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**National report for Denmark on
Quality Enhancement in Language Studies
(September 2002)**

1. General Introduction

1.1 Languages spoken in the country in question

The national language is Danish; although there might be a covert national language policy, there is no official, overt language policy. The Ministry of Culture has been working on one through 2000-2001, but it is not known what will happen after the change of government in December 2001 (status September 2002).

Foreign languages are generally taught as follows: The first foreign language is English, taught from the 4th year of primary school; the second foreign language (German or French) is taught from the 6th year, and the 3rd foreign language (French/German, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Japanese, or something else) is taught from the first year of the academically oriented upper-secondary education programmes (students specialising in the humanities / social sciences). The schools will typically offer French/German or Spanish, whereas one or more of the other languages are taught only at some schools. Throughout the school system and in the youth culture in general there is a strong impact of Anglo-American culture and English is almost becoming a second language for at least part of the young generations.

1.2 Modern languages in pre-primary, primary and secondary education

The Danish education system consists of three levels: primary and lower secondary school (a 9 year comprehensive school, also called basic school; responsibility of the municipality and the Ministry of Education), upper secondary school (3 years; responsibility of the county and the Ministry of Education), and higher education (responsibility of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation). Prior to the basic school, there is a voluntary pre-school class (1 year) which most children attend, and there is a voluntary 10th school year.

Youth education is either academically oriented (general upper secondary education) or vocationally oriented (vocational education and training).

1.3 The higher education system

Upon completion of a youth education programme, students may continue into higher education. This is divided into short cycle programmes (typically 2 years), medium cycle programmes (3-4 years; professionally oriented bachelor programmes) and long-cycle (university) programmes.

The university programmes are organised in a 3+2+3 structure in accordance with the recommendations of the Bologna Declaration (1999): 3-year bachelor programmes, 2-year master programmes, and 3-year Ph.D. programmes.

Denmark has a strong tradition for life-long learning, and there is also a parallel programme structure for adult (continuing) education in which the highest level is a 1-year master programme (full-time

equivalent), requiring as entrance qualifications another academic degree as well as a minimum of 2 years of professional experience¹.

1.4 Introduction of the two-cycle structure

The 3+2+3 structure has been implemented in Denmark for approx. 10 years.

1.5 Accreditation of new programmes

All programmes must be designed and defined in relation to the relevant ministerial regulation specifying the general content and structure of the programme.

It is the responsibility of the universities to define the objectives, content and structure of the programme in question and supply needs analyses before any given programme is submitted to the Ministry for approval. Before the final ministerial approval, the board of external examiners for the programme in question (see 1.6 below) as well as a ministerial board of experts, in this case *Statens Humanistiske Uddannelsesråd* (The national education council for the humanities), will be consulted. The details of the curricula and the syllabi are defined by the individual institutions.

This may change with the reforms that have been announced by the government. The rationale behind the reforms is said to be a higher level of autonomy for the universities. No specifics known at this point (September 2002).

1.6 Quality Assessment

Quality control measures include the following:

- Ministerial control and approval of the general framework of all programmes
- External examiners
- Evaluation of curricula
- Assessment of teacher qualifications
- Continuous quality control and quality development

Ministerial control and approval of the general framework of all programmes

All programmes must be designed and defined in relation to the relevant ministerial regulation specifying the general content and structure of the programme, cf. 1.5.

At the institutional level, the faculty councils (elected by faculty, technical & administrative staff as well as students) decide which programmes will be offered. The programme content is decided by the study council and confirmed by the faculty council. In accordance with the Danish University Act, there is a study council for each programme. The government has announced that it will propose a new university act, strengthening the leadership levels of the universities, in the 2002/2003 parliamentary session. Not specifics known yet.

It is the responsibility of the individual institutions to carry out needs analyses, establish focus groups, alumni groups, panels of future employers or other similar entities to ensure the influence of the professional environment on the design of the individual programmes. This is done more or less systematically at some institutions, but certainly not all universities go beyond the measures required by the Ministry of Education & the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation.

External examiners

All programmes approved by the Ministry of Education & the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation have a board of external examiners appointed by the ministry. The external examiners

¹ Further information on the Danish education system may be found at <http://www.uvm.dk/eng/publications/> or www.denmark.dk

either represent future employers in the private as well as the public sector or senior level faculty from other universities / HE institutions, the idea being that the external examiners vouch for the professional relevance of the academic programmes and for the fact that the curricula and their expected learning outcomes are designed to meet the needs of society (private as well as public sector). Whether the system in fact functions in this way is another matter. The author would claim that there are still a number of curricula / syllabi that do not reflect external needs (i.e. society's language needs).

All major final exams, and at least one third of all the exams of any given programme, must be assessed by the internal examiner together with an external examiner.

It is the responsibility of the external examiner to ascertain that the exams

- are designed in accordance with the objective of the programme, laid down in the ministerial regulation and the curriculum
- are carried out in accordance with the general rules and regulations
- are conducted in such a way that all students are given fair and equal treatment and that the assessment is established in accordance with the general rules and regulations.²

The board of external examiners submits an annual report to the study council as part of the continuous quality assurance and quality enhancement process. In rare cases the board of examiners will submit the report directly to the Ministry of Education if they reveal serious quality problems.

Evaluation of curricula

Course programmes, i.e. their structure, content, modes of learning, assessment, etc. are evaluated on a regular basis by the Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA).³ These evaluations result in an extensive report, published by the evaluation institute, and based on a self-assessment report and an expert peer review.

In addition to this, it is the responsibility of the individual institutions to decide to which extent they will submit themselves to further internal or external evaluations of the programme curricula, the teaching & learning process, etc. At a number of institutions, the study councils conduct regular student evaluations of the individual course modules, often in the form of questionnaires.

Assessment of teacher qualifications

New members of faculty (academic staff) are selected on the basis of a severe quality assessment process, laid down in government regulations. Once a faculty has advertised an academic post and the applications have been submitted, the faculty council proposes and the dean of the faculty appoints an assessment committee of 3 or 5 members, the majority of which are employed outside the department at which the post has been advertised, and of which at least one comes from another university in Denmark or abroad. It is the responsibility of the committee to assess the academic (research) qualifications as well as the pedagogical qualifications of the individual applicants and submit a written assessment report with a list of all qualified applicants to the dean of the faculty. On the basis of this report and, in some cases, a lecture by and/or interview with the applicant(s), the dean appoints the person s/he considers the most qualified applicant for the post.

This procedure is meant to ensure the quality of university research and teaching through the employment of the best qualified people. University research is of course subject to a number of

² *Bekendtgørelse* (ministerial regulation) # 1021, 20 November 2000.

³ <http://www.eva.dk>

other well-known quality assurance measures both nationally and internationally; this, however, is outside the scope of this report.

Continuous quality control and quality development

At the national (ministerial) level, this is the responsibility of the external examiners, cf. above; quality assessment is also conducted by the Danish Evaluation Institute, cf. above.

At the institutional level, quality control and development is primarily the responsibility of the study council responsible for any given programme. This is laid down in the Danish University Act. However, this is of course an area where there are considerable differences between the individual institutions, and further initiatives may be taken either at institutional level above the study councils or at departmental level, depending on the policies and organisational structures of the individual universities.

Quality criteria may be said to be relatively vague, and there are no official reference points or benchmark statements to guide quality assessment; cf. also chapter 2 below.

1.7 Funding of universities

Education is state funded in Denmark: 6.2 per cent of the GDP is spent on education, which corresponds to the OECD average. Denmark spends more than the OECD average on the basic levels of education and less than the average on the higher education levels. Of the total public expenditure on education, higher education receives 23 per cent; this figure, however, comprises the costs of the education programmes as well as basic research at the universities and the state education grant and loan scheme for students.

In order for the Danish universities to receive their annual government grants, they must conduct all their activities under the general quality control measures of the Ministry of Education, cf. 1.6 above.

Funding for full time bachelor and master programmes is completely output based, i.e. the university receives a certain amount for each successfully completed exam. Students who fail their exams do not generate funds. Thus it is in the best interest of the universities to make sure that the curricula and exams are organised so that as many students as possible pass the first time they sit any given exam. They may, however, sit the same exam three times; if they do not pass the third time, they need a dispensation from the study council in order to continue. If the dispensation is not granted, they will have to discontinue the study programme.

Funding for continuing education diploma or master degree programmes at university level is a combination of state grants and tuition fees. The ministerial funding is paid annually and is a function of the number of students (full time equivalent) that have paid their tuition fees.

Ad hoc courses are paid by the participants (or their employers, as the case may be).

This output-based resource allocation is combined with other quality control mechanisms such as continuous evaluation (peer reviews), centrally appointed external examiners, and quality development programmes.

1.8 Admission of students

Students are admitted on the basis of levels of qualifications and level of performance at the upper-secondary level exams. The institutions decide on the number of students accepted on the programme every year; if there are more applicants than the universities are willing to accept, those with the highest grade point average will be enrolled.

1.9 Student fees and student support

All students are eligible for the state loan and grants scheme if they attend programmes approved by the Ministry of Education (e.g. grants for a maximum of 6 years for a 5-year programme).

Tuition is free of charge for the full-time degree programmes in higher education. This, however, does not apply to the continuing education system, which is financed by a combination of state funding and tuition fees. In the tertiary or higher education system, students must buy their own books and other teaching material.

1.10 Departments / units in higher education responsible for programmes in the area of languages
Foreign languages are taught at the teacher training colleges (for basic school teachers). Foreign languages, communication and culture is taught in a variety of programmes at the universities in Aalborg, Aarhus, Copenhagen, Roskilde, and Southern Denmark as well as the two business schools in Aarhus and Copenhagen. Translators & interpreters are trained at the two business schools (the completion of the MA programme leads to the professional certification of sworn translators granted by the Ministry of Trade & Industry. The quality of this system is, however, being questioned because all graduates can obtain the certification, irrespective of their exam results, and because the certification is "for life").

There are no language centres teaching foreign languages and cultures to students of non-language disciplines at the Danish universities. Degree programmes combining studies of languages and business or other disciplines are found at the business schools and some of the universities.

The business colleges and the engineering colleges have some foreign language modules.

2. Description and analysis of measures relating to defining and designing courses and programmes in the area of languages

2.1 Have learning outcomes been defined for programmes or portions of programmes in the area of languages?

Learning outcomes are defined in the curricula and syllabi, but only in vague terms such as "to the highest level", in quantitative terms such as "covering xx pages" or "at a level similar to the content of xx book". General qualitative descriptors or reference points for the level of competence required at bachelor or master levels of a given discipline are not applied; this goes for programme content as well as language competences and skills.

2.2 Are the learning outcomes described as the result of consultations with a variety of stakeholders?

Universities tend to restrict themselves to consultations with the board of external examiners, cf. 1.5 and 1.6 above. However, learning outcomes may be defined as a result of further consultations with stakeholders, and in recent years the ministries have required such consultations before they approved proposals for new programmes.

In an ideal world, such a procedure would also be applied to existing programmes on a regular basis, and the most professionally oriented language programmes, e.g. at the business schools, are typically the result of such consultations with external stakeholders, but even here there is room for improvement. At the traditional universities such procedures are being discussed and may be introduced in the future, possibly as a result of pressure from the ministries combined with the current drop in applications for traditional philology programmes, which has led some of the universities to rethink their curricula.

2.3 Do the learning outcomes stated reflect specific professional profiles?

This only applies to the primary school teachers who are trained at the teacher training colleges and to a certain extent to the language-related programmes of the business schools (language

mediators, specialist in a foreign language plus communication, ICT, area studies or similar programmes, translators and interpreters). Similar bachelor programmes are found at the universities in Aalborg, Roskilde, and Southern Denmark.

At the traditional universities (Aarhus and Copenhagen), the programmes still try to cater, with the same curriculum, to future researchers (university faculty), upper-secondary level teachers, and graduates going into all kinds of academic work in the private and public sectors. The University of Copenhagen has recently issued a white book on the status quo and future challenges of the modern language programmes⁴. Similar development work is also going on at the University of Aarhus.

It is a serious problem that the general interest in foreign language programmes is on the decline because it can be foreseen that there will be a serious lack of e.g. sufficiently qualified upper secondary school and teacher training college modern language teachers in a few years time unless the trend is reversed. Such a reversal will most certainly only take place if there is a reorientation of the modern language programmes towards a clearer set of professional profiles that appeal to the young generations.

2.4 Are the learning outcomes stated relevant to personal development and citizenship?

No.

2.5 If there are statements regarding the outcomes of language learning, are these related to accepted levels of proficiency, for example to the skill-specific levels of the Common European Framework of Reference of the Council of Europe?

No.

2.6 Admission requirements for the various programmes in question

For bachelor degree programmes, cf. 1.8 above. For each programme the university defines the level of qualification, A, B or C, with A being the highest possible level for upper-secondary graduates. The level of qualification only defines the level at which the student in question has been taught; it does not say anything about whether the student passed this subject at the final exams or his/her final grades. The universities therefore see that they often accept students with a B-level who are more qualified than other students with an A-level in the same subject.

The universities must spell out which (bachelor) programmes give access to any given master programme. The level of performance (grade point average) at the final exams of the bachelor programme is not taken into consideration as long as the student has passed the final exams.

2.7 New course content based on newly defined learning outcomes

Not really.

2.8 New forms of assessment based on newly defined learning outcomes and content

Courses are assessed at the final exams at the end of each semester; there is, however, a trend towards the assessment of coursework as well as independent project work and 24-hour or one-week exams where students work at home, in the library, or in the learning resource centres instead of sitting 4- or 5-hour exams. This, however, is not really linked to newly defined learning outcomes, but rather to a wish to let the students complete their exam papers in a more realistic setting than the traditional written exam; this also enables the students to exploit information and communication technologies at the exams.

⁴ It is available in Danish at <http://www.staff.hum.ku.dk/lauha/IDENTITE/hvidbog.htm>

3. Description and analysis of quality measures relating to the process of teaching and learning

As for quality measures relating to the process of teaching and learning, this is left to decisions within the individual institutions. Most HE institutions do, however, carry out surveys by asking all students to fill in a questionnaire (anonymously) covering the objective and content of a given course / a given module as well as the process of teaching and learning, including the performance of the teacher(s). These questionnaires are then processed by the head of department (who has the HRM responsibility of the department faculty) and by the study council responsible for any given programme. However, practices vary considerably as there is no official requirement that such surveys be conducted.

In general, the study councils (academic staff and students elected by their peers) are responsible for curriculum development as well as the running of programmes and the monitoring of the process of teaching and learning. The fact that the members are elected by their peers and the director of study is elected from among the academic staff in the study council obviously has pros as well as cons. One of the latter may be that the faculty serve in the council for a number of years, during which time they also remain colleagues of the teaching staff whose performance they monitor, and they may therefore not always be prepared to react in a sufficient and necessary way to problems that arise. The counterargument to this would be that the election of the members of the council from among their peers ensures that they know the field of study and any problems that need to be addressed.

Measures designed to facilitate quality language learning

3.1 New methods facilitating quality language learning

There is no observable shift in the methods of language learning at HE level.

3.2 Learning environments facilitating language learning

There is no observable shift in the environments of language learning apart, of course, from a clear tendency to co-operate with sister institutions abroad (electronic chat rooms, tandem work, exchanges, etc.), especially at primary and secondary school level. The HE institutions exchange students under the SOCRATES programme, engage in LINGUA teaching assistant projects, etc. and thus enable students to improve their foreign language skills as a side-effect of going abroad.

The universities do not provide linguistic preparation before the students go abroad, but take it for granted that the students are able to go as a result of qualifications required at secondary school level. If this is not the case, it is up to the individual student to improve his/her language proficiency at a cultural institute or somewhere else outside the university.

Degree programmes are defined in relation to the ECTS system, and some universities do not require a specific number of contact hours, but leave it to the teachers to devise more flexible programmes during the individual terms. However, this only applies to some universities and is still mostly on an ad hoc basis, depending on the initiative of the individual teacher rather than an institutional policy or strategy.

3.3 Delivery of programmes in other languages

Modern language and language-related programmes are taught in the foreign language in question, and literature is read in the foreign language. However, classes are not always conducted in the foreign language. This applies especially to classes other than those of English (and German).

A rising number of non-language programmes are taught in English at Danish universities. This is done in order to attract foreign students rather than to enable Danish students to follow courses in a

foreign language. Apart from the language or language related courses, no other programmes are taught in foreign languages other than English.

As a result of this, some Danish students are often reluctant to go abroad unless they can receive instruction in English (unless they are students of other foreign languages); however, quite a large number of students are still prepared to follow courses and even complete whole programmes in languages other than English, but there seems to be a need for more diversification of the foreign language instruction offered at HE level in Denmark.

3.4 The quality of student mobility

There are no specific programmes preparing Danish students, linguistically and culturally, for going abroad. It is taken for granted that this is not a problem for them, even though this is not necessarily true.

The improved foreign language competences and skills required during a stay abroad are not recognised by the Danish universities and do not count towards the students' final degrees; rather, it is seen as a positive side effect of a study abroad that will be recognised by the labour market when the students graduate. Since study or work experience abroad is seen as an asset for the university graduates once they enter the labour market, a system according to which linguistic qualifications were recognised (a personal language portfolio) would be very desirable.

3.5 Organisational structures facilitating quality language learning (e.g. language centres)

There are no language centres at Danish universities. It has always been taken for granted that the level of foreign language skills required at upper-secondary level was sufficient for Danish HE students. As indicated above, this is not always so.

3.6 Languages of communication in modern language departments

At the departments where students study their first or second foreign language (English and German/French), most classes are conducted in the foreign language and literature is read in the foreign language. However, when it comes to the students' third language or languages taught ab initio in preparatory classes (before the bachelor or master programme), this is not always so.

Measures designed to facilitate learning in the area of languages in general

3.7 New methods facilitating quality learning in language teacher education

See 3.1 and 3.2 above.

3.8 New methods facilitating quality learning in the training of translators and interpreters

See 3.1 and 3.2 above.

3.9 Preparation for lifelong learning

There has always been a tradition for, especially beginners level, foreign language teaching at institutions outside the primary, secondary and tertiary systems and their degree structures. This, however, has not, and still does not, lead to formally recognised qualifications.

3.10 Identification, validation, recognition, and certification of skills, competences and knowledge required outside a given institution

Unfortunately, this is not found in Denmark.

3.11 To what extent has a new learning culture been introduced into programmes and provision in the area of languages

Generally speaking, a new learning culture has not been introduced at HE level in Denmark, even though individual teachers or departments may experiment with a new learning culture in the area of

languages. At the Aarhus School of Business, a three-year project (2001-2004) runs pilot projects regarding new modes of learning in the area of languages. Participation is still voluntary for the teachers involved, but this may change after 2004/2005 when the project has been evaluated.

4. Description and analysis of quality measures relating to the training of higher education teachers and trainers working in the area of languages

4.1 Brief description and analysis of the status quo regards (i) entry qualifications required of university teachers working in the various programmes or portions of programmes; (ii) measures relating to the updating of the qualifications of the teachers in question

Language teachers for the basic school system are trained at the teacher training colleges. As regards the upper-secondary, academically oriented programmes, language teachers are university graduates, a minor part of them from the faculties of modern languages at the business schools. There is a subject-specific professional, post-graduate training programme for upper-secondary level teachers.

At the university level, the individual institutions are under an obligation to offer a general teacher training module for assistant professors (tenure track). Further pedagogical training of university teachers is the responsibility of the individual institutions and varies considerably. However, the general international trend to focus more on university didactics than it has previously been the case is also seen in Denmark, and some universities have established so-called pedagogical units in their organisation; there are, however, no specific units for teachers engaged in the area of languages.

4.2 Status, career prospects, and conditions of contract of university language teachers

University teachers are primarily employed in permanent positions on the basis of their research qualifications. Since there are no language centres or similar units, there is also not a category of permanently employed, full time language teachers in the university structure. Teachers of Danish for foreign students or ab initio language instructors for the less common foreign languages are all, formally speaking, temporary staff (teaching assistants) even though, in some cases, these people have been employed to teach the language courses for many years. The career prospects for these language teachers are actually very poor because they do not have the chance of qualifying for any permanent position and they are all paid the minimum wage per hour without the possibility of a pay increase with experience or further qualifications.

4.3 New qualifications required of university teachers working in the area of languages as a result of the introduction of new learning outcomes, new content, new learning methods and new forms of assessment

No new qualifications have been formally recognised, and teachers experimenting within this field typically exchange views with and learn from each other.

4.4 Programmes and courses for the training of university teachers in the area of languages

The only programme catering to the language teachers in primary, secondary or tertiary education within the area of languages, and experimenting with new modes of learning, is the master programme in *ICT & Language Learning* offered in conjunction by the Aarhus School of Business and the University of Aalborg under the auspices of *IT-Vest*.⁵

Continuing education modules for language teachers is offered by the teacher training colleges, the Danish University of Education, the universities, and the professional organisations (in some cases the initiatives of the organisations are also financially supported by the Ministry of Education).

⁵ <http://www.asb.dk/itv>

There is a certain amount of ad hoc in-service training at the individual institutions.

4.5 Staff development programmes

There does not seem to be specific staff development programmes within the area of languages at Danish universities.

The Danish Ministry of Education has a project, *Kvalitet der kan ses* (Quality that can be seen).⁶ According to the executive summary of the 2000 report on this project, there seems to be a very positive attitude to in-service training among teachers. The extent varies between the different areas of education and can therefore not be further specified. However, the ministerial report argues that in order to maintain and develop the subject-specific, pedagogical and management competences needed, the qualifications of teachers and management must be strengthened.

Some initiatives have been taken in this area, e.g. the creation of a Master programme in general upper secondary pedagogy for university graduates.

4.6 Human resources management

Human resource management, including staff development, is the responsibility of the individual institutions.

4.7 Measures designed to promote the development of university language teachers

Such measures do not seem to be available.

4.8 Staff mobility programmes

Language teachers at all levels of the education system have been active in the EU and other international programmes, and have thus benefited from the mobility programmes, joint development programmes, shared experiences, and exchanges of ideas within the areas of languages and cultures, especially in the last 10-15 years. However, there is of course still room for improvement of the quality of the programmes just as it would be desirable if there was a larger number of teachers involved in these project. It would enhance the dissemination of examples of good practice and other project results throughout the country.

4.9 Refreshment courses

Only available on an ad hoc basis, if at all. There is thus no formal requirement that language teachers or teachers at foreign language departments maintain and develop their own foreign language competences and skills.

4.10 Tailored continuing education

Only available on an ad hoc basis, if at all.

The teacher's participation in innovation and development projects contributes to the upgrading of the participants' pedagogical qualifications. In the management area, an increasing number of teachers now also go for management programmes in addition to the short management courses of a more introductory and ad hoc nature.

5. Description and analysis of quality measures relating to the organisation and management of the process of teaching and learning

⁶ The Danish Ministry of Education initiative *Kvalitet der kan ses* (Quality that can be seen) is described in detail at <http://www.uvm.dk/pub/2000/kvalitet/> with an executive summary in English at <http://www.uvm.dk/pub/2000/kvalitet/16.htm>.

5.1 Descriptions of programmes, courses, modules and other offerings provided by those responsible to ensure transparency and comparability

According to the Danish University Act (1994), the faculty council, chaired by the dean, approves the curricula and allocates annual funds to each programme. It is then the responsibility of the study council to run and monitor the programmes within the framework given by the faculty council. It is the responsibility of the individual universities to establish the framework within which the programmes and course modules are to be described. However, most courses and programmes are described in accordance with ECTS standards to ensure transparency and comparability for Danish as well as international students.

5.2 Calculation of student workload

Student workload is officially calculated as 60 ECTS per year. However, it is sometimes the case that an existing programme has been divided into a certain number of credits per module / exam without seriously taking into consideration the student workload involved. Practices vary between universities and departments.

5.3 Introduction of information management systems

Danish universities must have a specific electronic management information system to keep track of the academic achievement of individual students, etc. This is due to the fact that the state funding for courses as well as for international exchanges is based on the successful completion of an exam or the actual exchange.

5.4 Division of tasks among staff members teaching on a specific programme

This is the responsibility of the study council for each individual programme in co-operation with the department heads.

5.5 Systems for the external and internal evaluation of courses or programmes

This is basically described under 1.6 above.

Further external evaluation, benchmarking or accreditation is possible, but not obligatory. Some universities have participated in international evaluation or benchmarking of the whole university or part of the university's activities, e.g. internationalisation; other have undergone accreditation of specific units or programmes. There are as yet no such initiatives within the area of languages.

5.6 Concluding remarks on the organisation and management of Danish universities

University governance is the subject of a heated debate in Denmark at the moment. The University Act foresees a system in which the rector, the deans, the heads of department as well as the directors of study, the senate, the faculty councils, and the study councils are all elected for (typically) four years by their peers (faculty, technical & administrative staff as well as students). Those supporting the system do so because the collegiate system is supposed to ensure that everyone is prepared to respect the decisions taken by their peers. Opponents argue that exactly because the whole governance structure consists of people elected by their peers, these people will not be prepared to take the necessary decisions as to the development of the organisation, including quality assessment and quality enhancement measures, especially when it comes to less popular issues like e.g. revision, reorganisation or discontinuation of activities, cut backs, etc. As it is, a large number of people take up leadership positions without having had any management or leadership training and may therefore also be said to be ill equipped for dealing with the complex issues and problems they need to address. It can be foreseen that the government will take steps to change the university act and the governance of universities within the next couple of years. Whether this will lead to improved quality in the organisation and management of the teaching and learning process is another matter.

6. Concluding remarks: The Bologna process

Most of the quality measures described above have a long history in Denmark and are thus not the result of recent developments in Europe or beyond. However, it goes without saying that the whole concept of the open European Higher Education Area and the so-called Bologna process is reflected in new initiatives taken and the general education policy discussion at national as well as institutional level.

Even though quite a few Danes may belong to the group of Euro-sceptics, the international mobility of the students and the university graduates is indisputable, and it is important for the Danish universities to adopt the different measures laid down in the Bologna Declaration (1999) and the Prague Communiqué (2001).

The Bologna process

All HE institutions must define their courses in accordance with ECTS and supply a Diploma Supplement (as of 1 September 2002, according to a ministerial order) in order to ensure the transparency of the programmes as well as the final assessment of the students.

As it appears from the above, the programmes are defined in accordance with the concept of two main cycles in the Bologna declaration.

As it also appears from the above, there is already a set of national quality control measures, laid down in the regulations of the Danish Ministry of Education. However, the international transparency of these measures is questioned by some universities. As a consequence of this some universities also go for international benchmarking or evaluation of their programmes and/or their institution, whereas others have applied for international accreditation. This applies to some of the professionally oriented programmes such as e.g. the faculties of business administration at the business schools. At this stage there are no international accreditations available for foreign language programmes.

As it appears from the description of the quality enhancement measures above, the majority of these are laid down in government regulations and thus apply to all academic disciplines, and not only to the area of languages. Further measures may of course be initiated at the individual HE institutions.

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