of Moldova (in force from January 1, 2015).

The new Education Code entered into force in 30 days after it was officially published but a number of articles will be put into effect by 2018-2019 academic year only. Thus, on January 14, 2015, the Ministry of Education approved regulation "On Moldova higher education institutions self governing bodies organization and functioning" based on Code stipulations. This regulation specifies that faculty members and research staff should be elected to Senate at the Faculty general meeting by direct secret ballot while the support staff and students are elected in accordance with the universities Charters and internal regulations. It also set the students' share in Senate and Faculties Councils in the proportion of one-fourth from the total number of self-governing bodies members. The regulation clarifies that Administrative council consists of Rector, Vice Rectors, Deans and one students' representative who is the Senate member. This regulation underlines the important precept that opens the cooperation ways between institution's administration and stakeholders. The Rector can invite trade unions and student associations' representatives, other institutions personnel as well as others from outside of the institution for Administrative Council meetings assuming their consultative status. As well as Education Code, this regulation doesn't provide clear mechanisms for Parents' Associations/Committees and other civil society organizations participation and representation in institution's management. We also didn't find any reference to establishing the Board of Trustees in provided institutional management structure as well as it doesn't describe the employers representation mechanism, their competences, rights and duties in terms of participation in higher education institution management. This applies to private universities.

On September 10, 2014, by the order<sup>5</sup> of Moldova Ministry of Education the

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<sup>5</sup> № 969 from 10 September, 2014  
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framework regulation (*regulament-cadru* – romanian) on student's self-governing structures organization and functioning was adopted. This regulation details students/students associations rights to represent and participate in higher education and state decision making bodies arising from Lisbon Declaration and in accordance with Bologna principles. It states that student's representatives are partners in education management structures and have rights to make decisions on education, culture and social development issues. This regulatory documents allot significant role to students self – governing structures in representing, developing and defending students rights in relations with university management, local and central authorities. Along with the right to elect delegates and representatives to Faculty Council, University Senate, Council on Ethics and Management and other Committees, students self-governing bodies are designated to participate in students development projects/programs design and implementation ensuring their maximal effectiveness; in regulatory acts, methods and curriculum development; in external and internal evaluation processes of quality of higher education and students and faculty assessment. Student's self-governing structures are allotted the role to support students within national and international academic mobility, monitor higher education social aspects (access to education, social benefits and scholarships distribution, tuition fee exemption, fairness of budget places competition, students vouchers to youth camps distribution, etc.). They also participate in management and services improvement at students' dormitories, inform and consult students on educational, professional, social, cultural and moral issues. Student self-governing structures organize social and economic, sports and cultural events, conferences, etc. It is assumed that student self government establishes departments for public relations, for basic and continuous professional education, for social and economic issues, for international relations and youth policy, project management, cultural and linguistic diversity development, sports and tourism, environmental issues and others. It is also recommended that in order to increase activities effectiveness and to spread best practices, student self governance could set up a number of Committees, for instance, on study programs and quality assurance, on research and innovations, entrepreneurship, on state and private partnerships, on international and public relations, academic mobility, cultural and art contests, social services, institutional strategy, infrastructure and financial management as well as to establish Commissions on automation and digital communication, university Charter, ethics, strategy, some administrative regulations, on elections and audit, etc. To support and motivate students participating in student self governing structures, it is recommended that higher education institutions takes into account students active participation

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when allocating dormitory places and distributing vouchers to students summer events and camps including budget study places competition. It is also suggested to provide preferential financial support to participate in conferences, seminars, international and national study tours, to establish special account for compensating their transport costs, meals and accommodation to fulfill their commitments as student self governance representative in other locations as well as to support financially conferences (forums), exhibitions, contests organization at home university.

According to Ministry of Education representative, following the Education Code adoption, the largest number of complains by the higher education institutions Rectors were directed towards introduced changes in university management structure. In their opinion, besides burdensome financial costs, the new model establishes a dual power management system where Senate has control over academic affairs and the Strategic institutional Development Council ensures objective decision-making process, transparency and effectiveness in resources allocation. One third of the SIDC will be appointed by the institution's Founder from entrepreneurs, people with professional experience in business administration, economists and lawyers. Such reaction was expected as prior to Code adoption the university Rector had a full authority in the university and bore responsibility for all administrative, legislative and executive affairs and was Senate chairman. <sup>6</sup>

## **b. University Charters**

In the following year after the Moldova Education Code came in force and new regulatory framework adopted, the gradual process of higher education institutions organizational structure and management system reform has begun including the development, discussion and adoption of new universities Charters, administrative regulations and rules of procedures.

Moldova State University Charter (*Carta Universității de Stat din Moldova* – romanian) includes all main principles and structures of the higher education institution management system in accordance with Moldova Education Code. The university governing system is represented by Senate, Strategic Institutional Development Council, Academic Council, Administrative Council, Rector,

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<sup>6</sup> „Codul Educației ne scoate din zona noastră de confort”, în «Ziarul de Gardă», nr. 456 (30/01.2014), [<http://www.zdg.md/editia-print/social/codul-educatiei-ne-scoate-din-zona-noastra-de-confort>].



Faculty Council, Senate Presidium and Faculty Boards (*Biroul facultății* – romanian). Senate Composition as the supreme university governing body is elected by direct secret ballot from the entire university faculty members, researchers at the research centers while students representatives are delegated by academic and student associations. The trade unions representatives in the Senate are elected by them. The total number of Senate members should not exceed 101 among which the number of student representatives should be one-fourth from total number of Senate Members. In accordance with university Charter, students are full members of the quality assurance process and present its assessment public report on annual basis. Charter also indicates that students should be involved in decision making related to educational process. The Ministry of Education as the institution's Founder has a right to nominate 2 candidates to institution's Strategic Institutional Development Council. The university Charter doesn't include representation and participation mechanisms for Parent Associations/Committees involvement as well as other civil society organizations. The university management structure doesn't envisage the Board of Trustees inclusion. The Charter states that the university is the Founder of Alumni Association, through which the university collects data to improve the quality of education and research, develops relations with the business community and receives additional funding.

Moldova Economic Academy (*Carta Instituției Publice Academia de Studii Economice a Moldovei* – romanian), State University for Physical Culture and Sport (*Carta Universității de Stat de Educație Fizică și Sport* – romanian), Beltsk State University “Alecu Russo” (*Carta Instituției Publice Universitatea de Stat „Alecu Russo” din Bălți* – romanian) and Kagul State University “Bogdan Petricejku Khadsheu” Charters includes similar provisions.

### **c. Rules of Procedures for Councils, Senates and Strategic Development Councils**

Moldova State University Rules of Procedures for Senate states that Senate as the supreme decision making body should promote academic freedom and university academic community autonomy development. Senate is elected from among research and teaching personnel, researchers, support personnel, students and trade unions members. In particular, Senate consists of 91 members out of which 19 members from administration (Rector -1; Vice Rectors – 4; Deans – 14), 40 faculty members, 5 members from research personnel, 4 members from

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support personnel, 1 member representing trade unions, 22 students (13 students studying at BA and MA programs; 8 - studying at Doctoral programs; 1 - representing student trade union). The Rules of Procedures do not highlight and do not contain additional and specific regulatory provisions concerning the students, faculty, parents, employers and civil society associations representatives' role or their special role/function.

In Beltsk State University "Alecu Russo" the Strategic Institutional Development Council is a management body consisting of 9 members: 3 members are recommended by the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Finance (as employers representatives), 2 experts from faculty members who are not members of the institution's Senate and management structures (elected by secret ballot at the general meeting of Faculty Councils members and students representatives in the Senate), Rector and Vice Rectors and 2 members delegated by Senate who are external experts and are not employed by the respective higher education institution. The SIDC Rules of Procedure do not envisage the representatives of student and parents associations and civil society organization inclusion but do not limit their right to be elected or being delegated to the Council in a capacity of internal or external experts (in case of internal expert nomination the nominee should hold an academic title).

In Moldova Economic Academy, State University for Physical Culture and Sport, Kagul State University "Bogdan Petricejku Khadsheu", State Technical University and State Pedagogical University "Ion Kryanga" the Rules of Procedures for Strategic Institutional Development Council are developed in accordance with Education Code provisions.

#### **d. Other Statutory Documents: Organizational Principles and Powers**

According to the Ministry of Education instructions<sup>7</sup> and to Education Code, during the last year Moldova higher education institutions have been introducing regulatory documents related to student self governing structures.

Moldova Economic Academy and Beltsk State University "Apecu Russo" regulations on student self governing structure lay down the general organizational principles, duties, mission, goals and powers, students' participation motivation in decision making as well as representation, delegation

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<sup>7</sup> In particular, order № 969 of 10 September, 2014



and students interests' defense formats. According to this regulation, the student self governing structure is the highest representative body of Academy's students and officially recognized by institution's leadership. It includes several decision making levels in accordance with which student self governing structure could be called as Senate, Council, Association, Society, League, Alliance, Parliament and others and defines the following powers and activities:

- a) Represents, assists, supports and defend students' interests in relation to Academy leadership/ local authorities/ Council on Ethics and management, etc.
- b) Participate in students projects/programs development and implementation ensuring their maximal effectiveness
- c) Participates in regulatory acts, methods and curriculum development
- d) Participates in external and internal evaluation of quality of higher education
- e) Participates in students and faculty assessments
- f) Supports students in national and international academic mobility
- g) Monitors mechanism for addressing students' social aspects (access to education, social benefits and scholarships distribution, tuition fee exemption, fairness of budget places competition, students vouchers to youth camps distribution, etc.)
- h) Participates in management and services improvement at students dormitories
- i) Informs and consults students on educational, professional, social, cultural and moral issues
- j) Organizes social and economic events on voluntary basis
- k) Organizes conference, cultural and sports events

as well as carries other duties and responsibilities that are not in breach with Academy regulations and Moldova laws.

Moldova higher education institutions do not have separate regulatory documents concerning Parents Organizations/ Associations activities (often they operate on voluntary basis or as NGO or as Public Foundation in the field of primary and secondary education). The higher education institution Charter doesn't envisage provisions related to establishing the Board of Trustees.

## **II. Public Participation: Specific Practices Monitoring**

There is a student organizations and student governments network in Moldova. Most of them are established according to organizations Statutes and universities

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Charters as well as according to student self governing regulations. At the level of powers and set objectives, universities student organizations represent students communities in institutions' management bodies (Senate, Committees), participate in Rector's election, have a voting right in all Committees they were elected or delegated to. In this context, students' involvement in university administrative bodies and their participation in decision making marks a significant landmark and stimulation that supports this university autonomy pillar. Yet, at current stage, we can state that higher education institutions management system is in transition state of reforms.

Bank in 2011, Moldovan Parliament increased the student representation in university Senates. The Law on Education specified that number of students in universities governing bodies should have been no more than 25% and that institutions will continue to be obliged to observe 20% threshold of students representation (Law №. 31 from 25 February 2011 on Amending Article 46 of the Law on Education nr.547-XII from 21 July 1995). In accordance with Regulation on higher education institutions elections to executive and managerial positions and elections' organization in Republic of Moldova (Annex to Order nr.697 from 4 November, 2011), election committee in consultations with Dean sets the total number of Faculty Council members and representative share (equality principle) for each faculty department taking into account the following ratio: teaching and research personnel - 75%-80%, undergraduate and graduate students - 20%-25%.<sup>8</sup> Education Code requires that  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Senate and Faculty Councils members should be students.

In Moldova State University, Senate composition meets the Education Code requirements. The number of student representatives at Rector's election this year was at  $\frac{1}{4}$  ration to the total number of electors. In State Technical University Student Senate and other student self governing structures nominated 20 representatives to University Senate. The missing number of places to reach  $\frac{1}{4}$  representation counts against graduate students participation in Senate. In Beltsk State University Student Senate representation at this year Rector's elections that held in October 2015 was at  $\frac{1}{4}$  ratio to total number of electors. The same ratio of students' representation is held in university Senate. Moldova State University and State University "Alec Russo" in Belts established Committees on assessing the quality of education that have already been functioning almost a year.

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<sup>8</sup> Romeo V. Țurcan, Larisa Bugaian, *Autonomia universitară instituțională în Republica Moldova*, Chișinău: Cuvîntul-ABC, 2014, p.51.



Student self governing structures begin to differentiate their activities and open up for new forms and directions. For example, Belts Student Senate signed the Cooperation agreement with National Anticorruption Center and organizes joint seminars, round tables and other events related to combating corruption in universities.

Inter-University student organization Alliance of the Republic of Moldova Students involves in its activities 7 Student Senate Chairmen. This organization is very active in strengthening university self governance and autonomy. In 2015 the Alliance identified several problematic areas in student self governance:

1. Complicated dialogue/communication with university administration
2. Lack of financial support and funding
3. Lack of autonomy as student self government are not legally registered
4. Lack of knowledge on developing plans, strategies, internal regulations, which would ensure smooth functioning and continuity of self government structures.<sup>9</sup>

Alliance of the Republic of Moldova Students participated in Education Code public discussion and put forward a number of issues to be addressed in the final document. According the organization's leaders opinion, ¼ of students representatives in supreme decision making body - University Senate - are elected separately and are not always being a Student Senate part. Thus, there is a poor communication between students and sometimes, it doesn't exist at all. Students from associated structures have their prerogative in organizing cultural and social activities to large extent rather than to participate in decision making and influence certain processes within the university.

One of the most influential institution, thanks to its members professional status, is the Rector Council officially registered as NGO by Ministry of Justice in 1997 and not mentioned in Education Code. Rectors Council's main statutory goal is to develop and modernize higher education. Rectors Council meetings are called by the Ministry of Education for consultations on higher education modernization at key stages of reforms.<sup>10</sup> Alliance of the Republic of Moldova Students participates in some of these meetings.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://aliantastudentilor.md/aliantastudentilor/default/article/22#.VI3JwBGFPIV>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.studentie.md/noutati/educatie/item/676-sedinta-consiliului-rectorilor-cu-participarea-noii-ministre-a-educatiei-vom-colabora.html>



### III. Conclusion

The new Education Code (2014) settled the legal basis for education system modernization in Moldova European intergation context. They comply with Bologna principles and Strategy for Education Modernization 2020 proposed by the Ministry of Education. The key provisions of new Code are to strengthen education institutions autonomy and to increase institutions' collegial bodies public control. The Code sets the main principles on which the education management system should be based, defines organizational and management structures as well as defines competences. The Code establishes the universities autonomy rights. In accordance with this, university autonomy is the university community rights for organization and self-governance, for academic freedom without any ideological, political and religious interference. The university autonomy is related to university management, organizational structure and its smooth functioning, faculty and research activities, management and finance. In order to proceed with institutions autonomy, the new Strategic Institutional Development Councils were introduced in the university structure. The new regulatory documents specified student self government duties, responsibilities and competences. Student organizations and universities student self governments actively participate in higher education intuitions processes in Moldova. They represent and defend student community interests at university and inter-university levels. The main problems that student organizations face are difficulties in obtaining registration and receiving an official student self government status at national level; insufficient financial support by universities; the lack of established mechanism related to state programs support for student organizations and the inability of non-registered organization to access and/or receive international programs funding.

In real practice as well as in regulatory documents, there is no introduction of higher education institutions Board of Trustees although this could become an additional instrument in educational process organization and development, in improving institutions' facilities and attracting additional budgetary funds, organizing sports and cultural events, etc.

Moldova higher education intuitions structure doesn't possess any practice either regulatory documents related to Parent Organizations/ Associations





activities (often they are either voluntary organization or established as NGO or Public Foundation in primary and secondary education field).

#### IV. Recommendations

1. Central governmental authority should expand and detailed regulatory base for higher education democratization and more clearly define social partners and other stakeholders' role in higher education management.
2. To set necessary conditions and administrative mechanisms for cooperation between higher education institutions and civil society organizations.
3. The higher education management bodies should allocate budget for student self government on annual basis.
4. Central government authorities and universities should develop a legal framework for establishing Board of Trustees as one of higher education management structures.
5. Central government authorities and universities should introduce more 'hands on' approach and detailed regulatory basis for cooperation with Parents Organizations/Associations and their participation in decision making and higher education management itself.

