

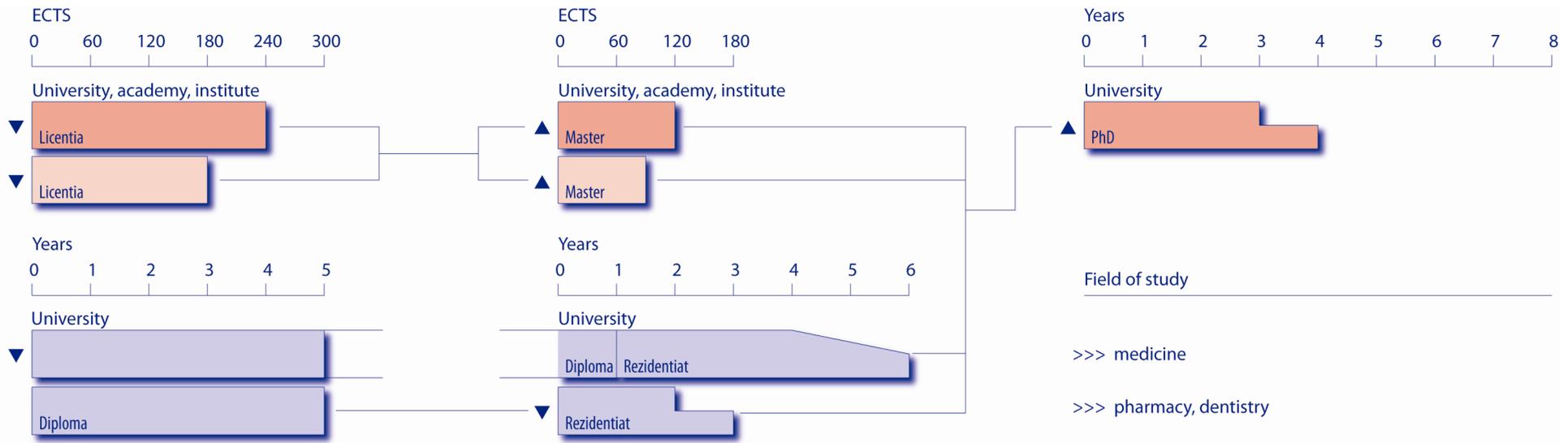


HIGHER EDUCATION IN MOLDOVA



- I. Overall description**
- II. Current challenges and needs**
 - Trends and challenges**
 - The Bologna Process**
- III. Participation in EU programmes**
 - Tempus**
 - Erasmus Mundus**
- IV. Bibliographical references and websites**

The higher education system in Moldova



- Most common length of a Bologna cycle
- Other length of a Bologna cycle
- Programme outside the typical Bologna model
- Professional programme

ECTS

Credits according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

		regulated at national level	decided at institutional level
ALL	programmes have admission requirements	▼	▲
SOME		▽	△

Source: "Focus on Higher Education in Europe 2010 - The impact of the Bologna Process" (Eurydice, 2010).

I. Overall description

1. Major characteristics of tertiary education in the country

The changes in the economic, social and political life of Moldova demanded the development of a new educational policy and legislative framework. Soon after the Declaration of Independence a new concept of national education had been designed and endorsed. A new law on education (1995) and a new regulation came into force, which represented the legal basis for the reforms. The harmonization of the national higher education with the European one represented one of the main reform principles. After the adoption of the *Law on Education* in 1995 the main achievements have been certain qualitative and quantitative changes in structure and content.

The main objective in the area of higher education was declared to be the integration of the country into the European Higher Education Area. In 2005 the *Law on Education* was amended in order to incorporate the basic Bologna Principles; a two-cycle system of higher education has been introduced: the first cycle - the *Licentiate* (with a duration of studies of 3 - 4 years) and a second cycle - the *Master* (1-2 years). In May 2005 Moldova joined the Bologna Process. Since September 2005 the first cycle has been implemented in all national higher education institutions. In 2008 the implementation of the second cycle started. It should be mentioned that doctoral programmes have not yet been changed in the light of the Bologna process. Doctoral studies are still regulated by the *Science and Innovation Code* and the *Law of Education*.

By 2009 the reforms enacted in the area of higher education had led to the following results: a two-cycle system has been implemented; the first version of the National Qualification Framework was developed; the ECTS and Diploma Supplement have been implemented.

The number of students and specializations has increased considerably over the last decade.

At the beginning of the academic year 2009/10 the higher education system in Moldova comprised 30 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), including 17 state institutions subordinated to the Ministry of Education and some other ministries and 13 private. The total number of students involved in HE was about 106 900 (excluding foreigners), 96 500 students in the first cycle and 10 400 in the second cycle.

At the state institutions there are about 88 900 (83.0%) students and at private institutions there are about 17 900 students (17.0%). Full-time students in the first cycle represent 69% of the total, while part-time students make up 31% of the total. The share of women in higher education is about 58%.

Legislation covering the field of tertiary education

The current legislative framework of the education system is being updated.

In Moldova the draft *Code of Education* is undergoing public discussion. Some provisions of the draft Code of Education related to Higher Education are presented below:

Higher Education (HE) performs two types of education - initial education and continuing training.

Initial HE education is structured into three higher education cycles: first cycle - the Bachelor degree (*Licența*); second cycle - the Master degree; third cycle - the Doctoral degree.

Continuing HE training is provided through: postdoctoral studies; b) specialisation; c) continuing training; d) qualification; e) re-qualification and f) conversion.

Bachelor and Master programmes are provided in the following forms: full-time attendance; part-time; distance learning and a mixed form.

Bachelor and Master programmes in psychology, clinical medicine and pharmacy, foreign languages can be organized only on a full-time attendance basis.

Doctoral programmes are organized in the following forms:

- full-time attendance;
- distance learning / part-time.

Types of tertiary education programmes and qualifications

In Moldova, according to the Law of Education, there are the following types of tertiary education programmes:

- Secondary and intermediary professional programmes (*Învățământul secundar profesional și învățământul mediu de specialitate*)
- Higher Education (*Învățământul superior*),

- Post-university Education (*Învățămîntul postuniversitar*).

At the level of higher education the following types of degrees are delivered:

For first cycle studies:

- Bachelor (*Licență*)
- Diploma in medicine/pharmaceutics

For the second cycle:

- Academic/professional Master (*Master*)

Doctoral studies refer to post-university education and include the following degrees:

- PhD (*Doctor*)
- Doctor of Science (*Doctor Habilitat*)

Types of tertiary education institutions

Higher education in Moldova is carried out by the following types of institutions: universities, academies and institutes.

A university (*Universitate*) is a specialized Higher Education Institution (HEI) that:

- performs studies commonly in a wide range of fields / specializations,
- provides initial and continuing education of specialists in various fields of social life,
- conducts fundamental and applied scientific research into a wide range of areas,
- and ensures interconnection with the labour market.

An academy (*Academie*) is an HEI that performs studies in a general field of professional education like economics, law, arts etc.

An institute (*Institut*) is an HEI that performs studies in a given specific field.

Examples:

- State University of Moldova; Technical University of Moldova; Agrarian State University, etc.
- Academy of Economic Studies; Academy of Public Administration; Academy of Transport, Informatics and Communications, etc.
- State Institute for Continuing Education; Military Institute of Armed Forces, etc.

In Moldova there are 30 HEIs including 17 public and 13 private.

The total number of students involved in HEIs is 106 900, 83% at public HEIs and 17% in

private.

The basic difference between public and private HEIs is in the source of financing: public HEIs are funded from the state budget while private ones are self-financing. For the rest, all HEIs must follow the national regulatory framework regardless of the type of ownership.

State owned HEIs have an admission plan established by the government. For private HEIs the Ministry of Education sets some restrictions on the number of students enrolled per subject.

2. Distribution of responsibilities

In Moldova higher education is under the responsibility of Ministry of Education and other ministries of the central public authority. Because of the small size of the country, there is no delegation of responsibility to regional and local authorities in respect of higher education.

The competences of public authorities in establishing, reorganization and abolition of state higher educational institutions are explained below:

The Ministry of Education, all branch ministries and state departments have the right to make proposals regarding the establishment, reorganization and abolition of state higher educational institutions. Proposals are submitted to the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education examines the proposals presented and submits a draft decision to the Government. The Government, after examination, submits the proposal to the President. The President of Moldova takes the final decision regarding the establishment or reorganization and abolition of the state higher educational institutions.

The basic responsibilities of the Ministry of Education, as the central public authority in the area of higher education, include the following:

- Higher Education policy development;
- Regulatory framework development;
- Cooperation with other ministries in the area of higher education;
- Approval of annual admission plans;
- The share of higher education financing from the state budget;
- HEI evaluation and accreditation;
- Intergovernmental cooperation in the area of higher education and degrees recognition.

3. Governing bodies of Higher Education Institutions

The main administrative and consultative bodies at institutional level are:

The university senate, the senate bureau, the administrative university council, the faculty council.

The operation of HEIs is determined by the University Charter, adopted by the university senate.

Students are represented in the university senate, the administrative university council and the faculty council with a share of up to 25%.

HE institutions administration

HEIs are administrated by university senates, headed by rectors;

Faculties – by faculty councils, headed by deans;

Departments – headed by the chairs.

HEI rectors are elected on a competitive basis by the university senate. The final assignment of rectors to their position is made by the Government.

HEI operation is regulated by a University Charter, adopted by the university senate.

HEI rectors in Moldova have established the Rectors' Council as a consultative body.

University autonomy

State higher education institutions can receive the status of an autonomous university, in accordance with existing legislation.

University autonomy is related to the university governance, structure and functioning, teaching and research activities, administration and financing, etc.

4. Financing

For state HEIs the main source of financing is the state budget. The HEIs benefit from other related sources, such as income from training, retraining and research activities as well as donations etc. Among other sources, the most significant income is from students' fees.

Budget allocation depends on the number of students.

5. Students' contributions and financial support

About 46% of the students involved in state

HEIs study on a budget financing basis and 54% on a fee paying basis (self-financed).

The total share of self-financed students in private and state institutions is 74.4%.

Study fees are established by university senates; for the first cycle fees vary from EUR 250 to 500 per year, depending on the study programme and year of study.

Students' scholarships paid by the government vary from EUR 30 to 50 per month, depending on the year of study and academic performance. There is a social scholarship which amounts to 18 Euros per month. For orphaned students there is an allowance of EUR 30/month regardless of a student's academic performance.

At national level there are about 32 300 students in need of housing, while dormitory accommodation was provided only to 18 700 (58%). The cost of dormitory service is approximately EUR 75 per year.

6. Licensing, quality assurance and accreditation of institutions and/or programmes

Licenses for educational institutions are granted and withdrawn by the Licensing Board, an independent entity. Any educational institution for which the license has been revoked may submit a new application for a license only after 3 years from the date of the license withdrawal decision.

State and private educational institutions are subject to mandatory accreditation which includes two steps:

licensing - granting the right to organize and provisionally conduct the educational process;

accreditation - granting all rights as foreseen by the law.

Accreditation of a higher education institution is requested after the first award of a given qualification degree.

The basic criteria for accreditation of private educational institutions refer to the teaching staff, the content of study programmes, the technical-material basis and economic and financial performance.

For accreditation, an HEI has to have at least 60% full time employed teachers according to the standard requirement for Moldova.

7. Admission

The Ministry of Education establishes the admission rules. Admission quotas by higher

education professional fields are determined by governmental decision.

Admission to the first cycle is on the basis of marks obtained at the secondary education final exams. Candidates can apply for admission to 3 specialties, finally choosing one. The existing admission regulation establishes quotas for each higher education institution according to the type of graduated study programme completed (degrees received), residency (rural / urban) and study language. The quota for each category is determined by its share in the total number of candidates in a given year. Admissions regulations provide some facilities for certain categories of disadvantaged candidates (up to 15 percent of the total number of candidates in the budget financing admission plan).

Admission requirements for the second cycle are determined by the state and university admission regulations. Registration for admission is done for the same field of study as for the finalized first cycle. Where a candidate applies for a research Master programme in a field which is different from the one of his Bachelor degree, there is a prerequisite for admission; the candidate, on his own, must take compensatory courses for some core and specialized disciplines, established by the university, for a total amount of 30 credits.

The competitor should pass three admission exams: for a specialized discipline, a modern language and computer use.

Admission on a fee paid basis is pursuant to the same regulation, after the completion of admission to the budget-funded candidates.

Admission to vocational programmes in Moldova is on the basis of a gymnasium diploma, secondary education diploma or Bachelor degree, depending on the level of vocational education.

Student enrolment in the academic year 2009-2010¹ was 19 425 students at first cycle level and 2 470 at second cycle level.

8. Organisation of the academic year

The main organization parameters of the academic year are determined by the Law on Education. The academic year starts on the 1st of September. The duration of the HE study programmes varies according to the HE cycle (I or II) and the field of study: the first cycle comprises three-four (6-8 semesters) academic years and the second cycle from one to two years (2-4 semesters). Each semester

lasts fifteen weeks. There are a summer holiday, Christmas and Easter holidays and a holiday at the end of the first semester. At the end of each semester there is an exam session. Exams can be oral or written.

The Moldovan higher education system provides full-time, part-time and distance learning courses. The part-time and distance learning programmes can be provided only by higher education institutions that deliver full-time programmes. The part-time programmes last usually one academic year longer than the full-time programmes. An academic group does not exceed 25 students.

9. Curriculum content

The Ministry of Education developed and delivered to HEIs curriculum frameworks for the first (2005) and second (2007) cycles' study programmes. The national curriculum framework has been transposed into a wide variety of formats representing the specificities and orientation of each higher education institution, each field of professional education and each specialisation.

HEIs' educational programmes include a set of courses (modules) which are divided by degree of their obligation and comprise a choice of:

- compulsory courses;
- optional courses;
- elective courses.

For a programme with 240 ECTS, depending on the role of the discipline in professional formation, courses are divided into:

- fundamental (50-80 ECTS);
- general skills and abilities (up to 15 ECTS);
- socio-humanistic orientation (25-35 ECTS);
- specialization oriented (50-95 ECTS);
- orientated towards the second cycle (25 ECTS);

10. Assessment, progression, certification and degree

There are intermediary and final exam sessions. The final evaluation for a given discipline includes a series of components related to: course attendance, intermediary evaluations, course assignment, labs, and final exam mark.

Students progress from one year of studies to the next if they have accumulated at least 50 of 60 credits, on condition that during the next semester the difference of 10 credits will be made up.

The first cycle of higher education ends with passing two state exams and defending a thesis. Graduates who have successfully passed these requirements are awarded the title of licensed specialist under the appropriate

¹ <http://www.admiterea.md>

profile and speciality and a Bachelor (*licență*) degree. Graduates who did not pass the exams may receive a certificate upon request.

Master studies end with the defence of a graduation thesis. If successful, graduates are awarded the title of Master and a Master degree diploma is issued.

A Master diploma certifies that its holder has acquired knowledge, general and professional competences as well as specific cognitive abilities. A Master degree confers the right to hold teaching positions in higher education or research institutions and to apply for admission to a PhD.

11. Academic staff

The main categories of academic staff (teaching positions) in HEIs in Moldova are as follows:

- university assistant (asistent universitar), university lecturer (lector universitar), superior university lecturer (lector superior universitar),
- associate professor (conferentiar universitar), and
- university professor (professor universitar).

Once every five years all teaching positions are declared vacant and must be occupied on a competitive basis. The qualifications needed to access these categories are set out in the regulation which governs access to the main categories of academic staff (*Regulamentul cu privire la ocuparea posturilor didactice*).

Once a candidate has passed through the selection procedure he/she will sign a contract for a 5-year period.

The teaching staff involved in the higher education system in the academic year 2008/09 comprised 6 415 persons; 2 704 of them are holders of doctoral degrees (2 301 PhD and 403 *habilitat doctors*), 54% were women. In addition, the auxiliary staff, including technicians, engineers and librarians, numbered 2 190 persons.

12. Research activities

Research and development in HEIs is conducted by departments and laboratories. In these activities, besides the teaching staff the students are involved. National policy in the area of research is developed and implemented by the Academy of Sciences.

Research is basically financed from the state budget. Involvement in the international research programmes is another source of financing.

13. University-enterprise cooperation

University-enterprise cooperation includes the following main components:

1. Student placements,
2. Enterprise support to HEIs in terms of defining curriculum content, enterprise specialists' involvement in the teaching process, reinforcement of the technical and material basis,
3. University support for enterprises in carrying out studies and research.

14. International cooperation

Moldovan citizens can study abroad on the basis of intergovernmental or inter-ministerial cooperation agreements, as well as on their own account.

Foreigners can study in Moldova on the same basis.

Fruitful cooperation with EU Member States and neighbourhood countries has been established in the framework of the Tempus and Erasmus Mundus Programmes, which has led to a transfer of educational know-how and best practices to Moldova and the bilateral mobility of students and academic staff.

At the beginning of the academic year 2008/09 the total number of foreign students at Moldova's HEIs amounted to 1 200 persons, with the following breakdown - from Israel (24.6%), Ukraine (22.2%), Turkey (12.2%), Russia (11.5%), Syria (8.4%), Romania (6.4%), etc.

II. Current challenges and needs

1. Trends and challenges

The national Higher Education system priorities are fully in correspondence with Bologna values. In this regard over the last years several changes have been operated:

- reorganization from 1 September 2005 of the higher education into a two-cycle system: a Bachelor cycle of 3–4 years, and a Master cycle of 1-2 years;
- elaboration and implementation of the *Curriculum Frameworks* for the first and second cycles;
- the National Qualification Framework (for the First Cycle) was outlined;
- an ECTS implementation guide has been drawn up;
- diploma supplements (Bachelor programmes) have been drawn up and implemented;
- quality assurance bodies have been established in the framework of each higher education institution;
- a system of internal quality assessment

has been developed and implemented;

In November 2009 the new power established in Moldova rejected the *Code of Education* which had passed through parliament twice as not corresponding to educational standards and trends. In June the Ministry of Education delivered to the Government a new Code which is to speed up the development of education in the country.

According to experts, the methodology of developing a new Education Code requires consistency of the educational system, ensuring continuity and interconnection between the components, creating premises for development of the field, targeting towards European educational standards and general human and national values.

Another point of concern is the quality of the reforms implemented. There is a need for turning back and polishing the newly established schemes and mechanisms and building capacity at all levels of the educational system.

2. The Bologna Process

The Bologna cycle structure

Level of implementation of a three-cycle structure compliant with the Bologna Process	Partial/limited introduction of Bologna structure
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Student workload/duration for the most common Bologna programmes			
Bachelor programmes	Various combinations	Master programmes	120 ECTS (2 academic years)

Bachelor/master cycle structure models most commonly implemented	Various combinations
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European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)

Legislation on ECTS	Legislation governing the arrangements for implementing ECTS has been introduced.
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Level of implementation of ECTS	Over 75% of institutions and programmes are using ECTS for both transfer and accumulation purposes. Allocation of ECTS is based on learning outcomes and student workload.
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Diploma Supplement (DS)

Implementation of the Diploma Supplement	Bologna DS issued in the vast majority of study programmes	
Diploma Supplement issued	Automatically and free of charge	In the language of instruction and/or English

National Qualification Framework (NQF)

Stage towards establishing a National Qualification Framework		Not yet started formally.
		Step 1: Decision taken. Process just started.
	X	Step 2: The purpose of the NQF has been agreed and the process is under way including discussions and consultations. Various committees have been established.
		Step 3: The NQF has been adopted formally and the implementation has started.
		Step 4: Redesigning the study programmes is on-going and the process is close to completion.
		Step 5: Overall process fully completed including self-certified compatibility with the Framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

National Quality Assurance System

National Body for Quality Assurance		
Name	Quality Assurance Agency	
Year of establishment	2008	
Status	Government-dependent body	
Principal "object" of the evaluations	Institutions plus programmes	
Body responsible for	Both public and private higher education institutions	
Main outcome of the review	X	A decision granting the reviewed institution/programme permission to operate/teach at certain levels/undertake research, etc.
		Advice on how the reviewed institution/programme can improve quality in specific areas

Recognition of qualifications

Ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention	YES	1999
Adoption of national laws/regulations required to implement the Lisbon Recognition Convention	-	-
Institution responsible for recognising foreign qualifications for the purpose of academic study in the country	Ministry of Education, Information and Qualification Recognition Office	
Institution responsible for recognising foreign qualifications for the purpose of work in the country	Ministry of Education and Specialized Committees in the frame of HE institutions	

III. Participation in EU programmes

1. Tempus

Moldova has participated in the Tempus Programme since 1994.

1. Statistics

Number of projects in which one or several institutions in the country have been involved (as coordinator, contractor or partner)

	TEMPUS I and II	TEMPUS III	TEMPUS IV		
	1990-1999	2000-2006	2008	2009	2010
Joint European Projects	4	18	9	0	5
Compact Projects	5	0	0	0	-
Structural & Complementary Measures (Tempus III) Structural Measures (Tempus IV)	0	10	0	2	0
Total	9	28	9	2	5

Higher education institutions with highest TEMPUS participation during TEMPUS I to III (1990-2006)

Institutions	Total	Number of projects	
		JEP	SCM
MOLDOVA STATE UNIVERSITY (CHISINAU)	21	15	6
TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF MOLDOVA (CHISINAU)	15	11	4
CAHUL STATE UNIVERSITY	7	3	4
STATE UNIVERSITY 'ALECO RUSSO' (BALTI)	7	3	4
MOLDOVAN PEDAGOGICAL STATE UNIVERSITY 'ION CREANGA' (CHISINAU)	6	3	3
STATE AGRARIAN UNIVERSITY (CHISINAU)	6	4	2
TIRASPOL STATE UNIVERSITY (CHISINAU)	6	2	4
ACADEMY OF ECONOMIC STUDIES OF MOLDOVA (CHISINAU)	5	3	2
THE CONTINUING EDUCATION INSTITUTE (CHISINAU)	4	1	3

2. Impact of the TEMPUS programme

The Tempus programme in Moldova has over years been the driving force for institutional and national reforms in the area of higher education. All Moldovan state universities have taken part in Tempus.

Tempus projects in Moldova have had a significant positive impact on staff development, course upgrades, teaching practices, teaching means used and university management practices. Bologna priorities such as the development of national qualification frameworks, quality assurance, ECTS etc. have also been the subjects of some projects successfully implemented in Moldova.

A series of successful Tempus projects have been carried out to implement new Master courses. These projects have had a positive impact on curriculum development, student mobility and staff development.

Projects focusing on university relations with the local labour market have made it possible to strengthen the relevance of curricula against labour market needs, to improve the practical work of students and their placements within enterprises.

Since 2007 a team of Higher Education Reforms Experts (HEREs) has been involved in HE policy development in the country. The selected experts are highly professional, actively playing a key role in the promotion of the Bologna Process priorities.

The HEREs counsel and advise local higher education institutions with regard to the introduction and implementation of the national reform strategy. In particular, they provide assistance to local universities in the following Bologna areas: Quality Assurance, The Three Cycle System and Recognition.

2. Erasmus Mundus

Erasmus Mundus (2009-2013) is a cooperation and mobility programme in the field of higher education with a strong international focus. It operates through three actions:

Action 1 – Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes (Masters Courses and Joint Doctorates)

Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes are operated by consortia of higher education institutions (HEIs) from the EU and (since 2009) elsewhere in the world. They provide an integrated course and joint or multiple diplomas following study or research at two or more HEIs. Masters Courses and Joint Doctorates are selected each year following a Call for Proposals. There are currently 123 Masters and 24 Doctorate programmes offering EU-funded scholarships or fellowships to students and scholars from all over the world.

Action 2 – Erasmus Mundus Partnerships (former External Cooperation Window)

Erasmus Mundus Partnerships bring together HEIs from Europe on the one hand and from a particular region in the world on the other. Together the partnerships manage mobility flows between the two regions for a range of academic levels – bachelors, masters, doctorate, post-doctorate – and for academic staff. The programme is focused on geographical "lots" of countries or regions covered by the EU's financial instruments for cooperation. These lots include most Tempus countries. New partnerships are selected each year through Calls for Proposals.

Action 3 – Erasmus Mundus Attractiveness projects

This Action of the Programme funds projects to enhance the attractiveness, profile, image and visibility of European higher education worldwide. HEIs (and other key players in the HE sector) may apply.

More information: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus

Number of students/staff participating in the programme

Erasmus Mundus – Joint degrees (Action 1)

	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Students	9	5	5	6	10	6
Scholars	-	-	-	-	1	N/A

Nationals of the country participated in the programme for the first time in 2005-2006 (students) and in 2008-2009 (scholars).

Erasmus Mundus– Partnerships (External Cooperation Window, Action 2)

Year of Grant Allocation	2007	2008	2009
Undergraduate	23	26	16
Master	16	13	23
Doctorate	12	7	11
Post-graduate	1	7	5
Academic staff	8	8	9
Total	60	61	64

Institutions participating in the programme up to and until 2010

Institutions	Action 1 Joint Programmes	Action 2 Partnerships	Action 3 Attractiveness projects
Cahul state university "B.P.Hasdeu"		X	
Centrul de informatii universitare			X
Comrat state university		X	
Moldova state university	X	X	
Universitatea "Perspectiva-int"		X	
Universitatea de stat "b. p. Hasdeu" din Cahul		X	
Universitatea de stat din Moldova		X	
Universitatea de stat din Tiraspol		X	
Universitatea tehnica a moldoveo		X	

IV. Bibliographical references and websites

1. *Law on Education* no. 547 of July 21, 1995, modified in 2005.
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3. *Guide on the Implementation of the National Transfer Credits System*, approved by M.E.Y. Feb. 2006
4. *Curriculum framework for the first cycle (licentiate studies)*, The M.E.Y Regulation No. 202, July 01, 2005
5. *Organization of examination for completion of the bachelor programme*, Order nr. 84 of Feb. 15, 2008 of the Ministry of Education and Youth (M.E.Y.)
6. Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova - www.edu.md
7. AllMoldova Info portal - <http://www.allmoldova.com/ro/moldova-news/1249046342.html>
8. National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova - www.statistica.md

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