

BOM CALLS HIGHER EDUCATION STAKEHOLDERS FOR CORRESPONDING AND RESPECTABLE ACADEMIC CULTURE AND PERFORMANCE WITHIN EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE BALTIC STATES

As outcomes of the Baltic Organizational Meeting (BOM) seminar “Academic Fairness. The Quality of Studies Aspect”, that took place in Vilnius, Lithuania on May 24-27, 2012 BOM stresses the decent academic culture as crucial component within HE systems in the Baltic states. BOM sees academic fairness as a fundamental value of higher education (HE) that must be entirely present and respected. Students, so as other participants and bodies of HE are equally responsible, while participating in study process and while violating academic fairness.

BOM sees diverse teaching methods, appropriate assessment forms and clear sanctions of unfair behaviour as the main tools to reduce environment that results in academic unfairness during studying process. Expected outcomes together with competences-based teaching and learning processes, increase of eye-to-eye examinations and problem-solving tasks would detract the necessity and opportunity to cheat while studying. BOM sees the tools described as ways of improving QA within HE systems.

BOM marks a strong need of increasing the regulations and tools for local student bodies to participate equally in implementing QA in a fair and appropriate way, so to create a field of equal responsibilities of all participants. In this regard HE and governmental institutions together with National Unions of Students are responsible for engagement of student bodies and provision of relevant resources and capacities. Provision of academic staff, administration and students with the relevant proficiency on the issues, regarded as academic unfairness (cheating, plagiarism, absence of sources etc.) within HE institutions will lead to ensure academic culture and awareness in HE systems of the Baltic states.

BOM recognises the input and the role of students as full partners in starting, improving and revising of study programmes and learning outcomes. By doing so capacity of young generation to take more responsibility of own studies is being built, where an assurance of corresponding financial and organisational capability should be put on the agenda.

BOM welcomes activity of Lithuanian National Union of Students on the field, namely “Academic Fairness Index of Lithuanian HE Institutions” survey as a good example of responsible awareness and capacity building within HE system. National Student Representatives agree on critical monitoring of academic fairness issues in their countries in comparable ways. Keeping academic fairness in the focus of study process is a matter of moral honesty and academic integrity for both students and academic staff.

BOM emphasises importance of establishing independent arbitrage mechanisms in HE as a way to ensure fairness within academic participation. Suchlike mechanisms as ombudsman and other institutions, independent both from the state and HE institutions are among key conditions for sustainable and transparent functioning of the HE systems in the Baltic states, thereby ensuring academic culture and securing progress in reforming HE systems.

BOM insists on academic ethics to be recognised as important way for growing moral, democratic and responsible citizens and parents out of students. Through honest and fair behaviour in each and every possible way, students and academic community should become role models for the entire society.

BOM calls for more public debates and surveys to be conducted, as a way to secure the issue of academic fairness as a crucial one for the HE systems. National Student Representatives express commitment to quality and fair play in learning and research and call on ad rem attention from administrators of HE institutions to be given to the matter, as well appeal for assurance of resources and capability in monitoring, researching and investigating academic fairness in the Baltic states.

Baltic Organizational Meeting (BOM) is a regional cooperation agreement between National Unions of Students in the Baltic states. Signed originally in Vilnius, Lithuania on September 30, 1999 by Lithuanian National Union of Students (Lietuvos studentų sąjunga) and Student Union of Latvia (Latvijas Studentu apvienība) it aims at promotion of closer cooperation between National Student Unions, exchange of knowledge concerning educational, social, political and economical processes in Baltic countries. As for year 2012 BOM is an agreement for Lithuanian National Union of Students (Lietuvos studentų sąjunga), Student Union of Latvia (Latvijas Studentu apvienība) and Federation of Estonian Student Unions (Eesti Üliõpilaskondade Liit).