"Generalized report

on the results of the external evaluation of study programs in Law of the Republic of Moldova, compared to a reference from at least one European country" *

Introduction

One priority objective for the higher education reform of the Republic of Moldova is to ensure access and quality of educational services provided to the beneficiaries of the education system in the legal system. In this regard the Ministry of Education initiated a process of amending the Law on Education regarding quality assurance in higher education, also launching other actions relating to quality assurance. Thus, within the **Justice Sector Reform Strategy for the period 2011-2016 and the Strategy Implementation Action Plan**, one of the key actions is to achieve external evaluations of higher legal education quality in Moldova, in accordance with European best practices and the principles of the Bologna Process, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova.

In this context, an international procedure was launched aiming at implementing an integrated sectoral and general evaluation regarding legal sciences, to evaluate undergraduate programs in the field of Law offered by higher education institutions in the Republic of Moldova, with all preliminary activities such a process requires (developing a Methodology for the evaluation and training of internal evaluators from higher education institutions responsible for drawing up the self-evaluation reports underlying the evaluation visit) and with system analysis activities following the achievement of evaluations.

* Title taken from the Specifications for contracting external evaluation services of Law programs

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Taking into account the fact that when drafting the above mentioned Strategy, there was no specialized agency of quality assurance in the Republic of Moldova, an international bidding procedure for the evaluation of these services was initiated, in which ARACIS (RAQAHE) participated and which it won, thus starting its project in January 2014 with an initial estimated duration of 12 months.

In this context, given the details of the Specifications, the fact that ARACIS has a specific set of indicators for the field of Law, as well as a Permanent Specialty Commission for this field, consisting of 9 prestigious academics in the field of legal sciences and a total of over 50 legally trained evaluation experts who know both the Romanian and the international legal higher education system, including the system of the Republic of Moldova, was an important element for the activities required to achieve the objectives set by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova.

The algorithm followed for the performance of activities that enabled the evaluation process of undergraduate study programs in the field of Law and the processing of information obtained for the preparation of this generalized report was a normative-formative-evaluative one, meaning that the following activities were implemented:

Activity 1: Adjusting the external evaluation methodology of the study programs in the field of Law and of other relevant normative acts in this area. This activity was an essential element of the external evaluation procedure, being designed to allow the organization of other activities whose purpose was the external evaluation process. Thus, a total of five ARACIS experts analyzed the Methodology proposed by the Ministry of Education and conducted a series of adjustments and adaptations in accordance with the latest European practices in the field, the Methodology being completed by an Evaluation Guide and by a Guide intended for universities regarding the specific evaluation manner.

Activity 2: Training of internal evaluators and self-evaluation. Once the evaluation tools (the methodology and other specific normative acts) were adjusted, the training of the internal evaluators in the 17 universities participating in the project was conducted, given that they were to draw the self-evaluation reports underlying the evaluation of study programs. Considering the importance given to students in this task, students were also included in the training process of each evaluated study program.

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From a methodological and logistical point of view, the training session was held in Chisinau, during one week (from March 10th to March 15th 2014), with specific training from five ARACIS trainers, for three teachers and a student in each evaluated program, and representatives of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova.

After the training of internal evaluators, universities were given a period of ten weeks to draw up the self-evaluation reports, which were submitted to the Ministry of Education in May 2014. During this period, internal evaluators who have so requested received advice from ARACIS experts.

Activity 3: The actual evaluation activity was organized on two levels, as follows:

- The first step included evaluation activities with two or three day visits for each program, involving three experts for each program and one student in four programs. The evaluation visits took place between June 9th and June 14th 2014 and assumed the mission of 25 expert evaluators in the Republic of Moldova (20 teachers, 5 students) who drafted the evaluation documents used for the achievements of the evaluation reports from which the elements analyzed in this Generalized Report were retrieved. This activity was supplemented by an additional evaluation mission to four evaluated programs to consolidate visit records and to obtain further details, given the low compliance level of standards in their case.
- The next step considered the analysis of visit reports and drawing up evaluation reports in their primary version, after the evaluation visits, which took place during the months of June and July 2014;

Activity 4: Drafting a generalized report on the results of the external evaluation of study programs in Law for the 17 law programs in the participating higher education institutions, by comparison with a reference from at least one European country.

This Report comparatively presents the results of the 17 undergraduate degree programs in law, and the results of two undergraduate degree programs in the field of Law in Romania, to which the evaluation criteria in the Evaluation Methodology adjusted within the project and implemented within the evaluations performed during June-July 2014 were applied. The two programs used as external reference come from an institution of higher education (Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj Napoca), and from a private higher education institution (Danubius University in Galati) being

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externally evaluated by ARACIS in same period with the evaluation in the Republic of Moldova.

Although this report shows the fulfillment degree of the evaluated study programs in a summary table, it is desirable that its reading should not be considered a ranking or a classification between different study programs, a conceptual analysis in the perceived quality of each evaluated study program, also related to the organizing institution being recommended.

With the completion of this Report, all project activities that can be summarized by the following undertaken and achieved objectives are completed:

- An external evaluation methodology and other adjusted normative acts;
- A training session with the people responsible for the development of self-evaluation reports in higher education institutions, which resulted in 80 people trained;
- Evaluation visits to 17 undergraduate degree programs at public and private universities in Chisinau, Cahul, Comrat and Balti;
- 17 reports on the external evaluation of the study programs in Law evaluated;
- A generalized report on the results of the external evaluation of the study programs in Law for the 17 programs compared with two references from Romania.

This report presents a comparative analysis of the results of the 17 study programs in the field of Law in the Republic of Moldova and the two references in Romania (Ch. I), which allows the development of a SWOT analysis on the evaluation criteria and the study programs (Ch. II), of which some aspects of the system related to institutional capacity, admission procedures and ensuring study conditions for students, teachers, material and scientific basis, quality management and management quality and educational process can be deduced (Ch. III). A final chapter is devoted to the manner in which students, including those who have written self-evaluation reports and evaluating students, have perceived the quality level of the programs under evaluation.

Chapter I – Results of the external evaluation process

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The external evaluation process of undergraduate programs in the field of Law, achieved in a sectoral manner, was a premiere in the Republic of Moldova. The analysis of evaluation reports, visit records and self-evaluation reports reveals a number of general considerations on certain trends in the higher education legal system in the Republic of Moldova.

As noted above, 20 ARACIS evaluating experts, prestigious teachers from accredited universities in Romania, of which seven members of the Standing Committee of Legal Sciences within ARACIS, 5 evaluating students, of which two PhD students at accredited higher education institutions in Romania participated in the evaluation of the 17 undergraduate programs.

The evaluation process lasted two or three days for each program, during which the evaluation teams examined the details of the self-evaluation reports on the spot, requesting additional elements, where appropriate.

The evaluation methodology focused on seven generic criteria, with a total of 117 different indicators. The results of the evaluation process are presented in Annexes 1 and 2, which reveal the scores obtained by each program evaluated and the scores obtained by two undergraduate degree programs in the field of Law in Romania, for which the same evaluation grid was applied.

Of the total number of programs evaluated, with respect to four of these, although the final score was higher than that required for the three-year accreditation with action plan (over 58 points), the score obtained for the effectiveness of the educational process (Criterion B) was below the minimum threshold of 30 points set for accreditation.
In the other cases, the score obtained for criterion B was included in a range from 36 to 48 points, and the total score was between 85 and 109.5 points.

Programs used as a reference in Romania came from a state university and a private university, the scores obtained by them being 113 and 111.5 points in total, of which for criterion B 48 and 46.5 points.

From the analysis of the data presented in the centralizing table in Annexes 1 and 2, we can retrieve a number of aspects that require closer analysis regarding the main issues of study programs in the field of Law in the Republic of Moldova, namely a series of similar elements highlighted in programs in Romania.

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Thus, a first finding that stands out for the 17 programs in the Republic of Moldova is the fact that over 50% of them do not have all necessary means to achieve the objectives assumed, whether we refer to scientific resources (courses, books, lecture notes, treaties etc.) or human resources. However, in almost the same proportion, it was found that study programs and curricula partly correspond to the framework plan.

At the same time, evaluating experts stressed the existence of some nonconformities regarding the manner in which educational activities are carried on, among which the following can be mentioned:

- study subjects in the curriculum are presented with some deviations from a logical sequence;
- curricula do not always ensure the possibility of achieving an active-participative learning process for students or the possibility of using modern teaching methods;
- titular teachers of teaching lines partially cover the educational process with courses and educational materials developed by them;
- databases on the employment and professional development of graduates are incomplete;
- part of the total teaching staff is involved in scientific research, who drawing on the results of research by developing courses, laboratory works, projects and theses;
- low participation in specialty conferences of teachers and students;
- reduced valorization of research results through publication in prestigious journals.

More details and interpretations are revealed in Annexes 1 and 2, given that Annex 1 schematically illustrates all scores, for a comparative analysis, while Appendix 2 shows the degree of criteria fulfillment for each program, thus justifying the above outlined scores.

However, we emphasize that although the table in Annex 1 presents the evaluated programs in the order of scores obtained, this cannot be a ranking or rating, the more that the respective order is not found in scores for criterion B, where there are programs whose scores are superior to programs that have achieved higher total scores.

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Chapter II – SWOT analysis

The evaluation activities of ARACIS specialists primarily considered the areas, criteria and benchmarks included in the Methodology of evaluation of professional training programs in the general field of study Law, approved by Order of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova no. 956 / 10.07.2013.

On the other hand, in situations where reference criteria and indicators required additional clarifications they considered the legal normative acts in force and also, the experience acquired at ARACIS and European level regarding their scope.

In order for final results to reflect situations that evaluation teams had the opportunity to meet, as objectively as possible, there were permanent exchanges of views regarding the manner of assessment and quantification of information obtained during visits.

A number of general issues, concerning the regulatory and institutional context in which the activities of Law programs in the Republic of Moldova are carried out and also concerning the adequacy level to the evaluation criteria set out by the specific methodology, have thus resulted.

We shall group these findings below, in a SWOT analysis that aims at achieving an objective picture of the realities existing at the moment of carrying out the activities of the project.

1. Strengths

- ✓ The existence of central administration will to introduce systemic quality standards of higher education in the legal field.
- ✓ The opening to the adoption of European standards and experiences in the field.
- ✓ The reality of the existence of both public and private legal higher education.
- ✓ The responsiveness shown by higher education institutions regarding the implementation of the new quality indicators and evaluating activities pursuant to them.

2. Weaknesses

- ✓ The inadequate legal framework. The Education Act does not contain provisions relevant to the quality of education; there is no specific law on the

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subject, and the draft Education Code was adopted during the evaluation of study programs.

- ✓ The legislation in force allows the organization of the study program in the field of Law at department level (although the functional unit must be the faculty), which induces the possibility of lack of representativeness of specific programs in terms of number of students and teachers and regarding the quality of specific activities.
- ✓ Specialized intensive study programs (land, geodesy, cooperatives and criminology) and, implicitly, the restriction of the role of fundamental subjects, causes insufficient assimilation of knowledge in traditional areas of law and rather gives these programs master programs features.
- ✓ Low salaries of teachers are likely to reduce the level of involvement and their stimulation and also affect their status in the social environment.
- ✓ The lack of an institutionalized functional dialogue between public and private legal higher education institutions.
- ✓ With few exceptions at the level of legal higher education institutions, the culture of research was not developed. There are many examples of teachers who have not developed their own courses or who have not updated them for a long time; scientific projects are small in number, international scientific exchanges are (except for the Russian and Romanian territory) incipient.

3. Opportunities

- ✓ Requirement existing in the society regarding the provision of professionals to the judicial system, who can benefit from an education system that meets adequate quality standards.
- ✓ Increased demand on the labor market for legal professionals.
- ✓ The possibility of institutions organizing educational programs with a low number of students and teachers to undertake joint activities, possibly stimulated by legislative rules, for better valorization of human and material resources

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- ✓ The opening of higher education institutions to cooperative relationships with partner institutions abroad, other than traditional ones.

4. Threats

- ✓ The decreased number of students against the background of the birth rate decrease and massive migration flows to Europe and Russia.
- ✓ Lack of clarity regarding the legality of carrying out teaching activities in several educational institutions (there are legislative gaps that allow the possibility of more work cards for the same person), and therefore, uncertainties concerning the actual degree of coverage in human resources.
- ✓ The insufficient level of training and motivation of a significant percentage of high school graduates, and hence the need for reforms at this level also.
- ✓ Insufficient financial and logistic resources for carrying out research projects.
- ✓ In some educational institutions there is an inadequate tendency of isolation from the scientific and institutional framework by organizing the educational process in a language other than the official one and thus affecting the general principle of non-discriminatory access to education programs provided by the legislation in the Republic of Moldova and by international standards.
- ✓ The lack of a functional system for the provision of public information about their own activities and sometimes the reluctance to provide such information (up to difficulties in accessing the premises of the institution) are not specific to educational institutions which, by their nature, generate knowledge and information.

Chapter III – Analysis of cross-cutting (system) issues

The comparative study of the evaluation reports prepared by ARACIS experts allows observing the status quo on cross-cutting issues that were subject to review and which we summarize in this chapter. We further refer to the key areas that define a quality education program and which people responsible for legal higher education in the Republic of Moldova could consider the structuring and conducting study programs.

1. Institutional capacity

- there are study programs whose legal status is not clear.

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- in some cases, specialized laboratories are missing or they are not organized, or they have outdated facilities.
- for the entire education system, there is a need to pay attention to the development of standardized and special regime documents.

2. Students

- there are problems regarding the compliance with the specified number of students.
- some institutions do not have databases on the employment and professional development of graduates.
- practical activity internships are not carried out, in all cases, in institutions specific to judicial activities, but in institutions complementary to these activities (geodesy, cooperatives, land, criminology, psychology).
- students felt the need to increase the number of active-participative stages and also, their diversification.
- international academic mobility activities for the benefit of students are reduced in number.
- the adoption of measures to increase the competitiveness and employability of graduates in the relevant specialized fields is recommended.
- it is essential to stimulate a significant number of graduates to continue their studies in Master's degree programs.

3. Teaching staff

- the lists of positions are not standardized in format.
- there are teachers carrying out activities which exceed the number of hours permitted by law.
- it is necessary, in all cases, to have conformity between subjects in the teaching load and the scientific specialization of teachers.
- the necessary attention should be given in order to cover all subjects in the curriculum with teaching staff holding didactic titles and scientific / academic degrees.

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- the research activity of some teachers is poor or without scientific impact. It is recommended to establish certain annual indicators regarding the results of the scientific research of each teacher and to monitor their achievement degree.

- the number of research projects in the field is reduced.

- in many cases, teachers participated in internal / international events on their own account, no financial funds being allocated for this purpose.

- due to financial constraints, educational institutions not fully apply promotion and motivation policies.

- there is a need to ensure continuous training of teachers in diversified forms (besides the classic ones: doctoral studies and psycho-pedagogical modules).

- the necessary attention should be paid to the systematic and comprehensive evaluation of teachers and courses by the student, to the involvement of the representatives of relevant employers in the evaluation of the program, to the achievement by teachers of self-evaluation questionnaires and peer review and to the process of removing nonconformities.

4. The material and scientific basis

- electronic platforms and other TICE means for teaching, learning and evaluation are not used in all cases.

- the books available to students in some institutions are insufficient and outdated.

- in some evaluated institutions, the foreign literature available to students is predominantly Russian, literature in the official language and other foreign languages is less represented.

5. Quality management / management quality

- there is a need to adapt management policies regarding quality in line with the developments and best practices recorded at internal and international level.

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- there is need for a more active involvement of external partners in quality management activities.

6. The planning, development and results of study programs.

- study subjects are not always ordered in a logical sequence.
- some subjects were planned at the beginning of the study period, although students have not acquired sufficient knowledge to assimilate the respective themes.
- evaluators consistently noted the inclusion of subjects that are not specific to the study program in the field of Law, which unnecessarily load the curricula.
- in some cases, legal disciplines have been granted a smaller number of credits than the credits granted to subjects specific to other fields.
- there are examples where curricula are overloaded, the achievement of all activities not being possible without exceeding the legal threshold of the workday.
- it is necessary to reconsider the curricula so as to eliminate the overloaded or over-specialized objectives and the partial duplication of content and to standardize strategies so as to steer students towards active learning. Also, some subjects having complementary study object can be merged.
- full attention should be paid to supplement the curricular support with textbooks, courses and other scientific works of teachers, updated and in line with national and international developments at doctrinal and jurisprudential level.
- many of teachers' works are published in publishing houses or periodicals with low scientific impact.
- there are teachers reluctant to use information technologies in the teaching process and not all classrooms are equipped with technical means appropriate for the teaching and learning process.

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Ch. IV. The vision of students

One of the main achievements of the Bologna process was that both academia and other stakeholders and beneficiaries of the educational process in higher education perceived the idea that students are equal partners in the educational process.

As members of the Committees for the Evaluation and Quality Assurance, students can contribute to the improvement of educational process quality. They can also influence the content of self-evaluation reports by integrating their opinion in the process of external quality evaluation at institutional level, as a self-evaluation report distinct from the institutional one, which includes students' opinion regarding the institutional evaluation integrated process.

In the context of external quality evaluation of undergraduate programs in the field of Law in the Republic of Moldova, ARACIS decided to also involve students in this process, both in terms of self-evaluation and external quality evaluation of the process.

In what follows, we present the manner in which students in evaluated programs perceived the quality of these programs and presented it in evaluation reports and the outcome of the evaluation conducted by evaluating students of ARACIS.

I – The vision of students in evaluated programs

The vision of the students in the Republic of Moldova who developed the self-evaluation reports at student level, largely showed the same elements.

In terms of the elements which they have emerged as positive, they are related to the fact that students are satisfied with the educational offer, regardless of the institution, considering that a legal expert degree is useful for employment and labor market. The majority praised the teaching manner and teachers and the fact that higher education institutions provide them with the opportunity to participate in internships, although in some cases they are not actually useful, due to the fact that they do not take place in institutions relevant to the subsequent exercise of their profession.

The negative elements shown in the most self-evaluation reports are mainly related to course materials, in some cases being insufficient and with outdated bibliographies. They also pointed out that although mobility programs exist, they are not promoted properly and students are not involved in this process, many of them not having information about these mechanisms. Another problematic issue in this context is the segment of internal mobility, since there are no programs for exchange of experience between universities in the country.

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Another issue reported as problematic is that course materials and scientific articles of teachers and research results achieved by students are insufficiently published in conference collections and in journals and libraries either do not have sufficient specialized books in the field, or their offer is outdated.

In terms of material facilities, students have shown that in some cases there is no possibility of accommodation in dormitories and if the dormitories exist, there are deviations from the technical and hygienic - sanitary standards (all dormitories need a modernization process by conducting capital / current repair works. Another problem related to dormitories is also overcrowding, in some cases, with 3 people in rooms for 2 and 5 people in rooms for 4). Also, although it is claimed that the university and dormitories have a WIFI network, in many cases it is not available.

Also, medical services provided to students, where they exist, do not fit the requirements of regulations in force.

Pointing out these elements, students made a number of recommendations for improvements that they expect, mostly relating to material facilities.

An item that has drawn the attention of evaluators was that some of students' reports have been prepared under the supervision of universities or were also signed by the representatives of some higher education institutions.

II. The vision of student evaluators

Evaluating students have prepared evaluation reports for each program, for whose development they studied the Self-evaluation Reports written by students and universities for the undergraduate study program in the field of Law, they analyzed the websites of universities / faculties in which the evaluated programs are carried out, as appropriate, and attended on-site meetings with the leadership of the University, students, graduates and employers, going to different locations of Faculties related to the evaluated programs and their students (classrooms, seminar halls, laboratories, libraries, secretariats, offices of various university services). Evaluating students also requested a series of additional elements and materials during the visit and, in some cases, because the evaluation took place during exam period, they attended the briefing of graduation papers.

The analysis of reports, which focused on evaluating certain elements related to the effectiveness of the educational process, related to students, material and financial resources, and student involvement in quality assurance processes, revealed a number of issues that need to be improved.

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In terms of the general criterion regarding the effectiveness of the educational process, although students were generally satisfied with the training level of teachers, it appears that, for some subjects, they are not provided with course materials, and where this is achieved, materials are not always updated and scientifically accessible.

However, it has been shown for some of the programs evaluated that teaching materials developed by teachers in the last 5 years, where this has been achieved extensively, are of particular relevance. The quality of teaching materials was judged to at the level and in line with the latest developments in information technology and scientific matters. Students have rated some of the materials published by certain higher education institutions as being attractive, clear and explicit, including theory and practice: test cases and their resolution, multiple choice exercises, questions for assessments.

Unfortunately, as found in visit records, very little has been published in the last five years, in some universities.

However, although students have shown that bibliographic resources are, in many cases, insufficient and outdated, the analysis of the printing process of curricular support and teaching materials in the last 5 years reveals a positive trend increasing the quota of the library of faculties responsible for programs in the field of Law.

Another aspect mentioned by students as positive is that they can participate with teachers in scientific meetings and conferences, but the works developed by them are not always published.

Another problem highlighted is that in some institutions there is no access to online scientific databases intended for teaching and research activities (e.g. EBSCOhost, IOPscience, SpringerLink, Cambridge Journals Online, Oxford Reference) as there are in some of the visited institutions.

In terms of subjects studied, students have shown that at some universities, study programs contain too many general education subjects, while some fundamental legal disciplines are reduced as a percentage, both in terms of time allocated and related credits, or do not exist at all.

Also, discussions with students have revealed that teachers generally use the traditional method of teaching courses, plus teaching by presenting slides when they consider it necessary; in some cases, interactive methods of study are also used, in particular during certain seminars, when they organize simulated processes or the

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activities are carried out in groups of students. However, the fact that there are small study groups is an advantage in favor of the student-teacher interaction.

Student evaluation is usually done in accordance with applicable regulations, although there were some cases in which students present at the meetings organized by the evaluation team argued that evaluation manners are presented to them just before the exam period and not at the beginning of the semester, as it would be normal.

With regard to students, evaluation was focused mainly on the way of attracting students and career guidance for graduates, on practice and mobility, as concrete proof of the quality of the training achieved.

Evaluating students concluded that the most widespread mechanism for popularizing the specialization in the field of Law is the recommendation coming from graduates, although there are no institutionalized networks of *alumni* in the true meaning of the word. With regard to career guidance, students have highlighted a number of methods, and the most used is discussions with teachers and to a smaller extent, in some institutions, agreements for collaboration between universities and potential employers, which requires a diversification of these methods designed to provide graduates better career guidance.

In accordance with the self-evaluation report, the right of students to internal and external mobility is assured. However, in the vast majority of cases students were not aware of the possibility of participating in academic mobility, wishing to be involved in such mobility if they had the possibility to financially support themselves, thus bemoaning the lack of internal / external mobility for student and the lack of an effective strategy to promote mobility among students (Erasmus-Mundus, etc.) in most of the institutions visited.

With regard to practice, the students interviewed during the visits have shown that they benefit from this possibility, but they signaled the need to diversify internships offered by universities; in some cases, internships are only carried out in certain institutions (the prosecution/police), which does not ensure a uniform training in all legal professions. Also, although existing agreements between universities and different institutions which organize practice internships for students were evoked, there are many times when it was mentioned that, in most of the cases, internships are obtained by students, with the risk that some very well prepared students may not be able to do their internship in an institution that would have interested them because of legal issues related to the transparency of institutions where such internships are carried out or because of the impossibility to access the institution concerned. The situation of

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institutional transparency was repeatedly raised by evaluated students not only in terms of practical training, but also regarding labor market integration.

In terms of available resources, both at human and material-financial level, evaluating students revealed a small number of teachers in some of the programs, with a high degree of teaching load, with negative effects on the quality and effectiveness of the educational process.

Evaluating students found that, in some of the visited institutions, classrooms were equipped with furniture designed to provide comfort to students, while in others, the conditions were not that appropriate for the educational process. Also, although institutions assert that most of the classrooms and seminar rooms are equipped with multimedia technique (laptop, projector, microphones) and laboratories endowed with special furniture, adapted according to the type of activities carried out (computer science, etc.), it has been found that many of the classrooms and seminar rooms do not have projectors for an interactive manner of teaching, but interviewed students said that some teachers use mobile projectors and projection panels provided by higher education institutions.

Some universities do not have their own dormitories, canteens and gyms. In these situations, universities facilitate access to accommodation in dormitories belonging to other universities or private companies. Unfortunately, although some dormitories are in good condition being well maintained, the discussions with students and on-site visits revealed that some upgrades are needed and, in some cases, rehabilitation works are being carried out. However, the situation regarding the fact that electricity in the dormitories is supplied intermittently, based on a program, which affects students' right to education, was emphasized.

Other highlighted shortcomings were related to the fact that access to the INTERNET is limited in terms of coverage (Wi-Fi), some evaluating students noting the fact that during the evaluation visit, they could not have Internet access, and they also found deviations regarding the are allocated to a student, three students being accommodated in rooms for two and five students in rooms for four people.

Finally, student involvement in quality assurance procedures is performed differently in the visited institutions; in some cases, there was no centralizer on the evaluation of teachers by students; students' decisions in the evaluation and academic quality improvement process are not visible in some of the self-evaluation reports of students, nor in the Annexes of some programs, while in others it is noted that the evaluation of

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teachers and study courses is carried out periodically by interviewing students, who offer suggestions for the improvement of the educational process.

Conclusions

Following this evaluation process, the first of this scale in the Republic of Moldova, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- this sectoral evaluation process contributed to the awareness by higher education institutions in the Republic of Moldova of the importance of the concept of quality assurance in higher education, considering the performance of such evaluations as being also useful in other areas of university studies;

- as it results from the fulfillment degree of performance indicators, both public authorities responsible in this domain and educational institutions should consider further action in those directions which the evaluation process found as not being fully compliant with the standards set by the established methodology;

- higher education institutions should, as much as possible, focus on research and exploitation of its results, and try to direct this activity in relation to labor market needs;

- concerning the field of Law, a general trend detected by evaluation teams is that some fundamental subjects are not sufficiently covered in terms of hourly load and ECTS credits, although the scientific content assumed to be assimilated by students is extremely broad. However, some niche disciplines (e.g. Medical Law, Municipal Law, Land Law) or those without legal guidance are unnecessary in the economy of a Bachelor's degree program in the field of Law.

- concerning students, it was found that although some institutions were capable of schooling a large number of students, human resources and the material basis giving this possibility, the enrollment quotas allocated annually by the Ministry of Education were below this capacity. However, from checks carried out on the spot, it was found that these figures were exceeded in most cases. This situation implies the need for normative and institutional actions to ensure the correlation between institutional capacity available to various providers of higher education and the establishment of a maximum enrollment capacity for students in the first year of studies by the

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Ministry of Education. Following this evaluation process, ARACIS also recommended limits for full-time learning, for each of the programs submitted for accreditation;

The legal higher education system in the Republic of Moldova has the necessary prerequisites to support the training of domain specific skills, provided consideration of such normative, institutional and formative interventions, so that the existing shortcomings found by ARACIS evaluators, which are summarized in this Report, be rectified, thereby implementing a culture of quality in legal higher education in the Republic of Moldova.

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*I, the undersigned **MARIA CRISTINA STEFAN**, authorized translator with no 4092/2000 do certify the accuracy of this translation with the text of the document in the Romanian language.*

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