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Long Night's Journey into Day: Implementation of Czech Policy on Higher Education Quality Assurance

Doctoral Thesis

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Summary

This doctoral thesis takes up the theme of policy implementation in higher education. More specifically, the thesis aims to analyse the implementation of Czech system-level policy on higher education quality assurance in the period from 1990 until 2010. This policy is analysed through the implementation instruments: accreditation, the Higher Education Development Fund, the Development Programmes, and the platform for dissemination of examples of good practice. The conceptual framework guiding the enquiry combines insights from the policy-action continuum concept, the instrumental approach to policy implementation, including Vedung's typology of policy instruments, and Actor-Centred Institutionalism. The enquiry undertaken in the thesis attests to the theoretical and empirical obsoleteness of the Cerych and Sabatier framework, traditionally used in analysing higher education policy implementation. Furthermore, the enquiry identifies the stick-carrot-sermon instrument set-up as a distinct implementation style. As a result of the enquiry, several shortcomings are identified that limit the utilisation of the four implementation instruments, and recommendations are formulated on how to ameliorate them in policy practice.

Keywords: Policy implementation, higher education, quality assurance, policy instruments

Scope of Thesis: 510,940 characters (footnotes, references, and annexes not counted in)

Declaration of Authorship

I declare that this doctoral thesis and the work presented in it are my own and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

Prague, 14 June 2011 **Jan Kohoutek**

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> We can no longer take quality for granted in higher education. We can no longer presume that we all know what we mean by "quality" higher education. Quite the contrary. (Harvey and Knight 1996)

> Quality … you know what it is, yet don't know what it is … But some things are better than others, that is, they have more quality. But when you try to say what the quality is, apart from the things that have it, it all goes poof! (Pirsing 1974)

1. Introduction

Researching quality in higher education is not an easy task. In reference to Pirsing's oft-quoted statement, anyone wishing to study this issue sooner rather than later encounters the problem that quality in higher education is essentially contestable. Two general reasons can be put forward to validate this statement. The first relates to a distinctive characteristic of higher education, encompassing considerable professional autonomy, organisational fragmentation, and diffusion of decision-making powers (Westerheijden 1995), which has evolved in time as universities have historically played an important role in nation- and state-building. This role has centred around supplying states with educated manpower, building a national consciousness and identity, integrating national elites, and providing a national research capacity for economic and social development (Olsen and Maassen 2007). Hence the formation of higher education as a loosely coupled policy sector (Weick 1976) owes a great deal to the societal mission that higher education has traditionally played nation-wide, that is: the pursuit of liberal education through teaching and learning, research, and its relationship with the wider community (Barnett 2009). Given these distinctive characteristics of higher education, it seems safe to assume that the sector of higher education confronts government with specific problems when it wants to implement sectoral policy (Maassen and Van Vught 1994). The policy domain of higher education quality assurance is no exception to this assumption.

Second, quality in higher education as a specific sectoral domain subject to research (Tight 2003, 2004)[1] is particularly difficult to grasp. This is due to the variety of stakeholders' perspectives, making it elusive of prescription, and no easier to describe and deliver in practice (Harvey and Green 1993). To wit, after almost three decades of systematic research

[1] Tight (2003, 7; 2004, 397) lists quality as one of the domains/thematic areas of higher education research.

into higher education quality assurance, we can rest assured of only one thing–that there is not, and most probably never will, be any unanimous agreement on what constitutes quality in higher education and on ways of assuring it. As Van Vught and Westerheijden (1993) remind us, it is not surprising that Pirsing's fictional hero finally went crazy when he thought that he had found the essence of quality.

Despite the sectoral specifics of higher education and the highly nebulous nature of the concept of quality, quality assurance of higher education[2] has been subjected to government policies[3]. Government quality assurance policies started being implemented largely in reaction to the changing relation between higher education and the state, with the state becoming less interventionist but still retaining aspirations to steer the higher education sector. Governments were thus willing to grant higher education institutions (HEIs) more autonomy, provided quality is assured (Fredericks, Westerheijden, and Weusthof 1994). Implementation of system-level[4] policies on higher education quality assurance entails the design, choice, and application of corresponding implementation instruments. In the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), where system-level policies of this kind got off the ground in the first half of the 1990s, after the governments broke away from the practices of the communist period, these implementation instruments have been primarily associated with accreditation (Temple and Billing 2003).

The Czech Republic is no exception to this general scheme of policy development (Šebková 2003). However, despite a reasonably long tradition of accreditation in the Czech Republic, starting in 1990, there are still gaps in our knowledge as to the extent to which accreditation contributes towards achieving the state policy goals in the quality assurance policy domain *in relation to the operation and effects of other state-level implementation instruments*. To the author's knowledge, *no implementation analysis drawing on fundamental*

[2] Assurance of quality in higher education defined as a process of establishing stakeholder confidence that provision (input, process and outcomes) fulfils expectations or measures up to threshold minimum requirements (Harvey 2004-09). The term "quality assurance" is treated as *generic*, encompassing the terms "quality enhancement/improvement", "quality assessment", "quality monitoring", and "quality control" done both internally (within the institution) or externally (mostly by a designated agency, such as the Accreditation Commission, as in case of the Czech Republic).

[3] Policies defined as "legislative and political statements of governmental or organisational intent" (Mark, Green, and Shaw 2007, 3–4)

[4] Tight (2003, 10–11) distinguishes seven hierarchical levels of analysis of higher education research, i.e.: (1) the individual level; (2) the course level; (3) the department or centre [faculty] level; (4) the institution, university or college level; (5) the nation or country; (6) the system level, (7) the international level. The difference between levels 5 (national) and 6 (system) is that the latter addresses an essentially systemic issue without making any explicit or central reference to a single country (ibid.). However, as Tight (2003, 11) admits, "the placing of [level 6] between national and international in the hierarchy is essentially arbitrary and somewhat debatable". To avoid possible controversies, the thesis treats levels 5 (national) and 6 (system) as equal, i.e. essentially identical. Thus, in this thesis, *the focus is placed on analysing the national (Czech) higher education system* with interconnections and outreaches to levels 3, 4, and 7 made where appropriate.

theoretical concepts of public policy implementation and taking account of the range of instruments of which the state makes use in putting goals of a quality assurance higher education policy into effect, is available in the Czech Republic[5]. Such a theory-based, multi-instrument implementation analysis, written in English language, will contribute to theoretical advancement which the quality assurance policy domain needs (Harvey and Newton 2007). Moreover, it will enhance the understanding of implementation processes in higher education within the CEE region, on which little information is available internationally. As Teichler (2005) points out, "on the one hand, any parochial information on higher education in individual colleges in the UK is widely known. On the other hand, almost all research results in the domain of higher education in France, Spain, … and the Central and Eastern European countries remain unknown internationally" (464).

To fill the existing gaps in the theory and practice of sectoral quality assurance, this thesis presents an implementation analysis of the Czech system-level policy on higher education quality assurance spanning the period 1990-2010. This definition of the subject of inquiry means that no quality assessment of the state research policy or of the impact of system-level policy measures on institutional community involvement is attempted. Instead, attention is placed on the rationale, functioning, and effects of instruments through which the state gets involved in implementing a system-level policy in the higher education quality assurance domain (substantive policy instruments[6]), and on the extent to which these instruments help to achieve the corresponding policy goals. At the same time, attention is also given to the roles and interactions of actors involved in putting the instruments into operation. Four system-level policy instruments are analysed: accreditation, the Higher Education Development Fund (HEDF), the Development Programmes (DPs), and the platform for disseminating examples of good practice (Platform). The analysis draws on theoretical insights into public policy and higher education policy implementation as well as actor-interactions in policy processes. It is argued that, given the elusiveness of the quality concept, an instrumental approach to policy implementation represents a promising line of research, as

[5] In the Czech context, the works "Teorie a nástroje vzdělávací politiky" [Theories and Instruments of Education Policy] and "Vybrané problémy vzdělávací politiky" [Selected Issues of Education Policy], as parts of the trilogy on education policy edited by Jaroslav Kalous and Arnošt Veselý (Praha: Karolinum, 2006), probably come closest to the theme. However, although the works in question do contain chapters dealing with higher education policy (Ježek 2006; Šebková and Kohoutek 2006a, 2006b), these chapters do not explicitly aim at implementation instruments beyond accreditation, let alone implementation theory. It is worth pointing out that selected chapters from the trilogy, including those on higher education quality assurance, management, and funding, are available in English (In Kalous, J., J. Štoček, and A.Veselý, eds. 2007).

[6] Generally thought of as instruments such as command and control regulation or subsidies that seek to effect changes in how governments address public issues or deliver services (Eliadis, Hill, and Howlett 2005).

it enables us to decompose the corresponding state policy goals and to transcend the limitations of the top-down orientation that hamper empirical utilisation of the framework developed by Cerych and Sabatier (1986), which has traditionally been used in higher education implementation analysis.

The thesis is broken down into eight chapters. The difficulties of conceptualising quality and analysing policy implementation in higher education settings are touched on in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 builds on the initial reflections by formulating research questions and research goals alongside presenting the methodology for the thesis. Chapter 3 reviews theory developments pertaining to conceptualising quality and researching policy implementation in the field of public policy and sectoral higher education policy. Based on these reviews, Chapter 3 presents the conceptual framework guiding the implementation analysis undertaken in the thesis. To put the implementation analysis into context, Chapter 4 gives an overview of the fundamental developments underlying the formation and implementation of Czech system-level policy on quality assurance between 1990 and 2010. Chapter 5 analyses the rationale, functioning, interaction patterns, effects, achievements, and limitations that pertain to accreditation, the HEDF, the DPs, and the Platform. Selected standpoints of the respondents interviewed are given to augment the analysis. The findings are summarised and reviewed in Chapter 6. The major policy options for developing the Czech system-level policy on higher education quality assurance through the four implementation instruments are formulated in Chapter 7. The thesis ends by presenting answers to research questions, implications for policy theory, and recommendations for policy practice in Chapter 8.

2. Research questions, thesis goals, and methodology

2.1 Research questions and goals

Although, at first glance, the sectoral specifics of higher education may suggest otherwise, governments are far from silent and paralysed when it comes to implementing policy measures aimed at changing the characteristics of higher education (Gornitzka, Kyvik, and Stensaker 2002). In the quality assurance domain, the significant challenges that governments face when formulating and implementing policy goals, owing to the contestable nature of quality, offer plenty of potential for analysis. This is all the more so because the implementation of these policies has not been complemented by studies drawing on

fundamental theoretical approaches to public policy implementation. As Gornitzka, Kyvik, and Stensaker (2005) point out:

> A look at the pace and scope of the many public reforms and policy initiatives in higher education throughout the OECD area gives strong indications of a rather proactive state ... In a situation where tight public budgets, accountability claims due to new social demands, and output of higher education are on the agenda, policy analysis and, in particular, implementation analysis should be squarely at the centre of the research interest of students of the sector. However, it could be questioned whether this is the case (35–6).

In actively shaping higher education policies, governments make use of the means through which they put their policies into action–policy instruments. In the quality assurance domain, in the CEE region specifically, *accreditation* is generally considered to be the instrument of government policy implementation for higher education quality assurance (Rozsnyai 2003). However, in consideration of a plethora of accreditation-oriented analyses, significantly less is known about other, possibly less visible, implementation instruments. The state policy on higher education quality assurance in the Czech Republic makes a case in point, attesting to the tendency to study policy instruments in isolation rather than in combination (Peters and Van Nispen 1998; Eliadis, Hill, and Howlett 2005). This gap in our knowledge is unfortunate, since an analysis of the design, choice, and application of policy instruments in conjunction with each other as well as in consideration of the policy context may further increase our understanding of the complexity of the implementation process of government quality assurance policies. Above all, it will enhance our ability to decompose how the concept(s) of quality in use are translated into goal formulation, and what actions are taken to put these goals into operation.

The lack of a process-oriented, theory-driven implementation analysis in higher education research is the problem that the thesis aims to address. To that end, an enquiry into the Czech Republic system-level policy on quality assurance is held. The thesis takes account of the need for theory-based implementation analysis in higher education and the contestable nature of sectoral quality assurance policies augmented by the lack of empirical evidence on implementation instruments *other than accreditation*. In reference to Pirsing's (1974, 164) famous question "What the hell is quality?", the questions that the thesis undertakes to answer can be more specifically (and politely) phrased as:

1. How can public policy and higher education policy implementation be studied?
2. Does a Czech system-level higher education quality assurance policy exist, and, if so what are its goals?

3. What instruments are used for implementing Czech system-level higher education quality assurance policy?
4. How do the system-level implementation instruments function?
5. What are the effects of the system-level implementation instruments, and to what extent do they match the policy goals?
6. What can be done to make Czech higher education quality assurance policy function more effectively?

In providing answers to these research questions, the thesis aims to:

a. Compare theoretical approaches to implementation analysis in the field of public policy and higher education policy;
b. Perform an implementation analysis of Czech system-level higher education quality assurance policy based on the policy-action continuum concept and the instrumental approach to policy implementation;
c. Formulate recommendations for higher education policy theory and practice, with regard to the quality assurance domain.

The formulation of answers to the research questions in line with the goals set out in the thesis may, to some extent, contribute to the advancement of:

- policy implementation theory in higher education (by exploring the utilisation of the public policy-conceived concept of the policy-action continuum complemented by the instrumental approach in comparison to the Cerych and Sabatier framework);
- empirical knowledge on instrument-based implementation of Czech government policy on higher education quality assurance (by applying the instrumental approach to examining the policy content); and
- analytical insights into how such policy implementation can be made more effective (by giving relevant policy recommendations).

More will be said about the theoretical underpinnings of the thesis in Chapter 3. A decomposition of the content of the policy in question through an analysis of the four implementation instruments will be performed in Chapter 5. Relevant policy recommendations will be presented in Chapter 8.

2.2 Methodology

The methodology underlying the thesis enquiry entailed the following steps. First, a review of available documents was made. This document review enabled preliminary standpoints to be formed on the rationale, functioning, modes of interaction, effects, achievements, and limitations of the four implementation instruments under study. The four implementation instruments were: accreditation, the Higher Education Development Fund, the Development Programmes, and the platform for disseminating examples of good practice.

Second, to verify the author's hypotheses, semi-structured interviews with selected respondents were conducted. The purpose of the semi-structured interviews was *exploratory*, i.e. to get a deeper insight into the working of the instruments from the respondents best placed to give relevant information due to their position and/or professional specialisation. Overall, 12 actors were interviewed (see Annex II). Four respondents gave statements on all four implementation instruments under study. The interviews with the 12 respondents were conducted in Czech, and were guided by a simple matrix (see Annex II). The matrix contained the major points to be clarified for each of the instruments, which in turn proved helpful for specifying the strengths and weaknesses in the rationale, functioning, and effects of the instruments. Selected statements of the 12 respondents were used to augment the argumentation throughout Chapter 5, with the aim of identifying major achievements and limitations of accreditation, the HEDF, the DPs, and the Platform (see especially *Letting respondents speak*, Sections 5.1.5.2, 5.2.5.2, 5.3.5.2, 5.4.5.2).

Third, once more precise knowledge of the working of the instruments had been obtained, three policy options for developing Czech system level policy on higher education quality assurance were formulated. The policy implementation instruments that were analysed (accreditation, HEDF, DPs, Platform) were used as components ("building blocks") for formulating the options. The options were underlain by 25 key instrument characteristics (variables) identified as a result of the instrument analysis (see Section 6.5). To formulate the factual content of the options, consideration was given to: the results of the instrument analysis (Chapter 6), the viewpoints of the respondents (Chapter 5), and policy context (Chapter 4). As far as the content of the policy options was concerned, the options differed in the extent of accountability and of trust in the actors. For this reason, the options were called Accountability Land, Moderate Instrumentation, and Trustworthy Partnerships.

Fourth, the applicability of the three options was subjected to assessment through the Dephi method. The Delphi method originated in a series of studies conducted in the 1950s with the objective of developing a technique for obtaining the most reliable consensus of a

group of experts when there is incomplete knowledge about a "wickedly-ill structured" problem or phenomenon (Linstone and Turoff 2002; Franklin and Hart 2007; Skulmoski, Hartman, and Krahn 2007). The Delphi method, ranked among qualitative research methods (Nekola and Veselý 2007), is particularly appropriate when there is no historical data or when ethical or social dilemmas dominate economic or technical issues, as in the area of education (Gupta and Clarke 1996; W. Dunn 2004). Delphis do not and are not intended to produce statistically significant results (Gordon 1994). Delphi researchers employ this method primarily in cases where judgmental information is indispensable (Okoli and Pawlowski 2004). Four key features are necessary for undertaking the Delphi method. These are: anonymity, iteration of the questionnaire for a number of rounds, controlled feedback, and statistical aggregation of the group response (Rowe and Wright 1999).

A key advantage of Delphi is that it avoids direct confrontation of the experts, but the selection of the participating experts is crucial (Gordon 1994). The participants in the Delphi process should be selected to represent a wide range of opinions (W. Dunn 2004), but they should have the necessary knowledge and interest to answer the questions (Hurworth 2005). Depending on the policy issue area, the number and type of participants will vary. The number of rounds is dependent on the purpose of the research, but experience suggests that a two- or three-iteration Delphi is sufficient for most research purposes (Delbecq, Van de Ven, and Gustafson 1975. In: Skulmoski, Hartman, and Krahn 2007). Questionnaires can be structured provided that a sufficient insight into the major issues of the enquiry has been gained (Mullen 2003; W. Dunn 2004). The Delphi method does not call for expert panels to be representative samples for statistical purposes. Representativeness is achieved through the qualities of the expert panel (respondents) rather than its numbers (Powel 2003).

These principles were adhered to when conducting the Delphi to illuminate the enquiry undertaken in this thesis. A panel of 40 experts[7] was created with the participation of experts from academe (20)[8], the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (7), research institutes dealing with higher education (7), and students (6). Apart from proportional participation resulting in expert variety, the notion of "expertness" itself was considered when creating the panel. The experts asked to participate in the Delphi are listed in Table 1, Annex III. In the first round, a questionnaire was e-mailed individually to the experts. The response rate for the first round was 47.5%, with 19 out of 40 experts getting involved. The

[7] All 12 respondents who gave their views in the exploratory interviews were also chosen to participate in the Dephi.
[8] In various positions, including members of the Accreditation Commission.

questionnaire included 25 questions bearing on 25 key characteristics of the instruments (one question per one characteristic). Each question included three options, referring to Accountability Land, or Moderate Instrumentation, or Trustworthy Partnerships, out of which the option closest to the expert viewpoint was to be selected. The same procedure was repeated in the second round with the exception that, this time, experts were given the results of the first round and they were left free to formulate their alternative views on each of the key characteristics. However, the participants made use of this possibility very sporadically. The response rate for the second round was 78.9%, i.e. 15 out of 19 experts e-mailed the questionnaires back. As major consensus was achieved on 21 out of 25 questions, no third round was organised. The results of the Delphi are given in the text (Chapter 7, Section 7.2.4) and in Annex III (Table 2, 3).

Finally, a factor analysis of the results of the Dephi-based enquiry was performed. To perform the analysis, the Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis and the Rotation Method: Varimax were employed. The aim of the analysis was to identify the correlation between the characteristics of the analysed implementation instruments and their groupings into components following the expert choice. For both the first and second round of the Delphi enquiry, the analysis extracted three components. The results of the factor analysis are given in the text (Chapter 7, Section 7.2.5) and in Annex III (Table 4, 5).

Overall, the thesis makes use of a mixed methodology, combining qualitative approaches (document review, semi-structured interviews, Delphi method) and quantitative approaches (factor analysis).

3. Theoretical propositions

Any implementation analysis that aspires to be more than a purely nominal contribution to implementation literature can hardly be made in ignorance of major theoretical approaches to policy implementation. At the same time, insights from policy implementation theory must be brought in line with the subject matter in question, i.e. quality in higher education. For this reason, it seems appropriate first to penetrate the complexity of quality in higher education by presenting policy developments that bear on the implementation of government quality assurance policies and on the formation of concepts of quality in higher education. Second, a review is made of theory accumulated over the years of research into public policy

implementation[9], and into higher education policy implementation. The conceptual framework for the research inquiry in the thesis is constructed on the basis of selected theoretical approaches. The chapter ends with a summary of the major points that have been made.

3.1 Quality and quality assurance policy in higher education

3.1.1 Quality in higher education: Little disputes till the 1980s

To state that "quality is not 'here to stay', if only for the self-evident reason that across the centuries of the university's existence in Europe, it never departed" (Neave 1994, 116) is a fitting encapsulation of the historical perception of quality in higher education. Quality in the sense of achieving academic excellence has traditionally been a central concept of quality in higher education, as "without striving for excellence, there is no way to distinguish higher education from skills training" (Westerheijden, Stensaker, and Rosa 2007, 1). The concept of quality in higher education as achieving excellence entails two dimensions: the internal dimension and the external dimension. While the former reflects a disinterested search for truth and knowledge, the latter refers to universities' services provided to the community (Van Vught and Westerheijden 1993).

Corresponding with the internal and external dimension of quality, two ideal-typical approaches to assuring quality of higher education can be identified. First, the approach based on vesting control over quality in an external authority as developed in France and, second, the English approach of assuring quality internally by a self-governing community of scholars. The combination of assuring quality of higher education by bureaucratic controls (externally) and by academic peers (internally) was regarded as sufficient in the higher education systems of an elite nature that prevailed in Europe till about the end of the 1970s (Westerheijden 1995).

The concept of excellent higher education quality that was assured through bureaucratic controls and academic peer reviews has been contested politically since the (mid) 1980s. The reason was a growing anxiety that national higher education systems in Europe were becoming less competitive and less efficient globally, i.e. they were achieving insufficient quality of educational provision at too high a price (Fredericks, Westerheijden, and Weusthof 1994). The general feeling was that the mechanisms in use up to that time were

[9] Including approaches allowing for studies of the functioning of policy instruments and inter-actor transactions in policy implementation processes.

no longer adequate and should be replaced by differently conceived approaches to quality assurance (Van Vught and Westerheijden 1993, 1994). The differently conceived approaches were to take account of emerging factors that began to change the characteristics of European higher education.

3.1.2 Initiation of government policies on quality assurance in western and Central/Eastern Europe: Similarities and differences

The factors bringing significant changes to higher education in Western Europe since the 1980s have been identified and analysed at great length (Vroeijenstijn 1993, 1995; Harvey and Askling 2003; Šebková 2003; Van der Wende and Westerheijden 2003; El-Khawas 2007; Tremblay and Kis 2008). In sum, these factors are: rapid expansion of student enrolments, limitation of state budgetary allocations to higher education, an increasing role of market forces, redefinition of the governance role of the state towards supervision, expansion in numbers and variety of institutional and programme provision, increasing numbers of international student exchanges, and the changing relationship between higher education and the labour market. Coming under labels such as "massification", "value for money", "marketisation", "deregulation and decentralisation", "diversification", "internationalisation", and "employability of graduates", these factors made quality "a central concept in many discussions on higher education" (Van Vught and Westerheijden 1994, 356).

The re-configuration of the higher education sector due to the effects of these factors showed the limits of assuring quality by external bureaucratic means, and made the concept of excellent quality-as-given contested. This contestation, bringing in political concern for the quality of mass higher education at a time of financial stringency (Harvey and Askling 2003)[10], resulted in the implementation of state policies on quality assurance in higher education. In Western Europe, these policies first started to be implemented around 1985 in Britain, France, and the Netherlands, with other countries, such as Denmark, following suit in the 1990s (Schwarz and Westerheijden 2004b).

Similar trends in quality assurance, delayed somewhat due to the different socio-political conditions, were observable in the Central/Eastern Europe (CEE) region. Under the communist practices that were in place regionally from the mid/late 1940s to the late 1980s, the high quality of higher education was simply declared (Šebková 2004), based on state bureaucratic controls confounded with overt and covert control mechanisms of the governing

[10] As Harvey and Askling (ibid.) admit, "More graduates were needed, but there was no more public money to pay for them" (70).

party's *nomenklatura* system (Schwarz and Westerheijden 2004b). Implementation of government policies on higher education quality assurance in the CEE countries thus began in the early/mid 1990s (Kohoutek 2009b), after disengagement from tight association with the communist-period practices and after the liberalisation of academic structures (Scott 2002, 2007). The implementation of CEE state policies on quality assurance reflected general trends in the transformation of the higher education sector as a whole. These trends were: transformation of higher education curricula, rapid quantitative expansion of sectoral capacity, freeing of access conditions, and sectoral decentralisation (Van der Wende and Westerheijden 2003; Westerheijden and Sorensen 1999). A comparison of the trends bearing on implementation of state quality assurance policies in Western and CEE countries shows some convergence (expansion, decentralisation) as well as some divergence (freer access, curricular transformation). However, it should be pointed out that post-1989 expansion and decentralisation of higher education systems progressed differently in the CEE countries than in the West due to the specifics of transformation in the CEE countries–the rapidity of the change vs. the limitations of the resource base.

Despite the specifics of the situation in the CEE countries, the newly implemented state policies on quality assurance had some conceptual elements in common. Made along the lines of New Public Management ideology, these policies were based on the retreat of the state from direct involvement in institutional governance, and a shift toward less intrusive, supervisory forms (Neave and Van Vught 1991). In return for greater institutional autonomy, HEIs were, however, required to document their spending effectively and efficiently and to accept external evaluation of their performance by a state agency. In changing the nexus between higher education and the state, the newly implemented governmental quality assurance policies made use of the concept of the Evaluative State (Neave 1998). This concept is based on evaluation as an instrument of public accountability, making it possible to make authoritative evaluations, use them as a basis for accountability, and be assured that these steps will produce higher education of better quality (Henkel 1998).

A pilot study of the evaluation methodology used in state-level quality assurance policies across Europe identified five common elements[11] that were conceptualised into the general model of quality assurance (Van Vught and Westerheijden 1994). This model served as a template for analysing government quality assurance policies in many European

[11] These were: an agency charged with evaluation, self-evaluation, external evaluation based on peer review, public reporting, and some (usually indirect) relationship with governmental funding decisions (Van Vught and Westerheijden 1994).

countries. Exploring the applicability of the model, Brennan and Shah (1997, 2000) found variations in terms of the functioning of the national agencies, the level and focus of the assessments, the purposes of the self-evaluations, the external peer reviews, and the way of reporting, concluding that the model is most applicable to countries with medium-size, less diverse higher education sectors with a tradition of state regulation. Similarly, Billing (2004) argues that the general model provides a starting point from which to map deviations, and to which to relate them. In each country, there may be specific additions of elements or omissions from the model, but more usually there are modifications or extensions of elements rather than omissions. These variations are determined especially by practicalities, the size of the higher education sector, the rigidity/flexibility of the legal expression of quality assurance and the stage of development towards the "Evaluative State".

The major difference between Western and CEE countries in the evaluation methodology used in government quality assurance policies before the initiation of the Bologna process lay in the nature of the output. Recognising that national idiosyncrasies make generalisations rather difficult, it is argued that, before 1999, West-European government policies on quality assurance adopted *formative evaluation for institutional improvement*, while such policies in the CEE countries were based on *summative evaluation for programme/institutional accreditation*. The major reason why accreditation instead of improvement-oriented evaluation became the predominant CEE policy approach reflects the different stages of development of CEE and West-European higher education systems at the end of the 1980s. As Van der Wende and Westerheijden (2003) suggest:

> A main difference between Western and Central/Eastern Europe at the time of introducing evaluation systems was that in the West, state-supported higher education systems already had made the change from elite to mass systems, with a reasonable level of state funding. Minimum quality levels, therefore, were not at the forefront of the social problems to be solved by introducing evaluation … In Central and Eastern Europe, minimum levels were at stake, because they had to be redefined after the fall of communism, and had to be preserved in the face of "rogue providers" (private higher education was received with a good dose of scepticism), making accreditation a perfectly sensible option (181–82).

This difference in evaluation methodology lasted till the initiation of the Bologna process, which helped to bring government policies on (not only) quality assurance in the countries of Western and Central/Eastern Europe toward greater convergence.

3.1.3 Bologna process as a supranational catalyst for change

The Bologna process has been one of the most studied processes of European integration of national and institutional higher education policies (Neave and Maassen 2007). Owing to the availability of a range of scholarly works on this subject, including its linkages to the Lisbon agenda, no comprehensive analysis of the Bologna process is attempted here. Instead, selected findings already available are used to sketch out the Bologna process initiatives that are likely to bear on implementation of the national quality assurance policies of the signatory countries.

The signing of the declaration on the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by the ministers of education of 29 European countries, in Bologna 19 June 1999, set the realisation of the Bologna process in motion. However, there is mounting evidence to suggest that the ministers who signed the Bologna declaration acted not so much out of the commitment "to ensure that the European higher education system acquires a world-wide degree of attraction equal to our extraordinary cultural and scientific traditions" (European ministers of education 1999, 2–3), but rather out of the need to use the newly signed inter-governmental agreement as leverage for national policy reforms (Westerheijden 2007; de Wit 2007; Martens and Wolf 2009).

More than ten years after the Bologna declaration[12], the Bologna process, aimed at creating the European Higher Education Area by 2010 and beyond, has grown *in the scope* and *depth* of the areas addressed, as well as *in the number* of signatory countries (from 29 to 46) (Olsen and Maassen 2007). The fact that enactment of the Bologna process reform agendas is not legally binding (Huisman and Van der Wende 2004) should not denigrate the prominence of the Bologna process in historical records (Neave 2009). Nor should argumentation suggesting that the actual impact of the Bologna process agendas on national higher education policies can be problematized due to the grossly inaccurate methodology of the Stocktaking and Trends reports (Neave and Maassen 2007), the limitations of the "soft-law" method of activity coordination (Veiga and Amaral 2006, 2009), and the presence of a high-speed "political" track versus a low-speed "evidence-based policy" track (Neave 2002, 2005). However, the extent to which realisation of the Bologna process reform agendas is compromised by national idiosyncrasies and path dependencies, especially in terms of policy delivery at "street level", is the matter of dispute (Amaral and Neave 2009).

[12] With the precursor in the Sorbonne declaration, signed May 25, 1998 in Paris by the ministers of education of France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom. Although coming as a surprise, the declaration was surprisingly well received both in the signatory countries and across Europe (de Wit 2007).

As to quality assurance in particular, the corresponding Bologna process policy initiatives started right in 1999 with a commitment to promote European cooperation in quality assurance with a view toward developing comparable criteria and methodologies. The wording of this goal has been made more precise over the years. As Witte (2009) comments:

> At the Berlin Conference in September 2003, ministers committed themselves to supporting further development of quality assurance at institutional, national and European level. They stressed the need to develop mutually shared criteria and methodologies on quality assurance and called upon ENQA[13] … to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance and to explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance agencies … These standards and guidelines were published by ENQA in 2005 and adopted by the ministers at the Bergen Conference in the same year. Before they did so, the European Commission put forward another, more far-reaching proposal on how these standards and guidelines should be used, namely, to set up a European register of quality assurance and accreditation agencies (248).

As the comment suggests, the increasing concretisation of the Bologna quality assurance measures that national policies are supposed to reflect peaked in 2005 with the adoption of *the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG) (ENQA 2005) and the positive reception of *the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education* (EQAR). To clarify, national quality assurance agencies must adopt the ESG unless they wish to be blackballed internationally. This involves undergoing a cyclical review against the ESG at five-year intervals (ENQA 2006). Assessment against the ESG is contingent on the agency qualifying for full membership in ENQA and for entry into EQAR. EQAR was formally established in March 2008. Its function is to register those quality assurance agencies that substantially comply with the ESG, and are thus thought of as internationally trustworthy and transparent. Realisation of both initiatives was further endorsed in the 2007 and 2009 ministerial meetings, which called for continued international cooperation in quality assurance (European ministers of education 2007) with respect to external evaluation of EQAR (European ministers of education 2009).

The synergy effects of the Bologna agendas have helped the national policies on quality assurance to converge toward accreditation mechanisms, which brought about the prevailing orientation on accountability (see 3.1.4). This statement is upheld empirically by studies documenting the spread of minor accreditation schemes[14] across the signatory countries since 1999 (Schwarz and Westerheijden 2004a, Kohoutek 2009a). The reasons for

[13] The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.
[14] I.e. accreditation used by national policy authorities to regulate only a part of the higher education sector e.g. vocationally-oriented education.

this policy convergence have been identified as: the increasing prominence on the political agenda of the demand for HEIs to be publicly accountable; the demand for converging labour market and student mobility requirements due to recognition issues related to (parts) of Bachelor–Master studies as a Bologna two-tier study structure; and the demand for a borderless market for higher education without rogue providers getting accredited and sharing in the advantages (Hämäläinen et al. 2001).

In sum, sketching out the Bologna process initiatives that have a bearing on national quality assurance policies reveals a lot of complexity. Despite this complexity, two Bologna process initiatives–the introduction of the two-tier study structure and the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance–stand out as being likely to have an effect on the implementation of national quality assurance policies. Both will be considered in the context of the implementation of Czech government policy on higher education quality assurance.

3.1.4 Improvement and accountability in quality assurance policies

By placing major responsibility for quality enhancement on the individual HEI, which is at the same time accountable to external stakeholders (primarily government), government policies helped to codify two major rationales of post-1980s quality assurance–accountability and improvement. Accountability is required, because government has a constitutional obligation to assure quality of higher education, since it is accountable to parliament for the money spent on higher education (Vroeijenstijn 1995). Although improvement is primarily associated with the process of enhancing, upgrading or enriching the quality of institutional provision or standard of outcomes (Harvey, 2004-09), it is argued that external, i.e. government-initiated, policies on quality assurance must take account of both accountability and improvement. As Vroeijenstijn (1995) points out:

> External quality [assurance] has two purposes: quality improvement and accountability. To fulfil these two purposes, managing the EQA-process is like navigating between two extremes. When one aims only at improvement, the system will be shipwrecked against the "Scylla", because the outside stakeholders will ask for accountability and design their own external quality assessment system. If accountability is emphasised too much, the system will disappear in the "Charybdis", because improvement will be hindered or even made impossible. The challenge is to keep on course and, by doing so, reconcile the two purposes in one system (33).

Due to the threat of political contestation of claims of excellent quality in view of the massification, diversification, and decentralisation of the sector, an argument can be made for the dominant accountability-orientation of government quality assurance policies (Harvey and

Newton 2004, 2007). Others have claimed that it is unnecessary to polarise the potential incompatibility of the two rationales, as accountability can be handled internally (Stensaker 2003). It is suggested that the perceived accountability-improvement incompatibility can be bridged by externally-addressed accountability through internally-organised enhancement, i.e. *by the notion that improvement is its own accountability* (Harvey 2008). However, the debates on *optimising* the two rationales within system-level quality assurance policies have reached no unanimous conclusion (Kis 2005; Tremblay and Kis 2008), largely because of the range of contexts and stakeholder perspectives involved.

3.1.5 Concepts of quality in higher education

Given political contestation of the concept of quality as excellence, it has been unclear how the term quality can be conceptualised in government policies implemented since the mid 1980s. As Harvey and Askling (2003) point out, "In many countries, governments have introduced and changed models of external quality [assurance] without having anything else than value-loaded expectations as grounds for their decisions" (81). Difficulties with conceptualising quality in higher education policies can be associated with the *multidimensional nature of quality*, as demonstrated e.g. on excellent student counselling services in contrast to poorly devised doctoral programmes within a single institution, and with the *ambiguity of what quality in higher education actually refers to* (Westerheijden 1995). Stake and Schwandt (2007) comment on the ambiguity of the concept as follows:

> The word "quality" (Latin *qualitas*) is used in ways that both describe and appraise. It is commonplace to speak of "quality" as if we are referring to the aspects or properties that constitute or characterize something. For example, one identifies the "qualities" of (read "features") of an educational program as being composed of staff qualifications, pedagogy, materials used, students served, institutional support, and so on . . . But the *quality* of an educational program is often spoken of in terms of its meeting its objectives, enhancing student outcomes, and so forth (405).

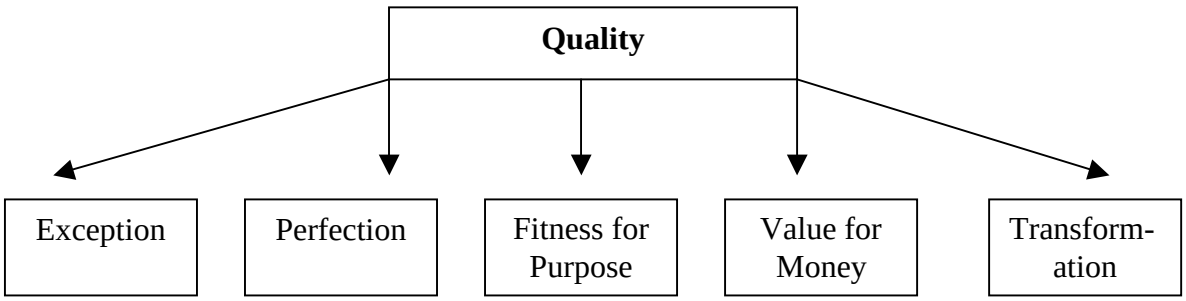
Dealing with the ambiguity of what constitutes quality in higher education, Watty (2003) distinguishes two basic approaches: one relating to context and the other relating to stakeholders. In the *context approach*, any attempt to define or attach meaning to the term is largely ignored, and one is left to assume that it is "high" quality that is being referred to as opposed to "good" or "poor" quality (ibid). *The stakeholder-specific approach* posits that quality means different things to different higher education stakeholders (Kristensen 2010), which in turn influences their conceptualisations. Through this proposition, the stakeholder-specific approach draws to a large extent on the seminal work of Harvey and Green. Arguing

that the widely differing conceptualizations of quality in use can be grouped into five discrete but interrelated ways of thinking about quality, Harvey and Green (1993) identify the stakeholders' concepts of quality in higher education as: *exception, perfection, fitness for purpose, value for money*, and *transformation*. The basic characteristics of each of these concepts (Harvey and Green 1993; Harvey and Knight 1996; Harvey 1997) are:

- *Exception*: distinctive, embodied in excellence, passing a minimum set of standards;
- *Perfection*: zero defects, getting things right the first time (focus on process as opposed to inputs and outputs);
- *Fitness for purpose*: relates quality to a purpose, defined by the customer or provider;
- *Value for money*: a focus on efficiency and effectiveness, measuring outputs against inputs;
- *Transformation*: a qualitative change; education is about doing something *to* the student as opposed to something *for* the consumer. It includes concepts of enhancing and empowering: democratisation of the process, not just outcomes.

The five concepts of quality in question can be deconstructed by the descending level of abstraction into a single framework (Watty 2003) (see Figure 1). Drawing from the stakeholder-specific approach, the framework serves heuristic purposes (Lomas 2002).

Figure 1: **Framework of quality in higher education (stakeholder-specific approach)**



Source: Watty (2003)

Utilisation of the stakeholder-specific approach to quality in higher education suggests that a traditional notion of quality as something exceptional, top-class, passing the minimum standards has been supplemented by concepts relating quality to perfection, purpose, value for money, or transformation. Deconstructed by level of abstraction, these stakeholder concepts

help, to some extent, to operationalise the term quality in higher education settings. As Saarinen (2007) points out, "quality receives meaning by the operationalisations attached to it [and] different actors are presented in different ways in the context of quality" (4). In other words, the stakeholder-specific approach to quality in higher education suggests that *within the five categories identified*, there may be as many definitions of quality as stakeholders present (Van Vught and Westerheijden 1993).

As already indicated, difficulties with conceptualising quality do not stop governments from stating goals in the higher education quality assurance policy domain and implementing them in formal policies. Useful as Watty's heuristics is for clarifying the quality concept beyond the context-bound notions of merit / worth / significance as opposed to inferiority / worthlessness / unimportance (Stake and Schwandt 2007), it provides only a starting point for implementation analysis of a government policy on higher education quality assurance. Recognising difficulties with conceptualising quality, Newton (2007) remarks, "the most constructive way forward is to adopt an approach which acknowledges the relative nature of quality: relative to stakeholders, context, and to the particular assurance mechanisms with which it has become associated, such as assessment, audit, accreditation" (15–16). It is argued that adoption of the approach based on instrument-oriented analysis of policy implementation advances our understanding of quality in higher education. By examining the ways in which instruments of a given policy function in context, instrument-oriented implementation analysis helps not only to assess the extent of policy goal realisation, but also to further deconstruct the concept of quality that government, as a major higher education stakeholder, makes use of.

3.2 Public policy implementation

3.2.1 Positioning implementation

More than 30 years have passed since the publication of Pressman and Wildavski's book *Implementation* (1973), which makes a critical examination of a federal economic development programme for increasing employment among local minority groups in Oakland, California. Generally regarded as a landmark in implementation literature, this book, along with other studies of the time, reflected the wave of concern over the effectiveness of wide-ranging reform programs undertaken in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s (Winter 2006; Pülzl and Treib 2007). However, the claim that the missing link between policy goals and policy outcomes was first investigated in the 1970s perhaps overstates the issue, as

the effectiveness of public policies had long been a subject of public administration literature (Hill and Hupe 2002; Winter 2003a).

Implementation is said to have the following meaning: to carry out, accomplish, fulfil, produce, complete (Hill and Hupe 2002). Peter DeLeon (1999b), paraphrasing Ferman (1990), sees implementation simply as what happens between policy expectations and (perceived) policy results, whilst Jann and Wegrich (2007) define it as the stage of enforcing a policy by the responsible institutions and organisations that are often, but not always, part of the public sector. For O'Toole (2000), policy implementation is what develops between an apparent intention on the part of government to do something, or to stop doing something, and the ultimate impact in the world of action. Though varying in phrasing, these definitions of implementation seem to have one thing in common; they attempt to capture the complexities in the organisation of social human activities. From this, it follows that issues of implementation had been dealt with long before anyone wrote about implementation per se (Hill and Hupe 2002, 2010).

Similarly, there are various viewpoints on how to define implementation analysis/ study[15] (Brousselle 2004). Implementation studies, encompassing the corresponding research, can be seen as a sub-discipline of public administration and political science with close links to organisational studies (Schofield and Sausman 2004). Implementation analysis is thus linked to what happens after decisions have been made and when policies are put into action (Gornitzka, Kyvik, and Stensaker 2005), including specific processes by which policies are enacted.

3.2.2 Three periods of public policy implementation studies

Implementation studies as an explicit subject of research enquiry emerged in the 1970s. The studies compiled in this period, including the seminal work by Presman and Wildavski, represent the first period of implementation research. This period was marked by a rather pessimistic undertone, used a case study design, dealt with the execution of a single authoritative decision, offered a minimum of prescription, and was rarely concerned with generalisations (Lester et al. 1987; P. deLeon 1999b). The most significant achievement of the first period of implementation researchers was to raise awareness of the issue in the wider scholarly community as well as among the general public (Pülzl and Treib 2007).

[15] Considered as synonyms, owing to the variations and inconsistencies in the treatment of these two terms in implementation literature.

As theory had not been at the heart of the first period of implementation studies, concentrated efforts at theory building throughout the 1980s characterised the second period of policy implementation studies. To construct more systematic theories of policy implementation, the second generation of implementation scholars were concerned with understanding the factors influencing implementation processes and with structuring these processes to minimise implementation obstacles (Ryan 1999; Birklad 2005). For this, the second-generation scholars turned either to a deductive approach, resulting in the application of a hierarchical top-down, command and control framework with emphasis on local unit compliance, or to an induction-driven, bottom-up approach, building on observations of actors' interpersonal behaviours at the local level (Goggin et al. 1990). These two different approaches to studies of the implementation process gave rise to two distinct theories of policy implementation: top-down, and bottom-up.

Aware of the limitations of top-down and bottom-up theory (see Section 3.2.3), the third generation of implementation scholars made efforts to bridge the gap between the two theoretical perspectives. Concerted efforts in this direction, stimulated by the call to be "more rigorously scientific" (Goggin et al. 1990), started in the 1990s, laying emphasis on specifying clear hypotheses, finding proper operationalisations, and producing adequate empirical observations to test the hypotheses. However, only a small number of studies have measured up to these requirements so far (Pülzl and Treib 2007). This is presumably due to potentially intimidating costs and methodologies. The methodologies involve multi-variable and cluster analyses and multiple measurements over a decade or more, rendering such research a lifetime undertaking (O'Toole 2000). In recognition of the methodological as well as practical difficulties underlying quantitative research designs, a more recent tendency has been to conduct research on implementation of public policies through "less rigorously scientific but invariably more practical" alternative lines of enquiry.

In parallel to intense discussions on whether to study policy implementation in a top-down or bottom-up fashion, the past two and a half decades of implementation research (mid 1980s-2010s) have registered efforts to synthesise the two competing perspectives. The major syntheses combining elements of top-down and bottom-up implementation theory include "the application of forward and backward mapping" (Elmore 1985), "the Advocacy Coalition Framework" (Sabatier 1986, 1993), "the concept of the implementation process as a combination of responsibility and trust" (Lane 1987), "the integrated implementation model" (Winter 1990), "the comprehensible implementation model" based on the ambiguity-conflict matrix (Matland 1995), and "the Multiple Governance Framework" combining theoretical

insights from implementation and governance studies (Hupe and Hill 2006; Hill and Hupe 2010). Among these syntheses, the Advocacy Coalition Framework and its subsequent revisions have probably reached the most prominent position, with 31 registered cases of application between 1987-1997 (Sabatier 1998), rising to 34 by 1999 (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999). Key contributions to the formation of theories of public policy implementation are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: **Key contributions to implementation theory**	
Pressman and Wildavsky (1973)	Top-down
Van Meter and Van Horn (1975)	Top-down
Bardach (1977)	Top-down
Sabatier and Mazmanian (1980)	Top-down
Elmore (1985)	Synthesising
Sabatier (1986, 1993)	Synthesising
Lane (1987)	Synthesising
Winter (1990)	Synthesising
Matland (1995)	Synthesising
Hill and Hupe (2006, 2010)	Synthesising
Lipsky (1971, 1980)	Bottom-up
Elmore (1980)	Bottom-up
Hjern and Porter (1981)	Bottom-up
Hjern and Hull (1982)	Bottom-up

Source: adapted from Pülzl and Treib (2007, 91)

3.2.3 Central debate: Top-down or bottom-up?

Given the centrality of the top-down vs. bottom-up debate in implementation literature, the two theoretical perspectives merit further attention. The top-down theory starts from the assumption that a policy decision on policy goal formulation is made by a top-level actor (government) prior to carrying out such a goal. The policy goal(s) is clearly formulated and policy performance can be measured against it. The top-down implementation theory further presupposes the ability of top-level actors to structure policy delivery through a command-and-control chain, thus minimising the discretion of local-level implementing officials (Pülzl and Treib 2007).

One of the most influential conceptual frameworks helping to produce the top-down implementation theory was that of Sabatier and Mazmanian (1980). Because of its importance for implementation analysis in higher education, the conceptual underpinnings of the framework are described in some detail. Taking the first generation of implementation studies as a point of departure, Sabatier and Mazmanian, borrowing from the concept of veto points

and causal theory from Pressman and Wildavsky, start from the proposition that the crucial role of implementation analysis is to identify the variables bearing on the achievement of legal statutory objectives. After first identifying a number of legal, political, and tractability variables affecting the consecutive stages of the policy process, they then sought to synthesise these variables into a shorter list of six general conditions necessary for effective implementation. The six conditions are: clear and consistent objectives; adequate causal theory; legal structuring of the implementation process; committed and skilful implementing officials; support of interest groups and sovereigns; and changes in socio-economic conditions which do not substantially undermine political support or causal theory (Sabatier and Mazmanian 1980).

While the first three conditions can be dealt with by the initial policy decision, the latter three are largely the product of political and economic pressures during the subsequent implementation process. Ryan (1996) argues that although the Sabatier and Mazmanian framework predominantly promotes central control, the framework to some extent takes into account bottom-up concerns by incorporating the commitment and active support of organized interest groups and the commitment of implementing officials/agencies among the conditions critical for successful implementation. Thus, the key to understanding the Sabatier and Mazmanian framework is the assumption that policies are likely to fail if they do not incorporate a valid causal theory that explains how policy objectives are to be attained, also accounting for target group behaviour (Winter 1990).

In their overviews of top-down and bottom-up approaches to implementation research, Sabatier (1986) and Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989) made an appraisal of the top-down framework that they had authored. Based on a review of 24 cases of empirical application of the framework, *out of which seven were made in the policy arena of higher education*, they formulated the strengths of the framework as: the empirically verified importance which the framework attributes to the legal structuring of the implementation process; verification of the six conditions for effective implementation as a useful checklist of critical factors in understanding variations in program performance; a relatively manageable list of variables and a focus on formulation-implementation-reformulation as factoring into longer time-frame empirical investigations; and a focus on legally-mandated objectives, particularly in cases of longer time-frame empirical investigations, helping to produce less pessimistic conclusions than in the first period of implementation studies.

Nevertheless, as Winter (2003b, 2006) suggests, two kinds of reservations apply to the Sabatier and Mazmanian framework. First, by ignoring the politics of policy formulation and

design, the framework is unrealistic, because it overemphasises the ability of policy proponents to structure implementation. The second, related piece of criticism questions the capacity of the framework to account for events taking place where public policies are delivered to their recipients (implementation periphery), and to account for the influence that front-level staff have on such policy delivery.

The primary concern of top-down implementation theory with a central level, dominant piece of legislation and clear objectives came in for criticism from scholars proposing the opposite, bottom-up theory orientation. The bottom-up implementation theory questions the ability of top-level policy officials to control and structure the implementation process. It posits that policy objectives hardly remain unaffected in the process of implementation, because they are subject to the discretionary influence of front-level staff. Bottom-up implementation studies thus reject the idea that policies are formulated only at central level and that implementers positioned at a lower level stick to these objectives as neatly as possible. Instead, the availability of discretion at the stage of policy delivery is seen as a beneficial factor (Pülzl and Treib 2007). Based on these theoretical propositions, the bottom-up perspective put forward the following analytical reorientations, which subsequently became accepted in implementation literature: acknowledgement of the central role of implementation agencies and their personnel in shaping policy outcomes; supplementation of a focus on single policies regarded as inputs into the implementation process by a perspective regarding policy as the outcome of implementation resulting from the interaction of various actors and various programmes; and increasingly widespread recognition of linkages and networks between a number of (governmental and social) actors within a particular policy domain, cutting across the policy formulation/implementation stage (Jann and Wegrich 2007).

Notwithstanding their contributions to implementation theory building, both the top-down and bottom-up perspectives were subjected to relevant criticism. Starting with the top-down implementation theory, four sets of criticism apply. First, by taking the statutory language as their starting point, top-down frameworks fail to consider the significance of actions taken earlier in the policy-making process, i.e. in the policy formulation stage. Second, these frameworks tend to structure implementation as a purely administrative process, either ignoring the corresponding political aspects or trying to eliminate them. Third, top-down frameworks can be criticised for their exclusive emphasis on the statute-framers (top-level implementing officials) as the key actors. Related to this is the rather misguided focus placed on clear and consistent policy objectives. Fourth, top-down frameworks are

difficult to use in cases where there is no dominant policy (statute) or agency, but rather a multitude of governmental directives and actors, none of them pre-eminent (Matland 1995; Sabatier 1986, 2005).

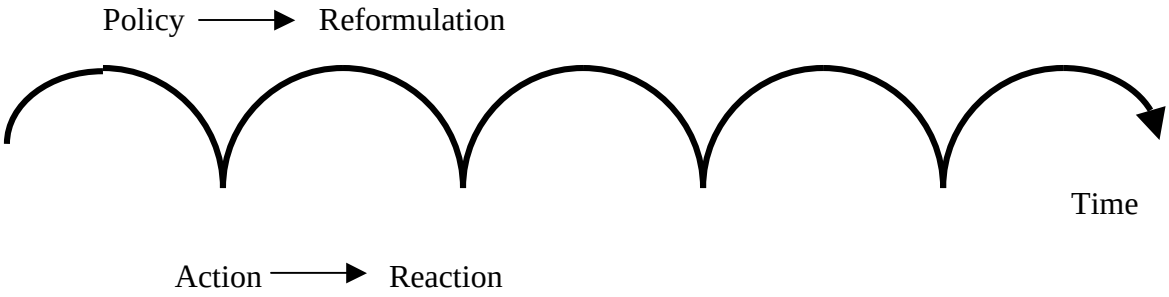
In trying to rectify the limitations that pertain to top-down frameworks, the bottom-up implementation theory meets two sets of criticism. According to the first, normative set of criticism, in a democratic system policy control over the implementation process should be exercised by actors whose power derives from their accountability to voters through elected representatives. However, the authority of local implementers does not derive from this power base (Hogwood and Gunn 1984). The second criticism is that the methodology used within bottom-up frameworks tends to overemphasise the level of autonomy of local-level actors (Matland 1995).

The debate as to which of the two theoretical perspectives is more valid for studying policy implementation is largely unproductive. The reason for this argument is that both schools of thought exaggerated their respective positions empirically, methodologically as well as normatively, ignoring the portion of the implementation reality explored by the other school (Hill and Hupe 2002), thereby oversimplifying the complexity of the implementation process (Parsons 1995).

3.2.4 Policy-action continuum as a way out of implementation stalemate

The concept of implementation as a policy-action continuum has the potential to account for the major limitations of the top-down and bottom-up theories. The policy-action continuum concept was conceived by Barret and Fudge in 1981 in reflection of research findings on inter-organizational perspectives in policy interpretation and the role of discretion in shaping policy outcomes (Barret 2004). In developing the concept, Barret and Fudge started from the assumption that the implementation process is a sequence of events "triggered off" by a policy decision, involving the translation of policy into operational tasks to be carried out by a variety of actors and agencies and a substantial coordinating activity. As Barret and Fudge (1981) reason, "[t]hus it becomes difficult to identify a distinct and sequential 'implementation process' which starts with the formulation of policy and ends with action. Rather, it is appropriate to consider implementation as a policy-action continuum in which an interactive and negotiative process is taking place over time, between those seeking to put policy into effect and those upon whom action depends" (25). Graphically, the concept of the policy-action continuum is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: **Policy-action continuum concept**



Source: Barret and Fudge (1981, 25)

In general terms, the formation of the policy-action continuum gives weight to the role of bottom-level actors in implementation processes (Hill and Hupe 2010). Barret (2004) explains the theoretical assumptions applied in forming the concept as follows:

> The core argument of Policy and Action was to challenge the traditional policy-centred view of the implementation process … It was suggested that implementation should be regarded as an integral and continuing part of the political policy process rather than an administrative follow-on, and seen as a policy-action dialectic involving negotiation and bargaining . . . This negotiative perspective shifts analytical attention away from a focus on formal organizational hierarchies, communication and control mechanisms, to give more emphasis to the power-interest structures and relationships between participating actors and agencies, and the nature of interactions taking place in the process (253).

To understand the policy-action continuum, it is thus necessary to abandon a normative view of how the process should be, and to adopt a conceptualisation that reflects the empirical evidence of the complexity and dynamics of the interactions between individuals and groups seeking to put policy into effect and those upon whom action depends (Barret and Hill 1981. In: Hill 2005).

Dismissing the policy formulation-implementation divide, the policy-action continuum can be regarded as enabling the limitations of the top-down and bottom-up theoretical approaches to policy implementation to be overcome (Parsons 1995). This argument is proposed in view of the fact that after years of debates between top-down and bottom-up scholars, both sides seem to agree that implementation is a continuum located between central guidance and local autonomy. The preferences of street-level bureaucrats and the negotiations within implementation networks have to be taken into account to the same extent as centrally-defined policy objectives and efforts at hierarchical control (Pülzl and Treib 2007). Advancing the argument further, it is suggested that the biggest contribution of the policy-action continuum to implementation theory is in acknowledging that the very

factors which top-down theorists urge must be controlled are at the same time the factors that are difficult to bring under control. The reason is that policy implementation is not in reality about the degree of (im)perfect control but about action as a continuous process of interaction with a policy that is changing and changeable, because it is implemented by actors who are inherently difficult to manage (Hill 2005). By conceptualising implementation as an iterative process of policy and action involving interaction between top and bottom-level positioned actors, the policy-action continuum provides the basic elements for a more systematic analysis. It is argued that by taking into account the discretion of policy deliverers and by focusing on interactions including negotiations and bargaining, the policy-action concept is particularly suitable for application in highly decentralised and professionalised policy sectors such as higher education.

3.2.5 Accountability and trust on policy-action continuum

Conceptualising implementation as a continuum of policy and action, however, one should not lose sight of the issue of power and discretion as another important contribution of the top-down/bottom-up debate to implementation theory. In dealing with this issue, the concern of the top-downers with the power of decision-makers to control and structure the process of fulfilling policy goals was opposed by the bottom-upper's emphasis on the discretion of front-level implementing staff. A researcher applying the policy-action continuum for implementation analysis should take into account both theoretical perspectives when considering the issues of control and discretion.

In the thesis, the investigation of the role that control and discretion play within the policy-action continuum is based on four assumptions. First, inter-actor transactions within the continuum combine rule imposition and delegation of discretion. Second, rule imposition is related to requirements of accountability placed, in general terms, by those putting policy into effect on those upon whom the action depends. However, front-line policy deliverers at the same time typically exercise discretion, the amount of which is greater in highly professional and decentralised policy settings such as higher education. Third, trust is what makes delegation of discretion to policy deliverers more likely. Because of this, fourth, accountability and trust are contextually important in shaping the outcomes of implementation processes and in enhancing our understanding of the role of control and discretion in them.

In the policy implementation context, the importance of accountability and trust in the implementation process was highlighted and analysed by Lane. Lane (1987, 2000) sees implementation as carrying the notion both of *a process* (policy execution) and of *an outcome*

(end state), with no a priori assumption of correspondence between objectives and outcomes. These two distinct notions embody *accountability*, which is central to the relationship between objectives and outcomes, and *trust*, which is characteristic of putting policies into effect (the implementation process). From this perspective, the implementation process is seen as a combination of accountability and trust both in the relation between citizens and the public sector in general and between politicians and officials (Lane 1987). Hence, Lane's major contribution to implementation theory seems to be that he draws attention to the fact that developing synthesising approaches to policy implementation also involves searching for the right mix of accountability and trust between actors variously positioned in the implementation process.

Needless to say, issues of control and discretion linked to accountability and trust are especially pertinent to implementation analysis in decentralised settings with high professional autonomy such as higher education. More will be said about these issues in relation to the higher education quality assurance domain in Chapter 7. Before turning our attention to the arena of higher education, it seems appropriate to comment on what the future holds for studies of public policy implementation.

3.2.6 The future of public policy implementation

The potentials and limitations of the top-down, bottom-up, and synthesising theories have given rise to various scholarly approaches as to their potential for studying public policy implementation. The attitudes have ranged from quite optimistic, postulating the creation of a parsimonious yet comprehensive implementation theory (Lester and Goggin 1998), via moderate, concentrating on providing theoretical diversity by constructing partial theories (Winter 1990, 1999), to pessimistic, stressing the limited usefulness of implementation studies that reach "an intellectual dead end" (P. deLeon 1999b).

An assessment of the field of implementation research indicates that some progress has been made since the first period of implementation studies. Reviewing the state of public policy implementation research at the beginning of the new millennium, O'Toole (2000) maintains that "virtually all analysts have moved past the rather sterile top-down/bottom-up dispute ... the implementation problem has been reconceptualized … and work has proceeded along a number of parallel, overlapping, and highly relevant lines of research" (267–68). Similarly, Hill and Hupe (2010) are moderately optimistic about the future of implementation studies, noting three kinds of promising developments. These are: the existence of a critical mass of mainstream implementation studies, the surfacing of neo-implementation studies

taking up the study of implementation through the perspective of multi-level governance, and the emergence of implementation studies under different headings. The alternative approaches to public policy implementation tend to eschew the development of a grand theory and focus instead on policy performance studied with an increasing degree of theoretical rigour.

Assessments of the theoretical state of the field of public policy implementation can thus be said to produce mixed findings (O'Toole 2004). However, a number of synthesising approaches to policy implementation have brought important innovative insights into implementation theory in two respects. First, leaving aside the normative aspects of the top-down/bottom-up controversy, they focused instead on empirical arguments about the proper conceptualisation of the implementation process. In doing so, they managed to make a pragmatic blend of the extreme arguments of both sides and form models that accounted for both central steering and local autonomy. Second, some of the synthesisers, such as Lane, elaborated on important issues, such as the relationship between accountability and trust in implementation processes, which had previously received little attention (Pülzl and Treib 2007). No comprehensive theory of policy implementation has emerged as yet–but could this have been realistically expected, in view of the inability of researchers to account satisfactorily for the mass of explanatory variables? Similarly, an empirically documented recession of implementation studies in core research journals in comparison with the 1980s (Saetren 2005) suggests that implementation research has increasingly started being carried out under alternative, but theory-based lines of enquiry. The suggested lines of enquiry are: institutional theory, governance studies, the study of networks and network management, formal and deductive approaches (O'Toole 2000), public administration and management, regulatory enforcement and compliance, principal-agent theory, policy design, and policy instruments (Winter 2006). Hence, rather than attempting to form a comprehensive theory of policy implementation, possibly by spending a career constructing sophisticated research designs, public policy implementation research is now been carried out under different rubrics, among which the study of policy design and policy instruments is particularly pertinent to this thesis.

3.3 Implementation analysis in higher education

Chapter 2 briefly stated that implementation analysis in higher education had begun with case studies on the implementation of national reforms published in 1986. Given the focus of this thesis on higher education, the developments pertaining to analysing implementation in higher education policy settings are treated on a higher level of detail. In reviewing them, the

categorisation of four scholarly attitudes toward policy implementation research (Lester and Goggin 1998) can be of help. This categorisation distinguishes *the reformers, the testers, the sceptics, and the terminators*[16]. The ensuing debate on the pages of *Policy Currents* on "who is who in implementation research" (see P. deLeon 1999a; Winter 1999; Schneider 1999, Meier 1999), including personal references[17], indicated that implementation research was far from being irrelevant. It is to be seen whether the same can be said about implementation research in higher education. To enable a comparison with the field of public policy implementation, the review of higher education implementation research is broken down into three periods (the 1970s–1980s, the 1990s, the 2000s).

3.3.1 1970s-1980s: Testers of Cerych and Sabatier framework

One of the first themes systematically researched in higher education under the thematic area of system steering and institutional management was policy implementation (Kogan 1997; Teichler 2003). In the European context, this was largely due to the research project carried out by the Paris-based *European Institute of Educational and Social Policy* at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s. This project sought to apply policy implementation analysis to the study of nine predominantly West-European higher education reforms[18] eight to ten years after their initiation in the late 1960s[19]. Following this rationale, the aim was to examine the extent to which the official reform goals had been attained and to analyse the reasons, thus pointing to reform success or failure. The outcomes of the project were summarised in the book "Great expectations and mixed performance: The implementation of higher education reforms in Europe", published in 1986 and co-authored by Cerych and Sabatier.

The conceptual framework guiding the research project comprised policy formulation, policy implementation, and policy reformulation as three separate stages through the policy process (Cerych and Sabatier 1986). In analysing the degree of attainment of the reform goals by applying the conceptual framework, the relationship between legally-mandated goals and reform outcomes was particularly looked into. The aim was to take into account the impact of general factors affecting implementation. These factors were based on the six general

[16] The testers are quite comfortable with the way policy implementation has been studied in the past, whereas the reformers see a need to continue implementation research by applying modified conceptual and methodological approaches. The sceptics see no need to continue implementation research unless significant modifications are made, whilst the terminators prefer not to carry on with implementation research at all.

[17] For example, Paul Sabatier is ranked amongst the terminators, Peter deLeon amongst the sceptics, while Kenneth Meier belongs to the testers and Richard Matland to the reformers.

[18] With the exception of Poland and its system-wide reform aimed at instituting the preferential point system to ease access to higher education for students of working class origin.

[19] With the case studies written between 1979-1981 (Cerych and Sabatier 1986).

conditions for effective policy implementation[20] postulated by Sabatier and Mazmanian in the late 1970s.

Research into higher education reform processes undertaken within the project yielded several results relevant to policy implementation studies in the general sense. The major findings having a bearing on policy implementation theory can be summarized as follows:

- clearly formulated and consistent policy goals facilitate effective implementation;
- ambiguity and conflict in policy goals are often unavoidable;
- in many cases, implementation processes lead to unexpected/unintended outcomes;
- centralisation or decentralisation does not usually seem to be a decisive implementation factor;
- reform success can be enhanced by an adequate system of rewards and sanctions;
- implementing new policies not in keeping with basic traditions in the corresponding national context is extremely difficult if not impossible, though policies implying far-reaching changes may be successful if they aim only at one or a few system or institutional policy domains;
- the relationship between the scope of policy change and implementation success is probably curvilinear;
- the special facets of higher education policies bearing on implementation are the many highly autonomous actors and the diffusion of authority throughout the system (Cerych and Sabatier 1986; Gornitzka, Kyvik, and Stensaker 2002).

While most of these points are nowadays rather obvious in light of the general literature on policy implementation, at the time when they were published (1986), they represented an important contribution to the forming higher education implementation research.

3.3.2 Cerych and Sabatier framework: Limitations

Several generalisable conclusions can be drawn from weighing the pros and cons of the Cerych and Sabatier study more than 20 years after its publication. Clearly, not only by the

[20] These conditions were: legal (official) objectives including reform programme clarity and consistency as well as degree of system change envisaged; adequacy of the programme's causal theory; adequacy of financial resources; degree of commitment to programme objectives by actors within the ministry and affected HEIs; degree of commitment to programme objectives by legislative and executive officials as well as affected stakeholders outside the implementing agencies; and changes in socio-economic conditions affecting goal priorities or the programme's causal assumptions.

time-period in which the research was carried out, or the title of the study referring back to the Pressman and Wildavsky classic[21], but also by its emphasis on clarity and consistency of policy objectives, the Cerych and Sabatier implementation study of higher education reform processes builds upon the first generation of implementation research. This conclusion is corroborated by the design of the conceptual framework. By its utilisation of policy formulation-implementation-reformulation as separate stages of the policy cycle and its focus on statutory and non-statutory variables structuring the implementation process, the Cerych and Sabatier conceptual framework combines elements from the Sabatier and Mazmanian influential top-down framework. The Sabatier and Mazmanian top-down framework, developed at the turn of the 1970s/1980s, is ranked amongst the early contributions to the second-generation implementation research (Schofield 2001).

By applying the Cerych and Sabatier framework to an analysis of higher education policy reforms, the 1986 study displays some of the limitations of top-down theory for studying policy implementation. Following the critical debate on the stages approach to a policy process (Nakamura 1987; Sabatier 1992, 1999; Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1993), it is argued that the "stagist" structure of the Cerych and Sabatier framework (formulation–implementation–reformulation) does not fit empirical reality and has limited descriptive utility. In addition, questions are raised about Cerych and Sabatier's conceptualisation of the implementation of higher education reforms as largely a top-down process with little attention to core academic values, the plausibility of the enumeration of factors and variables associated with success in implementation, and assumptions on the likelihood of attaining reform goals decreasing in the case of "high-scope-of-change" reforms (Kogan 2005).

Applying the top-down, stages approach to studies of the implementation of government-initiated policies in higher education settings can be problematic. If higher education implementation processes are generally considered as displaying substantial complexity and a bottom-up orientation due to the loose structure of the sector (Weick 1976), then the top-down approach is grossly inaccurate in most cases. Despite all these limitations, the Cerych and Sabatier central hypothesis on the success of higher education reform being critically dependent on the clarity and consistency of the reform goals and the degree of change envisaged along with other aspects[22] offered enough potential for further empirical as

[21] Parsons (1995) rather jokingly attributes the significant impact of Pressman and Wildavsky's study also to "its holding a record for one of the longest subtitles of any book on public policy, including government reports" (463).

[22] Such as the role of ambiguity and conflict, or rewards and sanctions in higher education implementation processes.

well as theoretical advancement. Given the popularity of implementation studies in the 1980s, it might have been expected that the line of research started by Cerych and Sabatier would be followed up, particularly in view of the British Open University being considered among the most successful implementations of a policy programme to date (Sabatier 1986).

3.3.3 1990s: No testers but the reformers

The idea that the application of the Cerych and Sabatier conceptual framework to higher education policy settings might lead to theoretical and empirical advances remained unfulfilled in the 1980s and the 1990s. Reviewing the developments of higher education implementation research spanning this period, Gornitzka, Kyvik, and Stensaker (2002) point out:

> A search for comprehensive implementation studies in higher education using criteria originally launched by Pressman and Wildavsky is a rather disappointing affair. It is not an easy task to find studies that carry the word "implementation" or a reasonable synonym in the title. Even if one may find the word implementation in many higher education texts appearing since the Cerych and Sabatier study, the word is often not defined or analytically specified, indicating that the implementation process is not of main interest of the studies conducted (401).

Several reasons can explain why higher education implementation research drawing from public policy implementation theory did not boom after the publication of the seminal 1986 study. These reasons are: the complexity of the research task, lack of an agreed research perspective due to the top-down vs. bottom-up dichotomy, scarcity of US-based implementation studies in comparison with the European context, and ideological shifts orienting higher education policies toward market and deregulation, institutional adaptation and innovation (Gornitzka, Kyvik, and Stensaker 2002). While the first three reasons can be subsumed under the sectoral isolatedness of higher education research (Neave and Maassen 2007), shifts in political ideology bear on what has been described as the transition from government to governance, characterised by much greater reliance on horizontal structures instead of formal hierarchies, network management, the role of third-party actors (both profit and non-profit), and indirect instruments instead of direct government provision and command and control regulations (Salamon 2002; Peters 2006).

The ideology-laden shift toward new governance had profound implications for quality assurance of higher education. The devolution of the governing powers of the state to the institutional periphery (steering from a distance) due to political re-orientation (NPM and neo-liberal doctrine) factored into the initiation of government policies on quality assurance.

By contesting the excellent quality of higher education as given, these policies, once implemented, enhanced the importance of evaluation in the sector. Factors such as consciousness of education as a crucial economic resource, cost-effectiveness and internationalisation suddenly became predominant (Veld 1991). In addition, the newly implemented government policies on higher education quality assurance helped to reorient the focus of evaluation *from internal*, primarily improvement-oriented, *toward external*, providing predominantly accountability-related information for judging the quality of HEIs. This reorientation reflected rising government demands for greater quality and institutional efficiency, thus meeting the needs of "the Evaluative State" (Neave 1998). The changing nexus between the state and the HEIs along the lines of the Evaluative State concept–i.e. less direct state interference in exchange for institutions letting themselves be evaluated externally–thus helped to proliferate government policies on quality assurance.

The 1993 inventory of these policies identified the following common elements: a coordinating agency, institutional self-evaluation, external evaluation, and reporting of the results (Van Vught and Westerheijden 1993). Conceptualisation of the common elements into a general model of quality assurance in higher education (Van Vught and Westerheijden 1994) helped, first, to introduce "the stagist approach" to the study of quality assurance processes, and, second, to produce a multitude of research studies evaluating the applicability of the general model in a variety of institutional/system-wide settings (for comprehensive accounts, see Frazer 1997; Harman 1998; Billing 2004). Not least due to the harmonisation pressures of the Bologna process and the spread of accreditation schemes across Europe (Sursock 2010) and also, e.g., Latin America (Bernasconi 2007), the focus of these studies shifted in time to an exploration of the accreditation-like extension of the model's output. Most recently, studies on the applicability of a general model of quality assurance have been superseded by studies assessing the impact of various ranking schemes (see e.g. Kehm and Stensaker 2009).

These developments tended to displace the foci of the studies that were conducted. Rather than investigating how policies are transformed during the execution process till the point of delivery (Winter 2003b) i.e. implementation in the narrow sense, the studies focused on evaluating policy outcomes. This analytical reorientation had two major consequences. First, it blurred the boundary between traditional implementation research and evaluation research. Second, orienting evaluation studies along the lines of the Evaluative State left its trace on the debate over the role of accountability and improvement rationales in higher education policies (Harvey and Newton 2004, 2007; Stensaker and Harvey 2010b). It is

argued that in line with the application drift and sensitivity to political agendas as underlying characteristics of higher education research (Teichler 1996, 2000a,b, 2003, 2005), the late 1980s and the 1990s saw a shift from implementation studies *in the narrow sense* to more broadly-oriented evaluation studies into quality assurance policies and the phenomena which brought such policies about, i.e. massification, diversification, marketisation, and internationalisation.

Despite the blurring boundaries and the dominance of policy evaluation, a stream of theory-driven studies, based on alternative lines of inquiry into policy implementation processes, was identifiable in the 1990s. These implementation studies, presented under various rubrics, drew from alternative theoretical approaches, such as resource-dependence theory (Goedegebuure 1992), resource-dependence theory and neo-institutionalism (Gornitzka 1999; Maassen and Gornitzka 1999), or combined perspectives on institutional theory[23] (Kogan et al. 2000).

3.3.4 2000s: A time for revival, or an age of sceptics?

Alternative lines of enquiry into higher education policy implementation continued to be followed after the beginning of the new millennium. They made use of the concept of the implementation staircase (Trowler 2002), stressing the untenability of separating policy formulation from implementation in the policy-making process–a point made and elaborated in the second period of public policy implementation research (Palumbo and Calista 1990). Another alternative enquiry into change processes during implementation of higher education policies in Great Brian, Norway and Sweden was based on the 2000-revised framework, which combined institutional theory perspectives (Kogan et al. 2006). The mid 2000s also saw a re-invigoration of research interest in implementation analysis per se, due to the follow-up on Cerych and Sabatier's seminal work.

A critical reappraisal of the Cerych and Sabatier seminal study was made at the 2003 conference of the Consortium of Higher Education Researchers[24]. The conference outputs were made into the book "Reform and change in higher education: analysing policy implementation", published in 2005. Based on an analysis of 16 national case studies, the book deals with issues bearing on the success or failure of processes of implementation of higher education policies. These issues, in short, are: the changing policy context and political

[23] Including new institutionalism, normative institutionalism, historical institutionalism, and actor-centred institutionalism.
[24] With about 100 scholars from 21 countries presenting a total of 49 papers (Amaral and Enders 2005).

climate; rising complexity of the policy-making processes due to the multiplicity of layers and actors involved; discrepancies between initially high government expectations and the reform outcomes; the role of government reforms in change processes; and the role of "heroic ministers" vs. the obstinacy of implementing institutions (Gornitzka, Kogan, and Amaral 2005). Taking account of these generalisations, which can be read as an update on Cerych and Sabatier's 1986 findings through the lenses of 21st century scholars, Gornitzka, Kogan, and Amaral (2005) arrive at the following pointers for future research:

> Whilst some of Cerych and Sabatier's conclusions and empirical cases remain secure after an interval of nearly 20 years . . . their top-down treatment of policy development and implementation has been overtaken by alternative accounts . . . . There remain the conflicting perspectives of top-downers and bottom-uppers. There is a case, to judge by our empirical examples, for taking an eclectic and case by case approach on this question. It would thus be difficult to construct a combined model, unless one could specify those areas of policy that are likely to be top-down … [and those] which would be bottom-up (2, 12–13).

Two points made by Gornitzka, Kogan, and Amaral merit further attention. First, the limited potential of the body of higher education research accumulated in the book for enriching the theory of policy implementation[25], with the research also showing the geographical bias[26]. Nevertheless, a few of the case studies included in the monograph (Kyvik 2005; Harman 2005; Kent 2005) explicitly refer to the Cerych and Sabatier framework, thus offering some potential for replication. Second, the issue of the potentiality of identifying higher education policy areas that are predominantly top-down or bottom-up oriented with the corresponding choice of the approach for their study is certainly challenging. It is also quite contestable for forming relevant hypotheses the verification/falsification of which could make some modest contributions to policy implementation theory. Hence, the stage in which higher education implementation research finds itself in the late 2000s offers enough arguments for those doubting the benefits of applying the Cerych and Sabatier top-down framework to higher education policy settings. Having in mind these doubts and criticisms, some researchers prefer to continue studying higher education policy implementation through alternative, theory-based lines of enquiry.

The theory-based orientation is augmented by the existence of works on higher education policy implementation drawing from public policy related approaches and reaching

[25] A point especially pertinent to the case studies presenting context-based policy narratives (without any theoretical concept to refer to).

[26] The 2005 monograph on higher education policy implementation contains no case study from Central and Eastern Europe, with the Austrian case coming closest.

the publication stage in the mid/late 2000s. These works include the national case study on policy developments within higher education in Mozambique between 1993 and 2003 (Beverwijk 2005) and the comparative study on implementation of the Bologna Bachelor/Master degree structure in four West-European countries[27] (Witte 2006). The Mozambique study applies the Advocacy Coalition Framework to examine policy developments within the decade from 1993 to 2003 through policy change processes and coalition formation. The Bologna process study utilises Actor-Centred Institutionalism (Scharpf 1997), ranked amongst contributions to institutional theory (Thoenig 2003), for its theoretical framework guiding the respective implementation research. Correspondingly, a study investigating the influence of organisational characteristics on the implementation of quality management mechanisms in Hungarian higher education (Csizmadia 2006; Csizmadia, Enders, and Westerheijden 2008) also draws on institutional theory perspectives, namely resource-dependence theory and neo-institutionalism. It is perhaps of significance that all the works noted here are the output of doctoral thesis projects, which provide time for more systematic theory reflection.

3.3.5 Higher education and public policy implementation: Towards convergence

A review of over 30 years of research into higher education and public policy implementation makes it possible to comment on the two strands from a comparative perspective. The Cerych and Sabatier 1986 study on the implementation of higher education policy reforms in six European countries capitalised on the body of knowledge accumulated over the first period of public policy implementation research and utilised some elements of "early-on" top-down theory, as suggested by the conceptual affinity of the Cerych and Sabatier and Sabatier and Mazmanian frameworks. This utilisation of theory placed Cerych and Sabatier in line with the state of knowledge at that time, while the mismatch between the design of the study and the phenomena that were studied offered enough room for a critical re-appraisal.

This critical reappraisal, however, did not come about in the second period of higher education implementation research. In the period marked by intense development of top-down, bottom-up, and synthesising implementation theories in the field of public policy (Matland 1995, Sinclair 2001), implementation studies in higher education were superseded by evaluation studies of the outcomes of the newly-forming quality assurance policies and related factors, such as massification, diversification, marketisation, and internationalisation,

[27] The countries were: France, Germany, the Netherlands, and England.

which had helped to produce them. This analytical re-orientation, corresponding to application drift and sensitivity to the political agendas of higher education research, helped to blur the boundary between policy implementation and evaluation. Nevertheless, it was still possible to identify a small but distinct stream of implementation studies that drew from alternative, theory-based approaches conceived within the public policy field.

Public-policy conceived approaches labelled as synthesising or alternative continued to be utilised in the third period of higher education implementation research. Moreover, the mid 2000s saw a belated re-appraisal of the 1986 seminal implementation study. The critical re-appraisal can be read as delivering two major messages. First, there is a suggestion that the Cerych and Sabatier conceptual framework is obsolete as far as studies of higher education policy implementation are concerned. This is primarily due to the decentralised sectoral structure and the high level of autonomy of academic staff, two factors that favour the bottom-up/synthesising analytical orientation, and, secondarily, because of the rising complexity of forms in which higher education is delivered, not least due to the effects of lifelong learning and cross-border education. Second, there is the proposition to construct combined models or frameworks as fitting the characteristics of the sectoral domain under study. This proposition is upheld by the application of public policy related conceptualisations, such as the Advocacy Coalition Framework, institutional theory, and the instrumental approach when constructing frameworks guiding implementation research, as in the work of Beverwijk and other scholars in the mid and late 2000s. Higher education and public policy implementation research can thus be seen as converging toward alternative lines of enquiry, with higher education research prone to utilise theory concepts as conceived within the public policy field.

The proposition upheld in this thesis is for a continuation of higher education implementation research drawing extensively from theoretical approaches to the study of policy implementation as conceived within the public policy field. It is argued that more extensive use of “synthesising” or “alternative” approaches borrowing from public policy theoretical apparatus can, in time, enhance the theory development of higher education implementation research. Moreover, systematic application of public policy theory-inspired frameworks or concepts such as the Advocacy Coalition Framework or the policy-action continuum might help to generate empirical findings with a higher degree of replicability than has so far been the case in higher education implementation research.

The policy-action continuum is a concept applicable to the study of higher education implementation processes. This is due to its focus on the discretion of front-line staff and

inter-actor negotiations and bargaining, found to be common in highly decentralised and professionalised policy sectors such as higher education. *Utilisation of the policy-action continuum concept can be enhanced by complementary application of the instrumental approach to policy implementation as another "old wine in new bottles" as far as public policy implementation research is concerned.*

3.4 Instrumental approach to policy implementation

3.4.1 Policy-action continuum and policy design

Following the review of public policy implementation theory, it is argued that the way out of the top-down/bottom-up stalemate may lead through the policy-action continuum. By conceptualising implementation as an interactive and negotiative process between those seeking to put policy into effect and those upon whom action depends, the policy-action continuum concept dismisses the policy formulation-implementation divide. It does so not least because of the existence of works of scholars questioning the (empirical) benefits of disaggregating the policy process into individual stages[28]. However, in making use of the policy-action continuum concept, one should not equate policy implementation with policy design (Palumbo and Calista 1990). The reason is that, for implementation to take place, the oft-documented goal reformulation in the series of actors' interactions must be preceded by some act of policy design (typically a prior goal statement)[29].

Separation of policy design from policy implementation thus faces one obstacle of a more than purely linguistic nature. As Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) argue:

> There must be something out there prior to implementation; otherwise there would be nothing to move forward in the process of implementation. A verb like "implement" must have an object like "policy". But policies normally contain both goals and the means for achieving them . . . There must be a starting point . . . Implementation cannot succeed or fail without a goal against which to judge it (xxi–xxii).

The issue at stake is one of logic, as the act of implementation, in its general sense, presupposes a prior act, particularly the cognitive act of formulating what needs to be done (Hill and Hupe 2002). Hill and Hupe (ibid.) propose the following solution, "[t]he act of formulation and decision making may take place 'at the bottom'. But even then, it is to be

[28] See Sabatier's classic standpoint (1999), "The stages heuristic has outlived its usefulness and needs to be replaced with better theoretical frameworks" (7).
[29] This reasoning suggests that studies of policy design entail policy formulation as one their explicit objects of enquiry (Sidney 2007).

followed by implementation; otherwise the former act remains without consequences. The logical connotation of [the issue is that] *implementation follows formulation and decision theorem*" (4).

From this, it follows that studies of goal formulation as part of the policy design feed into the policy implementation analysis. Apart from policy goals, a policy design typically contains a mix of instruments for obtaining these goals, a designation of (non)-governmental entities charged with carrying out these goals, and allocation of resources for the requisite tasks (May 2003). The study of policy design thus involves questions about the policy goals, policy implementers, policy instruments, and costs. The call for more systematic attention to be given to the study of policy design when studying policy implementation runs through several critical contributions to implementation theory (Ingraham 1987; Linder and Peters 1988, 1990). In the main, they point out that:

> Implementation studies have been useful in alerting the unwary to difficulties involved in making complex policy systems function in the manner desired, but they must develop beyond that to make more constructive statements about the prospective design of implementation systems and the linkage of policy goals to policy instruments (Linder and Peters 1987, 459).

At the heart of the critique is the argument that the roots of implementation problems can be ameliorated by crafting appropriate policy designs to signal policy intent and to build the commitment and capacity of the actors involved (May 2003). The critique questions the capability of implementation research to explain the extent of policy goal realisation without studying variations in policy design. The research findings that key elements of policy designs can be altered to enhance implementation led in turn to a conceptual shift in implementation research (ibid.) This shift entailed studying policy implementation through policy instruments.

3.4.2 Instrumental approach to policy implementation: Origins and benefits

Anticipated by Dahl and Lindblom in the 1950s, the study of the effects of policies through policy instruments developed in the mid 1960s out of Edelman's emphasis on symbolism as a technique of government control and Lowi's categorisation of policy types (Woodside 1986; Schneider and Ingram 1990; Howlett 1991). Policy instruments can be broadly defined as "an authoritative choice of means to accomplish a purpose" (Elmore 1987, 175) or "an identifiable method through which collective action is structured to address a public problem" (Salamon 2002, 19). More specifically, policy instruments are "the set of techniques by which government authorities wield their power in attempting to ensure support and effect social

change" (Bemelmans-Videc 1998, 3). This specification of policy instruments is upheld in the thesis.

The study of policy effects through policy instruments gained momentum in the 1980s, following the argument that implementation research had focused on the wrong unit of analysis (individual programs) instead of on generic tools[30] of public action (Howlett, Ramesch, and Perl 2009). It was argued that a systematic examination of policy instruments and instrument choices would lead to more precise insight into the factors driving the policy processes and the characterisation of long-term patterns of public policy-making, which would also bring benefits for policy practitioners (Howlett 2000). The implication was that the non-existence of a systematic body of knowledge on tools of public action was the real "missing link" in the theory and practice of policy implementation (Salamon 1981. In: Vedung 1998). The view that issues concerning policy instruments are relatively little explored was carried over the following two and a half decades (Lascoumes and Gales 2007). Stimulated by this line of argumentation, scholarly attention has shifted from addressing the content of a policy as a whole to understanding the workings of components of policy (policy instruments). The reorientation in the study of implementation processes through policy instruments can be subsumed under the alternative approaches to policy implementation analysis. The corresponding change in focus on the unit of analysis from policy content to policy instruments provided a stronger analytic basis for unpacking policies empirically and for theorising about policy design and implementation (May 2003).

In policy implementation literature, a policy design perspective is accounted for in *the instrumental approach to policy implementation* (Howlett and Ramesch 1995, 2001; Howlett, Ramesch, and Perl 2009). The instrumental approach has been described as "an orientation in the social sciences in which the issues discussed concern the way persons or public organisations purposefully influence societal processes . . . [involving] questions concerning the conversion of policy intentions into administrative actions" (De Bruijn and Hufen 1998, 11). More concretely, Howlett and Ramesch (1995) clarify the approach as follows:

> The instrument-choice approach to policy implementation begins from the observation that, to a great extent, policy implementation involves applying one or more of the basic techniques of government to policy problems. These basic techniques … are variously known as *policy tools*, *policy instruments* or *government instruments*. Regardless of whether we study the policy implementation in a top-down "design" fashion or a more traditional bottom-up administrative one, the process of giving form or substance to a government decision always involves choosing one or several tools from those available in the government toolbox (157–58).

[30] In the thesis, terms *policy instruments* and *policy tools* are treated as mutually interchangeable.

The central assumption of the instrumental approach is that any policy can be disaggregated to one or a mix of policy instruments (Winter 2003a). Policy instruments individually structure policy activities (content) and produce policy effects (De Bruijn and Hufen 1998). The structuring of policy content by any instrument entails describing a) the rationale behind the instrument choice and b) the instrument application. In turn, describing the rationale and the application of the instrument make it possible to identify policy effects produced by the instrument.

In general, the major benefits of the instrumental approach to policy implementation are threefold. First, by its application, any policy can be disaggregated into functional units (policy instruments) through which it is put into action, irrespective of the perspective from which policy implementation is studied. Second, this disaggregation allows for a more in-depth and empirically verifiable study of implementation processes through the instrument rationale, application (functioning), and effects than in the case of policy treated as one monolithic block. Third, attention paid to policy design helps to ascertain the politics of goal formulation and instrument choice, which makes it possible to establish links between the means and ends of a given policy. As May (2003) suggests, "one key lesson for policy design is to fashion instruments and implementation approaches (means) that are consistent with the policy intent (ends). Otherwise the policy is working at cross purposes" (228).

Studying policy implementation through policy instruments, labelled as an alternative, third generation approach, is also pertinent to the area of education (McDonnell and Elmore 1987). In the sector of higher education, the importance of utilising the instrumental approach to policy implementation has also been recognised and called for (Gornitzka, Kyvik, and Stensaker 2002) with regard to the quality assurance domain (Dill and Beerkens 2010). The reason is that "governments still have aspirations of affecting the actions of higher education institutions in specific ways … If 'old' policy and reform instruments such as central planning … are abandoned by governments, there should be a more thorough investigation of the kind of measures that have replaced them" (Gornitzka, Kyvik, and Stensaker 2002, 418).

As to the enquiry undertaken in this thesis, application of the instrumental approach to policy implementation brings several benefits. These are:

- a reduction of potentially harmful normative emphasis on policy implementation as a seamless web of inter-actor transactions;
- decomposition of policy into analysable segments, allowing for an empirically verifiable and replicable study of policy effects;

- an examination of the politics of goal formulation and the rationale of instrument choice, and the relationship between these two and policy effects;
- compensation for the limited explanatory power of the policy-action continuum concept.

Moreover, application of the instrumental approach as complementary to the policy-action continuum concept is beneficial in two other respects. First, in helping to account for the policy context including contextual variables (accountability and trust). Second, in arranging the analytical segments (policy instruments) into a typology, thus increasing the replicability of the study (see Section 3.4.3).

3.4.3 Types of instrumental approach and Vedung's typology of policy instruments

The emphasis on studying policy implementation through policy instruments made in the 1980s helped to generate a sizeable body of academic literature (Howlett 2000). In it, three types of approaches to the study of policy instruments can be distinguished. These are:

- *the traditional approach*, which concentrates on the study of policy instruments without considering contextual influences;
- *the instrument-context approach* (refined instrumentalism), which explains the operations of instruments by examining both the characteristics of individual instruments and the context in which the instruments are applied;
- *the contextual approach*, which assumes that policy instruments are only one of the many factors that determine the course of policy processes (De Bruijn and Hufen 1998).

Out of these approaches, the instrument-context approach is chosen for application in this thesis. Three reasons underlie this choice. First, the instrument-context approach eschews the strict goals-means rationality in treating policy instruments. The policy instruments are not considered neutral and value-free, but rather as having intrinsic design features that enable the construction of instrument typologies. Second, the instrument-context approach explains the effects caused by policy instruments through the context, which corresponds to the need to understand policy instruments in relation to the particular political, social, and economic situations in which they are applied. Third, the instrument-context approach gives weight to actor-interactions in the instrument choice and application. The instrument choice and

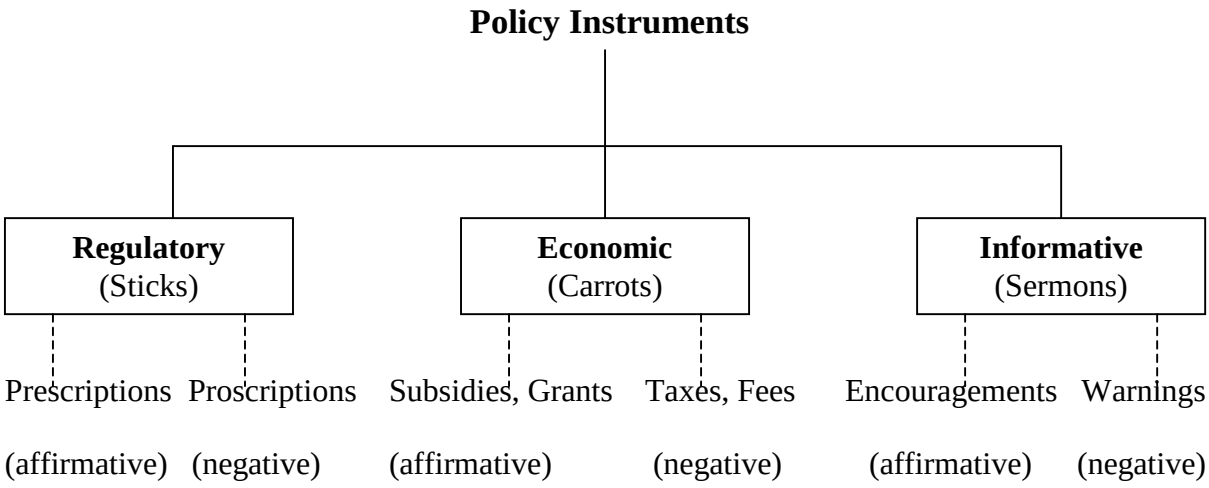
application are regarded as the process of pushing and pulling between actors with often conflicting interests (Bagchus 1998; Peters 2005).

In line with the orientation of implementation analysis on policy instruments, efforts have been made to account for instrument variety. More specifically, they have concerned constructing parsimonious yet comprehensive typologies that would allow comparisons across time, area, and policy domain (Hood 2007). Several typologies of policy instruments have been constructed since the 1980s, with more up-to-date contributions by Vedung (1998), Bardach (2000), and Salamon (2002). With the differences in scope and level of detail owing to the author's take on the subject (Hood 2006, 2007), the existing typologies, nonetheless, converge on recognising three archetypes of policy instruments, i.e. *regulation, economic means* (funding), and *information*.

These three archetypes make up the elements of Vedung's (1998) typology of policy instruments. Vedung's typology is used in the thesis to identify and arrange instruments through which system-level higher education policy on quality assurance is put into operation. As the typology is central for the enquiry, each of the three instrument types is briefly characterised. *Regulations* are measures undertaken by governmental units to influence subordinates by means of binding rules and directives to act in accordance with what is ordered in these rules and directives. *Economic instruments* involve either handing out or witholding resources, in kind or in cash. *Information* embodies attempts at influencing people through transfer of knowledge, communication of reasoned argument, or persuasion. The principle underlying this trichotomy of policy instruments is the degree of constraint by which each of the instrument types is applied. In this respect, regulation is thought to be more constraining than economic means, which are in turn to be regarded as more constraining than information (Vedung 1998).

Addressing the three instrument types more informally as "sticks, carrots, and sermons", Vedung further attributes an affirmative and a negative variant to each instrument. As an illustration, the economic type of policy instruments ("carrots") may come in the form of subsidies, grants (affirmative variant) and/or taxes or fees (negative variant). Vedung arrives at a threefold "sticks, carrots, and sermons" typology, with each instrument type coming in an affirmative and a negative variant (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: **Vedung's typology of policy instruments**



Source*:* adapted from Vedung (1998, 30)

3.4.4 Instrument mixes, choice, and application

In real-time policy settings, the implementation of a given policy often involves multiple instruments rather than just one (Ringeling 2002). The multiple instruments are combined in a mix/package as a part of the response to the formulation of a policy goal. The combination of instruments into a mix/package is even more likely in the case of policies with multiple goals. This theoretical proposition appears to hold regardless the type of policy area and policy response, the latter by individuals or institutions (Rist 1998). Although the instrument mixes can become quite complex in time, it is worth noting that despite having a large array of policy instruments at their disposal, governments often repeatedly choose from a more limited set of options, thus developing a distinct *implementation style* for a given policy (Howlett 2005).

The tendency to study policy implementation through policy instruments in isolation rather than in combination has been noted and critiqued (Peters and Van Nispen 1998; Eliadis, Hill, and Howlett 2005; Peters 2005). The thesis addresses this critique by studying the implementation of a system-level higher education policy on quality assurance through a combination of four specific implementation instruments. These are: accreditation, the Higher Education Development Fund, the Development Programmes, and the platform for dissemination of examples of good practice. A study of the four implementation instruments is presented in Chapter 5, with the major findings summarised in Chapter 6.

Given the intention to study policy instruments in combination, the issue of instrument packaging merits attention. Two types of policy instrument packaging–*horizontal and*

chronological–are particularly pertinent for the enquiry undertaken in the thesis. In horizontal packaging, two or more policy instruments or their sub-types are directed at the same target. Chronological packaging refers to a certain time order in the selection among and the application of diverse policy instruments. With regard to the "sticks, carrots, sermons" typology, the theoretical assumption is that the three instrument types are linked together (chronologically packaged) in the sequence from the least coercive to the most coercive. This means that, in time, a policy problem is tackled first by providing information (sermon), subsequently by applying selective incentives (carrots), and finally by establishing regulation possibly along with the threat of sanctions (sticks) (Vedung 1998). The assumption of chronological packaging "sticks, carrots, sermons" with an increasing degree of coerciveness will be considered when studying higher education policy implementation through the four specific instruments.

The horizontal and vertical packaging of policy instruments reflects the search for the optimal solution to a policy problem. This leads to considerations of the rationale behind the instrument choice and application. It is argued that in reality the instrument selection and application process often cannot be regarded as logical. It is rather a process of muddling through often contradictory political agendas and expectations, confusion over policy goals, and partial understandings of societal conditions (Howlett and Ramesch 1993; Rist 1998). From this, it follows that instrument choice and application involves a good deal of politics and actors' interactions in which issues of power, conflict, negotiations, and bargaining come into prominence. The theoretical constructs chosen to guide the enquiry in the thesis do indeed address issues concerning the politics of instrument choice (instrument-context approach) and application (policy-action continuum). However, they leave the very nature of actor-interactions significantly open to interpretation. To maintain theoretical rigour and replicability of the study, bringing structure into actor-interactions seems to be in order.

3.4.5 Structuring actors' interactions

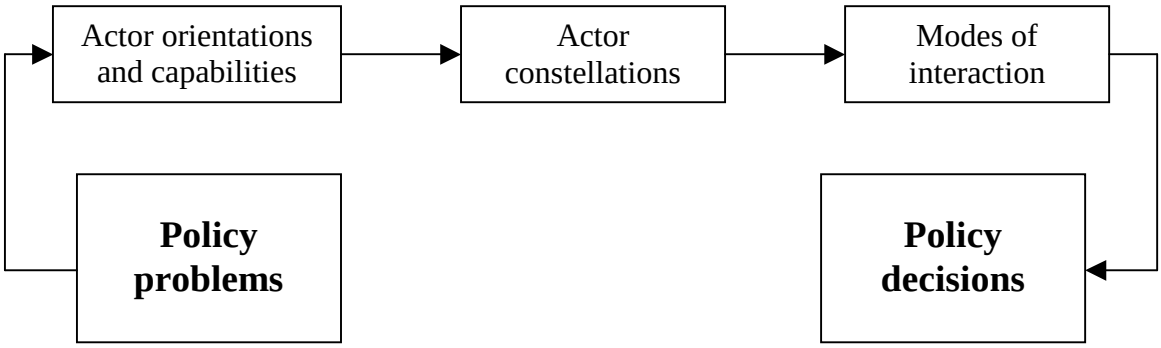
In every higher education system, there is a set of actors entering into interactions (exchange relationships). Three major categories of actors can thus be identified. These are: *academic actors* (faculty, administrators, students), *governmental actors* (Ministry of Education), and *societal actors* (employers, professional associations) (Frederiks, Westerheijden, and Weusthof 1994). While academic actors are internal to the system, the reverse is true for the other two categories.

For structuring actors' interactions, insights from Actor-Centred Institutionalism are of help. Actor-Centred Institutionalism (ACI) is a theoretical framework developed for the study of actors' interactions in policy formulation and policy implementation processes in semi-public sectors such as health, or education. It provides a response to the fact that governance in these sectors can no longer be conceptualised by a clear dichotomy between the governor and the governed. ACI replaces the relationship by an analysis of actors' interactions in policy networks that are characterised by multiple modes of interaction (Witte 2004). Actors and their interacting choices, rather than institutions, are thus assumed to be the proximate causes of responses to policy problems (Scharpf 2000).

In ACI, actors are attributed two sets of characteristics. These are: *actor capabilities* and *actor orientations*. Actor capabilities refer to all action resources that allow an actor to influence an outcome in certain respects and to a certain degree. Actor orientations comprise perceptions and preferences. Taken together, they refer to the desirable or undesirable status quo, to the causes of a perceived problem, to the efficacy and desirability of perceived courses of action, and to the outcomes associated with these (Scharpf 1997). ACI further introduces the concept of *actor constellations* and *modes of interaction*. Actor constellations emerge as a result of the combination of perceptions, preferences, and capabilities of individual actors brought together. Actor constellations thus represent what is known of a set of actors involved in particular policy interactions, pointing to the level of potential conflict in a given interaction. The conflict in a given interaction can in turn be resolved through modes of interaction. Four ideo-typical modes of interaction are recognised, i.e. unilateral action, negotiation, voting, and hierarchical determination (ibid. cf. Witte 2006).

Selected insights from ACI make it possible to operationalise the actors' interactions in policy formulation and implementation processes. The interactions proceed as illustrated in Figure 4. To clarify when a policy problem in policy formulation and implementation emerges, the actors involved enter into interaction. In the interaction, they mobilise their capabilities to bring the problem to a solution that is in line with their desired course of action (orientation). Deciding on the solution involves a certain degree of conflict. How the conflict is to be played out depends on the overall characteristics of all the actors involved (actor constellation), interacting with each other in one of the ideo-typical means of conflict resolution (modes of interaction) to arrive at a policy decision. Overall, four ideo-typical means of conflict resolution can be identified for use in actors' interactions.

Figure 4: **Actors' interactions in policy formulation and implementation**



Source: adapted from Scharpf (1997)

3.5 Linking policy design and policy implementation

3.5.1 Constructing a conceptual framework

Deconstructing the complexities in the study of quality and policy implementation makes it possible to produce a conceptual framework guiding the enquiry undertaken in this thesis. The complex and multi-faceted nature of quality in higher education is best tackled context-specifically and in recognition of the relative positions of the actors involved in assuring it. As higher education represents a loosely-coupled, decentralised sector with high professional autonomy, the significance of the front-line academics must also be accounted for when analysing the implementation of a domain-specific policy at system level. The positions and roles of front-line policy deliverers in policy implementation processes have long been a source of discord between two major theoretical perspectives on policy implementation: top-down and bottom-up perspectives. After a protracted debate, both perspectives seem to agree that implementation is a continuum located between central guidance and local autonomy. On the continuum, the preferences of front-line policy implementers and the negotiations within implementation networks have to be taken into account to the same extent as centrally defined policy objectives and efforts at hierarchical control (Pülzl and Treib 2007). The concept of implementation as a policy-action continuum (Barret and Fudge 1981) on which negotiations and bargaining take place in interactions between central-level and front-level positioned actors has underlying characteristics of this type.

The policy-action continuum is a suitable concept for studying implementation in higher education policy settings, largely for two reasons. First, because it accounts for the professional autonomy of front-line academics, who are capable of influencing the effects of implementation processes through negotiated agreements made in interaction with central-

level staff (often Ministry representatives). Second, because it dismisses the policy formulation-implementation divide that was hailed as a useful heuristics tool but has proved unrealistic in empirical reality.

Applicable as the concept of the policy-action continuum is for an analysis of higher education policy implementation, its application faces two sets of limitations. First, empirically, the policy-action continuum concept has a limited explanatory power. Simply stated, recognition that implementation is a continuum of policy and action tells us little about what happens in reality when a specific policy, such as the policy on system-level quality assurance, is put into action. Second, normatively, conceptualisation of policy implementation as a policy-action continuum may be conducive to modelling implementation as a seamless web of inter-actor transactions where "anything goes"–again an idea that has little bearing on policy practice.

The instrument-context approach to policy implementation rectifies the two limitations. It does so by deconstructing the complex policy implementation processes into analysable segments (policy instruments). *The rationale, functioning, and effects of implementation instruments as proxies for the whole of policy content* may be identified, described, and evaluated *in combination and recognition of the contextual knowledge*. The instrument-context approach also takes account of the subtleties of policy design, including the politics of goal formulation and instrument choice, thus making it possible to establish the link between the goals, means, and ends of a given policy. The interactions of actors involved in designing and implementing a policy (whatever levels it involves) can be structured by applying insights from Actor-Centred Institutionalism. The structuring entails distinguishing between actor-orientations and capabilities, actor constellations, and means of interaction in the process of deciding on the solution to a policy problem.

The conceptual framework may be constructed on the basis of the foregoing argumentation. The framework combines three elements: *the policy-action continuum concept, the instrument-context approach to policy implementation, and Actor-Centred Institutionalism* (for utilising insights on actors' interactions). The central idea behind the framework links policy design and policy implementation perspectives. Policy design is accounted for by the instrument context-approach, drawing on Vedung's typology of policy instruments, while policy implementation perspectives are accounted for by the policy-action continuum. Complemented by structuring the actors' interactions in line with Actor-Centred Institutionalism, it is argued that the resulting framework is particularly suitable for studying the effects of policy implementation in decentralised settings with highly autonomous front-

line staff, as in higher education. The conceptual framework for the enquiry undertaken in the thesis is graphically shown on page 233.

3.5.2 Summary

More than 20 years of research into assuring quality of higher education have shown that quality is a complex, multifaceted, and contestable concept with political ramifications. Government-initiated policies on higher education quality assurance have been formed and implemented since the mid 1980s in Western Europe and began about a decade later in Central and Eastern Europe. In Western Europe, the primary reason for implementing these policies was the anxiety that national systems were becoming less competitive and efficient globally, as they progressed from the stage of elite higher education to mass higher education. In the region of Central and Eastern Europe, the primary government concern with quality assurance came from the need to carry out systemic reforms to dissociate the higher education sector from the practices of the communist period. For this reason, setting up threshold standards through summative evaluation with the accreditation output prevailed as the region's underlying approach to higher education quality assurance. The situation in Western Europe, however, unfolded differently, with the corresponding policies initially based upon formative evaluation for institutional improvement. The dichotomy of underlying approaches to quality assurance across Europe gradually came to an end in the 2000s. This was due to the effects of the supranational Bologna-process developments, which have brought about policy convergence in terms of implementing primarily accountability-oriented accreditation schemes.

Efforts to conceptualise quality ran parallel with the implementation of national policies on higher education quality assurance. As suggested, quality is a concept that escapes narrow confinement into a single specification, as it is, among others, stakeholder relative (Harvey and Green 1993), with as many conceptualisations of quality as stakeholders present (Van Vught and Westerheijden 1993). Difficulties with conceptualising quality, however, do not stop governments from stating goals and implementing them in formal policies. The most promising way forward may thus be to adopt an approach which acknowledges the relative nature of quality: relative to the stakeholders, the contexts, and the particular assurance mechanisms in use (Newton 2007). Hence what is required is an approach that takes account of the variety of stakeholders' positions, policy contexts and mechanisms, and which at the same time draws from policy implementation theory.

The policy-action continuum concept complemented by the instrument-context approach to policy implementation fulfils these requirements. The research into public policy implementation and the corresponding theory-building suggest that the way out of the top-down vs. bottom-up opposition may lead through conceptualising policy as a continuum of action between top and front-line policy deliverers with the corresponding interactions in place. This fits in with the theoretical assumptions behind the policy-action continuum. By conceptualising policy implementation as a series of transactions–including negations and bargaining–between actors variously positioned on the continuum, the policy-action continuum achieves two things. First, it dismisses the politics-administration dichotomy, and, relatedly, second, it gives weight to the power and discretion of front-line policy implementers. However, the policy-action continuum concept seems to face two sorts of limitations. The first, empirical limitation lies in the limited explanatory power as to what happens in reality on the continuum, and with what effects. The second, normative limitation relates to lending credence to the perception of policy implementation as a seamless web of actor-interactions with no beginning and end, where "anything goes" and goals are formulated only "on the go". It is argued that the instrument-context approach to policy implementation rectifies these two limitations. It does so by deconstructing the policy content into implementation instruments as analysable segments and by orienting the enquiry toward the issues of goal formulation, instrument rationale, functioning, and effects, as well as policy context. Two variables that are contextually important for framing the enquiry undertaken in this thesis are accountability and trust. The complementary application of the instrument-context approach helps to account for the issues of policy design, a perspective often overlooked in implementation studies (May 2003).

Linking policy design and policy implementation perspectives by combining the policy-action continuum concept and the instrument-context approach is the central idea behind the conceptual framework of the thesis. The utilisation of Vedung's typology of basic policy instruments ("sticks, carrots, and sermons") further allows for a study of the operation and effects of individual implementation instruments in combination. The nature and course of actor-interactions when arriving at policy decisions may be operationalised by applying selected insights from Actor-Centred Institutionalism. Operationalisation of this type entails a study of actor-orientations and capabilities, actor-constellations, and modes of interaction for resolving conflicts over policy decisions likely to emerge in interaction. The resulting conceptual framework is particularly suitable for studying policy implementation processes in decentralised and professionally autonomous policy settings such as higher education.

The comparative review of research into policy implementation in the field of public policy and sectoral higher education policy indicates that there has been limited theory utilisation and limited development in the field of sectoral higher education policy. Public policy implementation research can be said to have progressed from single case studies via theory maturation to being carried out under synthesising or alternative lines of enquiry. As to implementation research in higher education, the 1986 seminal study drew heavily on the stages model of the policy cycle and elements of the Sabatier and Mazmanian top-down framework. It is suggested that the potential of the 1986 implementation study was not capitalised upon in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s. Instead, in line with the rationale behind the Evaluative State concept, research enquiries shifted towards evaluation studies within which the sectoral domain of quality assurance received more than a fair share of attention. The reasons can be found in the very characteristics of higher education research, namely its tendency toward application drift, sector-isolatedness, and its sensitivity to political agendas (Teichler 1996, 2000a,b, 2003, 2005). The belated 2005 follow-up on the seminal study also does not seem to offer outstanding theoretical contributions to advancing implementation theory. Nonetheless, few studies undertaken especially in the 2000s, limited as they are in number, draw on public policy conceived theories and conceptualisations such as the Advocacy-Coalition Framework or Actor-Centred Institutionalism. Because of the limited number of studies, higher education implementation research has yet to show signs of theory maturation. The proposed way forward is to continue utilising the public policy conceived, mid-range theory concepts to which the elements of the conceptual framework used in this thesis belong.

Finally, given the focus of the thesis on implementation and higher education quality assurance, two points of a comparative nature should be made. The first concerns the parallelism between the study of quality assurance processes and the policymaking process in general, both decomposed into an individual “stages heuristic”. In the public policy field, this type of decomposition–typically agenda setting, policy formulation, implementation, evaluation, reformulation (or possibly termination)–sparked an intense debate between the critics and advocates of such an approach. In higher education policy settings, the stages model was utilised in the framework guiding the 1986 implementation study, which was to be critiqued for its theoretical obsoleteness about twenty years later (Kogan 2005). With regard to developments specific to the quality assurance domain, the general model of quality assurance introduced a four-stage distinction between a coordinating agency, institutional self-evaluation, external peer-review, and reporting of the results. Though not uncontested by

some (Brennan 1999[31]), it seems safe to assume that the model owes the widespread attention paid to it by the higher education community to the fact that it introduced the "stages approach" to the study of quality assurance with the corresponding heuristic value. Correspondingly, the dozens of independent variables used by researchers in assessing the applicability of the model in different contexts invites a comparison with the similar development in public policy implementation studies in the 1980s, characterised by mounting dissatisfaction with the rather limited value of independent-variable propositions for forming generalisable conclusions. It is assumed that higher education implementation research within the quality assurance domain will also face such a challenge. For this reason, the proposition is to reduce the enquiry to accountability and trust as two contextual variables helping to explain the outcomes of quality assurance policies that are implemented.

4. Czech system-level policy on higher education quality assurance between 1990 and 2010 in context

Policy implementation does not take place in a vacuum. In line with this assumption, which owes much to the instrument-context approach, Chapter 4 reviews developments that impacted the formation and implementation of the Czech system-level policy on higher education quality assurance between 1990 and 2010. The contextual knowledge thus gained helps in identifying the major factors that bear on the rationale, functioning, and effects of the four implementation instruments studied here. For greater clarity and analytical parsimony, 20 years of Czech quality-assurance related policy developments are broken down into three periods, i.e. 1990-1993, 1994-1998, and 1999-present. Arbitrary as such an analytical division may be, it reflects the pattern of higher education policy events in the post-transformation CEE countries. In the main, the pattern suggests that CEE higher education transformation processes proceed from (radical) dissociation with communist-like practices (1990-1993), via emphasis on system expansion and control (the mid 1990s), back to issues of sectoral governance and more nuanced articulation of domain-specific policies reflecting international trends (from the late 1990s onwards) (Scott 2002, 2007).

This sequencing of CEE higher education reform developments is applicable to the Czech Republic. A corresponding analysis of policy developments bearing on sectoral quality

[31] Arguing that the model is so general that it may hide as much as it may reveal. In this respect, Ostrom's (1999, 2005) differentiation among *framework*, *theory*, and *model* comes to mind.

assurance follows. To complete the picture empirically, the three analysed periods (Section 4.1-4.3) are complemented by basic quantitative data (Section 4.4). Finally, the implications of the policy developments for the sectoral domain of quality assurance are outlined (Section 4.5).

4.1 1990-1993: Out of Babylon into system reforms

From November 1989, after more than 40 years of the Communist party rule, Czech higher education took a democratic course. Re-orientation of the Czech higher education sector toward democratic values entailed several reform initiatives drawing on educational change processes of a general nature, such as depoliticisation and demonopolisation of education, recognition of student and staff rights, and decentralisation of administration (Cerych 1997). In Czech higher education, the thrust of the reform was oriented toward liberalisation of academic structures through the restoration of academic rights and freedoms including performance of research (Harach et al. 1992).

Liberalisation of academic structures entailed the establishment of the Council of Higher Education Institutions (Council of HEIs) and the Czech Rectors' Conference. Established in 1990, the Council of HEIs consists of members of the academic communities of HEIs (academic staff members, students), delegated by their representative academic bodies (academic senates). The Council's members represent institutional interests when entering into talks on policy matters with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (the Ministry). Organisationally, the Council is divided into several units with different competences[32], out of which the Students' Chamber is of special importance. The Czech Rector's Conference, formed in 1993, is a body that brings together the rectors of HEIs. Its mission consists in discussing basic issues of HEIs, taking joint standpoints, and defending them in dealing with executive authorities, namely the Ministry (CHES 1996)

The newly granted academic rights and freedoms were set out in Higher Education Act No. 172/1990 Coll. (the Act of 1990). The Act of 1990 gave *both* HEIs *and their units* (faculties) the status of legal entities, thus providing them with considerable independence from the state and also intra-institutionally. Substantial autonomy was also granted in the matters of curriculum, organisation and management, personnel policy, allocation of finance, and external contacts (MŠMT 1994). In contrast to the pre-1990 situation, Czech HEIs were considered independent institutions with collegial governance structures (academic senates)

[32] These are: the assembly, Chair, Vice-Chairs, Presidium, sub-presidium, permanent and ad-hoc working committees, the Students' Chamber, and the Agency of the Council of HEIs.

acting on principles of self-governance and academic freedom. In this way, the institutions were supposed to develop into leading centres of education, research, and creative activity (Beneš, Huisman, and Šebková 2003).

Restoration of institutional autonomy was conducive to freeing access conditions. After the political and economic changes of 1989, there was a tendency to eliminate all barriers to higher education which had been characteristic of the past situation (Harach et al. 1992). Aside from the requirement on passing the secondary school leaving examination (SSLE), the Act of 1990 gave the right to decide on student admissions to faculties. In effect, the Act of 1990 thus put a stop to the *numerus clausus* that had been applied to access to higher education between 1948 and 1989. However, to deal with the excessive demand for study places, HEIs put in place a system of entrance examinations. From 1992, study places were funded on the basis of a formula. The major goal of introducing formula funding, replacing the incremental funding mechanism, was to gradually work it up to objective measures for funding educational activities of HEIs (Turner 1994). Despite the modifications to the funding base and the opening of six new regional universities[33], demand continued to outstrip the available study places. The establishment of the six regional universities, however, helped somewhat to lessen the concentration of higher education into traditional centres (Prague, Brno, Olomouc). However, it was not particularly effective for sectoral diversity.

Sectoral diversity was linked with programme and institutional diversification. The potential of programme diversification was not capitalised upon, as in the Act of 1990 the Bachelor programme was defined as an integral part of higher education studies (§ 21), i.e. de facto as an integral part of a 4 to 6-year Master programme. Not only did this concept have nothing in common with the Anglo-Saxon model from which the inspiration originally came, but it also contributed to the generally low status of Bachelor studies in comparison to the 4 to 6-year Master (Pabian 2009). Master programmes lasting 4-6 years ("long Masters") were traditionally considered the only proper form of higher education studies. As far as institutional diversification was concerned, the Act of 1990 disallowed the provision of private higher education, thus making the system structurally very homogeneous. In effect, the degree programmes offered were still predominantly 4-6 year Master programmes to be

[33] The University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem, the University of Ostrava, the Silesian University in Opava, and the University of Hradec Králové.

studied at universities only (with some possibility of dropping out early and receiving a Bachelor degree).

Following academe-led concern over dropping quality standards due to rising enrolments and limitations of the resource base (Hendrichová 1993), quality of higher education also became part of the systemic reforms. Assurance of institutional and programme quality was entrusted to the Accreditation Commission. The Accreditation Commission (AC) was set up on 1 September 1990 by ordinance of the Czech Government no. 350/90 Coll. as the government advisory body for the area of higher education. However, the legally unclear status of accreditation[34] made the AC enter into a three-year process of specifying its terms of reference. Between 1990-1993, while discussing how to proceed with accreditation, the AC prepared working documents for newly conceptualised doctoral studies and gave its viewpoint on the establishment of six new regional universities (Vinš 2004). Importantly, on the initiative of the Ministry, the Higher Education Development Fund was set up in 1992. It was designed as an instrument for aiding in institutional transformation and quality enhancement to compensate for stagnation under communist rule. From the very outset, the targeted financial support from the HEDF could not satisfy institutional demand (Valenta 1993).

The 1990-1993 period can be seen as a time of initiation of sectoral reforms triggered by the restoration of academic rights and freedoms. Liberalisation of academic structures helped toward the establishment of two representative academic bodies: the Council of HEIs and the Czech Rectors' Conference. In the main, the sectoral reforms entailed freeing access conditions as a part of substantial deregulation, some decentralisation (through setting up six new regional universities), and little diversification. Quality of higher education was also subject to reform efforts through the establishment of the AC and the HEDF. The legally unspecified status of accreditation factored into lengthy disputes about how accreditation should be handled. Overall, the passing of the Act of 1990 is seen as having come too early to be instrumental in settling policy issues for a longer term under rapidly changing socio-political conditions (Hendrichová and Šebková 1995).

4.2 1994-1998: Policy suggestions that did not materialise

In the mid 1990s, the reforms initiated after 1989 lost their momentum. Once Czech higher education had been put on a democratic course, limitations set by the legal framework surfaced. The content and wording of the Act of 1990 failed to address three issues that were

[34] With the exception of the name of the Commission, the term "accreditation" was not introduced by the Act of 1990.

fundamental for further systemic development. These were: diversification of higher education by type and founder, extension of variety and flexibility of studies including Bachelor programmes, and the legal definition and status of accreditation (Hendrichová and Šebková 1995). *With the exception of accreditation*, the urgency of the other two was reiterated by the OECD Review of Higher Education (Antweiler et al. 1992; Pabian 2007), thus helping to catch the eye of legislators and policy-makers. After the 1993 amendment was turned down by Parliament, there was agreement that a new bill would be drafted.

The work on a new act began in autumn 1993, with the bill expected to receive approval by the end of 1995 (Šebková 1994). The drafting was finalised in 1995. The finalised bill addressed three major areas, i.e. the relationship between the state and the HEIs (to clarify the status of accreditation), institutional diversification, and diversification of financial sources including payments of tuition fees (MŠMT 1995). However, the bill was rejected in the parliamentary session in December 1995. Rejection of the bill prolonged the validity of the Act of 1990. Under the Act of 1990, Czech higher education in the mid 1990s continued to be democratic, expanding, deregulated, and somewhat decentralised, with no involvement of private providers.

With regard to quality assurance, the absence of an up-to-date legal framework entailed non-specification of the rationale behind the accreditation scheme. After a protracted debate, starting in 1994, the AC commenced improvement-oriented, institutional evaluations based on peer-review. The evaluations were focused on faculties in related fields of study (electrical engineering, pedagogy, etc.) For each of the evaluated faculties, the AC issued specific recommendations, and the AC gradually established itself in the higher education sector as a respectable body (Vinš 2004). *The initiation of evaluations of faculties in related fields of study by the AC as a proxy for an accreditation scheme meant that no institutional and/or programme accreditation was performed*. The commencement of institutional evaluations can be seen as a response to concern that, under continuing expansion of the system, quality standards would be lowered. Grants from the HEDF, aimed at enhancing the quality of education activities, worked against such concerns. *However, frequent changes in the priority areas declared for support, along with alleged mismanagement of the Fund's budget, made the Fund's position in the freshly reformed system rather unstable* (RVŠ 1998).

Overall, higher education developments in the mid 1990s can be characterised by an orientation toward legislative work. In this respect, parliamentary rejection of the 1995 bill did not put a stop to legislating a new framework (Beneš, Staněk, and Šebková 2006).

Following further discussions, efforts were concentrated on drafting the new higher education legislation that was passed in 1998.

4.3 1999-present: Formation of quality assurance policy

4.3.1 Changes in the legal framework

The passing of Higher Education Act No. 111/1998 Coll. (the Act of 1998), which came into force in January 1999, placed Czech higher education under a new legal framework. The Act of 1998 laid down several changes bearing on sectoral governance, funding, organisation of studies, and quality assurance. These changes can be summarised as follows:

- Governance:
- division of HEIs into the university category and the non-university category according to the type of degree programmes provided;
- changes in the organization of units of existing HEIs aimed at promoting institutional integration, with the only legal entities henceforth being HEIs, and not faculties;
- changes in the competencies and responsibilities of the governing bodies of existing HEIs, including the establishment of the Boards of Trustees;
- possibility of establishing private HEIs;
- obligation on the part of the Ministry to prepare the Long-term Plan of Educational and Scientific, Research, Developmental, Artistic or Other Creative Activities in the Area of Higher Education–the major strategic policy document for higher education–and to update it annually;
- the corresponding obligation on the HEIs (both public and private) to prepare their own long-term plans, including annual updates.
- Funding: new arrangements for the financial management of HEIs, extending their financial autonomy and sources of income[35];
- Organisation of studies: introduction of a three-tier structure: Bachelor (3-4 years), Master (5-6 years or 1-3 years as continuing Masters), and doctoral (3-4 years) programmes.
- Quality assurance:
- mandatory approval of new HEIs;

[35] Including income from: auxiliary, for-profit activities, gifts and endowments, and yields on property.

- obligatory accreditation of degree programmes, habilitation procedures, and procedures for appointing professors;
- evaluation of the quality of institutional activities (CHES 1999; Beneš, Staněk, and Šebková 2006).

Overall, the new legislative framework addressed policy issues which had hampered the development of the system in the mid 1990s. An end was put to the significant deregulation of the system, exemplified by the legal entity status granted to institutional units (faculties). New arrangements were made for financial management aimed at diversification of institutional sources of income. Diversification of the higher education landscape was supported by a) the possibility of establishing private HEIs, and b) the division of institutions into the university category and the non-university category on the basis of the types of degree programmes provided (Bachelor, Master, doctoral). Institutions offering all three types of programmes, i.e. the already existing public institutions funded by the state and collecting no tuition fees, became officially recognised as universities (university-type institutions). Newly established private institutions charging tuition fees were approved to offer Bachelor programmes (and exceptionally Master programmes), but were not given university status from the start. At the same time, the possibility of obtaining university status was not foreclosed to them[36]. The establishment of private HEIs, conditioned by accreditation of at least one Bachelor's programme, was also conducive to programme diversification.

Diversification of higher education studies based on the two-tier Bachelor/Master structure was made obligatory by Amendment to the Higher Education Act No. 147/2001 Coll. (Amendment of 2001). The Amendment of 2001 reflected the Bologna-process Bachelor/Master structural template which was forming at the time (Beneš, Staněk, and Šebková 2006), and the Bologna Declaration was one of the justifications for the amendment (Pabian 2009)[37]. Under the Amendment of 2001, student admissions to existing accredited programmes could be made only till the end of 2003, unless the programmes were accredited anew in compliance with the two-tier structure. This made the Bachelor degree programme a self-standing type of programme, leading either to a professional qualification or to further study in a two-year Master programme. This restructuring brought the Czech Republic into line with international developments within the Bologna Process, aiming at adoption of the

[36] The granting of university status is contingent on conducting research and development activities and accreditation of at least one doctoral programme. The standpoint of the AC is decisive in this respect. Up to 2009, two private HEIs were granted university status (CHES 2009).
[37] The Czech Republic signed the Bologna Declaration in 1999.

Bachelor/Master degree structure across European higher education systems. However, the available analysis suggests that the Bologna process had an impact on the politics of Czech higher education, rather than on its polity (Pabian 2009). To illustrate, in the process of implementing the two-tier degree structure, various actors at various implementation levels developed varied interpretations of the Bologna process in keeping with their own interests and policy preferences[38] (ibid.) *The Czech Republic thus may be seen as an example of a Bologna signatory in which the Bologna process priorities, such as the implementation of the Bachelor/Master degree structure, have tended to be politically reinterpreted to leverage national policy reforms*.

Institutional and programme diversification were accounted for in the newly codified measures for quality assurance. These measures entailed: approval of newly established private HEIs, accreditation of degree programmes along with authorizations to carry out habilitation procedures and professorial appointments, and evaluation of institutional activities. All the measures fell under the competence of the AC, with priority given to institutional approval and programme accreditation (Smrčka 2003). Institutional approval is conditioned on accreditation of at least one degree programme. All degree programmes were subject to accreditation awarded by the Ministry based on the prior standpoint of the AC (Act of 1998, § 78). *Under these legal stipulations, programme accreditation became the instrument for assuring the minimal quality standards of Czech higher education, with ramifications for institutional funding* (losing accreditation leading to the loss of study places funded on a formula basis).

Finally, the new legislation had an impact on sectoral policy-making. The Act of 1998 obliged the Ministry to produce the Long-term Plan for sectoral development and to update it annually (§ 87). The Long-term Plan of the Ministry (Ministry's Plan) sets out the major higher education policy goals to be achieved within a certain period of time (five years), taking into consideration international developments. The first Ministry's Plan was made for the 2000-2005 period (Ministry's Plan for 2000-2005), and the second for the 2006-2010 period (Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010). Correspondingly, all HEIs are under a legal obligation to elaborate their long-term institutional development plans (plans of HEIs), including annual updates, in reflection of the Ministry's Plan (§ 18). The annual updates offer an opportunity to take new development trends into account, be they domestic or international. The annual discussions between the representatives of HEIs and the Ministry,

[38] The parliamentary right appropriated Bologna to defend neo-liberal reform proposals against the Social-Democratic Party, which was in power at that time.

which include considering possible ways of harmonizing the plans of the HEIs with the goals of the Ministry's Plan, contribute to a better understanding of ideas and expectations on both sides (Beneš, Staněk, and Šebková 2006). The Ministry's Plan and the plans of the HEIs are basic strategic policy-making documents in Czech higher education, laying the groundwork for the formation of more pronounced system and institutional policies in individual domains, such as quality assurance.

4.3.2 Making quality assurance policy

The early and mid-1990s saw the establishment and evolution of two instruments bearing on the quality of education activities. These were accreditation and the HEDF, which helped to enhance the sectoral quality through peer-evaluations or, in the case of the HEDF, targeted funding (grants). However, the missing clarification of the status of accreditation and the unstable position of the HEDF made them isolated phenomena in the turbulent higher education environment, rather than solid building blocks for a domain-specific policy. The legal framework in effect from 1999 changed this in two respects. First, the legal specification of accreditation provided threshold standardisation as a policy base. Second, under the obligation of strategic policy-making, the Ministry's Plan became the basic policy document enabling articulation of domain-specific policies and domain-specific policy goals; something that Czech higher education in the 1990s had been devoid of.

The first Ministry's Plan was made for the 2000-2005 period. The Ministry's Plan for 2000-2005 referred to quality assurance being reflected on when formulating development goals (i.e. not a domain to be prioritised). The legally mandated activities of the Accreditation Commission were declared fundamental for assuring quality of education activities. In this respect, the Ministry's Plan for 2000-2005 states:

> The Accreditation Commission assesses the quality of the educational activities of HEIs when making a standpoint on accreditation of a degree programme, a habilitation procedure, or a professorial appointment. Other assessment activities of the Accreditation Commission should be directed at stimulating the quality of education across the whole sector in line with the corresponding legal stipulations (MEYS 2000, 13).

As to the HEDF, the Ministry's Plan for 2000-2005 brought grant support from the Fund in connection with the development of degree programmes and ICT (MEYS 2000). The Fund's function in implementing the Ministry's priorities was made more specific in the 2001-2005 updates to the Plan. In effect, the Ministry's Plan for 2000-2005 and its updates made the HEDF into a system-level instrument for enhancing quality. To codify this newly specified

status, an Agreement on the HEDF between the Council of HEIs and the Ministry was made in 2001. The Agreement concretised the terms for formulating priority areas for support (to be in line with the Ministry's Plan and its updates) and the process for making and agreeing on the Fund's budget (RVŠ 2001b).

Importantly, the 2002 Update to the Ministry's Plan for 2000-2005 introduced *Development Programmes* as another system-level instrument for enhancing quality (MŠMT 2001). DPs were initiated by the Ministry in 2000 to foster the transformation of teacher-training degree programmes. The rationale behind DPs is to consolidate the governance of the higher education sector from the central policy level, and actively to shape up its development in key policy domains such as quality assurance. The DPs thus incentivise HEIs to develop broadly in line with the Ministry's policy priorities, basically through the allotment of block grants. Again, the priority areas of the DPs were brought in line with the Ministry's goals in the following updates to the Ministry's Plan.

The content of the Ministry's Plan for 2000-2005 and its updates make it possible to identify basic goals within the quality assurance domain and instruments for goal implementation. The system-level quality assurance policy forming between 2000-2005 entailed:

a) assurance of quality of education through programme accreditation (plus accreditation of habilitations and professorial appointments) based on checking the minimum standards;
b) improvement of educational activities through funding from the HEDF and from DPs.

It is worth pointing out that the formulation of these goals was the result of synthesis, as in reality the goals are scattered through six policy documents (the Ministry's Plan for 2000-2005 plus the five updates for the respective years). The same can be said about the function attributed to the three corresponding implementation instruments, i.e. accreditation, the HEDF, and the DPs.

The Plan of the Ministry for 2006-2010 brought the formation of quality assurance policy a step further. The Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010 defines three areas where development should be prioritised. These areas are: *internationalisation*, *quality and excellence of academic activities*, and *quality and culture of academic life* (MEYS 2005). Quality of education is thus explicitly referred to as a system priority. Each of the three areas further includes development goals, which are subject to concretisation in the annual updates.

The development goals are to be implemented through policy instruments that are, for each of the priority areas, demarcated in the Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010.

Two of the system priorities, quality and excellence of academic activities, and quality and culture of academic life, fall into the quality assurance policy domain. The introduction to the quality and excellence of academic activities states the domain-specific development goals. The key part of the text reads:

> Evaluation of the quality of higher education institutions in line with international developments will facilitate the identification and promotion of the strengths of higher education institutions and their units … The Ministry will support this development and dissemination of good practices … The principle objective is to support all higher education institutions so that they may pursue top quality in activities where the future lies for them and where they are capable of achieving excellence. This relates to another objective, which is the maximum possible use of all capacities and resources … no institution should be excluded from this development. This approach will make it possible for higher education institutions/faculties to shape their profiles and excel in the areas where they show major strengths (MEYS 2005, 13).

The system-level quality assurance policy thus should be formulated and implemented with the aim to allow all HEIs to develop excellence in areas where they are strong, be it e.g. doctoral education or regional engagement. Aiming at achieving excellence, the system-level policy should be efficient and make use of the following implementation instruments: the HEDF, the DPs, and *the platforms for dissemination of examples of good practice* (Platforms). The same scheme applies to implementing the priority quality and excellence of academic life. At the same time, accreditation continues to be viewed as the instrument for systemic external quality assurance (MEYS 2005).

Hence, in effect, the Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010 identifies four instruments for implementing the system-level quality assurance policy. Three of the instruments are already functioning (accreditation, the HEDF, DPs), while the Platforms are new. The Platforms are intended to be instrumental in identifying, presenting, and emulating examples of good practice cross-sectorally. However, a considerable variation in viewpoints on what qualifies for such Platforms, along with a lack of attention from policy-makers, has made this instrument peripheral to quality assurance policy implementation (see Chapter 5).

Overall, the legal framework in place from 1999 has been pivotal in forming the system-level quality assurance policy. Policy was formed through two strategic policy documents made on legal basis. These were: the Ministry's Plan for 2000-2005, and the Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010. The former document *along with its annual updates* set the policy to be centred on two goals: assurance of minimal standards through programme

accreditation, and enhancement of educational quality through the HEDF and the DPs. The Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010 kept the assurance part of the policy but refined the improvement function by focusing on attaining institutional excellence in areas where institutional strengths lie. In terms of policy implementation, the Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010 extended the range of instruments for quality improvement by the Platforms. *Thus, the goals of the present-day system quality assurance policy are twofold, i.e. a) to assure minimal quality standards, and b) to promote institutional excellence through continuous improvement in areas in which capacities exist.* At the same time, attainment of the latter goal is contingent on the former, and the aspect of efficiency in resource management is stressed.

4.4 From elite to universal higher education: Basic statistical data

A review of developments bearing on sectoral quality would be incomplete without the statistical backdrop. Due to unavailability of the statistical data for 2010, the statistics cover developments up to 2009. The first set of data concerns participation in higher education. The number of students nearly doubled between 1990-1999 and more than tripled up to 2009. The same trend is observable for persons enrolled in higher education studies for the first time (entrants). The number of graduates went up more than five times compared to the situation in 1990; in 2009 it was almost as high as the number of entrants (see Table 2). An analysis of the rates of entry shows that the entry rate was 17.1% in 1990, dropping to 16.6% in 1991, but rising in subsequent years to reach 52.3% of the 19-year-old cohort in 2007 (Prudký, Pabian, and Šima 2010). Applying Trow's concept[39], we can conclude that between 1990-2007, Czech higher education went full circle from the borderline between the elite phase and the mass phase to universal higher education (ibid.) As Table 3 shows, under this quantitative expansion, the student/teacher ratio nearly doubled, rising from 10.1 in 1993 to 19.3 in 2009.

Table 2: **Participation in higher education**

Cat./Year	**1990**	**1993**	**1994**	**1998**	**1999**	**2009**
Entrants	27 507	33 049	37 256	45 901	45 230	82 978
Students	*118 194*	*127 137*	*136 566*	*187 148*	*198 961*	*389 231*
Graduates	15 318	17 513	19 129	25 960	26 687	81 672

Source: ÚIV (2002, 2009)

[39] Distinguishing three development phases (elite, mass, universal) of higher education systems, based on rates of entry. The respective rates, marking the transition from the elite phase to the mass phase, and from the mass phase to the universal phase, are 15% and 50% (Prudký, Pabian, and Šima 2010).

Table 3: **Student/teacher ratio***					
1990	**1993**	**1994**	**1998**	**1999**	**2009**
10.0	10.1	10.8	14.1	14.6	19.3

*Not including private HEIs
Source: Prudký, Pabian, and Šima (2010); ÚIV (2009)

The prevailing degree programmes studied between 1990-1998 were Master programmes lasting 4-6 years ("long Masters"). In comparison, the numbers of students in Bachelor programmes were about three times lower in the mid-1990. This was caused by the low status of Bachelor studies due to their legal definition as an integral part of long Masters. The situation began to change in 1999, when the two-tier (Bachelor/Master) structure came into effect alongside the long Masters, and even more after the passing of the Amendment of 2001, which made the two-tier degree structure obligatory (with exceptions in medicine, law, and some teacher-training). Statistics for 2009 show about 62% of students as studying in Bachelor programmes, 20% in continuing Masters, and 11.6% in long Masters. Impressive as the outcomes of this programme diversification may appear, they are to a significant extent negated by the fact that about 90% of Bachelor graduates enrol in a 2 to 3-year Masters programmes (UK 2009). Somewhat unaffected by the programme re-structuring, doctoral programmes have show a steady tendency toward capacity increase, with 25 191 study places filled in 2009 (6.5% of total student numbers) (see Table 4).

Table 4: **Students according to degree programme**						
Progr./Year	**1990**	**1993**	**1994**	**1998**	**1999**	**2009**
Bachelor	N/a	15 886	28 147	41 433	33 872	240 575
Master	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10 304	78 220
Long Masters	118 194	106 373	101 306	132 796	139 778	45 239
Doctoral	N/a	4 878	7 113	12 919	15 007	25 191

N/A–Not Applicable, N/a–Not available
Source: ÚIV (2002, 2009)

After 1989, efforts were made to overcome the territorial concentration of higher education in three traditional centres (Prague, Brno, Olomouc). As a result, six new regional HEIs were established between 1990-1993. With the exception of an institutional merger in Pilsen, the other five institutions were established out of existing teacher training institutes/faculties and expanded through newly founded faculties. For this reason, the number of HEIs remained stable between 1990 and 1993, while the number of faculties increased from 82 to 105 (see Table 5 and 6). Further impetus for institutional diversification came in 1999 in the wake of the legal possibility to establish private HEIs. Between 1999 and 2009, private higher education expanded both in terms of the number of institutions (from 4 to 45;

see Table 5) and in size, registering 56,357 students, i.e. 14.5% of the overall sectoral capacity in 2009 (ÚIV 2009). The considerable institutional diversification of Czech higher education throughout the 2000s is also documented by the number of faculties, which increased from 110 in 1999 to 145 in 2009 (see Table 6). The establishment of new faculties owes a lot to the tendency to profile the institution more distinctly in the increasingly competitive environment by creating more specialised units with a less traditional programme set-up (AK 2009).

Table 5: **Higher Education Institutions**

Year	**1990**	**1993**	**1994**	**1998**	**1999**	**2009**
HEIs total	24	23	23	23	27	71
Private HEIs	0	0	0	0	4	45

Source: ÚIV (2002, 2009)

Table 6: **Faculties**

Year	**1990**	**1993**	**1994**	**1998**	**1999**	**2009**
Faculty	82	105	107	113	110	145

Source: ÚIV (2002, 2009)

Finally, Table 7 shows the level of public funding allotted for higher education. Despite the continuously rising subsidy level, which reached nearly 26 billion CZK in 2009, the share of public funding for educational activities measured as a percentage of GDP has been stagnant in the long term between 0.6% and 0.7%. This funding level is inadequate, and is significantly lower than in the EU 15 countries (Beneš, Staněk, and Šebková 2006). The available analyses suggest that Czech higher education is underfunded by about 7-10 billion CZK, with the present-day level of funding likely to have a deleterious effect on the quality of educational provision (Koucký 2009).

Table 7: **Public funding of higher education* (mil. CZK)**

Year	**1990**	**1993**	**1994**	**1998**	**1999**	**2009**
Subsidy	N/a	N/a	8 325	11 940	12 748	25 965
% of GDP	N/a	N/a	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.7

* Research & Development not included, N/a–not available
Source: ÚIV (2002, 2009)

4.5 Implications of policy developments for quality assurance

The post-1989 transformation of Czech society also involved higher education. In higher education, dissociation from the communist-like practices primarily took the form of liberalising academic structures. Under the Act of 1990, sectoral liberalisation was made the key reform concept whose realisation brought the system a long way toward delegation of decision-making powers from the state to academe. These developments reflected the

widespread social distrust for government and government decision-making following the unhappy experience with 40 years of centralised planning by the Communist Party. Under the conditions after 1989, policy and policy-making became forbidden words[40], and the Ministry was left responsible for allocating the budget and coordinating the development of the system. All other powers resided with the institutions (De Boer and Goedegebuure 2003).

Assurance of minimum quality standards through accreditation was supposed to be a part of systemic coordination. Once implemented, accreditation would allay the growing academe-led concern about dropping standards of quality of tuition (Hendrichová 1993). However, due to the legally unspecified status of accreditation in the Act of 1990, systemic quality assurance in the early 1990s boiled down to the approval of six new regional universities and discussions on how to handle the accreditation scheme. The discussions on the take-up of accreditation resulted in the initiation of improvement-oriented evaluations of faculties in related fields of study. Besides, the orientation toward improvement of educational activities in demarcated areas was accounted for by grant support from the HEDF, starting in 1992.

The establishment and functioning of the AC and the HEDF suggest that quality of higher education was on the agenda in the early 1990s. However, it was assigned a secondary role, as the major reform thrust was oriented toward sectoral liberalisation. In addition, there were three other factors working against the formation of a system-level quality assurance policy. These were: the missing specification of accreditation in the provisions of the Act of 1990, social disdain for policy-making, and the lack of general expertise in quality matters. Altogether, these factors gave rise to the situation characterised by the presence of two implementation instruments of the policy in question (accreditation, the HEDF) but the absence of a factual policy content to be implemented.

The absence of a system-level policy on quality assurance continued throughout the mid 1990s. This was largely because, in the mid 1990s, efforts were primarily concentrated on creating a new legal framework to account for the most glaring limitations brought about by sectoral liberalisation and decentralisation (namely confinement of the status of legal persons to faculties). Under the absence of a system-level policy, the AC continued with improvement-oriented evaluations of faculties and the HEDF continued with distributing grants to support improvement of educational activities at HEIs and their organisational parts

[40] As manifested in the 1996 statement of the then Vice-Minister for Higher Education, "our higher education policy should not be formulated in any declaration, because it is embedded in the corresponding clauses of the higher education bill" [to be rejected by the Czech Parliament in November 1995] (Učitelské noviny 1996, 8).

(faculties, departments). *As a result, no programme accreditation to set minimum quality standards was in operation either in the mid 1990s or before*.

The situation changed from the late 1990s onwards after adoption of the new legal framework set by the Act of 1998. The passage of the Act of 1998 had ramifications for the consolidation of sectoral governance and policy formation. Under the Act of 1998, the system moved from a full institutional focus to a more balanced state-institution-market focus, and domain-specific policies with development goals emerged (De Boer and Goedegebuure 2003). The commencing market orientation of the system, represented by the possibility of establishing private HEIs financed through the tuition fees, was dealt with by the initiation of programme accreditation following institutional approval. The responsibility for programme accreditation and institutional approval was legally vested in the AC, thereby considerably extending its scope of activities and its workload. A sectoral quality assurance policy was formed in the Ministry's Pan for 2000-2005 including its updates, and, in a more systematic and complete manner, in the Ministry's Pan for 2006-2010. The corresponding policy goals as read from the two Plans comprise *assurance of minimum quality standards and promotion of excellence through continuous improvement in areas in which institutional capacities exist*.

These goals are implemented through four instruments. Two of the implementation instruments, i.e. accreditation and the HEDF, were already functioning in the 1990s (with accreditation, however, in the form of improvement-oriented evaluation). The other two instruments, i.e. DPs and Platforms, were incorporated into the sectoral quality assurance policy in 2001 and 2005, respectively. Since their initiation, DPs have become a stable constituent of higher education policy. On the other hand, the Platforms have received limited attention from policy-makers as a result of a missing consensus on what they should represent. Overall, the late 1990s and 2000s saw the formation of the sectoral quality assurance policy and its implementation through the four policy instruments: accreditation, the HEDF, DPs, and the Platforms.

To conclude, three points of a more general nature should be made. First, the Czech Republic is an exception to the popular notion that quality assurance in the CEE countries began with accreditation (Rozsnyai 2003). A closer look at the policy developments in Czech higher education in the 1990s reveals that, though formally in place, no programme and/or institutional accreditation was performed, with the very term confined only to the name of the Accreditation Commission. Second, following the radical liberalism of Czech society in the early 1990s seeking minimal state interventions and banishment of formal hierarchies (Cerych 2002), no pronounced system-level higher education policy was made, let alone with

specifications for individual domains. In this respect, the situation began to change only after the new legal framework was introduced in 1999. The radically liberal stance on state involvement may explain not only the prevailing orientation of the reforms in the early 1990s but also, coupled with the lack of actors' experience in quality matters, the initial focus on "light touch" quality measures, such as improvement-oriented faculty evaluations, as a proxy for legally required (but unspecified) accreditation. Third, once formulated, the system-level quality assurance policy has applied to a sector that has changed significantly over time. Twenty years after the Velvet Revolution, Czech higher education registers universal access, under which the programme offer has been restructured according to the Bologna Bachelor/Master template, total student numbers have more than tripled, the number of providers has nearly tripled (as a result of the existence of 45 private HEIs), and the student/teacher ratio has almost doubled. The level of public funding, however, has not kept pace with the quantitative system expansion, still amounting to 0.7% of the country's GDP.

It is unlikely that the stage of universal higher education has been reached without affecting the quality of educational provision. Deconstructing the system-level quality assurance policy to four implementation instruments and analysing them should help in understanding how the policy operates and in what aspects it needs to be modified to deal with the challenges of universal access and sectoral underfunding.

5. System-level instruments for implementing Czech higher education policy on quality assurance

Before starting with an analysis of the four instruments for implementing Czech higher education quality assurance policy at system level, a few notes on the structure of the chapter are in order. The analysis of each of the four instruments, i.e. accreditation, the Higher Education Development Fund, the Development Programmes, and the Platform for dissemination of examples of good practice, is broken down into five sections. The first section gives information on the reasons why the instrument was created and which purpose it serves (rationale). The second section contains a description of how the instrument operates in reality (functioning), while the third section identifies the actors involved in putting the instrument into action and the corresponding interaction patterns (actors and interactions). The fourth section summarises the effects that the instrument has on quality assurance policy

(effects). The fifth section presents the strengths and weaknesses of the instrument (achievements and limitations) based on the foregoing sections, on other available analyses, and on selected viewpoints of the respondents.

5.1 Accreditation

5.1.1 Rationale

Accreditation is the instrument most commonly associated with assuring the quality of higher education in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Rozsnyai 2003; Šebková 2003). Defined as establishing the status, legitimacy or appropriateness of an institution, a programme, or a study module (Harvey 2004-09) based on meeting a threshold standard, accreditation in the Czech Republic is vested in the authority of the Accreditation Commission (AC). The AC was set up on 1 September 1990, following the stipulations of the Act of 1990 (Section 17). Under the Act of 1990, the AC enjoyed the position of an advisory body of the Government for the field of higher education.

The assumption behind the establishment of the AC was to create a specialised buffer body which would take an independent standpoint on the quality of education, thus assisting in sectoral development (Kurzweil, Vinš, and Mikulec 1991-92). The chair, vice-chair, and members of the AC were appointed by the government from amongst persons of high professional quality and esteem. The AC had a total of twenty-one members. Membership in the AC was incompatible with holding the post of rector or dean. However, when establishing an independent, specialised body responsible for assuring quality of higher education, with the exception of its use in the name "Accreditation Commission", the term "accreditation" *was not introduced or otherwise specified by the Act of 1990* (Vinš 2004). Under the Act of 1990, existing institutions and programmes were implicitly accredited by including the existing HEIs in the Annex. Given the lack of experience in quality matters under Communist rule (Šebková and Svatoň 2003) and the limited impact of various forms of supranational assistance (OECD, the European Union), the first task faced by the AC was to clarify and define the scope of its own responsibilities.

On the basis of a review of the Act of 1990 (Section 15, 17) and expert commentaries, the AC adopted four lines of responsibility. These were:

1. to issue standpoints on proposals to set up, merge, split or close down HEIs and faculties;
2. to issue standpoints on the right of an HEI or faculty to provide doctoral degrees or hold rigorous examinations in the relevant degree programme;

3. to propose the withdrawal of an HEI's or faculty's right to hold habilitation procedures and procedures for the appointment of a professor;
4. to carry out evaluations of HEIs and faculties (Kurzweil, Vinš, and Mikulec 1991-92).

Tasks 1-3 were considered most urgent in the early 1990s, especially due to the establishment of six regional HEIs between 1990-1992 and the flurry of activities to open up doctoral study programmes, for which the AC received more than 1,350 proposals in 1991 and 1992 (Kurzweil, Vinš, and Mikulec 1991-92).

By concentrating on issuing standpoints on the establishment of new institutions, faculties, doctoral programmes and the quality of their personnel, the AC managed to address the pressing issues in 1990-1991 of quantitative system growth. Afterwards, *in 1992, the AC turned its attention to institutional evaluation*. Following protracted debates on the design of the evaluation procedure, the AC opted for and commenced external, peer-review evaluations of faculties in related fields of study (Vinš 2004). The first faculties evaluated externally between 1992-1993 were the faculties of electrical engineering and natural sciences, plus the Faculty of Maths and Physics of Charles University. There followed an evaluation of faculties providing education in other fields of study (chemical technology, education, economics). *The AC retained peer-review evaluations of faculties in related fields of study as its major activity until 1999*, when the new higher education act came into force.

The passing of the Act of 1998, which introduced mandatory programme accreditation, had significant consequences for the AC (Šebková 2004). By the 1998 legal definition, the AC is an expert body composed of 21 members, appointed by the government upon the nomination of the Minister of Education. Currently, three members of the AC come from abroad, one from the private sector. Twenty out of 21 members (including the three foreign members) have an academic or research background (AC 2009). The Minister discusses proposals for appointments with representatives of the HEIs (the Czech Rectors' Conference, the Council of HEIs), the Research and Development Council, and the Academy of Sciences of the CR. The AC's members are named with regard to equal representation of the major scientific disciplines. The AC's members are appointed on a part-time basis, i.e. they retain their academic or professional positions, for a six-year term renewable once[41]. Membership in the AC is incompatible with holding the post of rector, vice-rector, or dean. A

[41] When the first members are named to the AC, the government will appoint one-third of the members to a term of office that will expire in two years' time and one-third of the members to a term of office that will expire in four years' time (Act of 1998, § 83).

member of the AC may only be dismissed before the end of his/her term of office by reason of loss of integrity or long-term failure to participate in the work of the AC, or on his/her own request. Apart from the 21-member AC plenum, there are also 20 standing working groups and special work groups as parts of the AC (AC 2004).

The Act of 1998 entrusts the AC with general care for quality of higher education. It requires the AC to:

- evaluate activities pursued by the HEIs and the quality of accredited activities, and publish the results of these evaluations;
- assess other issues concerning the system of higher education, when it is asked to do so by the Minister, and express its standpoints on these issues (§ 84).

This latter obligation binds the AC to express its standpoint specifically on:

- requests for the accreditation of degree programmes;
- requests for authorization to carry out habilitation procedures and procedures for the appointment of professors;
- the establishment, merger, amalgamation, division or dissolution of a faculty of a public HEI;
- granting state approval for a legal entity desiring to operate as a private HEI[42];
- determining the type of HEI (university or non-university type) (Act of 1998, § 84).

In pursuit of its activities, the AC is authorised to request all necessary information and documentation from the Ministry, from public and private HEIs, and from other legal entities[43].

Material and financial support for the activities of the AC is provided by the Ministry via the secretariat. The secretariat of the AC is organizationally a part of the Ministry. The AC's secretariat is headed by a secretary, who is appointed and dismissed by the Minister upon a proposal submitted by the AC's chair no later than sixty days following the presentation of the proposal. The full-time personnel of the secretariat comprise five employees (AC 2009).

The activities under the legal responsibility of the AC are financed solely from public sources (state budget), as the AC's budget, including the secretariat, is part of the budget of

[42] Establishment of a public HEI is contingent upon the approval of the Czech Parliament.
[43] These entities constitute especially the Council of HEIs, including the Students' Chamber, the Czech Rectors' Conference, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Defence, and the Ministry of the Interior.

the Ministry. The AC repeatedly argues that the budget level is too low, preventing the implementation of activities beyond the scope of the AC's routine operations. Desirable further activities would include system-level analyses and analyses of accreditation and evaluation procedures (AK 2007, 2008, 2009). The annual budget for the activities of the AC amounted to approximately CZK 2.5 million in the mid 2000s (R 6).

The AC itself has limited decision-making powers. It decides only on the type of HEI and, in matters pertaining to faculty establishment, merger, etc., it gives its expert recommendation to be accepted/dismissed by the faculty senate (Šebková and Smrčka 2008). The AC holds no decision making-powers on conferring accreditation, on rights to carry out habilitation procedures or professorial appointments, or on approval of new institutions. All these powers rest with the Ministry. *However, the vesting of these decision making-powers in the Ministry is, to a significant extent, only a formality*, as the Ministry in practice follows the standpoints of the AC in executing the decisions. Mandatory accreditation of all degree programmes along with mandatory approval of all newly-established private HEIs makes the AC's standpoints important. The reason lies in the fact that *the AC's negative standpoint* on any of the issues under its competence *must be respected by the Ministry* and can be overruled only by an appeals procedure (see Section 5.1.2.2). In practice, this means that if the AC's standpoint on the accreditation of a given degree programme is negative, it is not possible to admit any applicants, carry out examinations, award academic degrees, obtain state funding (public institutions) or collect tuition fees (private institutions), not to mention reputational losses. The same applies to the granting of state approval for establishing a private HEI, as the application, among others, must include at least one degree programme (Act of 1998, § 39). However, it should be added that failure to grant accreditation/approval is not an ultimate, irreversible act, as the HEI or private entity is free to re-submit the application.

A comparison of the activities of the AC under the Act of 1990 and under the Act of 1998 suggests that the Act of 1998 considerably extended the competencies of the AC (Kohoutek et al. 2006; Šebková 2009). For this reason, it is appropriate to make an analytic distinction between the competencies of the AC up to 1998 and since 1999. The 1998 extension of the AC's competencies lay especially in programme accreditation and approval of newly established private HEIs. These two new facets of the forming quality assurance policy geared the AC's activities greatly toward overseeing the meeting of minimum standards (Sojka, Höschl, and Sobota 2007; Šebková 2009). Hence, the 1998 legal extension of the AC's competencies introduced dominance of the accountability rationale over improvement. Improvement had been the rationale guiding the AC's institutional (faculty)

evaluations between 1992-1998. However, the situation changed somewhat in the late 2000s due to the unmanageability of the AC's agenda and the pressures to implement (i.e. comply with) the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

5.1.2 Functioning

Given the difference in the underlying rationales, competencies and lines of responsibility of the AC under the Act of 1990 and under the Act of 1998, the AC's functioning will be dealt with separately for the 1990-1998 period and for the period from 1999 to the present time.

5.1.2.1 1990-1998 Period

Following clarification of the lines of responsibility left fuzzy by the legally unspecified term "accreditation", the bulk of the AC's functions from 1992 to 1998 comprised external peer-review evaluations of faculties in interrelated fields of study. To give a more precise picture, the evaluation process for the faculties of education, as an illustrative example of the AC's work in the period under discussion, is described in more detail below.

An external evaluation of the faculties of education was undertaken between 1993-1995. Nine faculties of education, i.e. all faculties of education existing at that time, were subjected to an evaluation. The evaluation process began by setting up a special working group composed of five senior academe members; it should be noted that it also became common practice to establish working groups for other faculty evaluations (Kurzweil, Mikulec, and Vinš 1995). The working group members drew up a questionnaire aimed at providing a picture of faculty characteristics. Accentuating provision of personnel, the questionnaire also covered areas such as faculty mission, curriculum composition, student enrolments, study conditions including material and technical infrastructure, organisation and management, and research and publication activities (ibid). The questionnaire was sent to the faculty, filled in by faculty staff members assigned to the task, and sent back to the working group in 1993. As Mareš and Beran (1995) point out, "the working group did not carry out the accreditation[44] procedure from the ivory tower; it made site-visits to all the evaluated faculties" (265).

The site visits took place in 1994, but the findings generated a need to clarify and update the information on certain issues that turned out to be problematic. The visits were

[44] In translation, the term "accreditation" used by the then authorities instead of "evaluation" is retained to illustrate the unsettled conditions and policy environment under which the AC operated in the 1990s. The same approach is taken to translations of other relevant quotations on this topic.

therefore repeated at the turn of 1994-1995. For the sake of making final recommendations, the members of the working group also conducted interviews with selected faculty staff members (dean, vice-deans, secretary). With a few exceptions, student viewpoints on quality of tuition were not sought (Mareš and Beran 1995). The final recommendations of the working group were communicated through the AC's Plenum to the rectors and deans of the evaluated faculties. The recommendations centred especially on improving the personnel situation.

The review of the literature suggests that, though carried out with the best intentions and goodwill, the evaluation by the AC of the faculties of education was not an easy undertaking. As Kurzweil, Mikulec, and Vinš (1995) state, "from the outset, it was apparent that accreditation of the faculties of education represented quite an enormous task … Only thanks to the dedication and hard work of all the parties concerned was it possible to compile the findings and formulate the conclusions so that they could become part of the AC's agenda" (257). Based on the available analyses (Tollingerová 1993; Vinš 2004), it is reasonable to conclude that the evaluations carried out by the AC at other faculties between 1992-1998 were also not free of organisational, subject-matter, and methodological difficulties. However, as the AC gained experience the processes and the methodology for external evaluation became more stabilised in time.

5.1.2.2 1999-present Period

Since 1999, the AC has taken on new competencies, which have significantly affected its rationale and modus operandi. The 1998 extension of the AC's competencies, which took effect from 1999, was due to the legal introduction of mandatory programme accreditation and institutional approval (Act of 1998, §§ 78, 39). *Importantly, the Act of 1998 introduced mandatory programme accreditation and institutional approval, both executed by the AC, as a legal instrument to assure the minimuml standard of quality in Czech higher education.*

Reflecting the changes in the AC's role in higher education policy-making, the AC's competencies, organisational and procedural rules were set in the 1998 Statute of the AC, amended in 2004. The AC's competencies, as extended in 1998, can be stated as:

A. *programme accreditation and accreditation/approval-type activities* including standpoints on habilitations/professorial appointments, faculty matters (establishment, merger, amalgamation, division, dissolution), approval of new institutions and specifying their status;
B. *institutional evaluation, including evaluation of accredited activities.*

Given the different characteristics of the AC's post-1998 competencies, each of them will be treated separately, with interconnections stressed where appropriate.

A. Programme accreditation and accreditation/approval-type activities

Following the stipulations of the Act of 1998 (§ 78), all degree programmes are subject to accreditation, which is awarded by the Ministry on the basis of the standpoint of the AC. Accreditation is awarded for a limited period, which is legally ten years at most (Act of 1998, § 80). In policy practice, the maximum 10-year duration is used for doctoral programmes only. Otherwise, in the case Bachelor and Master programmes, it boils down to twice the standard length of the study programme, at most (Šebková 2004, 2009). This limitation of the accreditation period requires the re-accreditation procedure to be initiated before the accreditation expires. Similarly, extending a programme, e.g. by introducing new study branches, also requires re-accreditation. If a degree programme is not accredited, it is not possible to admit any applicants, hold classes, carry out examinations, or award academic degrees (Act of 1998, § 78), not to mention funding and reputational losses, though re-submissions can be made free-of-charge (Kohoutek et al. 2006).

The AC makes use of its standing working groups to express its standpoint on requests for programme accreditation. The composition of the standing working groups depends on the type of degree programme, its form, and the objectives of the studies (Act of 1998, § 83). At present, 20 standing working groups, covering major study fields[45], are in operation. The members of the standing working groups are appointed by the AC's chair after being nominated by the member of the AC with the respective academic specialisation. As a rule, the member of the AC with the respective background acts as head of the group. The number of working group members depends on the size of the study field to which the group is related. Being a member of a standing working group is incompatible with holding the post of rector, vice-rector, or dean. *There are no official rules regulating the terms of office of the members of the standing working groups, but the members usually remain as long as the head of the group continues to be a member of the AC* (AC 2009). In 2009, the 20 standing working groups had a total of 254 members, with 200 coming from HEIs, 26 from the Academy of Sciences, 22 from other institutions, and 7 from abroad (AK 2009).

[45] These are: biology and ecology; economics; pharmacy; philology and literary arts; philosophy, theology and religion; physics; geology; history; chemistry; medicine; mathematics and computing sciences; health care; education, psychology and kinatropology; law and security studies; social science; technical science; arts and art sciences; veterinary medicine; military professions; agriculture, forestry and food industry.

There are detailed rules on filing, processing, and deciding on requests for programme accreditation. A request for accreditation of a degree programme is prepared by the faculty and officially filed by the rector, who signs it. The application is then sent in paper form and in electronic form to the secretariat of the AC. The secretariat keeps the paper version and makes the electronic version of the application available through the ftp protocol to the members of the AC. The chair of the AC assigns the head of the relevant standing working group the task of evaluating the application[46]. The head of the standing working group in turn designates two or more experts in the group to perform the evaluation. The names of the experts are not publicised; the evaluation is made anonymous at this stage. On the basis of the standpoints of the nominated experts, the application is assessed within the standing working group, which recommends its preliminary conclusions to the AC's chair (including the duration of accreditation when the standpoint is positive). Finally, the application is handled by the AC, which, after a discussion, takes a standpoint on accreditation (AC 2009). Approval of the applications requires the presence of at least two-thirds of the AC's members, and backing by the absolute majority of the members present at the session of the AC (AC 2004). As a rule, the AC comes into session four or five times a year.

The AC may issue one of four kinds of standpoints, as follows:

- positive without reservation; recommending the ministerial award of accreditation for ten years at most (for doctoral programmes), or twice the standard length of the study programme;
- conditionally positive; recommending ministerial award of accreditation but with the requirement to report back within a fixed deadline (one to two years) on problematic issues. With this standpoint, accreditation is awarded for the standard length of the study programme;
- positive with restrictions; recommending some kind of restrictive measure under § 85 of the Act of 1998 (see below);
- negative (Hodulík et al. 2010).

The AC makes its standpoint available in paper form no later than 120 days from the date on which the application was received via the secretariat. No later than 30 days after receiving the standpoint of the AC, the Ministry takes its decision on whether or not to award accreditation (Act of 1998, § 79). Taking the AC's standpoint on programme accreditation is

[46] If the programme under evaluation extends into various study fields, it is evaluated by all the standing working groups in the relevant fields.

a purely administrative process based on a three-level evaluation of the requested documentation[47] without any additional measures (e.g. a site visit).

The Ministry may refuse to grant accreditation under specific legal conditions[48]. Moreover, if the AC discovers serious shortcomings while the programme is being provided, the AC proposes to the Ministry, depending on the seriousness of the matter:

- restriction of accreditation, consisting in a ban on admitting new applicants to study in the relevant degree programme;
- a temporary termination of accreditation, consisting in a ban on holding state examinations and awarding academic degrees;
- withdrawal of accreditation (Act of 1998, § 85).

These restrictive measures also apply to holding the right to make habilitation/professorial appointments and to operate as a private HEI. However, all these restrictions have been made use of very rarely, as their utilisation is not considered to be the main route for assuring the quality of Czech higher education (AC 2009).

In accordance with the Rules of the Administrative Procedure of the Czech Republic (Act No. 500/2004 Coll.), each applicant entity may lodge an appeal against the Ministry's decision. In this case, the appeal is registered by the Ministry and is delivered to the Minister. The Minister appoints an independent expert committee with more than one half of its members coming from outside the Ministry, and none from the AC, to review the application subject to the appeal. If the expert committee comes to the same conclusion as the AC, it recommends rejection of the appeal to the Minister; if the expert committee reaches a conclusion different from that of the AC, the Minister sends the application back to the AC for re-evaluation. The AC either changes its standpoint, or confirms its previous standpoint, in which case the Minister and the expert committee are bound to respect it and reject the appeal. In the event that the appeal procedure ends in rejection of the appeal, the applicant entity has the right to turn to the court of justice (AC 2009; Hodulík et al. 2010).

The application for programme accreditation must address specific criteria set by the AC. These criteria include especially the following:

[47] By the evaluators of the standing work group, by the standing work group as a whole, and by the AC.
[48] These conditions apply in the following cases: the AC's standpoint is negative; the programme lacks sufficient staff, equipment, and information provision; implementation of the programme is not supported by sufficient financial, material, or technical resources; the HEI is not deemed capable of providing sufficient guarantees for lecturing, or the application does not contain data deemed crucial for awarding the accreditation.

- the name of the HEI or its constituent part that is responsible for providing the programme;
- the components of the programme[49];
- evidence of appropriate staff, financial, material, technical and information support for the programme for at least the standard length of study;
- a description of the planned development of the programme and the anticipated number of students to be admitted;
- in the case of programmes in the field of health services, the standpoint of the Ministry of Health on the employment of graduates is also required (Act of 1998, § 79; MEYS 1999).

In principle, the procedures for formulating the AC's standpoint on granting state approval and on habilitation and professorial appointments follow the same organisational pattern as in case of programme accreditation. Less thorough measures apply for standpoints on faculty matters and on changing the status of an institution (Šebková 2009; Šebková and Smrčka 2008).

The procedures and criteria for accreditation and approval schemes other than programme accreditation are not detailed here, as they can be accessed elsewhere[50]. Instead, only their most important attributes bearing on system-level quality assurance are given. As to habilitations and professorial appointments, positive standpoints of the AC are issued for a period of four or eight years. This led to a marked increase in the AC's agenda in 2003, in 2007, and, will presumably do so again in 2011 (AK 2003, 2007). The AC's standpoint on faculty matters (establishment, etc.) is not binding even if negative, and, as a result, there has been a tendency to split larger faculties into smaller ones with a seemingly more attractive, specialised offer of programmes. Unlike its decisions on faculty matters, the AC's positive standpoint is required for granting state approval to operate as a private HEI. The average success rate for such applications is about 30%, the major reason for a negative standpoint being inadequate personnel provision (AK 2009). Applications for a change in the type of institution are submitted by private HEIs of non-university type desiring to start operating as

[49] These are: programme title with a classification of the study branches; characteristics of study branches, if the study programme is divided into study branches; objectives of studies related to the entire programme as well as specific objectives of individual study branches, if the programme is divided into study branches; profile of a graduate and the abilities and characteristics for the professions that graduates should be prepared to exercise.
[50] In the Act of 1998 (§§ 39, 79, 82), and the Standards for Assessing Applications for Fields of Habilitation Procedures and Procedures for the Appointment of Professors (Ministry's Decree No. 42/1999).

universities by setting up faculties and doctoral programmes. In this respect, the AC's approach is to bind its standpoint to the standpoint on the accreditation of a doctoral programme. This means that a private university cannot come into being without having at least one doctoral programme successfully accredited (AK 2009).

The introduction in 1998 of mandatory programme accreditation had a significant effect on the AC's agenda. The legal stipulation that, at the time when the Act of 1998 entered into force (January 1999), degree programmes were automatically accredited for four years put the AC under an obligation to re-accredit all existing programmes (about 4,000) by the end of 2002. The AC set about accomplishing this task by dividing the organisational units (faculties) that provided the programmes into five groups based on similarity of study fields. This ensured that requests for programme re-accreditation would be filed for the entire faculty. A deadline for submission of re-accreditation requests was set for each faculty group so that the whole process would be ended in 2002 as required (Smrčka 2003).

The AC's strategy for handling circa 4,000 programme re-accreditation requests by 2002 was, however, impaired by the 2001 Amendment to the Act of 1998. The Amendment of 2001 made the HEIs restructure their offer of programmes, consisting predominantly of long Master programmes (4-6 years), into Bachelor and continuing Master programmes (3 years + 2 years) in line with the Bologna Bachelor/Master template[51]. In this respect, the Amendment of 2001 stipulated that students could be admitted into programmes submitted for accreditation before July 2001 only till the end of 2003, unless the programme was accredited anew taking into account the Bologna Bachelor/Master template. In practical terms, this stipulation meant that all programmes falling into stage one and two (August 2000, February 2001; 60 faculties in total), shortly after being re-accredited in compliance with the provisions of the Act of 1998, had to come back on to the AC's agenda to undergo accreditation in line with the Bologna Bachelor/Master template. In many such cases, the accreditations turned out to be an administrative formality, as the programmes had either been restructured already or the HEIs had no intention of restructuring, stating that the character of the programme suggested against restructuring (Smrčka 2003).

Aside from programme re-accreditations, the AC had to administer other issues between 1999-2002, the most pressing of which was to issue standpoints on the approval of new private HEIs (Šebková and Smrčka 2008). From 1999 to 2002, the AC received 72 requests, of which 65 were requests to establish a private HEI. With two requests still under

[51] Except in cases where the character of the degree programme suggests otherwise, e.g. in medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry, law, teacher education.

evaluation in 2002, the AC handled 70 requests. Thirty of these were approved, 40 were not approved, and 15 were withdrawn in the course of the evaluation process (AK 2002). *Importantly, large numbers of requests for programme (re)-accreditation as a result of implementing the Bologna Bachelor/Master structure and for state approval to operate as private HEI have continued to be submitted from 2003 up to the present time* (see Section 5.1.4). Handling about 4,000 programme re-accreditations by 2002 to some extent freed up the AC's agenda, enabling institutional evaluations and evaluations of accredited activities to be introduced and included as a second line of responsibilities undertaken by the AC.

B. Institutional evaluation including evaluation of accredited activities

Due to capacity limitations resulting from the need to re-accredit about 4,000 programmes between 1999-2002, the AC took up institutional evaluations only after 2002. Before turning to organisation details, *it is important to make a conceptual distinction between institutional evaluation and evaluation of accredited activities*. While institutional evaluation refers to a systemic evaluation, carried out at faculty level, usually across similar fields of study, an evaluation of accredited activities is initiated in order to find out to what extent the institution has in reality kept to the standards set at the time when the accreditation was granted (Vinš 2004; Šebková 2009). In other words, institutional evaluation takes place on the basis of selecting faculties in related fields or private institutions not divided into faculties, and is intended to have an improvement effect. On the other hand, evaluations of the quality of accredited activities are typically launched in response to problems with the provision of accredited programmes that come to the attention of the AC mainly via programme (re)-accreditation (Vinš 2004). Evaluations of accredited activities are a way to provide a "quick fix" to problems that have arisen.

Evaluations of accredited activities were initiated above all in response to the possibility of offering private higher education. To minimise the risk of substandard programme provision by new private providers, the AC did two things. First, it adapted the already established process for evaluating faculties in related study fields to the needs of the new private HEIs. This was done by creating a special questionnaire as a pre-requisite for institutional evaluation (in 2003), and by setting up a special standing working group for private HEIs to carry out these evaluations (in 2004) (AK 2003, 2004). However, institutional evaluations with a duration of 12-18 months proved inflexible in the case of shortcomings noted in the programme provision of some private HEIs. Shortly after receiving this approval, some private HEIs submitted new accreditation requests to expand in capacity and to secure

more money from tuition fees. For this reason, the AC adopted a second measure at its November 2002 session. It decided to initiate evaluations at four private institutions in the form of a quick fix for a drop in the quality of their accredited programmes (AK 2002). In this way, mechanisms for evaluating accredited activities came into existence de facto.

The type of evaluation activity to be performed by the AC, i.e. institutional evaluation or evaluation of accredited activities, is specified at the outset of the evaluation procedure. To undertake the evaluations, the AC is authorised to establish special working groups with their mandate limited to the evaluation period, i.e. between 12 and 18 months. One of the AC's members forms the special working group and presents it to the AC for approval. Participation in the special working group follows arrangements aimed at preventing conflicts of interest. As a rule, a special working group has 5-10 members. Student representatives have been regular members of special working groups since 2006. In this respect, the AC has capitalised on its good relations with the Student Chamber of the Council of HEIs, which nominates students for the working groups (AC 2004, 2009; AK 2006).

Irrespective of the type of evaluation, the standard steps are set in the Statute of the AC[52]. The structure of the self-evaluation report as a basis for external evaluation takes the form of a questionnaire. Although the scope and depth of the information required in the report differs according to the type of the evaluation, its focus, and the characteristics of the (part of the) evaluated institution, the procedure is standardised[53]. Importantly, *if deficiencies are found during the evaluation, elimination of these deficiencies by a specific deadline, based on the AC's recommendation, is proposed as a follow-up procedure*. When the deadline is reached, a control report on fixing the issue is requested. If the deficiencies are not fixed,

[52] The steps are as follows: 1) Selection of an institution or institutions by the AC and authorisation of the competent AC member to ensure the evaluation procedure. 2) Notification to the (part of the) HEI of the fact that it has been chosen for evaluation. 3) Establishment of the special working group by the AC. 4) Elaboration of requirements concerning information for use in the evaluation (structure of the self-evaluation report + guidelines). These are sent to the (part of the) institution to be evaluated with a request to provide them in the self-evaluation report. 5) Processing of information obtained through the self-evaluation report and other requested documentation by the special work group. 6) A visit by at least three members of the special working group at the (part of the) institution. 7) Elaboration of preliminary recommendations and conclusions from the evaluation by the special working group and a discussion about these with representatives of the (part of the) institution. 8) Elaboration of final recommendations and conclusions by the special work group and submission of these to the AC. 9) Acceptance of recommendations and conclusions related to the evaluation of the (part of the) institution by the AC with the participation of representatives of the (part of the) institution. 10) Submission of final recommendations and conclusions to the Ministry and publication on the AC's website (AC 2004).

[53] Including obtaining information on: organisational structure; development goals; degree programmes and curriculum; research, development, and other creative activities; personnel arrangements; infrastructure and material arrangements; financial arrangements; system(s) of internal evaluation. As a rule, supplementary documentation including the annual report, updates of the plan of the HEI, the study and examination rules, and an analysis of the most significant problems are requested as appendices to the self-evaluation report (Vinš 2004).

some restrictions in providing the programme are proposed to the Ministry (Hodulík et al. 2010).

Institutional evaluations also entail a check up on the course and results of final examinations. To this end, the AC makes use of information obtained from the evaluated (part) of the institution in the evaluation report. The report in the form of answers to a questionnaire includes a special section with several questions on final examinations, including graduation rates, standard and real times to degree, and the composition of examination boards (names of the examiners, some of whom must be from outside the degree-awarding institution) (AK 2005b). In the case of doctoral programmes, information is further requested on the numbers of successfully presented dissertations in last five years, numbers of dissertations per supervisor, and major benefits of dissertations considered outstanding to the theory and practice of the given field (AK 2010). Information of this kind is subject to verification during the on-site visit, a part of which may be devoted to random checks on Bachelor/Master theses and doctoral dissertations, which must be kept available in institutional facilities (libraries). The outputs, especially in terms of specification of the list of topics on which state examination candidates can be questioned, graduate profiles, and themes of theses/dissertations, are taken into consideration by the AC when deciding on programme (re) accreditations (AC 2009). The enquiries into underlying aspects of final examinations help to re-orient the focus of the AC's activities on educational outputs. The extent to which these enquiries are conducive to balancing the traditionally strong orientation of the AC on input parameters is a matter of dispute between the members of the AC and foreign analysts, with the latter expressing doubts about their effectiveness and adequacy as external quality assurance measures of educational outputs (File et al. 2006; Weko et al. 2009; Sojka, Höschl, and Sobota 2007).

The AC has been undertaking institutional evaluations and evaluations of accredited activities since 2003. Despite the above-mentioned difference between institutional evaluations and evaluations of accredited activities, with the latter introduced primarily to retain control over the quality of rapidly developing private providers, it is should be admitted that the use of the outcomes resulting from the two types of evaluation is, as a rule, not clear (Šebková 2009). This is primarily due to unclear (unintended) links to and spill-over effects on programme accreditation. The available evidence (AK 2003, 2004, 2005a, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009) indicates that the evaluation scheme is used mostly as a follow-up check on the fulfilment of the threshold standards set by the accreditation scheme. The improvement function of evaluations carried out by the AC is thus contested on the grounds that there are

difficulties in having both schemes operated by the same agency (Harvey and Newton 2007; Westerheijden 2007; Harvey and Williams 2010).

At this point, it is of importance to refer to the activities that the AC undertakes as a result of its involvement in international networks. The AC is a member organisation of the Central and Eastern European Network for Quality Assurance (CEEN), the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies for Higher Education (INQAAHE). Selected members of the AC and the AC's secretariat participate in events (seminars, conferences, workshops) organised by these international networks. It is reasoned that the AC's involvement in ENQA bears most intensively on the characteristics of the AC's activities, primarily due to the need to implement the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

The membership regulations of ENQA require all member agencies to undergo an external evaluation against criteria identical with the ESG[54] at least once every five years (ENQA 2006). In practical terms, this means that by 2010 all ENQA member agencies are obliged to implement the ESG into their operational procedures and to undergo an external evaluation against the ESG, under threat of their ENQA membership being forfeited.

Implementation of the ESG requires the AC to accept new tasks and commitments (AC 2009). In consideration of the ESG content and in preparation for external evaluation against the ESG, the AC has started

- internal evaluation (since 2007);
- placing greater emphasis on reflecting the outcomes of evaluation procedures developed by the institution itself in the process of institutional evaluations and evaluations of accredited activities;
- placing greater emphasis on clarity of argumentation in the wording of recommendations and conclusions;
- introducing measures to assure greater transparency in making standpoints on programme accreditation, including consistency in decision-making across standing work groups (AK 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009).

[54] The ESG comprise 23 standards, each with the corresponding guidelines, broken into three sections, i.e. section one with 7 standards for internal quality assurance within HEIs, section two with 8 standards for external quality assurance in higher education, and section three with 8 standards for external quality assurance agencies (ENQA 2005).

Moreover, with a view to complying with the ESG, the AC initiated a joint project with the Accreditation Commission of the Slovak Republic in 2006. This project aimed to develop a compatible system of internal and external evaluation, thus preparing the ground for future mutual recognition of standpoints (AK 2006). The advantages of carrying out joint internal and external evaluations were intended to be: extending the level of mutual awareness of operational procedures and sharing examples of good practice with no need to provide translations of documents given the language similarity between Czech and Slovak (AK 2009). However, mutual cooperation along the projected lines did not bring the expected benefits, and has been terminated (ibid.)

The AC underwent an external evaluation against the ESG between 2009 and 2010, the verdict being that it was sufficiently compliant. This thesis makes no attempt to present the details of the evaluation procedure and its outputs, as both can be accessed in detail in the relevant documents[55]. However, selected findings and recommendations drawn from these two documents are used in the thesis to augment the argumentation where appropriate.

5.1.3 Actors and interactions

The AC acts as a legal guarantor of the quality of Czech higher education. For this purpose, it issues accreditation/approval/evaluation standpoints. This involves the AC in interactions with actors that apply for the AC's standpoints in order to be accredited/approved/evaluated. Arriving at the AC's standpoint on accreditation/approval/evaluation is thus not a "one-off" activity but a process consisting of putting into action a series of interrelated decisions in interaction with the actors concerned (an implementation process including actors' interactions). In concrete terms, the accreditation/approval/evaluation-type of implementation processes involve interactions among the following actors:

- applicant/evaluated HEI (rector + faculty including dean);
- legal entity of the applicant;
- secretariat of the AC (5 employees);
- standing working groups of the AC (20 groups, 254 members);
- special working groups of the AC (temporary establishment, 5-10 members per group including 1-2 students);
- the AC (21 members);

[55] These are: "The self-evaluation report of the Accreditation Commission" (AC 2009) and "The final report on external review of the Accreditation Commission on compliance with membership criteria of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education" (Hodulík et al. 2010).

- the Ministry represented by the Minister, the Vice-Minister for Higher Education, or the Head of the Department of Higher Education;
- an expert committee[56].

The interactions among the actors differ in the case of accreditation[57]/approval[58] and evaluation processes. Hence, *two interaction patterns*, including a special interaction "add-on" in the case of the appeals procedure within the accreditation/approval process, *can be ascertained*:

- **Interaction pattern for the accreditation/approval process:**

applicant HEI (rector + faculty)/legal entity ---> secretariat of AC ---> AC ---> standing work group of AC ---> AC ---> Ministry (Head of the Department of Higher Education[59] + Vice-Minister for Higher Education[60]) ---> applicant HEI (rector + faculty)/legal entity

If the appeals procedure is initiated, the pattern to be followed is:
Minister ---> expert committee ---> Minister *(if yes-standpoint then ---> AC ---> standing work group of AC ---> AC ---> Minister)* ---> applicant HEI (rector + faculty)/legal entity
(*---> court of justice (if no-standpoint as a result)*)

- **Interaction pattern for the evaluation process:**

AC ---> secretariat of AC ---> HEI ---> special work group of AC ---> HEI (for comments) ---> special work group of AC ---> AC

The interactions thus take place inside and outside the AC. From the institutional point of view, filing an accreditation request involves prior approval by the dean (in special cases by the rector), preparation of the request by the faculty, and filing the request by the rector. The evaluation process mostly concerns a part or parts of an institution (faculty/faculties). This means that the dean(s) are involved more actively as faculty representatives than in the case of the accreditation procedure. It should be noted that the interactions among the actors

[56] Only in the case of the appeals procedure.
[57] Programme accreditation, including accreditation of habilitation procedures and professorial appointments.
[58] A request for state approval entails handling at least one programme accreditation request to avoid the "empty building scenario". Obviously, more numerous criteria are considered, especially in terms of institutional facility matters, than in the case of programme accreditation only.
[59] Awarding accreditation for degree programmes upon the standpoint of the AC.
[60] Awarding approval for establishing a new private HEI upon the standpoint of the AC.

within the evaluation process take place without the participation of the Ministry's top representatives.

5.1.4 Effects

The differences in the orientation of the activities of the AC before and after 1999 make it appropriate to describe their effects separately. In the 1990-1998 period, the AC focused on evaluations of faculties in related fields of study. From 1999 onwards, the AC's extended competencies have involved programme accreditation, including accreditation/approval-type activities and institutional/faculty evaluations, including evaluations of accredited activities.

5.1.4.1 1990-1998 Period

As already stated, the 1990-1998 period saw the AC concentrate on evaluations of faculties in related fields of study. Evaluations were carried out in the following study fields: electrical engineering, math-physics, natural sciences, chemical technology, nuclear and physical engineering, education, economics, law, engineering, and medicine. In total, 66 faculties were evaluated between 1992-1998 (see Table 1, Annex I), with the evaluation procedure of another 7 medical faculties started between 1997-1998 and finalised in 1999. The external evaluations of faculties undertaken between 1992-1998 were also seen as helping to deliver the standpoints on the establishment of new faculties which the AC were asked to provide. Although the AC's standpoints on this matter were not legally binding, as a result of a legal loophole (Kurzweil, Vinš, and Mikulec 1991-92), they had some positive impact, with the number of faculties rising from 72 in 1989 to 113 in 1998 (ÚIV 2002). In other words, 41 new faculties were established in the 1990-1998 period.

5.1.4.2 1999-present Period

From 1999 onwards, the AC's scope of competencies was considerably extended by mandatory programme accreditation and institutional approval. Correspondingly, the AC's emphasis shifted to accreditation and approval-type procedures. In the first four years of the 1998 Act's validity, with temporary provisions in place, the AC carried out these procedures "from behind the table" only, without any "on-the-spot evaluation" (Smrčka 2003). This was done to meet the legally stipulated 2002 re-accreditation deadline. The statistics show a steep rise in the number of submissions for accreditation in 2002, for all types of programmes. In 2002, 768 Bachelor programmes, 667 "long" Master programmes, 659 continuing (2-3 year) Master programmes, and 493 doctoral programmes were submitted for accreditation. In the

case of each programme type, this was more than the corresponding totals for 1999-2001. The steep rise in the number of programme accreditation requests in 2002 can be explained by the stipulations of the Amendment of 2001, as a result of which programmes from 60 faculties accredited successfully in 2001 had to be re-accredited in line with the Bologna Bachelor/Master template if the validity of their accreditation were not to be terminated by 2003.

The statistics of requests for programme accreditation (all types of programmes), including habilitations and professorial appointments, with the corresponding standpoints of the AC, are given in Table 2, Annex I. The yearly maximum number of requests for programme accreditation were reached in 2002, due to the effects of the Amendment of 2001. From 2003 on, the statistics show *increasing numbers of requests for accreditation of Bachelor programmes* (from 267 in 2003 to 667 in 2008), *a decreasing number of requests for accreditation of "long" Master programmes* (from 256 in 2007 to 96 in 2009, with a somewhat "fallow" 2005-2006 period), and *a stagnating number of accreditation requests for continuing (2-3 year) Master programmes* (about 254 requests per year since 2005, though, exceptionally, 403 in 2008). In the case of doctoral programmes, the statistics show a significant increase in requests filed in 2005 (214 requests), 2007 (510 requests, exceeding the 2002 maximum), and 2009 (838 requests). The sharply rising number of requests for accreditation of doctoral programmes can be ascribed to a "vogue" for accrediting these programmes in languages other than Czech (mostly English). However, many of these programmes are offered on paper only, lacking candidates that would make them efficient and profitable to deliver[61] (AK 2009). As for requests to hold habilitations and professorial appointments, the data confirms a periodic rise and fall in filing these requests in four-year intervals (798 in 1999, 359 in 2003, 1,118 in 2007) in line with the four-to-eight-year validity of this type of accreditation measure (see Table 2, Annex I).

Statistics on the AC's approval measures, concerning state approval, standpoints on faculty matters, and standpoints on the type of institution, are also available. Table 2, Annex I shows that the number of requests to establish a new private HEI submitted to the AC for approval between 1999-2003 (19 in 1999, 23 in 2000, 22 in 2001, 11 in 2002, 17 in 2003) was higher than from 2004 onwards, when the numbers began to average at 7 per year. The reverse is also true for standpoints on faculty matters, which numbered 6 per year on average,

[61] Although it is possible for students of Czech nationality to enrol in and study foreign-language-accredited doctoral programmes, they will have to cover the study-related costs *in full*. This option is rarely taken up, given the fact that *students at public HEIs are not charged tuition fees.* This policy measure thus makes enrolment for foreign-language doctoral programmes an unattractive option for most Czech students.

after the 2004 "fallow" year. The AC's standpoint on the type of HEI was requested only 6 times before the end of 2010, with 4 requests in 2007 and 1 request each in 2006 and 2009.

The AC's purely administrative approach to issuing accreditation and approval-type standpoints changed towards the end of 2002 (November), with the initiation of evaluation of accredited activities and institutional evaluations. Though formally undertaken independently from accreditation and approval mechanisms, the evaluations of accredited activities, and, to some extent, also the institutional evaluations show spill-over effects especially on programme accreditation. In brief, if deficiencies are found during the evaluation procedure, the accreditation of the programme(s) is put in jeopardy. The data on the two approaches to evaluation show that the AC tended to concentrate on institutional evaluations from 2005 to 2009, with a total number of 43 institutional evaluations compared to 6 evaluations of accredited activities. In sum, between 2003 and 2009, the AC carried out 49 institutional/faculty evaluations and 16 evaluations of accredited activities.

The statistical data available for the 1999-2009 period[62] makes it possible to enumerate the total numbers of positive and negative standpoints for each type of accreditation and approval measure of the AC. Starting with the accreditation of Bachelor programmes, the AC issued 3,943 standpoints, out of which 3,476 (88%) were positive and 467 (12%) were negative. For the accreditation of "long" Master programmes, the AC issued 2,133 standpoints, comprising 2,086 (98%) positive and 47 (2%) negative. For accreditation of continuing Master programmes, the AC issued 2,783 standpoints, including 2,583 (93%) positive and 200 (7%) negative. In case of doctoral programmes, 3,432 standpoints were issued, out of which 3,325 (97%) were positive and 107 (3%) negative. In the case of accreditation of the right to hold habilitations and professorial appointments, the AC issued 1,707 standpoints on habilitations, with 1,579 positive responses (93%) and 128 negative responses (7%), and 838 standpoints on the professorial appointments[63], out of which 778 (93%) were positive and 60 (7%) negative. *In sum, from 1999 to 2009, the AC issued 14,836 standpoints on all types of accreditation procedures, with 13,827 (93%) positive verdicts and 1,009 (7%) negative verdicts.* This indicates that *one request for accreditation in fourteen is turned down*. As regards approval-type measures, the AC took a standpoint on 135 requests to establish a private HEI, out of which 50 requests (37%) were accepted and the remaining 85 (63%) were turned down. The AC's stands on faculty matters produced 35 (81%) positive

[62] Data for 2010 was not available at the time of writing the thesis.
[63] The statistics for 1999 and 2001 do not discriminate between habilitations and professorial appointments, with the standpoints on professorial appointments included in the AC's verdicts on habilitation procedures.

responses out of a total of 43 requests. In sum, the AC handled 178 approval requests with 85 (48%) positive standpoints. *The total number of 15,014 standpoints of all types on accreditation and approval-related issues indicates that the AC handles about 1,500 requests per year, on average*. The statistics on positive and negative standpoints on accreditation and approval-type of measures, including success rates, are summarised in Table 8.

Table 8: **Accreditation and approval measures between 1999-2009**

Accreditation	**Total**	**Yes**	**No**	**Success rate**
Bachelor	3 943	3 476	467	7.4:1
"Long" Master	2 133	2 086	47	44.4:1
Continuing Master	2 783	2 583	200	12.9:1
Doctoral	3 432	3 325	107	31.0:1
Habilitations	1 707	1 579	128	12.3:1
Professorial appointments	838	778	60	12.9:1
Grand total	***14 836***	***13 827***	***1 009***	***13.7:1***
Approval				
Stand on HEI establishment	135	50	85	0.6:1
Stand on faculty matters	43	35	8	4.4:1
Grand total	***178***	***85***	***93***	***0.9:1***

Source: author, compiled from the annual reports of the Accredittaion Commission

The success rates for each of the measures deserve a brief commentary. Out of all accreditation measures, accreditation of Bachelor programmes shows the lowest success rate, with one request in seven turned down. Accreditation of habilitation procedures scores second lowest, with one request in twelve denied, closely followed by accreditations of continuing Master programmes and professorial appointments, where one request in thirteen was turned down. On the other end of the success-ratio scale, HEIs applying for accreditation of doctoral and "long" Master programmes are far more successful, with one in 31 requests, respectively, one in 44 requests rejected. *Overall, one in fourteen requests for accreditation-type-measures was turned down*. As regards approval-related schemes, figures on requests to establish a new private HEI show that one in three requests received a positive standpoint, whereby it should be remembered that repeated submissions may be made at no extra cost, and this option is made use of in practice. One in four of the AC's legally non-binding standpoints on faculty matters were negative concerning faculty establishment, merger, amalgamation, division, or dissolution. It can be concluded that *in the case of approval-related measures, one in two requests has met with a positive response from the AC*.

5.1.5 *Achievements and limitations*

5.1.5.1 Reviewing available sources and evidence

Lack of experience with quality matters after 1989, together with the hurried passing of the Act of 1990, impacted the newly-established AC. Due to its vaguely formulated legal responsibilities and the general state of development of the higher education sector, the AC first took to making standpoints on institutional and faculty matters, i.e. approval of six new universities. Once the structure of the system had been stabilised (1990-1992), from 1993 to 1998, the AC concentrated on institutional evaluations, which took the form of evaluations of faculties in related fields of study. The AC's faculty evaluation was primarily improvement-oriented (Tollingerová 1993).

Evaluations of a total of 66 faculties helped to cement the AC's status in academe and amongst the academic oligarchy, though the evaluations were not without organisational, subject matter and methodological difficulties (Mareš and Beran 1995). The AC attained a position of respec, due in part to the fact that its members were persons of high moral and professional profile, with a strong academic background (Vinš 2004). Hence, it can be concluded that the AC's recommendations based on an external quality evaluation of faculties in related fields of study helped the faculties to improve the programmes that they offered, and to better orientate themselves in the nationwide formation of the higher education landscape of the 1990s. The activities of the AC were also aimed at preventing multiplication of faculties and at the dissipation of meagre resources (human, material, and capital) and thus a drop in quality. These efforts of the AC were moderately successful, though the number of faculties increased from 72 in 1989 to 113 in 1998 (ÚIV 2002).

As a consequence of the Act of 1998, the competencies of the AC were considerably extended. Starting from 1999, the AC took up programme accreditation along with institutional approval as a new line of legal responsibility. Following the pressures for programme restructuring in line with the Bologna Bachelor/Master template and for establishing private HEIs, programme accreditation and institutional approval became the dominant items on the AC's agenda till the late 2000s.

The legal introduction of the programme accreditation/approval scheme contributed to the development a private higher education sector not beset with the problems of maintaining minimum acceptable quality standards that have affected the transforming higher education systems in some other CEE countries (File et al. 2006). It should be added, though, that this positive view is not shared unanimously (see 5.1.5.2). Accreditation, as a policy instrument

based on checking the meeting of pre-defined, threshold standards, has also been subject to repeated criticism. In general terms, accreditation has been criticised (Harvey 2004; Stensaker and Harvey 2006) for:

- focusing only on minimum standards, using narrow and quite specific criteria while disregarding the overall educational context;
- not capitalising on the outputs of internal evaluations;
- being a restraint on innovation and running counter to improvement processes;
- impinging on academic freedom while imposing an extensive bureaucratic burden;
- posing limitations on trans-disciplinarity and inter-disciplinarity;
- being state self-serving or self-protective instead of serving the public good.

Much of this general criticism is pertinent to Czech programme accreditation. The 2006 OECD review of Czech higher education found the practices and working methods of the AC too inward-oriented (File et al. 2006). The inward orientation of the AC shows itself through the AC's focus on input criteria rather than output criteria, i.e. on faculty qualification, especially in the professorial rank, and on the technical/material infrastructure rather than on learning outcomes, student support services, and student employment prospects. The upshot of the input-based accreditation process, which attaches particular significance to senior academic rank (professor, associate professor) as a proxy for quality, is a high demand for (associate) professors to act as programme quality guarantors. Without required numbers of (associate) professors accreditation cannot be awarded. With high demand for a limited supply of (associate) professors in a system in which rank inheres in the person, not the position, the accreditation process has given rise to "the flying professor phenomenon". This phenomenon refers to the situation where quite a few professors accept multiple workloads, lending their qualifications, though perhaps not their full abilities, to several HEIs at the same time (File et al. 2006).

Amendment to the Higher Education Act No. 159/2010 Coll. was passed in order to combat "the flying professor phenomenon". Amendment No. 159/2010 Coll. (Amendment of 2010) stipulates the establishment of a nationwide register of professors and associate professors, including their workloads. Moreover, it legally introduces the institute of a guarantor of the quality of a degree programme, who shall be a professor or associate professor only (Amendment of 2010 (4), (6)).

The inward orientation of the AC is reinforced by its composition. Only one of the AC's 21 members comes from outside academe. The predominantly academic composition also applies to members of the standing working groups, with 226 members out of 254 having academic or research backgrounds. Moreover, under current practices the members of the standing working groups are nominated by the chair of the working group, with the AC taking a rather passive role. The procedure for nominating standing working group members has come in for criticism. It has been pointed out that the nominees are not discussed with higher education or student representatives, and that there are no time limits for group members remaining in office (Hodulík et al. 2010).

The AC has been making efforts to re-orient its activities toward evaluation, aiming to prepare for the envisaged changeover to an institutional accreditation scheme (AK 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009). The changeover from programme accreditation to institutional accreditation, based on the accreditation of broad areas of study granted on the basis of proven organisational, performance and financial parameters, is considered essential (Matějů et al. 2009). This is due to the constant growth in accreditation requests as a result of increasing fragmentation of programmes into study branches and specialisations. However, current legislation does not allow for a full and comprehensive transformation of this kind (Hodulík et al. 2010).

The envisaged changeover to institutional accreditation will, however, first require clarification of the relationship between accreditation schemes and evaluation schemes. Despite the AC's efforts to shift gradually from accreditation/approval to institutional evaluations, the number of institutional evaluations has been stagnant since 2007 at a level of 10-11 per year. Whatever type of evaluation procedure is used, the information obtained by the special working groups may be rather easily fed back via the AC into the accreditation process, and may later have a negative impact on the process (Šebková 2009). Hence, it is advisable to give attention to conceptualisations of and relationships between accreditation and evaluation-type processes. It is necessary to avoid accumulating accountability demands, otherwise institutions are likely to engage in window-dressing, or will "clam up". Little if any improvement effect can come about if the university or faculty is on the defensive.

In internal evaluations conducted since 2007, the AC itself has been analysing the factors that limit its own activities. In the corresponding internal evaluation reports (Sojka, Höschl, and Sobota 2007; Sojka, Kyloušek, and Sobota 2008, 2009), the AC repeatedly identified its own limitations. These were: a lack of system-wide analyses and discussions on conceptual matters; unsatisfactory electronic processing of accreditation/approval requests;

limited communication and cooperation between the AC and its standing working groups; limited discussion on involvement of students and practitioners in special working groups; a lack of focus on informing the higher education community and the public about the activities of the AC; and the inadequate budget of the AC.

The Self-evaluation Report submitted by the AC for the purposes of a review against the ESG lists the AC's weaknesses as well as strengths. Listed among the AC's strengths were: the long history, informal authority, and independence of the AC; the transparency of the assessment system; emphasis on the connection between educational processes and research; involvement in international structures; and potential to solve policy issues. The weak points listed were: congestion of the AC's agenda and excessive workloads; an obsolete information system and an unsatisfactory website; poor communication between the AC and the public; and limited financial resources (AC 2009).

Unsurprisingly, views on the achievements and limitations of the AC differ according to whether they are expressed from inside or outside the AC. Overall, bringing together all available analyses, three areas of achievements and four areas of limitations can be identified.

Achievements of the Accreditation Commission:

- respectable status due to its 20-year history and improvement-oriented evaluations in the 1990s;
- a mature programme accreditation scheme that stems the establishment and development of fraudulent private higher education providers (degree mills);
- international relations (especially within the CEEN network).

Limitations of the Accreditation Commission:

- agency composition and rationale, i.e. an inward orientation in the composition of the Plenum and the standing working groups, a continuing predominant focus on inputs, undertaking accreditations and evaluations with likely negative spill-over effects;
- procedural and organisational limitations, i.e. de facto accreditation of study branches/specialisations, heavy workload, limited computerisation, unsatisfactory communication and cooperation between the AC and the standing working groups (including limited comparability of assessments across the groups);

- information and promotional limitations, i.e. few contacts with the higher education community, a lack of promotion of the AC's activities among the public and interested parties;
- funding limitations, i.e. an understaffed secretariat, inadequate resources for training members of the AC.

5.1.5.2 Letting respondents speak

The positive and negative characteristics of the AC were identified by experts interviewed in order to gain a deeper insight into what the AC does well and what it does badly. The respondents were invited to comment especially on the following topics: programme accreditation, including habilitations/professorial appointments and (associate) professors as guarantors of quality; fitness for undertaking both accreditation and evaluation; composition, professionalisation, and internal evaluation of the AC; the AC's budget; computerisation of the agenda and presentation of results; a changeover to institutional accreditation; their overall view on the performance of the AC. Selected comments on each of these topics follow.

Programme accreditation, including habilitations/appointments of professors and (associate) professors as guarantors of quality:

> In the case of private HEIs, the oft-made argument is that, in our country, hell did not break loose as, for example, it did in Romania. I am not so sure about this (R 10).
>
> The AC congests itself with thorough assessments of requests for programme re-accreditations … The Commission has already got to know the faculty (R 3).
>
> What is commonly done is two things: institutional evaluations and accreditations, and these accreditations are extremely difficult, these accreditations of hundreds and thousands of study branches (R 1).
>
> I sincerely hope that we will stop fooling ourselves and will move over to a completely different system of habilitation and professorial appointments. I am by all means for ending the current state-of-affairs (R 10).
>
> I am clearly in favour of the western model, absolutely (R 9).

I disagree. I think that making a person who spent 20 years in business a professor will lead to a total chaos … it sells well in elections … but professor is a scientific position … So, I think it should be kept as it is (R 12).

I lean toward making associate professors work positions … and filling the position of a professor is clearly a matter for an internationally open competition (R 11).

The Amendment [of 2010] was an initiative of the members of the parliament … as I see it, in case of the guarantor of the programme, there was the need to specify it terminologically by law. The establishment of the register was totally necessary, something that the AC welcomes (R 7).

I feel a little saddened that something was clearly so far of out order that it was necessary to go to such lengths that the register was set up. That, apparently, there were so many excesses, that persons with such and such a title before and after the name had so many workloads that the situation became untenable (R 9).

Suitability of undertaking accreditation and evaluation:

Evaluations are becoming a more substantial part of the activities of the AC … the outcomes of evaluations are to some extent considered for programme accreditation (R 7).

It's not proper, it's not a proper way of doing things. I think they [the AC] should focus on one activity only (R 12).

I don't think it realistic for the AC to carry out accreditations and evaluations separately … what is absolutely astonishing to me is that they are able to declare in the evaluation report that they will use the outcomes for accreditation … I see the way out of this by having a single permanent working group for evaluation, and this does not require amending the law (R 10).

There certainly is some tension in accreditations and evaluations conducted by the AC (R 6).

We are making progress … when evaluating an institution, we at the same time re-accredit all study branches … when we did the kind of institutional evaluation I am speaking about, it was a madhouse, but a great experience … we considered continuing such evaluations but we got congested and worn out by the Law case[64] (R 1).

When the AC decided to evaluate us, it set up several work groups that came to the faculties … Thinking back on the evaluation, I remember many people being … disgruntled. Why us again? … But I must say that from my point of view it was very useful, also considering the fact that a lot of people recognized that the weaknesses are there and that it is time to work on them (R 9).

Composition, professionalisation, internal evaluation of the AC:

Composing the AC on the basis of equal representation of the major disciplines is, to me, absolutely pointless … In the AC, there should sit, first of all, a few people with good knowledge of the theory of quality assurance, a few people from outside academe, then, of course some academics, and, certainly, a student (R 10).

I would be for people from practice being represented in the working groups. Not in the AC's Plenum. In the AC's Plenum … there should be academics and some people with common sense and a sense of responsibility … As a member of the Plenum, a student is no good (R 6).

As to the composition of the AC … people from practice certainly yes. Whether students, I doubt it. Certainly, it is important for students to be in the special working groups (R 7).

When it comes to composition, well, yes, we have three foreigners, one person from practice, we can have a student, why not, I wouldn't mind (R 1).

[64] Breaking up at the Faculty of Law of the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen in 2009. This case especially concerned: plagiarism, forging study documentation to significantly reduced time to degree, and substandard requirements for Bachelor degrees, Master degrees, and doctoral theses. For details see, Pospíšil, J. 2010. "Zpráva pro vedení Západočeské university v Plzni zpracovaná na základě bodu č. 7 společného prohlášení rektora a děkana ze dne 24 března 2010" [Report for top institutional management at the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, made on the basis of a joint declaration of the rector and the dean, dated 24 March 2010].

What I cannot stand most about the AC is that they do not want to be trained in evaluation processes (R 6).

I don't think the AC should consist entirely of professionals and experts (R 9).

In the AC, we started internal evaluation in 2007 … it is time-consuming, for sure, but also useful. If you look at the reports, they develop … so it is no longer just crying over spilled milk, it is something of substance … And what also helped us was when we were compiling the self-evaluation report for ENQA in June last year (R 7).

The AC's budget:

Well, I would certainly wish them to have enough money to do what they need with all care. On the other hand, I would recommend they stop dealing with study branches, and then … they will have plenty of time (R 10).

I do not know their budget level in detail, I must admit. Nonetheless, budget levels for universities have gone up … If their budget has been stagnant, then, I think, additional funding for them … would certainly be effective, useful (R 9).

For 2010, the AC's budget was increased by 900,000 CZK (R 3).

Computerisation of the agenda and presentation of results:

I think that in case of, let us say computerisation, what they publish in electronic form, I think is on the plus side. You find what you need out there, I'd say (R 10).

Clearly, it would help if they shifted towards a computerized system for processing requests and stopped all the paperwork, as it is now … save our forests (R 9).

For computerising the agenda, we have … a public tender prepared. We would like to use the new web site more for electronic agenda … definitely, computerization should be a matter of one year (R 7).

As for presentation for the public, I think that considering the Law case, thanks to which the AC came into the public eye … that the AC should start presenting its activities and the reasons for its existence more actively (R 9).

Changeover to institutional accreditation:

I think that programme accreditation has its merits … true, overloads can be seen, but, generally, it works and has worked well (R 12).

We do not differentiate between ex-ante and ex-post accreditation at all … of course, the changeover to institutional accreditation will bring the costs down. Institutional accreditation will be demanding, but just once (R 10).

I am totally in favour of institutional accreditation (R 9).

Programme accreditation is obsolete (R 3).

I think it necessary to move over to institutional accreditation, because the institution knows best what its programmes should be like (R 6).

I think that the ideal is something like accreditation of an institution (R 1).

Overall perspective on the AC:

Accreditation, in some form, will always be needed; there will always have to be some guardian of quality, for better or for worse (R 9).

The principal problem is that, at present, the role of the AC is very negative. It is because the Commission developed a very narrow view on the input parameters and applied it when entering the market, clearly breaking the law, at the level of study branches … in the Czech environment, it is evident that a division of labour is necessary, and a fundamental revision of accreditation as a concept is due … The basic problem lies in the Commission's structures, most acutely in the standing working groups. Currently, these are lobbyists' clubs that apportion the education market; they are an instrument of most vicious anti-competitive moves … But this also concerns the AC itself. I've often participated in the sessions so I know it, I know that they pass their

viewpoints in one minute, even less, so what they can realistically do is to, in 95% of the cases, adopt the viewpoint of the five-member working group composed of people from two institutions … It would be best if standing working groups were not needed at all, and the standpoints were made on the basis of standardised metrics (R 11).

The AC should not deal with study branches but should take up institutional accreditation; they should stop fooling themselves with professoriate … They should be of assistance; not only a whip but also a guide (R 10).

5.1.5.3 Resulting achievements and limitations

The respondents' viewpoints seem to converge especially on the need to make the Accreditation Commission more outward-oriented by changing its composition (though no agreed pattern can be identified), and on the need to begin the process of institutional accreditation. Although the AC's positive role in limiting the uncontrolled growth of private higher education providers is called into question, as it is claimed that some low-quality providers have slipped below the radar, other comments point to some positive developments such as: regular internal evaluation, a new website with "user-friendly" presentation, the beginnings of computerization, and the increase in the budget level for 2010. According to the outputs of the available analyses, complemented by the respondents' viewpoints, the achievements and limitations of the Accreditation Commission can be formulated as follows:

+ a respected body with a 20-year history;
+ representation of members from academe;
+ some limitation of fraudulent private higher education provision (degree mills);
+ membership and involvement in international organisations (CEEN, ENQA[65])`
+ regular internal evaluation (since 2007);
+ inclusion of students in special work groups (since 2006);
+ a concrete plan for agenda computerization (to be finalised in 2011);
+ serious discussions about moving over to institutional accreditation.

- focus on accreditation of study branches and specialisations, not programmes;
- almost exclusively academic composition (including the standing working groups);

[65] Full ENQA membership reconfirmed 29 June 2010 after the Accreditation Commission found sufficient compliance with the ENQA Membership Provisions. See Hodulík et al. 2010, 40, and the ENQA List of Externally Reviewed Agencies, available at <http://www.enqa.eu/reviews_agencies.lasso>.

- limited transparency in naming standing working group members;
- an unclear link between the accreditation process and the evaluation process that stymies innovation;
- ongoing concentration on input parameters rather than on the overall context;
- heavy administrative demands (on the AC as well as on institutions);
- only professors and associate professors as guarantors of programme quality; a real danger of fuelling "the flying professor phenomenon";
- limited awareness of quality assurance practices and developments among most members of the AC and the working groups;
- limited communication with the wider public and with the wider academic community.

5.2 Higher Education Development Fund (HEDF)

5.2.1 Rationale

The Higher Education Development Fund was set up by the Ministry in 1992 as an instrument for transforming the HEIs after the watershed year of 1989. Since 1993, it has been jointly administered by the Ministry and the Council of HEIs, both of which are represented in the Fund's organisational structure, which comprises the Committee, the thematic commissions, and the Supervisory Board. The activities performed within the HEDF are regulated by the Statute and the Organisational and Competitive Regulations, both laid down in 1992 and amended several times since then. Organisational and technical support for the activities of the HEDF is provided by the Agency of the Council of HEIs.

Specification of the rationale of the HEDF has gone through several stages. The original intention was to help public HEIs reduce their development deficit in comparison to Western institutions of the same type. The HEDF was thus meant to be an instrument for facilitating institutional transformation and dynamic development, giving public HEIs an opportunity to obtain targeted financial support (RVŠ 2001a). However, it has been unclear how to interpret the term "dynamic development", whether as support for the establishment of new institutions or as improving the quality of existing institutions (or both). Interpretations have also differed as to the possibility of supporting research and development-related activities from the Fund (Valenta 1996). Because of the diverging views, the originally formulated rationale of the Fund was modified in the 1994 Amendment to the Statute. In the

Amendment, the Fund's rationale was specified as to *facilitate the conceptual, scientific-pedagogical, or artistic-pedagogical development of HEIs by means of targeted development grants*.

By linking institutional "dynamic development" with the processes of enhancing the quality of educational activities, a qualitative interpretation was chosen to guide the Fund's rationale. Correspondingly, grant support started to be given to projects aimed at *improving the educational activities of HEIs and parts of HEIs*. In the mid-1990s, the HEDF thus became the central policy-level instrument for enhancement of educational activities at public HEIs.

A further step toward making the HEDF a central-level policy instrument for institutional quality improvement was taken in 2000. In 2000, the Ministry issued the Ministry's Plan for 2000-2005. The Ministry's Plan for 2000-2005 refers to quality assurance, and funding from the HEDF is set for developing degree programmes (curriculum content) and ICT (MEYS 2000), with the areas for support from the HEDF specified in the updates of the Plan. To codify this newly-specified function of the HEDF, an Agreement between the Council of HEIs and the Ministry on the HEDF was reached in 2001. The Agreement declares the Fund's rationale be in line with the Ministry's Plan, its annual updates, and the plans of the HEIs. Furthermore, it concretises the process of making and agreeing on the Fund's budget (RVŠ 2001b).

The link between the HEDF and quality improvement as a system-level policy priority is retained in the Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010. This strategic document refers to the HEDF as an instrument for implementing development goals in the Plan's policy area *quality and excellence of academic activities* (MEYS 2005). The approach to the HEDF as an instrument for implementing quality of the education-related goals of the Ministry has been retained ever since, through the updates to the Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010.

Alongside clarification of the Fund's rationale went the process of specifying the priority areas. In 1992, the first year of the Fund's existence, ten priorities were declared, out of which three priority areas, i.e. *development of ICT*, *support for teacher-training*, and *development of degree programmes* constituted, until 2008, the major areas of grant support from the HEDF[66]. Given the different interpretations of the Fund's rationale, in the early and mid 1990s, grant support was also assigned to projects not targeted at educational activities. These projects were meant, rather, to contribute to solutions to research, infrastructure, and

[66] From 2009 onwards, the priority area *support for teacher training* is no longer declared, due to the possibility of funding these activities from the EU structural funds.

management-related issues that were also seen as critical at the time. For this reason, priority areas such as enhancement of research capacity (1993, 1994), infrastructure development of HEIs[67] (1995, 1996), efficiency of institutional economics and management (1993, 1994), employability of graduates (1997, 1998), and support for entrance examinations (1997, 1998) were also declared eligible for grant support (see Table 3, Annex I). However, especially after the rationale of the Fund had been clarified, grant support was to a greater extent allocated to education-related priorities, including also *transformation of libraries*, *student creative activities*, and *fellowships for visiting professors*. It can be argued that, by the end of the 1990s, the priorities annually declared for grant support from the HEDF became stabilised in seven areas (A-C, E-H), including: A. ICT at HEIs, B. teacher-training, C. Bachelor-student internships, E. libraries, F. innovation of degree programmes, G. student creative activities, H. innovation and development of laboratories, studios, and workplaces for practical tuition[68] (FRVŠ 1999-2010).

Stabilisation of the Fund's priority areas in the 1990s entailed several changes. Three should be mentioned in particular. First, innovations within fields of study such as biomedicine, the arts, technology, and humanities, declared as individual priorities, were brought under a single priority area–innovation of degree programmes (priority F), with the corresponding subcategories. Second, investments in institutional facility development and research capacity were terminated, and were obtainable from other sources of support[69]. Third, employability of graduates and support for entrance examinations, declared in 1997 and 1998, were no longer prioritised within the HEDF, and were transferred to be taken care of solely within the Ministry's remit (FRVŠ 1999-2010).

The demarcated priority areas (A-C, E-H) were not left completely untouched during the 2000s. In 2003, to take into account the preferences of the academic community, the priority Bachelor-student internships was replaced by a priority aimed at developing *counselling and information centres* (as priority C). In the same year, priority H was incorporated into A to form a single area for which investment costs could be applied for. This measure was intended to reduce the number of project applications and reduce the administrative load of the Agency of the Council of HEIs. In 2003, the terms for submitting projects for priority G (student creative activities) were modified for 2004 to include *only*

[67] Projects of extensive coverage, including construction of new faculties, study centres and the like.
[68] Priority area D, out of which entrance examination proceedings were supported, was cancelled in 1998.
[69] Programme investment funding, respectively, research plans.

PhD students in the on-site mode of study[70], and not to include academic staff acting as supervisors of student theses in Bachelor and Master programmes. Before this modification, i.e. up to 2004, priority G had *de facto* supported research-based activities of students in all three Bologna cycles. The reason for this modification lay in the stipulations of the newly adopted Act 130/2002 on Research and Development Support from Public Sources, which disallowed support for research-type activities from funding allocated for educational activities (FRVŠ 1999-2010).

Further changes followed in the mid and late 2000s. From 2006 onwards, after the controversy between the Fund's Committee and the Ministry on the interpretation of the term "programme" and on the terms of support for *research-based* student activities, changes were made to priorities F and G. Priority F was re-structured to include innovation of study *courses* in one of four specified ways[71]. Priority G was modified in the sense that *only projects aimed at enhancing education-related creative activities of PhD students* became eligible for funding. Up to 2005, given the difficulties in setting a clear-cut boundary between teaching and research-based creative activities, priority G was also conceived for stimulating student research activities, but the Committee had no option but to accept the standpoint of the Ministry. The Ministry argued that grant support for *research-based* activities from the HEDF, as in priority G, would be in violation of Act no. 130/2002 Coll. on Support for Research and Development from Public Sources. Activities of this type are funded from the subsidy for specific research, and no other type of *public* support, e.g. from the HEDF, is permissible. Finally, priority B focusing on teacher-training and declared up to 2008 was cancelled due to the possibility of funding it from the operational programmes (FRVŠ 1999-2010). An overview of the development of the priority areas of the HEDF shows that, at the present time, five priority areas (A, C, E, F, G) are declared (see Table 3, Annex I).

The budget of the HEDF is specified at the turn of each calendar year. Based on the subsidy level for HEDF in previous years, the Fund's Committee makes the initial budget proposal and, in compliance with the Statute, sends it to the Ministry's Department of Higher Education. The Ministry's Department of Higher Education takes note of the budget proposal and delivers it to the Representative Commission. The Representative Commission is the advisory body of the Vice-Minister for Higher Education, composed of representatives of the

[70] PhD students were able to enter this priority from 2000 onwards.
[71] These are: innovation of an existing course, creation of a new course, creation of study supports with multimedia characteristics, or support for a fellowship of a visiting professor leading to innovation of a course.

Czech Rectors' Conference, the Council of HEIs, the Registrars[72], and a representative of the labour union. The major task of the Representative Commission is to express its viewpoint on budgetary matters, including the total amount of the state subsidy and the demarcation of subsidy levels for individual budgetary items (the grant for teaching activities, the HEDF, the DPs, and the like) (Beneš and Melichar 2006). The final decision on the budget of the HEDF is taken by the Vice-Minister for Higher Education, who, however, follows the standpoint of the Representative Commission. The subsidy is re-allocated into the individual priority areas of the HEDF by the Committee, taking into account the distribution in previous years and the principle that all projects with the same average score across the priority areas have to obtain support (R 8).

5.2.2 Functioning

Implementing the rationale of the Fund involves preparing several actions. These actions are: *formulating the priority areas; submitting the projects to the competitive procedure; ex-ante evaluation and approval; and ex-post-evaluation*. To elucidate the way in which the Fund functions, a more accurate description of these actions is in order. However, since the functioning of the Fund is contingent on task-assignment within and cooperation between the Fund's organisational units, an overview of the organisational structure of the Fund is given first.

The organisational structure of the HEDF comprises the Committee, the thematic commissions, and the Supervisory Board. The Committee is composed of the chair, two vice-chairs, and eight committee members. The Committee chair, one vice-chair, and four members are appointed by the Council of HEIs from among its members. The other Committee vice-chair and four members are appointed by the Vice-Minister for Higher Education from the Ministry's staff members. The thematic commissions, whose task is to evaluate the projects submitted within the corresponding priority areas, are composed of a chair, one or more vice-chairs, and commission members. Currently, there are 15 thematic commissions, with six commissions evaluating projects for priority F (innovation of study courses), and six commissions for priority G (student creative activities). The fifteen thematic commissions have 163 members in total. The Supervisory Board is composed of the head, one member appointed by the Council of HEIs, and one member appointed by the Vice-Minister for Higher Education. Organisational and technical support for the activities of the Fund's

[72] Associated in the Club of Registrars.

units, including the running and maintenance of the ISSAR-F information system[73], is provided by the Agency of the Council of HEIs (FRVŠ 2003; FRVŠ 2005).

The Committee members and the members of the Supervisory board are not allowed to submit or in any way participate in projects of the HEDF. A similar, though less strict, limitation pertains to the chairs and vice-chairs of the thematic commissions, who are not allowed to submit and participate in projects falling under the thematic commission which they (vice)-chair. In the case of academic staff as project submitters or participants, the general rule is that though multiple submissions per person are possible across the priority areas, one person can be the (co-) guarantor of, or a participant in, only one project within one (sub-) priority at a time (FRVŠ 2003).

5.2.2.1 Formulation of the priority areas

The priority areas are formulated every year in the Declaration of the Competitive Procedure (CP Declaration) by the Committee of the HEDF. Each calendar year, in January, the Committee, in collaboration with the Presidium of the Council of HEIs, prepares the draft of the priority areas for the CP Declaration and sends it to the Ministry's Department of Higher Education. The Department as well as the Vice-Minister for Higher Education make comments on the draft; in practice, every year some changes are suggested to the draft[74]. Though the comments of the Ministry are not formally binding, the Fund's Committee, as a rule, incorporates them into the draft of the CP Declaration. Once the text of the CP Declaration has been agreed, the chair of the Fund's Committee makes the CP Declaration public via the Fund's website. This now takes place in February, formerly in March[75].

The priority areas of the HEDF, for which projects can be submitted, are formulated every year in the CP Declaration. From 2009 onwards, five priority areas have been declared, all aimed at facilitating education-related activities. The priority areas are: *innovation and development of laboratories; studios and workplaces for practical tuition, including libraries and ICT* (priority A); *counselling and information centres* (priority C); *libraries* (priority E);

[73] In full, read as: the Information System of the Agency of the Council of Higher Education Institutions for the Higher Education Development Fund.

[74] In the case of the CP Declaration for 2011, the Ministry newly prefers it to include a specification of the project's *sustainability*, including availability of results, *for the following two years*, and reasons why the project has not been submitted to the EU operational programmes. While the former requirement is intended to facilitate efficiency and give support to the project's guarantor, especially as regards projects in priority area F (to keep innovated courses in programme/course syllabi), the latter is aimed at compiling reasons why the budget of the HEDF should be kept at its maximum possible at a time of financial stringency and competitive options represented by the EU operational programmes (R 8).

[75] Applicable to the Declarations in 2010 and 2009; the former practice was to publish the CP Declaration at the beginning of March, or even in April, e.g. in 2006 (FRVŠ 1999-2010).

innovation of study courses (priority F); and *student creative activities for innovation of education* (priority G). Each of the priority areas further contains the corresponding sub-priorities which in the case of priorities F and G, relate to six major fields of study (FRVŠ 1999-2010) (see Table 4, Annex I).

5.2.2.2 Submission of projects in the competitive procedure

Projects are submitted by authorised personnel at faculty level, using the ISSAR-F information system accessible via the Fund's website. Due to the large number of submissions, (far) exceeding 2,000 per year, only authorised personnel are allowed to submit projects, collected at faculty level, via the ISSAR-F system. There is a set deadline for submissions, *which is the end of April.* This deadline is announced in advance in the CP Declaration. As the submitted projects have to follow a pre-set structure set in the ISSAR-F system, the submission of incomplete projects or projects with other formal irregularities is prevented. By mid-May, the rector whose staff submits the projects via the authorised personnel is requested to send a written notification to the Committee of the Fund, including a list of all submitted projects (FRVŠ 1999-2010).

The submitted one-year projects have to meet the formal and content criteria that are further specified for each priority area, with some priority areas containing a limit to the number of projects that may be submitted (see Table 9). The projects should have a demonstrable pedagogical output and be in harmony with the plan of the HEI for which they are submitted, to aid in fulfilment of the plan. Financial support in the form of a grant can be allocated only to a public HEI. Importantly, financial support from the HEDF is generally considered as a start-up grant, which means that funding for project-outcome based activities spanning beyond twelve months is to be provided by the HEI. In line with the Fund's rationale, targeted financial support must not be used for funding projects aiming at pursuing research and development-related activities (FRVŠ 2003). *The deadlines for submission of the projects have been part of the CP Declaration since 2006* (FRVŠ 1999-2010).

Publication of the terms of the submission procedure since 2006 has not been the only form of assistance to the submitters of projects. In 2000, after a large number of projects had been rejected for formal reasons (circa 20%), the Committee made publicly accessible the most frequent mistakes in project submissions[76]. *In addition, computerization of the*

[76] These include: a misfit between the rationale for the projects and the focus of the thematic (sub-)priority; excessive financial requirements; unclear/uncontrollable goals; declaration of standard duties of higher education personnel/students as project goals (relevant for priority F, G); or continuation of activities from previous year(s) (FRVŠ 1999-2010).

submission procedure using the ISSAR-F system, fully operational since 2005, has prevented the dismissal of projects on purely formal grounds (incomplete documentation, missing stamps, etc.)

In order to distribute the grants justly, in view of the limited budget of the Fund, and to keep the number of submissions manageable, a submission limit is applied to the priority areas. There is a limit for priorities A, C, and E, and also for the priorities F and G. Only one project per institution can be submitted for priority C and priority E. In the case of priority A, where only capital investments can be applied for, a submission limit has been in force since 2001. From 2001 to 2003, university-type HEIs (universities) could submit at most two projects (one "faculty project", and one "rectorate project"), while for HEIs not divided into faculties, i.e. HEIs of non-university type, only one project could be submitted (not discriminated). Since 2004, for universities, the submission limit for priority A has been applicable to individual faculties, and is based on the number of enrolled students per faculty as of October 31st in the previous year[77]. In addition, universities may also submit up to two "rectorate" projects beyond the limit. HEIs of non-university type may submit up to three projects. In the case of priority F, one academic staff member may submit and participate in only one project per sub-priority. As regards priority G, projects can be submitted only by PhD students in the on-site mode of study, who may submit and participate in only one project, while the co-guarantor, usually a PhD supervisor, may participate in at most two projects. For priority A, the amount of funding applied for must be between CZK 250,000 and CZK 1,750,000, to be used only for capital costs. There is a corresponding limit for priority C, where only funding up to CZK 250,000 can be allotted (FRVŠ 1999-2010). The limits for each priority area are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: **Limits in HEDF priority areas**

Area	Limit
A *Innovation and development of laboratories, studios and workplaces for practical tuition, incuding libraries and ICT*	University HEIs: Formula-based submission limit + 2 rectorate projects Non-university HEIs: max. 3 projects CZK 250,000-1,750,000 per HEI Only capital investments allowed
C *Counselling and information centres*	Max. 1 project per HEI (of any type) Max. CZK 250,000 per HEI
E *Libraries*	Max. 1 project per HEI (of any type)
F *Innovation of study courses*	Max. 1 project per academic per sub-

[77] The criteria applied for calculating the limit are as follows: up to 2,000 students: the faculty may submit 2 projects. The number of students above the 2,000 base is divided by 1,500, and the result + 2 is the total limit of projects for submission per faculty (FRVŠ 1999-2010).

	priority
G *Student creative activities for innovation of education*	Max. 1 project per PhD student (on-site mode), 2 projects per PhD supervisor

Source: author, compiled from the bulletins of the Higher Education Development Fund

5.2.2.3 Ex-ante evaluation and approval

Ex-ante evaluation and approval is a three-step procedure involving evaluators, thematic commissions, and the Committee of the Fund. First, following the submission deadline (April), the chair of each thematic commission, in collaboration with the vice-chair, assigns two evaluators per project submitted within the corresponding priority. The chair chooses the evaluators from the database maintained by the Agency of the Council of HEIs, ensuring that there is no conflict of interest. One of the evaluators is always a member of the relevant thematic commission. When the evaluation scores are known, they are inserted into ISSAR-F. The deadlines for putting the project evaluation scores into ISSAR-F are set by the commission chairs, i.e. they may differ from commission to commission. Due to the submission limits, the largest number of projects are submitted for priorities F and G. For this reason, each of these priorities has six thematic commissions. *For greater transparency, the criteria used for ex-ante evaluation of the projects*[78] *have formed part of the CP Declaration since 2006* (FRVŠ 1999-2010).

Once the project evaluation scores have been entered into ISSAR-F they are made accessible for approval within the relevant thematic commission. Since one evaluator always comes from the commission, it is crucial that the scores are made accessible to the commission members only after the evaluation. The terms of the approval procedure are specified by the commission chair; the usual, experience-based approach is that only projects at the critical point for being approved for grant support (circa 90-95 points) are dealt with by the commission members. However, if the two evaluation scores differ by more than 20 points (100 points is the maximum), the project has to be assigned to a third evaluator[79]. Based on the evaluation scores and the commission's standpoint, the commission compiles a list of projects recommended and not recommended for grant support, and sends it to the Committee of the Fund (September-October).

[78] These include especially: usability of the grant for educational purposes; the fit between the rationale for the project and the thematic priority; the adequacy of the financial requirements; the originality and added value of the project; the difficulty of implementing the project; controllability of the outputs; and clarity of argumentation (FRVŠ 1999-2010).

[79] This is not done in cases where the project receives less than 60 points from *both* of the two evaluators, as such a project is considered poorly prepared and thus ineligible for grant support (FRVŠ 1999-2010).

The evaluation scores in each priority area are scrutinised by the Committee of the Fund. The scrutiny takes place at a three/four-day meeting, at the beginning of which the projects are randomly assigned to Committee members. The chairs of the thematic commissions have a right to be present at the Committee meeting as non-voting members. Though there are no hard and fast rules for scrutiny, the principle followed universally by the Committee is to assure the allocation of financial support to all the projects with the same average score across the priority areas. A Committee member abstains from expressing a viewpoint in cases when the project comes from the institution at which he is employed. The evaluation scores of projects close to the funding limit[80], i.e. projects considered eligible or ineligible for support by a narrow margin within each priority area, are further investigated. In this respect, the scrutiny carried out by the Committee has become more thorough in the wake of recent successful appeals against the results of the ex-ante evaluation (see next paragraph). Furthermore, it has become regular practice to reduce the budget of the projects in terms of personnel or material costs, which are often overestimated. In general, the Committee prefers to reduce the allocated funding rather than to reject a project, though in cases where a reduction of more than 30% is considered appropriate, the project is assessed as ineligible for grant support. The scrutiny of the evaluation scores by the Committee brings the ex-ante evaluation procedure to an end (December). The evaluation scores, along with the decisions on grant support, are made accessible to project submitters via the ISSAR-F system for their information and to enable an appeal to the Supervisory Board (January).

Despite the efforts of the Committee to treat all the projects under scrutiny evenhandedly, it has to be admitted that there have been an increasing number of successful appeals against the results of the competitive procedure[81]. In 2010, following the Supervisory Board's verdict, three projects had to be re-evaluated and additional funding procured. For this reason, the Committee has started to play a more active role in checking up on the commissions' standpoints. In recent years, more than 2,000 projects have been submitted annually to the HEDF, out of which about 900, on average, receive financial support (R 5; R 8).

5.2.2.4 Ex-post evaluation and monitoring

Ex-post evaluation and monitoring is done at the turn of each calendar year (December-February) by evaluation committees, which include one member delegated by the Committee

[80] There are no officially codified rules for allocating funding into the individual priority areas of the HEDF.
[81] Appeals to the Supervisory Board can be lodged up to 15 days after delivery of the Committee's standpoint to the appellant (FRVŠ 1999-2010).

of the HEDF. In broad terms, the rules for organising the ex-post evaluation proceedings are referred to in the Statute, and they are set in detail in the methodological guidelines for controlling the projects[82].

The organisational rules for the ex-post evaluation proceedings are detailed, and their formulation was a long and arduous process. The draft of the 1992 Statute required the Committee of the Fund and the thematic commissions to check on the efficiency of the management of the project grant, but this requirement did not make its way into the approved text of the Statute (RVŠ 1998). Ex-post evaluation of the projects was thus organisationally entrusted to the bodies responsible for managing state funding (public finance) i.e. HEIs, faculties, and the Ministry (RVŠ 1993). In reality, ex-post evaluation was carried out by the faculty of the project guarantor's institution, in collaboration with the thematic commission ex-ante evaluating the project (Kudela 1994b).

The 1994 Amendments to the Statute required the Committee of the Fund to supervise the organisation of ex-post evaluation proceedings (RVŠ 1994). In 1995, the newly set up Supervisory Board commenced direct controls of the financial management of projects at selected faculties; by 1996 five faculties had been subjected to such a control (RVŠ 1998). From 1998, the Committee extended its activities by nominating its members as delegates to participate in ex-post evaluation proceedings. At the same time, the Committee began to work on a new mechanism for organising ex-post examinations. The aim of this initiative was to ensure that there was irrevocable proof that the financial management had been efficient and that the project goals had been attained (RVŠ 2001c). The Committee's work was finalised in 2000, when a proposal was put forward to modify the ex-post evaluation procedures. The

[82] The most important steps for organising ex-post evaluation proceedings are as follows. 1) The rector or, if the ex-post evaluation proceedings are organised at a faculty level, the dean appoints the chair of the evaluation committee (chair) and the academic staff member (appointed staff) responsible for organising the proceedings. 2) The appointed staff fixes the dates and places for presenting and defending the final reports in such a way that they will be, as far as possible, held in theme-related "blocks". 3) The appointed staff selects at least three members of the evaluation committee for each block. At least one of the evaluation committee members must be from a different organisational unit than the chair. Another committee member is delegated by the Committee of the Fund (delegate). 4) The chair assigns two evaluators for each project from the list available in ISSAR-F. 5) The criteria considered in ex-post evaluations are: the (mis)fit between the stated and achieved goals; the applicability of the project outcomes, including the usability of material equipment (if relevant); and the adequacy of the use of the financial grant. 6) The chair makes sure that all documentation will be available to the evaluation committee at least 10 days before the presentation and defence of the project. 7) The presentation and defence of the project is open to the public and includes: presentation of the guarantor of the project; presentation of the evaluation reports; a discussion; issuing the verdict; signing the protocol by the committee members, and making the verdict known to the guarantor of the project. 8) The committee chair sends the protocol to the Agency of the Council of HEIs. Based on the outcomes of the ex-post evaluation proceedings, a press release is prepared. 9) The Agency of the Council of HEIs collects the protocols, makes an overall report on the implementation of the Fund's project for the given year, and sends it to the Committee of the Fund (FRVŠ 1999-2010).

modification included nomination of the ex-post evaluators by the Agency of the Council of the HEIs[83], mandatory participation of the Committee's delegates in all ex-post evaluations, with the procedures to be organised in "blocks"[84], and the introduction of a three-scale evaluation verdict i.e. Achieved, Achieved with Reservation, Not Achieved (RVŠ 2000). The proposed modification, endorsed both by the Council of HEIs and the Ministry, was reflected in the 2000 Amendment to the Fund's Statute[85].

Adjustments to the organisation of ex-post evaluation procedures continued after 2000. Two of these adjustments merit particular attention. In 2003, the verdict "Achieved with Reservation" on the ex-post evaluation scale was differentiated, and was split into the verdicts "Achieved with Reservation on Subject Matter" and "Achieved with Reservation on Management" (FRVŠ 2003). In 2008, the ex-post evaluation scale was extended by the verdict "Achieved with Reservation on Subject Matter and Management" (FRVŠ 1999-2010).

Before concluding this section, a few remarks should be made about the functioning of the ISSAR-F system. ISSAR-F replaced the FRED/FROG system, based on the MS Excel platform, which was used from 2000 to 2003. The major aim in implementing ISSAR-F was to enable more efficient data handling and processing (RVŠ 2005). ISSAR-F can thus be characterised as an electronic support system for the agenda of the Fund, accessible via the internet, with access rights differentiated according to user category. After pilot testing, ISSAR-F was put into operation in March 2004. A very positive reaction to the implementation of the system by representatives of the HEIs led to the extension of the ISSAR-F functions. From 2005, the ISSAR-F system became fully operational in support of the Fund's agenda, including submission of projects, ex-ante evaluation and approval, ex-post evaluation proceedings, bonuses for involvement in ex-ante and ex-post evaluations, and press releases (FRVŠ 1999-2010). Table 5, Annex I shows that the number of registered evaluators has decreased somewhat since 2004. The number of registered evaluators was 678 in 2009. It is estimated that about 95% of the registered evaluators come from public HEIs (R 8).

5.2.3 Actors and interactions

The functioning of the HEDF is contingent upon the cooperation of the actors involved. The following actors enter into interactions essential for providing the functions of the Fund:

[83] Previously only recommended to the chairs of the evaluation committees; however, the Agency nomination can be subjected to a veto by an academic staff member responsible for organising the procedures at a given (part) of the institution.
[84] Including, as a rule, all projects at a given faculty, or, in the case of "rectorate" projects, at the HEI.
[85] By extending § 7a on evaluation of project results (FRVŠ 1999-2010).

- The Committee of the HEDF (11 members, 6 including chair for HEIs, 5 for Ministry);
- The thematic commissions of the HEDF (15 commissions, 163 members);
- The Supervisory Board of the HEDF (3 members, 2 including chair for HEIs, 1 for Ministry);
- evaluators (678 active);
- individual applicants/project guarantors, if successful;
- the Ministry's Department of Higher Education;
- the Vice-Minister for Higher Education;
- the Representative Commission (13 members; 3 representatives of the Council of HEIs, 6 representatives of the Czech Rectors' Conference, 3 representatives of Registrars, 1 representative of the Higher Education Labour Union);
- the Presidium of the Council of HEIs (56 members, 9 acting as Presidium representatives);
- the Agency of the Council of HEIs (6 persons, 2 explicitly assigned to the Fund's agenda);
- Rectors/deans/ex-post evaluation committees.

The functioning of the HEDF can be decomposed into four processes. These are: specifying the Fund's budget; formulating the priority areas and submitting projects; ex-ante evaluation, including the appeals procedure; and ex-post-evaluation. Each of these processes entails putting into action a series of interrelated decisions made in interaction among the involved actors. Four specific interaction patterns applicable to the HEDF can be identified:

- **Interaction pattern for the process of specifying the Fund's budget:**

Committee of the Fund ---> Ministry's Department of Higher Education ---> Representative Commission ---> Vice-Minister for Higher Education ---> Committee of the Fund

- **Interaction pattern for the process of formulating the priority areas and submitting projects:**

Committee of the Fund + Presidium of the Council of HEIs ---> Ministry's Department of Higher Education ---> Vice-Minister for Higher Education ---> Committee of the Fund --->

Agency of the Council of HEIs (web presentation of priority areas) ---> applicants + rectors (verification) ---> Agency of the Council of HEIs + Committee of the Fund

- **Interaction pattern for the process of ex-ante evaluation, including the appeals procedure:**

Evaluators ---> thematic commissions ---> Committee of the Fund ---> applicants (if appeal lodged: ---> Supervisory Board of the Fund ---> Committee of the Fund ---> applicants)

- **Interaction pattern for the process of ex-post-evaluation:**

Rectors/deans ---> evaluation committees ---> evaluators ---> project guarantors ---> evaluation committees ---> Agency of the Council of HEIs ---> Committee of the Fund

Taken together, the interaction patterns encapsulate the sum of the inter-actor transactions that take place within the functioning of the Fund.

5.2.4 Effects

Projects within the HEDF have obtained grant support from the state since 1992. By 2010, the total grant subsidy allotted to the HEDF had reached CZK 4,699 million, of which CZK 1,602 million were allotted in the first nine years of the Fund's existence (1992-2000) and CZK 3,097 million in the following ten years (2001-2010). The average grant subsidy per year totalled CZK 247 million. A total of 15,393 projects were funded in this period, of which 5,033 were funded in the 1992-2000 period and 10,360 in the 2001-2010 period. The average number of projects each year was 810 (559 in 1992-2000 and 1,036 in 2001-2010).

Between 1992-2000, the administrative costs were CZK 62 million (3.9%) out of the total grant subsidy of CZK 1,602 million. CZK 1,540 million (96.1%) were channelled directly to project support. The largest part of the grant subsidy, CZK 770.5 million, was allocated to priority A (ICT, laboratories, workplaces), followed by priority F (innovation of study courses) which received CZK 367.2 million, and priority G (student creative activities), which was awarded CZK 94.5 million[86]. On the other hand, only CZK 6.8 million were allocated to priority C (counselling and information services) (see Table 6, 7, 8, Annex I). The largest part of the grant per institution was obtained by Charles University (CZK 262.9

[86] However, it should be noted that, in the 1992-2000 period, CZK 140.8 million were allotted to other purposes (especially enhancement of research capacity, infrastructure development, efficiency of institutional management), including capital costs.

million), followed by Masaryk University (CZK 222.5 million), the Czech Technical University (CZK 152.6 million), and Brno University of Technology (CZK 128.5 million). The highest amount of grant support per year–CZK 50.4 million–was allocated to Masaryk University in 1995 (see Table 9, Annex I). The average success rate (submitted vs. funded projects) in the 1992-2000 period was 43.2%, with the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts scoring highest (60.2%), followed by the Institute of Chemical Technology (57.7%), the Academy of Performing Arts (52.0%), and Charles University (49.3%) (see Table 10, Annex I).

In the 2001-2010 period, for which more detailed data is available, the ratio between the state subsidy for the HEDF and the total state subsidy for higher education was 1.6%. The grant subsidy requirement for all HEDF projects totalled CZK 7,197 million, out of which CZK 3,097 million were allotted (see Table 11, 12, Annex I). Out of the total grant subsidy of CZK 3,097 million, CZK 3,048 million were allocated for project support, with the rest of the amount (CZK 49 million, i.e. 1.6%) used for covering administrative costs. Out of CZK 3,048 million for project support, capital costs made up CZK 1,905 million, i.e. 62.5% (see Table 13, Annex I). With CZK 1.7 billion allotted, priority A took for the largest part of the grant subsidy, followed by priority F (CZK 687 million) and priority G (CZK 362 million). Again, priority C received the lowest share of the grant subsidy (CZK 18 million) (see Table 13, Annex I). The largest part of the grant per institution in the 2001-2010 period was obtained by Brno University of Technology (CZK 484.8 million), with the Czech Technical University in second place (CZK 329.9 million), Charles University in third place (CZK 315.8 million), and Masaryk University fourth (CZK 219.6 million) (see Table 14, Annex I). The highest grant support per year, CZK 61.5 million, was awarded to Brno University of Technology in 2008. As a rule, capital costs made up the majority of the institutional grant, with a few exceptions (see Table 15, Annex I[87]). In the 2001-2010 period, the average success rate was 44.2%, with the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts most successful by a wide margin (62%), followed by the Academy of Performing Arts (51%), Brno University of Technology (49%), and the Czech Technical University (48%) (see Table16, Annex I). As regards the results of the ex-post evaluation proceedings, in the 2001-2009 period[88] 8,909 out of 9,342, i.e. 95.4%, of the projects were evaluated as meeting all the goals (verdict A–Achieved) (for individual years, see Table 17, Annex I).

[87] For exceptions, see especially: Academy of Performing Arts, Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts, Masaryk University, Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry, and University of Economics.
[88] Results for 2010 were not available at the time of writing the thesis.

5.2.5 Achievements and limitations

5.2.5.1 Reviewing available sources and evidence

The HEDF was set up as a funding-incentive-based instrument for aiding in the transformation of HEIs after 40 years of Communist rule. The support for institutional transformation was focused on educational activities, not on research and development, following the clarification of the Fund's rationale in the first few years of its existence. In relation to the unclear rationale for the Fund, other limitations factoring into the functioning of the Fund in the 1990s can be identified. These were: frequently changing priority areas; support for large investment projects draining precious resources from other priority areas; limited time for project preparation and ex-ante evaluation (priority areas for support announced in the summer time); limited time for project implementation (one year only); inconsistent attitudes of ex-ante evaluators; unclear formulation of priority areas and instructions to applicants, resulting in many applications being rejected on formal grounds (Kudela 1994a,b; Valenta 1993, 1996; RVŠ 2001a).

In the late 1990s, these limitations were to a large extent addressed. Most notably, steps were taken to: stabilise the priority areas, involve the Committee in ex-ante evaluations and the Committee's delegates in ex-post evaluation proceedings, set up the Supervisory Board to oversee the evaluations, and institutionalise the standardised time frame for project submission, realisation, and evaluation (RVŠ 2001a).

Despite the gradual improvements that were made, two major complaints were reistered in the mid and late 1990s about the rationale for the Fund. First, in 1995, the registrars of three HEIs[89] sent a joint declaration on the HEDF to the Ministry. The most substantial part of the declaration read:

> We consider the Higher Education Development Fund be too far detached from its original purpose, as it does not only support projects aimed at institutional development as a whole, but generally accepts small-scale projects for re-equipping of an institution, a faculty, or a workplace. For this reason the Fund should gradually cease to exist (RVŠ 1998, 5).

The registrars' declaration was considered to be a misunderstanding of the Fund's rationale. It was vigorously opposed by the Presidium of the Council of HEIs, and was not discussed any further. Rather than being a misunderstanding of the rationale for the Fund in the true sense, a likely motive seems to have been an endeavour to incorporate the budget of the Fund into the

[89] Czech Technical University, Brno University of Technology, and University of West Bohemia in Pilsen (Valenta 1996).

state subsidy for educational activities, channelled to the institutions as a lump sum (via formula funding), so that there would be more funding available at institutional level for the registrars to control. Second, in late 1997, the Representative Commission, acting on the initiative of its members representing the Ministry, criticised the Fund for having also supported projects focused exclusively on research and development. Following this criticism, the Ministry made an enquiry into the Fund's operations. In February 1998, the then Vice-Minister for Higher Education disproved the allegations, stating that the enquiry found no substantiation for the criticism.

Gradually reducing its limitations and resisting outside pressures, the HEDF became a stable constituent of system-level policy in the second half of the 1990s. The main achievements of the Fund concerned: provision of targeted support in areas seen as crucial for institutional development[90]; a constantly increasing number of project submissions; flexibility in its reaction to the needs of the academic community; a reasonable success rate (over 40%), and low administrative costs (3.9%) (Kudela 1994a,b; RVŠ 1998; RVŠ 2001a). The status of the HEDF was officially acknowledged by making the Fund a system-level instrument for enhancing the quality of education in the Ministry's Plan for 2000-2005 and in the Agreement between the Council of HEIs and the Ministry on the Activities of the HEDF, signed by both parties in 2001[91]. However, the Fund's conceptual linkage to strategic policy documents and to the development goals set in them seems to be rather formal.

Fine-tuning of the Fund's functioning continued in the 2000s. The improvements aimed at: facilitating project submission (publication of frequent mistakes); greater transparency (publication of ex-ante and ex-post evaluation criteria); merging of the priority areas for investment support (capital costs); and administrative efficiency (introduction of submission limits and ISSAR-F). The submission limits and ISSAR-F helped to bring the administrative costs down to the current level of 1.6%[92]. The principle of financial support in the form of start-up grants has remained intact. Following the controversy between the Committee of the Fund and the Ministry on priority F (innovation of study programmes) and

[90] In the 1990s, the HEDF was the only domestic source of targeted funding for supporting and developing education-related activities.

[91] Interestingly, a proposal for this agreement was made by the Council of HEIs and put forward to the Ministry as early as 1996. The proposal included a clause on the budget level of the Fund reaching at least 2% of the state subsidy for education activities allotted to HEIs. Following the recommendation of the Representative Commission, reflecting negative reactions from the registrars and from some Ministry representatives (Financial Section of the Department of Higher Education), the proposal was dismissed by the Ministry (RVŠ 1998). The text of the valid agreement from 2001 does not specify the budget level of the Fund in any way (RVŠ 2001b).

[92] When other agencies provide targeted funding (grants), the administrative costs are usually 2-5% of the total budget (RVŠ 2001c).

G (student creative activities), priority F was redesigned to cover study courses and priority G to provide support for educational activities of doctoral students in the on-site mode of study only.

After the initiation of the Development Programmes in the 2000s, some overlap between the priority areas of the HEDF and the DPs could be observed. Four areas can be identified in which support from the HEDF and from the DPs overlap: ICT development, development of degree programmes (courses); training for teaching staff; and development of counselling centres. In case of the HEDF, the overlap concerns:

- ICT development, priority A, overlap in 2002-2010;
- Development of degree programmes/courses, priority F, overlap in 2001-2007;
- Support for training for teaching staff, priority B, overlap in 2006-2007;
- Development of counselling centres (services), priority C, overlap in 2007-2010.

In June 2007, an analysis of the functioning of the HEDF was made for the Presidium of the Council of HEIs. In this analysis, the Fund's achievements were identified as: continuous interest in project submissions, a very efficient administration and information system, a convenient complementary source to the DPs, orientation on small-scale investments, a chance for individuals and small groups at departmental level to obtain extra funding for tuition-related innovations, and a long-term tradition. On the other hand, the limitations of the HEDF were formulated as: a large number of fragmented projects, resulting in similar applications which make evaluation difficult, ex-ante evaluation scores in the upper level of the evaluation scale (90-100%) and hence some distrust in their objectivity, considerable administrative limits on what is allowed and what is not, frequent overlaps with other sources of support, one-year project duration (start-up grants only), and some difficulty in finding suitable priority areas for support (Ježek 2007a).

Some suggestions for modifying the functioning of the Fund were presented on the basis of the analysis. These suggestions concerned especially:

- Allocating circa 60% of the Fund's budget to capital costs (investments);
- Giving support to ICT investments and to investments in library capacity (numbers of books);
- Giving support to the participation of PhD and Master students in national and international events (conferences, seminars, workshops), including financial rewards for the best students;

- Creating a new priority area in support of student artistic activities (exhibitions, workshops) to compensate to some extent for the generally tighter funding for artistically-oriented HEIs;
- Making efforts to create a new priority area in support of student cultural and sports activities (festivals, film clubs, summer schools, sports events);
- Reducing formalities in relation to project submission and implementation;
- Introducing brief monitoring and final reports, not requiring final project presentations and defences, but holding presentation seminars to disseminate the outcomes;
- Reconsidering the limits on submissions;
- Extending the period of project support (to more than one year) (Ježek 2007a).

The results of the analysis and the corresponding suggestions were presented to the Council's Presidium. The Presidium took note of the results and suggestions and asked the Committee of the HEDF for its comments. Generally speaking, the Fund's Committee took a rather conservative stance, having reservations on all the outcomes and suggestions made, with the exception of enlargement of the library funds (FRVŠ 2007).

5.2.5.2 Letting respondents speak

The results of the 2007 analysis and the corresponding suggestions were considered when asking the persons interviewed for comments on the achievements and limitations of the HEDF. The respondents were invited to comment especially on the following topics: the overlap between the priority areas for the HEDF and the DPs; the controversy over priority areas F and G; submission limits and project administration; ex-ante evaluations; ex-post evaluations; project results and presentation of project results; and overall views on the HEDF. Selected comments on each of these topics follow.

Overlap between priority areas of the HEDF and the DPs:

> It is hard to make an assessment when not being directly involved personally, but de facto, it should not be considered inadequate when different providers allocate resources to, in fact, similar activities … so, in principle, I do not see this as a big issue (R 12).

I studied the alleged overlap thoroughly, and it seems to me that it is a matter of theory rather than practice (R 8).

I would support the view that … the formulation of the priority areas, especially as concerns the DPs … is complementary, so it does not interfere with the Fund, and there is no internal tension (R 5).

I think that the overlap may be a weakness if the institution doesn't approach it with responsibility, but considering that HEIs usually behave responsibly … I think the areas can be more or less complementary … so I would not see this as a weak point (R 10).

There are no totally identical priority areas in the Fund or the DPs … they are not totally the same, though the content is very similar (R 6).

Controversy over priority areas F and G:

This is a matter of the overall design of the support system; it is clear that PhD students and also post-docs are categories that need some sort of financial support. The question is from what sources and how to get it working. If the support were not to come from the Fund, then, from some other source (R 12).

In area F, the involvement of Master and Bachelor students as project co-participants was in fact there from the outset. The project guarantor in area G was, originally, a teacher leading a team of students. Then, when the controversy over that research stuff came along, area G was transformed into student projects only, so, in fact, it became area F, for students. If the teacher needs to innovate a course, he can submit a project in area F, if his PhD student needs it, and then in area G … So I would say that area F and area G have become rather similar lately, so that they practically differ only in who is the project guarantor (R 8).

I understand the clash between teaching and research activities, like it or not … the formal divide is there, that is how it works (R 10).

To me, the formal, legal point of view that the Fund has to obey the law is the first, if not the foremost priority. On the other hand, as regards factual content, it was a sort of

mistake [to make area G strictly for educational activities of PhD students], so if it were possible to correct it … that is what we would like to do (R 5).

Submission limits and project administration:

I am a big liberal … so the intention to regulate, to set limits to everything is, to me, erroneous … submission [limits] should be dropped (R 11).

I think the limits make sense … overall, I do not see them as a fundamental problem (R 12).

I think the limits have proved their worth … I support the view that there is quality even beyond the limits, and if we had a bit more money, we would be able to fund even more good-quality projects (R 5).

Ex-ante evaluations:

A thoroughly functioning system with excellent information support, no paper work, which is very valuable, but it concerns only small amounts, and the costs for making decisions in many cases exceed the amount involved. But, as a matter of fact, I see it as an example of good practice (R 11).

It is always possible to make it work better, but the process is strict, robust, and I think there is very little chance for making a mistake … we have agreed that the weakness is that it takes so long … half a year, maybe more (R 5).

Certainly, for ex-ante evaluation, it is better to be more detailed, especially in the Czech context (R 12).

I think ex-ante evaluation, as it is now, is adequate (R 6).

Ex-post evaluations:

Especially when people travel long distances to present and defend a CZK 26,000 project, I see it as a waste of human and financial capital. The final presentations often have very different outcomes … But again, they are an example of good practice in

rigorousness, preparation, processing, and logistics. I am not sure about their impact, though (R 11).

They do not seem to me to be badly done, I think they are reasonable (R 6).

We tried to make some innovative changes, but they never made it through, and this is the standard model used at institutions whenever someone comes before a committee (R 8).

Project results and presentations of project results:

I think that the Fund is not to blame because this [extremely high number of successful projects] plagues all grant activities and, generally, the actors' frame of mind in the Czech Republic (R 11).

There are two aspects to it. The first is the level of the goals and how high it is set. If it is set for any innovation of one course within the priority area, it is not so difficult to meet or exceed the level. And the project is successful from the very outset … it doesn't have a chance to be unsuccessful at all … The second aspect … it is clear that the Czech Republic is a small pond in which most big fish know each other. Many things are divulged unofficially, though they should not be … so at final presentations and defences, the tendency is not to make enemies needlessly, because today's defender is tomorrow's evaluator (R 12).

I think that detailed controls would complicate it tremendously. The question is whether it would be worth having a more detailed check made at random by someone who understands the theme; then something useful may come out of it (R 10).

Principally, you have got to trust them a lot … when you present your work somewhere, you are a bit shy. You do not want be ashamed ... you have to say or write something about it. It may be pig's breakfast once or twice, but if you do it several times, you get a certain reputation. I think that just few people are so thick-skinned that they p..s it off and simply don't care (R 6).

Overall perspective on the HEDF:

> The reason why the Fund came into being was to make it possible for teachers who wanted to innovate their tuition from the bottom up to get some money, as everything was parcelled out by the rectors and rectorates in the early 1990s, and I think that this need … for a specific teacher to access such funds still holds (R 8).

> It is part of the "family silver" of the Council for HEIs, something I understand. But, as such, that is a hardly sufficient reason for defending its existence … I reckon that the Fund itself is not to blame. It is the environment that has changed … nowadays we have Development Projects and structural funds … What to do about it? Either keep the Fund's investment orientation, possibly including library and information systems … or re-focus the Fund on support for institutions' third role and student activities (R 11).

> If possible, I, personally, would very much like to get back to area G supporting PhD theses again (R 5).

> I offer two viewpoints … first, the Fund is a fairly useful matter, bringing together the Council of HEIs and the Ministry … second, what I see as a significant weakness is that we have a focus on something that is new and should start rolling, but it is funded for one year only. In the Czech environment, I see having start-ups as almost nonsensical (R 10).

> I primarily see pluses … simply that the Fund supports what the institution needs and it is controllable; this is how I generally see it (R 6).

5.2.5.3 Resulting achievements and limitations

The respondents' viewpoints seem to converge on the appropriateness of ex-ante and ex-post evaluations. The design of priority G remains contested, which, to lesser extent, also applies to priority F and the limits on applications. Importantly, the overlap between the priority areas of the HEDF and the DPs is not seen as an issue, considering the different levels of the orientation of each of the instruments, with the Fund focusing on course, department and faculty level. The respondents' comments further reveal that the almost absolute (95%) effectiveness of the Fund's projects is also a feature of the projects of other agencies serving a similar purpose. The HEDF is generally seen as an established, trustworthy, and well-

managed, if a somewhat "rusty" instrument, with its functioning somewhat hindered by the strictness of the administrative rules. This encourages routine thinking, though it also leads to low administrative costs.

On the basis of the outputs of the available analyses, complemented by the respondents' viewpoints, the achievements and limitations of the HEDF can be formulated as follows:

+ a well-established instrument of higher education policy supporting quality assurance policy goals;
+ stable priority areas;
+ oriented toward lower-level institutional units (course, department, faculty) as a fitting complement to the DPs;
+ a verified, reliable, and robust ex-ante and ex-post system of evaluation;
+ agenda computerization (ISSAR-F system);
+ low running costs of the project;
+ very low administrative costs.

- a rather formal link to strategic policy documents (Ministry's Plan and its updates);
- financial support in the form of one-year, start-up grants only;
- limits on applications, seen as "a mixed blessing";
- ongoing contention over the design of priority area G;
- some doubts about the relevance of the priority areas to present-day higher education policy.

5.3 Development Programmes (DPs)

5.3.1 Rationale

The Development Programmes were initiated in 2000 in support of transforming teacher-education degree programmes. Following a pilot run only at institutions providing teacher-education programmes[93], still in 2000, five priority areas were declared for support in the year

[93] No complete statistics on the DPs for 2000 is available; only the Ministry's Annual Report on the Higher Education Sector for 2001states the numbers of development projects aimed at teacher-education programmes and other education-oriented activities that were funded in 2000 and "re-submitted" for 2001. This number totalled 31 (MŠMT 2002).

to come (RVŠ 2005). In this way, the Ministry created a system-level policy instrument for motivating HEIs to develop in certain areas favoured by the Ministry.

Since 2001, the DPs have been a stable constituent of state higher education policy. As suggested, the rationale behind the design of the DPs is to consolidate and strengthen the governance of the higher education sector from the central policy level (Ministry), and actively to shape up its development in key policy domains including quality assurance. In more concrete terms, this was to be achieved by providing public HEIs with the opportunity to obtain a grant to finance the development of institutional, education-related activities. The allocation of a DP grant works on a contractual basis, under which the level of the grant depends on the congruence between the goals of each institution and those of the Ministry, as set in the corresponding strategic policy documents (Ministry's Plans and their updates). Hence, only those institutional, education-related activities that are in line with the policy development goals set by the Ministry qualify for grant support (Beneš and Melichar 2006).

The DPs are managed by the Programme Council. The Programme Council is a joint representative body of the Ministry and the Council of HEIs, whose remit is specified in the Statute of the Programme Council. Organisational support for the agenda of the Programme Council is provided by the Council's Secretary and the Agency of the Council of HEIs. Only public HEIs are allowed to participate in the DPs (MŠMT 2009).

Within the DPs, public HEIs are invited to submit projects that fit in with the priorities, which are derived from the policy development goals set in the Ministry's Plan and its annual updates (Beneš and Melichar 2006). The priorities for the DPs are formulated every year in the Declaration of the Development Programmes (Declaration of the DPs) made by the Ministry after consultation with representatives of the HEIs. The Declaration of the DPs should be in correspondence with the annual update of the Ministry's Plan, which means that the DPs are used as a policy instrument for implementing central-level policy goals, reformulated on a yearly basis in reflection of (inter) national developments.

The projects submitted by public HEIs to the DPs should *meet the formal submission criteria*, *be based on a rigorous analysis*, *have controllable outputs*, *demonstrate cost adequacy/efficiency*, and *have an integral character* (MŠMT 2002-10). The stipulation of "an integral character" means that the applicant (rector) should opt for priorities that correspond with the institutional development strategy of his/her HEI[94], and that the projects should help to fulfil this strategy by facilitating intra-institutional cooperation and integration of the

[94] Set in the plan of the HEI and its annual updates.

development strategies of the institutional units (faculties). This rationale enables the major aim of the DPs to be realised, i.e. *to motivate HEIs to enhance their strengths and reduce their weaknesses* (MŠMT 2007; CSVŠ 2009), *and fulfil the development goals set in the Ministry's Plan and its updates* (MŠMT 2002-10).

A linkage between the DPs and quality assurance was first made in the 2002 update of the Ministry's Plan for 2000-2005. In this document, the Ministry proclaimed its support for the implementation of demarcated degree programmes (teacher-education programmes, Bachelor programmes, programmes provided by tertiary professional schools[95] in collaboration with HEIs) and other outstanding development goals in order to improve the quality of higher education (MŠMT 2001). From 2002 to 2005, the priorities set by the Ministry for the DPs concerned especially: internationalisation (focusing on student mobility); lifelong learning; technical infrastructure including ICT; integration of students with disabilities; and reduction of inequities on entry to higher education. *At the same time, priority was given to restructuring, developing and modularising degree programmes to fit in with the Ministry's policy of promoting the Bologna Bachelor/Master structure* (MŠMT 2002-10) (see Table 18, Annex I).

The role of the DPs in improving the quality of higher education was cemented in 2006. The Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010 explicitly refers to the DPs as an instrument to support the implementation of three major policy areas set for the period from 2006 to 2010: internationalisation, quality and excellence of academic activities, and quality and culture of academic life. Each of the three policy areas further included development goals that were subject to specification in the annual updates to the Ministry's Plan. The specified goals were implemented through the DPs. It is anticipated that implementation of the development goals of the Ministry through the DPs will have a positive impact on the quality of higher education (MEYS 2005). Between 2006-2010, the development goals prioritised for implementation by the Ministry can be characterized as: development and innovation of degree programmes, *including restructuring in accordance with the Bologna Bachelor/Master template;* lifelong learning; internationalisation; technology and personnel; support for handicapped/talented students; operational programme support; and other quality-related issues[96]. Importantly, *institutional quality improvement by enhancing strengths and reducing weaknesses was also*

[95] Tertiary professional schools offering vocational education programmes are allowed to grant an academic degree only for programmes provided in cooperation with a HEI acting as "programme guarantor".
[96] Such as institutional governance, and elaborating the National Qualifications Framework.

repeatedly declared as congruent with the state policy goals (MŠMT 2002-10) (see Table 19, Annex I).

From 2007 onwards, projects submitted to the DPs began to be categorised as decentralised and centralised. While the category of decentralised development projects is used for integrated projects fitting the priority lines of the Ministerial policy, *the category of centralised development projects refers to projects in demarcated areas which are in the top-priority interest of the Ministry* (MŠMT 2002-10). It follows that, up to 2007, all projects submitted within the DPs had been treated as "decentralised". The reason for introducing centralised DPs was that certain issues–especially training in dentistry and barriers to access for students with disabilities–were felt to need urgent solution, and an *effective* solution required cooperative involvement of several institutions, or parts of institutions (faculties).

Different funding strategies are in place for decentralised DPs and centralised DPs. For decentralised DPs, every eligible entity, i.e. every public HEI, receives a block grant calculated on the basis of a formula. The formula contains five parameters, each with a weighting of 20%[97]. With the sum of the block grant known in June, i.e. three months after the Declaration of the DPs (March), each HEI prepares and submits projects so that the calculated costs per project (when added together) match the sum of the block grant allotted to the institution. Estimates based on statistics from past years are used to compensate for the three-month delay between the announcement of the priority areas and the specification of the block grant to the institution (R 4).

In the case of centralised DPs, grant support is provided on the basis of free competition among public HEIs (MŠMT 2002-10). Within the category of centralised development projects, support is given to the formation of consortia involving several public HEIs. However, a deeper insight into policy practice reveals that there are three "project subcategories" of centralised DPs: projects undertaken by one institution only, projects undertaken by one institution with the results shared by other institutions, and projects undertaken by several institutions; whether or not this arrangement represents a deviation from the rationale remains open for discussion (see 5.3.5).

The rules for calculating the block grant and the subsidy for DPs are set annually by the Representative Commission on the basis of a proposal from the Ministry's Department for

[97] The parameters are: 1) *student numbers in categories A and B1* (category A: student enrolments in degree programmes to 31 October of a given year; category B1: yearly increase in student enrolments), 2) *total sum of contributions and subsidies* (except for the subsidy for accommodation and social scholarships and the subsidy for accommodation and meals), 3) *total sum of R&D support* (including research plans, specific research, and research centres), 4) *number of professors and associate professors* (ratio 1:1), 5) *number of incoming and outgoing students on mobilities and exchanges* (ratio 1:1) (MŠMT 2002-10).

Higher Education. As the advisory body of the Vice-Minister for Higher Education, the Representative Commission discusses the subsidy level on the basis of the situation from previous years and makes a recommendation to the Vice-Minister who, as a rule, accepts it. The subsidy is redistributed into the decentralised category and the centralised category by the Ministry's Department for Higher Education.

5.3.2 Functioning

The functioning of the DPs entails the following actions: formulation of programme priorities; submission of projects; ex-ante evaluation and approval; ex-post evaluation and monitoring, including random checks. The actions are described in greater detail below.

5.3.2.1 Formulation of programme priorities

The programme priorities are formulated annually by the Ministry in the Declaration of the DPs. The formulation of the priorities of the DPs involves several steps. First, a draft of the Declaration of the DPs is made by the Ministry's Department of Higher Education and is discussed in the Working Group for Development Programmes (Working Group for DPs). Set up in 2005, the Working Group for DPs includes representatives of the Ministry's Department of Higher Education, the Council of HEIs, the Czech Rectors' Conference, students[98], the Higher Education Trade Union, and experts (Ježek 2007b).

Second, based on the comments of the actors involved in the Working Group for DPs, the Ministry's Department of Higher Education modifies the draft and makes it into a proposal for the Declaration of DPs. Third, the proposal for the Declaration of DPs is discussed at a committee meeting of the Vice-Minister for Higher Education. It is amended, if necessary, and put on to the agenda for the meeting of the Ministry's top officials (including the Minister), where it receives final, formal approval. After it has been signed by the Minister, the Declaration of the DPs is published on the Ministry's website in March as a special part of the update of the Ministry's Plan for that year. *This procedure for formulating the programme priorities thus makes no formal provision for involving the Programme Council*, the joint-representative body of the Ministry and the Council of HEIs which is officially responsible for running the DPs (see Section 5.3.2.3).

[98] Delegated by the Students' Chamber of the Council of HEIs.

5.3.2.2 Submission of development projects

Decentralised/centralised development projects are submitted by the rector before the announced deadline (beginning of October) before which the projects have to be sent to the Ministry's Department of Higher Education. Decentralised development projects should be based on a SWOT analysis, be of an integral character, and meet the formal submission criteria[99]. The formal submission criteria concern the category of centralised projects, where applicable. Importantly, along with the submitted projects, the rector is required to provide the Ministry with a specification of the project ex-post evaluation procedure at his/her institution.

5.3.2.3 Ex-ante evaluation and approval of development projects

Ex-ante evaluation and approval of decentralised/centralised development projects is carried out by the Programme Council. Formally established in 2007, the Programme Council is a joint-representative organ of the Ministry and the Council of HEIs composed of six representatives of the Ministry, appointed by the Vice-Minister for Higher Education, and six representatives of the Council of HEIs, appointed by the Presidium of the Council.

From 2007 onwards, the activities of the Programme Council have been regulated by a Statute. The Statute of the Programme Council specifies the terms of the ex-ante evaluation procedure and the tasks of the Programme Council in this procedure. In particular, the tasks of the Programme Council are to verify that the projects meet the formal submission criteria, to carry out an ex-ante evaluation, and to make a list of the projects designated for financial support (MŠMT 2009).

The ex-ante evaluation procedure starts with checks by the Secretary of the Programme Council on the completeness of the submitted projects[100]. Afterwards, an ex-ante evaluation of projects that are formally in order is carried out at a special, three-day session of the Programme Council at the beginning of November (i.e. approximately one month after the submission deadline). The session follows the statutory rule that projects shall be evaluated by three-member groups, with each group including at least one member appointed by the

[99] The criteria are as follows: the project contents have to be in line with the Ministry's Plan and its annual updates; realisation of R&D activities *is not* eligible for financial support; support for personnel development should include a set deadline for initiating the habilitation procedure/the procedure for appointing a professor, and the personnel costs should not exceed CZK 150,000; support for projects lasting more than one year is contingent on a brief report on the realisation of mid-term goals and an estimate of goal-realisation in the following period (in both cases including an enumeration of the costs); the institution may re-allocate a maximum of 10% from the total costs per project to another project if these costs cannot be used effectively (no increase in personnel and travel costs is permitted); there can be no grant transferability from one year to another (MŠMT 2002-10).

[100] The Secretary is not a member of the Programme Council.

Ministry and one appointed by the Council of HEIs. Each evaluator has to sign a statutory declaration on conflict of interests. In practice, there are four 3-member groups, of which one group evaluates centralised projects and the other three groups evaluate decentralised projects. The decentralised projects are distributed randomly among the three groups but taking into account the no-conflict-of-interest rule, meaning that the Programme Council members from HEIs do not evaluate and vote on projects involving their home institution.

The ex-ante evaluation criteria have been made consistent and publicly available since 2008 in the Declarations of the DPs (R 6). The criteria are:

- congruence with the priorities of the update of the Ministry's Plan and the plan of the HEI;
- contribution to the target group (institution) based on a needs analysis;
- key activities and controllable outputs;
- adequacy of financial requirements (including possible institutional co-funding).

A weighting of 5 points is attached to criterion 1, and a weighting of 15 points is given to each of criteria 2-4. Hence, a maximum of 50 evaluation points can be assigned to a project. Importantly, *these ex-ante evaluation criteria apply only to centralised projects*[101]. The decentralised projects are evaluated solely on the basis of the Council members' expert opinion, with *a three-scale evaluation verdict in place*, i.e. Passed, Passed with Reservation, Not Passed. The verdicts "Passed with Reservation" and "Not Passed" require a summary of the major reservations raised by the evaluation group (R 6).

The group evaluation results are presented to all members of the Programme Council, who express their agreement/disagreement with the results by a vote. The consent of more than one half of the members is required for a recommendation for financial support[102]. Based on the evaluation results, the Council Secretary makes a list of the projects recommended for financial support at the end of the session. Afterwards, a procedure is initiated for seeking agreement between the members of the Programme Council *representing the Ministry* and the representatives of the relevant HEI (the rector or person(s) designated on his behalf). During

[101] The amended 2009 version of the Statute of the Programme Council concretises the measures for ex-ante evaluation of *centralised projects in the event that two (or more) of them obtain the same number of points*. If this is the case, and at the same time it is not possible to grant financial support to both (all) of the projects, then the following three evaluation criteria are applied in the following order: number of HEIs co-participating in implementing the project, the number of HEIs making use of the project outputs, and the total amount of project costs requested (potentially reducible so that the project remains feasible after the cost reductions) (MŠMT 2009).

[102] The vote of chair of the Programme Council is decisive in the event of equal numbers of votes.

this procedure, the decentralised projects evaluated as “Passed with Reservation” and “Not Passed” are deliberated with the representative of the relevant HEI (mostly the Vice-Rector for Development) on points at issue. Most commonly, the project goals are made more specific and the personnel costs are reduced as an outcome of this procedure. It used to be a common practice that, in the category of decentralised programmes, each institution also submitted “reserve” projects so that, in the event that some projects were considered ineligible for funding, others were readily available; currently (in 2010 and for 2011), the tendency is to re-allocate to the centralised category the subsidy for projects for which no funding agreement is reached (R 6).

5.3.2.4 Ex-post evaluation and monitoring

Ex-post evaluation and monitoring is carried out by the HEIs and by the Ministry. To finalize any project receiving financial support, it is necesary to make a final report, for which a special form with a pre-set structure is used. The pre-set structure for the final report was first used in 2005, with the aim to prevent the programme guarantors omitting important information and to enable the project reports to be compared (MŠMT 2006). The rector is requested to send the final reports for his/her institution to the Ministry’s Department of Higher Education by 31 January of the year following implementation of the project. Subsequently, the Ministry’s Department carries out a formal check on the veracity of the information included in the final report.

The formal check on the information in the final reports, supplemented by a more detailed analysis of the content of the report, reveals significant if not extreme differences in the amount of grant funding awarded for the projects. As an example, in 2008, a grant of CZK 90,000 was awarded to the decentralised project “Raising the Proficiency of the Counselling Centre of the Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology of Palacký University”, while the total project costs for the “Innovation and Development of Equipment at Palacký University” were CZK 19,521,000. While the striking differences can, to some extent, be reasoned by the different focus of different projects (a single faculty vs. a rectorate, involving several faculties), and the inclusion of both current and capital costs (in the case of investment projects aimed at infrastructure development), it is doubtful whether such extreme differences in grant allocation are in line with the rationale of the DPs, *which aim at integrated solutions*. Further examples of potentially problematic grant distributions within the category of decentralised development projects are shown in Table 10. Importantly, ***an implied*** *clash with the rationale concerns support for “small-scope”, non-integral projects no. 299, 251, 158,*

168, 14/78. "Large-scope", integral development projects no. 295, 198, 523, 166, 171, 165, 14/15 are added to illustrate the implied difference.

Table 10: **Examples of differences in decentralised development projects**

Year	Project No.	Project Name	Guarantor	Costs (million CZK)		
				Capital	Current	**Total**
2006	299	Development of student project work	UPOL, Faculty of Medicine	0	0.06	**0.06**
2006	295	Development and use of ICT network	UPOL, Rectorate	3 678	3 493	**7 171**
2006	251	Communicative proficiency of civil servants	UK, Faculty of Education	0	0.12	**0.12**
2006	198	Transformation of PhD programmes	UK, Faculty of Science	0	16 000	**16 000**
2006	523	Establishment of classrooms and laboratories for dentistry	UK, 1st Faculty of Medicine	20 500	2 200	**22 700**
2007	158	Establishment of a network of practice-based instructors	UK, Rectorate	0	0.2	**0.2**
2007	166	Development and innovation of degree programmes	UK, Rectorate	4 803	41 814	**46 617**
2007	171	ICT development	UK, Rectorate	47 147	56 933	**104 080**
2008	168	Raising the Proficiency of the Counselling Centre at CMTF	UPOL, Sts Cyril and Meth. Faculty	0	0.093	**0.093**
2008	165	Equipment innovation and development	UPOL, Rectorate	13 885	5 636	**19 521**
2009	14/78	U3A as a type of lifelong learning activity	UK, Faculty of Medicine in Pilsen	0	0.145	**0.145**
2009	14/15	Multi-licence for centrally supported software	UK, Rectorate	1 329	19 990	**21 319**

Source: author, compiled from MŠMT (2006-09)

Following verification of the final reports, the overall evaluation report on implementation of the DPs for the year is prepared and presented to the Programme Council.

The criteria in the Declarations of the DPs stipulate that, at the time when the projects are submitted to the Ministry's Department of Higher Education, the rector also specifies the terms of the project's ex-post evaluation procedure at the HEI (MŠMT 2009). This ex-post evaluation procedure usually takes the form of a one-day seminar, at which the guarantors of the projects undertaken within the institution present the project outcomes to an audience comprising top-institutional representatives (rector, vice-rectors, deans, members of the board of trustees, etc.) This design of the ex-post evaluation procedure was first used by the University of West Bohemia, with other HEIs also coming to adopt a similar practice. At present, about two-thirds of the public HEIs hold seminars of this type (R 6).

Based on results of routine verification of the final reports, the Ministry has adopted on-site monitoring of the outcomes of development projects. On-site monitoring of the outcomes at some HEIs has formed part of the Ministry's practice since 2005. In 2005, on-site monitoring was carried out at three HEIs[103], and the year after at four HEIs[104]. Overall, between 2005-2009, 20 monitoring controls were conducted at 18 HEIs, which means that there were repeated checks at two HEIs[105] (CSVŠ 2009). The on-site monitoring exercises focus on a "hands-on" check on material equipment purchased as well as inquires into the degree of attainment of less tangible goals. Although no serious shortcomings concerning project implementation and outputs have yet been found in the course of the monitoring visits, the intention was to continue with this practice in 2010 with on-site monitoring at two HEIs (ibid.)

5.3.3 Actors and interactions

As a system-level implementation instrument, the DPs cannot function without information exchange among the actors. Actors' interactions thus underlie the functioning of the DPs. The following actors are involved in interactions going on within the DPs:

- Ministry's Department of Higher Education;
- Working Group for the DPs (16 members; 4 representatives of the Ministry[106], 3 representatives of the Czech Rectors' Conference, 3 representatives of the Council of HEIs, 2 representatives of the Registrars, 1 representative of the Higher Education Trade Union, 3 experts)
- Vice Minister for Higher Education;
- Minister;
- Representative Commission (13 members; 3 representatives of the Council of HEIs, 6 representatives of the Czech Rectors' Conference, 3 representatives of the Registrars, 1 representative of the Higher Education Labour Union)
- Programme Council (12 members: 6 for the Ministry, including the head of the Department for Higher Education as chair, and 6 for the HEIs, including the vice-chair);

[103] These were: University of Economics, VSB-Technical University of Ostrava, and Masaryk University.
[104] These were: University of West Bohemia, Czech Technical University, Czech University of Life Sciences, and Jan Evangelista Purkyně University.
[105] These were: Technical University of Liberec and University of West Bohemia.
[106] Vice Minister for Higher Education, Head of the Department for Higher Education, Secretary of the Programme Council, Head of the Funding Section.

- Secretary of the Programme Council;
- Agency of the Council of HEIs (6 persons);
- Rectors/vice-rectors;
- Programme guarantors.

As in case of the HEDF, the functioning of the DPs entails four processes, with the corresponding interaction patterns of the actors involved in them. The processes are: specifying the subsidy for the DPs; formulating programme priorities and the submission of projects; ex-ante evaluation, including the agreement-seeking procedure; ex-post evaluation and monitoring. The interaction patterns that match these processes can be described as follows:

- **Interaction pattern for specifying the subsidy for the DPs:**

Ministry's Department of Higher Education ---> Representative Commission ---> Vice Minister for Higher Education

- **Interaction pattern for formulating programme priorities and submission of projects:**

Ministry's Department of Higher Education ---> Working Group for the DPs ---> Ministry's Department of Higher Education ---> Vice Minister for Higher Education ---> Minister ---> Ministry's Department of Higher Education (publication) ---> Programme guarantors + Rectors (submission) ---> Ministry's Department of Higher Education ---> Secretary of the Programme Council

- **Interaction pattern for ex-ante evaluation, including the agreement-seeking procedure:**

Programme Council ---> Secretary of the Programme Council ---> Programme Council (only Ministry's representatives) + Rectors/vice-rectors

- **Interaction pattern for ex-post evaluation and monitoring:**

Programme guarantors (final reports (+ presentation and defence)) ---> Ministry's Department of Higher Education ---> Secretary of the Programme Council (formal verification + on-site checks)

The description of the interaction patterns for the DPs points to a purely formal role of the Agency of the Council of HEIs, which is not involved in any of the patterns. The Agency is officially given the task of providing organisational support for the activities of the Programme Council (MŠMT 2009). However, in reality, these tasks are entrusted to and carried out by the Secretary of the Programme Council, and the Agency's role is limited to administering payments for ex-ante evaluations to the Programme Council members (R 6).

5.3.4 Effects

DPs have been used as an instrument in support of implementing state policy on higher education quality assurance since 2001. In 2001, a total of 1,030 projects were submitted, out of which 584 were selected for financial support (see Table 20, 21, Annex I). 56.7% success rate (submitted projects vs. funded projects) was never attained in the following years[107].

A total of 6,339 development projects obtained grant support between 2001-2010. The highest number of funded projects per year was 991 in 2002 (see Table 21, Annex I). The total grant support for the DPs in the 2001-2010 period was CZK 9,788 million, with a sharp increase between 2001 and 2002 (from CZK 194,819 million to CZK 800,448 million). In 2006, more than CZK 1,380 million were allocated via the DPs, an amount that has not been reached again. The annual support for DPs averaged out at CZK 1.1-1.2 billion from 2007 onwards (see Table 22, Annex I). The ratio between the state subsidy for DPs and the total state subsidy for higher education stabilised at 5.1%.

As for the participation of the public HEIs in the DPs, the highest number of development projects funded in one year for a single HEI was for Masaryk University in 2002 (175 projects; see Table 24, Annex I). The grants allocated to the HEIs between 2001-2010 are shown in Table 25, Annex I. Charles University is the largest HEI, and the highest grant was allotted to it annually. The highest annual award to Charles University was CZK 338.14 million, in 2006. Charles University has also received the highest amount of total grant support since 2001 (CZK 1,958 million), followed by Masaryk University (CZK 1,127 million), the Czech Technical University (CZK 905 million) and Brno University of Technology (CZK 737 million). At present, about 78% of the total state subsidy for the DPs, i.e. about CZK 884 million, is awarded for decentralised development projects (see Table 23,

[107] On average 63% in the case of centralised projects, and 98.9% in the case of decentralised projects. Data on the success rates for centralised and decentralised projects are available for years 2008, 2009, and 2010.

Annex I). The capital and running costs allocated between 2006-2010 for decentralised and centralised development projects point to a steady increase in capital investment for centralised projects (at the expense of running costs for decentralised projects) (see Table 23, Annex I). The capital and running costs for decentralised and centralised development projects per HEI are shown in Table 26, Annex I. On closer inspection, this table shows an increasing tendency to allocate the block grant to capital costs (10 HEIs in 2009 and 2010), with this practice established over the last four years at Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem and at the University of Pardubice. This is in contrast to large HEIs such as Masaryk University or Charles University. It remains to be seen whether the prevalence of capital costs over running costs in grant allocation can be taken as the beginning of a wider long-term trend. The ratio of personnel costs to total costs (subsidy) for the DPs was 32.5% in 2007, 30% in 2008, and 33.4% in 2010. These figures show no significant change in comparison with 2005, when the ratio was 30%. As stated in the section on ex-post evaluation, *no serious deficits in project goal attainment or fund management were found during 20 monitoring controls prior to 2010 at 18 HEIs* (MŠMT 2008; CSVŠ 2009, 2010).

5.3.5 Achievements and limitations

5.3.5.1 Reviewing available sources and evidence

After a one-year piloting stage, the DPs started in 2001 as a system level, funding-incentive instrument, in support of implementing Ministry-declared strategic policy goals by HEIs. Due to its contractual basis, the DPs also provided much-needed diversification of the system mechanism for funding the education activities of HEIs.

The role of the DPs in strengthening the strategic element of Czech higher education governance and in diversifying the funding base has been appreciated internationally as an example of good practice (File et al. 2006). The establishment of the DPs and the support allocated through them provides flexibility for adjusting the goals of the system-level policy to contingencies and changing priorities, taking into account international developments, especially within the Bologna Process (ibid.) In this respect, a positive impact of the DPs has been identified on implementing some Bologna priority lines/agendas, most notably the Bachelor/Master structure, student mobility, and strengthening the access of disadvantaged students, through providing funding incentives at institutional level (Baštová, Menclová, and Pabian 2006; Kovář and Šťastná 2006). In the quality assurance domain, the DPs became a

major instrument for implementing the Ministry's strategic goals in the second half of the 2000s, after the initiation of the Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010.

Conceptually, implementation of the Ministry's strategic policy goals by individual HEIs through the DPs is intended to take place as a result of congruence between the goals of the Ministry and the goals of the institutions. Legally, the Ministry is obliged to elaborate the Ministry's Plan every five years and to update it annually (Act of 1998, § 87). The Plan is a major system-level strategic policy document, including development goals in individual domains. There is the same legal obligation on HEIs (§ 21) and their faculty/ies (§ 27), stipulating that the faculty development goals must be congruent with those of the HEI and the institutional development goals must be congruent with the goals set by the Ministry. Congruence of goals should thus be achieved by maintaining a top-down hierarchy of individual functional levels (Ministry, rectorate, faculty). Using the DPs as the major instrument for implementing its strategic goals, the Ministry makes the Declaration of the DPs a part of the Update of the Ministry's Plan for each year[108].

So far so good; however, a closer look into the workings of the DPs reveals a less idyllic picture. The issues in connection with the DPs can be grouped into six areas: the functionality of the contractual principle; the rationale behind the centralised project category; the limited integration potential of the decentralised project category; the adequacy of ex-ante and ex-post evaluations; the thematic overlap between the priority areas of the DPs and the HEDF; and the stability of these priority areas. Each of these issues is dealt with in more detail below.

The allocation of DP grants is based on a contract between the Ministry and the HEI, based on congruence between the strategic goals of both parties. However, the evidence indicates that, with some exceptions, the assumed top-down conceptual linkage is formal, and the elaboration of strategic policy documents at institutional level (the plans of the HEIs and their annual updates) is seen as a "necessary evil" rather than as a useful opportunity (Ježek 2007b). Moreover, the total amount of the institutional grant for decentralised development projects is calculated on the basis of a five-parameter formula, which means that the quality of decentralised project proposals (the extent of goal congruence, goal specificity and measurability, rigour of methods) has no impact on the amount of the grant. For this reason, many decentralised projects have been put together rather carelessly (to save time and effort), with the institutions relying on the results of the agreement-seeking procedure between the

[108] Or part of the Ministry's Plan itself, if the annual Declaration of the DPs falls in the year when the Plan is initiated.

Ministry and top-institutional representatives. This procedure has until now only in very exceptional cases led to a part of the grant funding being claimed back from the institution for breaking the contractual principle (ibid.) The functionality of the contractual principle is thus somewhat hampered., The introduction in 2007 of the centralised project category, which allocated on an average 28% of the total state subsidy for DPs on the basis of free competition, did not help in this respect.

Focusing attention on the category of centralised projects, it is argued that the rationale behind the introduction of this category is problematic. Introduced in 2007, the category of centralised projects relates to projects whose realisation is in the top-priority interest of the Ministry[109]. The reason for creating this category was that certain system-level policy issues, such as training of dentists and interior designs that limited the access of students with disabilities to campus buildings called for an immediate solution, for which cooperation of several institutions was necessary (R 6). In reality, however, the category of centralised projects also includes projects undertaken by one institution only, with project results that may be shared with or used by other institutions. This makes the category of centralised projects very similar to the category of decentralised projects, which also support the Ministry's system-wide priorities. The result is therefore support for the Ministry's priorities through decentralised development projects, and support of the Ministry's top priorities through centralised development projects. *Hence, it is argued that the categories of decentralised and centralised development projects do not differ in their rationale but in the way that the grant is allocated, i.e. a special block grant calculated on a formula basis vs. free competition, and the way that the ex-ante evaluation is made, making use of explicit criteria only in the case of the centralised project category (see below).* Due to the functional duplication, i.e. both project categories are in support of the Ministry's (top) priorities, the rationale behind the centralised and decentralised category needs to be clarified. The suggestion is to limit the focus of the decentralised category to institutional development of HEIs, and to keep the focus of the centralised category on the Ministry's priorities.

Reservations have also been expressed about the decentralised category, due to the alleged not very integral character of some decentralised projects. Table 10 and the corresponding analysis show significant differences in project scope/area of effect (a few faculty unit(s) vs. a number of faculties) and in the grant amounts allotted (ranging between

[109] As Ježek (2007b) points out, the very limited amount of support for the category of centralised projects in 2007, at a level of CZK 82.5 million, i.e. 6.9% of the total subsidy, was due to a joint effort of members of the Representative Commission delegated by the Council for HEIs, the Czech Rectors' Conference, and the registrars, to push their viewpoint through against the stand of the Ministry's representatives in the Commission.

CZK 0.06 million and CZK104 million). As one of the respondents reveals, small-in-scope decentralised development projects are likely to be used to compensate "low-performing" institutional units (e.g. faculties of theology) for their lack of funds (R 4). However, it is doubtful whether this small-in-scale project support, aimed at a certain part/at certain parts of one faculty only, is in accordance with the rationale of the decentralised development projects, which are aimed at supporting integrated solutions. Moreover, a priority area aimed at improving institutional strengths and removing weaknesses does not necessarily coincide with the Ministry's set of development priorities. This adds to the argument in favour of limiting the category of decentralised projects to institutional development only.

Potentially problematic support for some decentralised development projects may be ascribed to their ex-ante evaluation. Unlike the centralised category, ex-ante evaluation of decentralised development projects involves implicit criteria only, with the experience-based expert standpoints of members of the Programme Council gaining in importance during the two-day session at which the evaluations take place. However proficient the Programme Council experts are, the need for nine experts in three groups[110] to make an ex-ante evaluation of several hundreds of decentralised projects within two days, coupled with the absence of explicit criteria, places heavy demands that may have a negative impact on some results of the ex-ante evaluations. The Presidium of the Council of HEIs therefore recommended from the outset that at least a minority of projects be ex-ante evaluated according to a standardised procedure as used by the HEDF (RVŠ 2002).

The process of ex-post evaluations, though far more standardised, may also be found to fall below expectations. This is because the members of the Programme Council nominated by the Council of HEIs are not included in the proceedings, and the process is not computerized.

An analysis of the achievements and limitations of the HEDF reveals that there is a thematic overlap between the priority areas of the HEDF and the DPs. For the DPs, the overlap concerns the following priorities:

- *ICT development*, overlap in 2002/03/04/05/06/07/08/09/10 as priority area no. 6/6/1/1/4/8/3/1/1 (priorities 4/8/3/1/1 in the decentralised category);
- *Development of study programmes/courses,* overlap in 2001-05 as priority area no. 1, and in 2006-07 as priority areas no.1 and no. 4 (priority 4 in the decentralised category);

[110] The remaining 3-member group does ex-ante evaluations of centralised development projects (R 6).

- *Support for training for teaching staff*, overlap in 2006-07 as priority area no. 2 and 5 (priority 5 in the decentralised category);
- *Development of counselling centres (services)*, overlap in 2007-10 as priority area no. 10/4/6/4 in the decentralised category.

Finally, a comment can be made on the stability of the priority areas for the DPs, involving both the decentralised project category and the centralised project category. It is reasoned that the frequent changes in the declared priority areas (see Table 19, Annex I), though helpful in reacting to the latest policy developments, are counterproductive overall, as they fail to give clear signals about priority lines. This issue is exacerbated by the mandatory annual updates of the Ministry's Plan, and also the plans of the HEIs and their faculties. This generates a scarcely penetrable "jungle of strategic policy documents" which few bother to read and act upon. The rather formal approach of the creators and users of the policy documents, "sinning against the rules of strategic governance"[111], has been subjected to criticism (Ježek 2005). Moreover, the failure to specify what precisely is understood by the "integral character of development projects" can be considered as another contribution to the scarcely penetrable microcosm of Czech strategic policy documents.

Some of the criticisms made above are echoed in the analysis of the role of the DPs that was made for the Presidium of the Council of HEIs. The results of the analysis point especially to the need to pay more attention to the possibilities of computerized administration; setting limits for the decentralised and centralised categories; formulating priority areas (which should be sufficiently broad); and linkage between the goals from the plan of the HEI and the goals declared in the decentralised projects filed by the institution (Ježek 2007b). No follow-up action on this analysis has been initiated.

5.3.5.2 Letting respondents speak

The achievements and limitations of the DPs mentioned above are reflected in the interviews with actors familiar with the DPs. The respondents were invited to comment especially on the following topics: the rationale behind the DPs, including the decentralised and centralised category; organisation and budget; ex-ante evaluation; ex-post evaluation; project results and

[111] In particular, the "sins" are: no analyses made according to a standardised methodology; no evaluation of earlier strategic documents when elaborating new documents; approaching the plans of the HEIs as a "necessary evil", the purely formal role of annual reports (made by institutions and by the Ministry), no link between the plans of the HEIs and the accreditation procedure; the rather passive stance of the top-institutional level (rectorate) and of the boards of trustees towards matters of strategic governance (Ježek 2005).

presentation of the results; and their overall views on the DPs. Selected comments on each of these topics follow.

Rationale behind the DPs:

> The DPs came into existence as a libation to some Members of Parliament saying, "Everything is allocated on the basis of student numbers, so we'll make a new form of [contractual] funding" … so, I have had a problem with it for a long time, but as strategic management gradually found its way into the plans of the HEIs … and strategy can't be made if I don't have projects to fund it from … so this is an excellent instrument if it's done well (R 11).
>
> It started when … the state subsidy was some 20 billion for education. Then it was primarily set up as a means of contractual funding, secondarily I say, I thought institutions might improve in what they needed to improve … Rector X complained that the HEDF had made it possible for other institutions to equip themselves with ICT in the second half of the 1990s, but for his predecessor a pencil was enough, so he was the only one at the institution who had a computer, sort of complaining, "Now, where should I get money from?" So we said, "This is your institution's weakness which could be funded from the DPs, so we'd bring in a focus on removing of weaknesses" … On the other hand, there were also pressures that we [the Ministry] should care for the handicapped, but there were some institutions that cared and others that didn't give a damn. This is what led us toward introducing support for the handicapped as an extra priority … we had a stack of dough, about CZK 100 million, set aside as a reserve that we used for it. Then we called it centralised projects and had to haggle with the Representative Commission about how much would be given for the decentralised projects and how much for the centralised projects (R 6).
>
> If it wasn't for the DPs, then, if the Ministry wanted to prioritise social affairs or I don't know what, it may as well as just yell out of the window and it would be of no use anyway. So I think they make sense (R 10).
>
> This is the thing that gets repeated periodically, the integration thing, at one time it's this, another time it's that. There were times when in fact everyone could file a

development project, then there were times when faculties could file integrated projects. Now they have to be done for the whole institution (R 5).

Organisation (including division into the decentralised category and the centralised category) and budget:

Well, I think that those often-changed priorities reflect the rather unfortunate overall context of Ministry-led governance that evidently … is very unstable, starting with the Minister … this is not good, of course, too frequent changes only lead to chaos and anomalies (R 12).

What makes it less and less pleasant is that one has to consider the priority areas too carefully in order to get in … we don't have completely free hands in what we want to go for (R 11).

The division into the decentralised and centralised category, to some extent, makes sense. In a way, the decentralised category develops institutions in a direction following a sort of vision, and the centralised category by means of competition ... But declaring priorities other than institutional strengths and weaknesses for decentralised projects doesn't make sense. It contradicts the very purpose of the instrument, based on the idea that we trust the institutions to be intelligent enough, to be more far-sighted in what they need than the Ministry (R 12).

I would very carefully consider the subsidy ratio between decentralised and centralised projects, but from my point of view, not knowing what institutions tend to produce, I can hardly say whether I like the current ratio or not (R 10).

Decentralised projects play an absolutely formal role; they are paper-based exercises, totally missing out on their purpose … centralised projects are of better quality and should get more from the subsidy (R 3).

Frankly, at our institution we treat centralised projects only by providing official notification about them, announcing that there are such and such areas … but, more or less, this is only one of many agenda items at some meeting of vice-deans (R 4).

I, myself, do not lean toward strengthening centralised activities, because it would mean a more complicated way of evaluation (R 6).

I still have the feeling that there's not yet enough competition in the centralised category (R 5).

Ex-ante evaluation:

I think that, in general, there should be evaluation criteria … because they enhance transparency and make it possible to reason that if one is unsuccessful, one knows why, … So I'm clearly for criteria … and I certainly don't see the reason … why the information system of the HEDF shouldn't be used (R 12).

As to evaluating decentralised projects, I reckon such an evaluation must be part of the evaluation of the update of the plan of an HEI … so it should be done by a group that knows the institution as a whole … in the case of centralised projects, I think that the evaluation process should be based on evaluators selected from ISSAR-F, not based on the standpoint of the Programme Council (R 11).

For decentralised projects, I held on to the approach that the institution should itself know what to do … But there were projects we [the Programme Council] especially discussed … if an academic filed a project to go to Africa to collect orchids at a cost of CZK 200,000 … we would clearly say, "No, this project should not be there" … There were three or four people leafing through the project … for about 15 minutes … so the evaluation is based on expert experience ... So, we said, "This is silly, this is totally silly, this will pass, or we have different viewpoints on this" … and if we differed a lot, then we discussed it across the room, all sitting in on it … and one or the other finally backed off (R 6).

The advantage is that it's pretty fast, and can be managed in a short time … so this way, I think, it more or less works (R 5).

I'm surprised most or the main part of the critical remarks are pertinent, really … The ideal case would be … if they had to study up on our materials on institutional development. And this is what, in my opinion, they clearly do not do. They absolutely

can't make time for it … I suppose this is the reason why the agreement-seeking procedures that are in place turned out well for us, also because it's almost impossible to assess whether or not something has a development character (R 4).

Ex-post evaluation:

I think that the choice of the institution for an on-site control or visit should be justified, such as we found some not really criminal mistakes in funding, but there were some and it was a mess … and the final report says no word about it (R 10).

We don't know the agenda, the extent to which the controls are detailed, to which they go to the meat of things; that would be the first thing, to look into how the controls are made for real (R 12).

Above all, the Ministry, as a subsidy provider, prefers the current model … but, in fact, and, this is true in a way for the HEDF, I think it's not bad at all if the outputs are controlled by someone else … So, in principle, I wouldn't be against the presence of Programme Council Members nominated by the Council of HEIs (R 5).

I don't know why the representatives of the Programme Council for HEIs shouldn't be involved. It may be demanding personally, but, as a matter of fact, I do not see why they shouldn't be there or why they already haven't been there; not a single one (R 12).

I still think that the evaluations should not go much more strictly, I would just make it, and also the declaration, more formal in the sense of doing it in electronic form … And the annual final report should be made public by the Ministry, that would be good (R 6).

Project outcomes and presentation of project outcomes:

I think that the weakness of agencies such as the HEDF and the DPs is that no-one knows what happens to the results, and how much they are made use of (R 10).

If the success rate isn't 105%, it passes muster, I suppose … But joking aside, personally, I can't imagine everything being so successful, one way or another, as many things don't work out just because of some external conditions beyond one's control (R 12).

After all, it's public-source funding, so some pressure for it to be used as efficiently as possible is, I think, quite right. Whether it's done properly is a slightly different matter … in the things we do in the DPs, we tend to trust the project guarantors more than in the case of the HEDF, I'd say (R 5).

You have got to trust them [the guarantors], you know … if they make the results publicly available (R 6).

At our institution, the results are tangible and can be clearly illustrated on three cases. The first one is support for structured [i.e. Bachelor/Master] programmes as a priority of the Bologna process. In case of restructuring the degree programmes, putting the Bologna rationale aside, the positive impact was apparent There was a goal, it was needed, and I think it's demonstrable … Second, internationalisation, support for outgoing students and also for free-movers … And, third, support for improving many little things that count as institutional weaknesses (R 4).

Overall perspective on the DPs:

Keep the current level of funding, structured 90:10 in favour of the decentralised category, keep the broadness of the priority areas, but in connection with the strategic policy documents, and bring the evaluation of the centralised projects closer to the evaluation mechanisms of the HEDF (R 11).

Generally, I consider them a plus … because they are in fact the only instrument the Ministry has for pushing through state interests … The weaknesses that I see are in the results and how they are presented (R 10).

I'd increase the subsidy allotted through the DPs, because they have an integral orientation (R 6).

I think it's a pity that there's so much concentration on integration at faculty level; it may be working … but as our faculty is so monstrously big, integration tends to kill off islands of positive deviation (R 12).

> I'm critical about the way the priority areas are formulated … I understand that it's difficult and that the state puts them together on the basis of some analyses, but the thing is. Where do the analyses come from? … It's not written anywhere, I mean the source, instead, there are such … we should be fine, we should be happy to live together in peace and harmony … so I think this is the cardinal weakness of the DPs … It's positive for me that they give the institutions an opportunity to get funding for things money is not available for, or is very difficult to obtain (R 4).

> I'd say that the DPs haven't quite reached the mature stage, yet. This is my main impression, also based on witnessing more and more new elements being brought in. It will be another few years before the instrument gets stabilised … But I have the feeling that for the years to come, it's an instrument that has a future (R 5).

5.3.5.3 Resulting achievements and limitations

On the positive side, the respondents seem to agree that the DPs are an appropriate system-level, funding-incentive based instrument for implementing the Ministry's priorities and for facilitating institutional development through developing an institution's strengths and limiting its weaknesses. The potential of the DPs for implementing Bologna process priorities such as the Bachelor/Master structure also counts as a strength. As in case of the HEDF, the overlap between the priority areas of the DPs and the HEDF is not a source of concern, given the DPs' focus on different functional levels (rectorate, faculty) than the HEDF's (individual, department, faculty (marginally)). What concerns the analyst as well as the respondents are certain deficiencies in the design of the DPs, starting with the faulty rationale behind the decentralised and centralised category and ending with the evaluation system, which gives trust to project guarantors. *To make the point clear, it is not that trust in project guarantors would be in itself objectionable, on the contrary. Rather, the problem, system-wide, lies in the design of the DPs, which makes the DPs (far) less accountability-oriented than the HEDF, despite the three-times higher financial support for the DPs (9,788: 3,097 million CZK).* Taken together, the comments of the respondents along with the results of the analysis suggest rather strongly that it is necessary to re-design the rationale and the functioning of the DPs.

The resulting achievements and limitations of the DPs as a system-level instrument can thus be formulated as follows:

+ an established instrument of higher education policy supporting quality assurance policy goals;
+ implementation of projects lasting more than a one-year period without co-financing, bringing in the element of contractual funding;
+ facilitation potential for strategic governance and implementation of the Bologna process priories; orientation on faculty, rectorate and system level (institutional cooperation) as a fitting complement to the HEDF;
+ enhancement of institutional development through improving strengths and reducing weaknesses;
+ extremely low administrative costs (circa 0.05%).

- the problematic rationale behind the centralised project category, and, to some extent, behind the decentralised category;
- a problematic link between the goals of the strategic policy documents (Ministry's Plan, the plans of the HEIs plus the corresponding annual updates) and the priority areas of the DPs through which the goals are implemented;
- low stability of priority areas for support;
- only implicit evaluation criteria for the decentralised projects factoring into less rigorous ex-ante and, to some extent, ex-post evaluation proceedings despite three-times higher financial support than for the HEDF;
- the time lag between the Declarations of the DPs (March) and the announcement of the block grant level (June), which has a negative impact on the preparation of decentralised projects;
- the low level of computerization of the agenda.

5.4 Platform for disseminating examples of good practice (Platform(s))

5.4.1 Rationale

The platforms for disseminating examples of good practice are more recent in origin than the other three system-level, quality assurance policy instruments analysed here. The idea of developing these Platforms system-wide was conceived in 2005 during discussions about the content of the Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010. The intention was to create an instrument that would help motivate HEIs to invest more efforts in their institutional development; it was

assumed that presenting examples of good practice from key policy domains and lending support to their dissemination would motivate such efforts (R 10). As a result, references to the creation of system-wide Platforms were made in the Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010. With reference to the quality assurance domain, the Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010 aims to *set up and develop* Platforms to enhance institutional quality culture in specific areas[112].

Somewhat diverse viewpoints exist on what such Platforms should constitute and what activities they should entail. Nonetheless, *one such Platform* in the quality assurance domain can be identified. This is *the Bologna Promoters/Expert* platform. The Bologna Promoters/Experts platform (BPE Platform)[113] is treated in more detail below.

5.4.2 Functioning

The system-wide Platform in line with the goals of the Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010 started as the Bologna Promoters in 2004. The BPE Platform was established in response to the initiative of the European Commission to promote more active cooperation in implementing the Bologna Process action lines (agendas) among major stakeholders in the Bologna signatory countries, including the Czech Republic (Kovář and Šťastná 2005). As a result, the Bologna Promoters project was jointly launched in 2004 by the Ministry and the then Socrates National Agency, with the latter providing funding via the Erasmus sub-programme. In response to the Commission's initiative, the aims of the BPE Platform were to:

- aid in implementing the priorities of the Bologna agendas by collecting, presenting, and disseminating information on progress so far, including examples of good practice;
- acquaint members of academe, including top institutional representatives (rectors, vice-rectors, deans) and students, with current trends and developments within the Bologna process (MEYS 2004-05a).

[112] E.g. in the culture of educational processes, including establishing and strengthening partnerships between students and academic staff, effectiveness of studies, methodologies for internal quality enhancement, and cooperation between HEIs and graduates (MEYS 2005).

[113] The change in the platform's name from Bologna Promoters to Bologna Experts took effect from 2007 due to the initiation of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP), from which major costs for running the platform at national level are covered (via the Eramus sub-programme). As a major educational initiative of the European Commission, the Lifelong Learning Programme, running from 1 January 2007 until 31 December 2013, replaced the Socrates II programme (2000-2006), from which the platform known as the Bologna Promoters had been funded in the 2004-2006 period. As is apparent from the text, the change in the name of the Platform is nominal, though in the Czech case, by coincidence, it reflects certain changes in the running and focus of the Platform (see Section 5.4.2).

As the documentation suggests, the BPE Platform has been developed in five successive stages, i.e. 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2011. In the first two stages (2004-2006), it functioned under the name Bologna Promoters. Since 2007, following the initiation of the EU Lifelong Learning Programme, it has been run as the Bologna Experts. Despite the somewhat different thematic focus of the BPE Platform since 2007 (see further), its aims have remained the same throughout the stages. The subsidy has been on an average CZK 300,000 for each stage, with the exception of the 2009-2011 period, which is subsidised by CZK 500,000. The total subsidy allotted thus far (2004-2010) for running the BPE Platform is CZK 1.525 million (MEYS 2004-05a, 2005-06, 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-11).

To put the BPE Platform aims into action, the Czech National Team of Bologna Promoters (Bologna Promoters) was formed in 2004 by the Ministry in collaboration with the Council of HEIs, the Czech Rectors' Conference, and the then Socrates National Agency. The team was formed with the aim to have proportional representation of academic staff in various positions ((vice)-rectors, deans, senior academics), students, and experts. With regard to quality assurance, efforts were made to include one member of the Accreditation Commission as a senior academic. The major consideration when nominating individual Promoters was that they should have sufficient knowledge of the Bologna Process in general and deeper expertise in one or more Bologna agenda (three-cycle degree structure, quality assurance, recognition of degrees/periods of study, etc.) in particular, including presentation and counselling abilities (MEYS 2004-05a). The activities of the Bologna Promoters were consulted and coordinated with the representatives of the Ministry (two persons[114] from the Department of Higher Education) and organisationally supported by the then Socrates National Agency (one person), not counted as team members (R 2). The tasks that the Bologna Promoters were to perform can be specified as:

- active participation in and support for the content and also the organisation of the Bologna national seminars;
- participation in Bologna Promoters training seminars and other events abroad;
- counselling for individual HEIs (or parts of HEIs);
- preparation of information materials for the Bologna web page (MEYS 2004-05a).

[114] One of them acting as the Czech Republic Representative in the Bologna Follow-up Group.

At the start (2004-2005), the Bologna Promoters team had 12 members with the representatives of academe, experts, and students involved. Each of the Bologna Promoters performed the tasks assigned with regard to one particular Bologna priority line, i.e. there was no "one member knows everything about Bologna" case (RVŠ 2005). Neither the tasks of the Bologna Promoters nor the "one team member-one priority specialisation" approach was modified after the team changed into the Bologna Experts in 2007, *though the Bologna priority lines shifted from the degree structure and quality assurance to recognition-related issues and qualifications frameworks* (MEYS 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-11). The balanced composition of the team has also been retained. Currently, the National Team of Bologna Experts has 12 members, not including the representatives of the Ministry and the National Agency for European Educational Programmes (NAEP) as a successor to the Socrates National Agency (MEYS 2009-11). One of the 12 team members specialises in quality assurance matters (ibid.)

The functioning of the BPE Platform involves organising and participating in a variety of informative events (conferences, seminars, workshops). The Bologna Promoters/Experts regularly attend information and training seminars on the latest developments and priorities of the Bologna Process. These seminars take place mostly abroad. The information that is gathered is reinterpreted into the context of Czech national higher education policy, and is disseminated amongst top institutional representatives, "grass-roots" academics and students via the Promoters/Experts' official presentations or more informal discussions at a number of national conferences, seminars, and workshops. Information dissemination, including presentation of examples of good practice, reaches these fora and is spread out further by the participants. Apart from disseminating information on the Bologna priorities, the Promoters/Experts are also required to give consultations and advice to interested parties (usually deans and faculty members) on matters within their Bologna specialisation.

To facilitate the exchange of information across the BPE Platform, a special web page was created in 2004 and has been maintained since then. This web page[115] forms part of the Ministry's official web site[116] and contains comprehensive updated information on the Bologna Process developments, including basic documents and their reflection by the national authorities (especially the Ministry). The web page also contains overall information on the course of activities of the Czech National Team of Bologna Promoters/Experts and the results of all relevant events organised at national level (MEYS 2004-05a, 2008-09). The information

[115] Available at <http://www.bologna.msmt.cz/>.
[116] Available at <http://www.msmt.cz/>.

to be displayed on the web site is provided jointly by the Ministry and the Socrates/NAEP agency. The same organisations oversee the page structure and content. Technical support was at first provided by the Academic Centre of Students' Activities (ACSA). Since the BPE Platform was transformed into the Bologna Experts (2007), information on events related to the Bologna Experts has also been available in a special section of the NAEP web site[117]. The NAEP web site section on the Bologna Experts events contains information in Czech language only.

With regard to quality assurance, the most notable BPE Platform event is the two-day national conference linking quality assurance developments in the Czech Republic at institutional and system level to those in the Bologna process. Providing a stage for presentation, exchange, and dissemination of information, including examples of good practice, the conference was held regularly from 1999 at the end of January and the beginning of February. For ten years in row, it was hosted by Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem; in 2010, the event was organised by Masaryk University. *From 2005 to 2009, the conference was officially listed as a Bologna Promoter/Expert event* (MEYS 2004-05a, 2005-06, 2007-08, 2008-09). The official listing included financial support from the BPE Platform budget, which was used to cover the organisation costs and also for editing and publishing the conference proceedings. The conference proceedings, including the keynote speeches and the papers, were issued every year. Before 2005, however, and also in 2010, there was no financial support from the BPE Platform.

Importantly, on 23 June 2005, a one-day seminar on the present state of the Bologna Process and the implementation of its priorities in the Czech Republic was held at the Brno University of Technology. A special section of the seminar was devoted to presenting and debating system development priorities as included in the draft of the upcoming Ministry Plan for 2006-2010. The seminar thus also served as a discussion forum on the content of the Plan, including strategic policy goals, before the Plan was finalised (MEYS 2004-05b). The corresponding policy documents (MEYS 2004-05b, 2005) suggest forming links with the BPE Platform and making use of it as a system-wide policy instrument for publishing and disseminating examples of good practice in the quality assurance policy domain as set by the Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010. However, the interviews with actors directly involved in the making the Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010 suggest against these links be formed in a premeditated way (see Section 5.4.5.2).

[117] Available at <http://www.naep.cz/index.php?a=view-project-folder&project_folder_id=361&>.

5.4.3 Actors and interactions

A description of the BPE Platform suggests that actors' interactions are at the centre of its functioning. This is due to the BPE Platform focus on presentation and dissemination of information associated with the Bologna-process, including sharing examples of good practice. This implies information exchanges and interactions between the Bologna Experts and the participants in BPE Platform events. However, the range of actors involved in the BPE Platform-related interactions is even broader, as it includes:

- foreign lecturers/trainers;
- Czech Bologna Promoters/Experts (12 members; 1 rector, 3 vice-rectors, 5 senior academics, 1 chancellor, 1 student[118], 1 expert);
- the Ministry's Department of Higher Education (1-2 staff members);
- NAEP (formerly Socrates) Agency (1 staff member)
- the participants in BPE Platform events.

As in the case of the three other instruments analysed above, the interaction pattern thus formed entails putting into action a series of interrelated decisions about "what to do next". However, in contrast to the other instruments, the effects of these decisions are hard to ascertain (see 5.4.4). **The interaction pattern underlying the functioning of the BPE Platform shapes up as follows:**

- foreign lecturers/trainers ---> Czech Bologna Promoters/Experts (information re-contextualisation) + assistance by Ministry's Department of Higher Education, NAEP Agency ---> participants in BPE Platform events ---> Ministry's Department of Higher Education, NAEP Agency (for website presentation/dissemination)

As the interaction pattern shows, representatives of the Ministry's Department of Higher Education and the NAEP Agency enter into the interactions in order to provide organisational coordination and support, to use Experts' inputs and BPE Platform event outputs to present and disseminate information via the specialised web site.

5.4.4 Effects

The initiation of the BPE Platform and the subsequent stages of its development have been aimed at influencing top institutional representatives (rector, vice-rectors, deans, vice-deans)

[118] Chair of the Students' Chamber of the Council of HEIs.

and other members of academe. More specifically, the BPE Platform has aimed to have an effect in terms of:

- increasing the expertise of the Bologna Promoters/Experts;
- providing comprehensive information on the Bologna process and its action lines (especially via the web site);
- publicizing the latest news and developments concerning the Bologna Process;
- making sure that information is presented and disseminated, including examples of good practice, providing room for in-depth discussion of specific issues, and looking for more general solutions;
- publishing the outcomes of the most notable events (including the national conference on quality assurance);
- providing assistance to individual HEIs and their representatives in implementing Bologna-related institutional strategies;
- raising awareness and understanding of the Bologna Process and institutionalising it amongst academe as well as students and other higher education stakeholders (MEYS 2004-05a, 2005-06, 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-11).

Promoters/Experts have been sent for training abroad, national dissemination events (conferences, seminars, workshops) have been organised, and individual counselling (including site visits) has been offered in the functioning of the BPE Platform. The number of training sessions for Promoters/Experts, national dissemination events, and counselling visits held as activities of the BPE Platform is shown in Table 11. Quality assurance matters form a part of the Promoters'/Experts' work, especially through the inclusion of disseminating the outcomes of the national conference on quality assurance.

Table 11: **Activities of Bologna Promoters/Experts platform 2004-2011**

Stage/time-period	Training events	National dissemination events[1]	Counselling visits
1 (2004-2005)	3	5	10
2 (2005-2006)	3	8	6
3 (2007-2008)	3	9	12
4 (2008-2009)	2	5	6
5 (2009-2011)	16[2]	14	128[3]
Total	**27**	**41**	**162**

[1] Including the national conference on quality assurance up to 2009, [2] Estimate in person-days,
[3] Estimate in person-days, including prior "desk" evaluation of applications for the ECTS/DS Labels
Source: author, compiled from MEYS 2004-05a, 2005-06, 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-11

Participation of the Bologna Promoters/Experts in training events has been limited to a maximum of two Promoters/Experts per event. No statistics are available on the numbers of participants in the national dissemination events. An expert estimated an average of 60 participants per event (R 2), i.e. about 1,620 persons participating from 2004 to mid 2009 (27 events x 60 participants), but repeated participation by the same person will have brought the number of impacted persons down significantly. Comparatively little use has been made of the possibility of counselling visits, e.g. only two out of ten planned counselling visits actually took place in 2004-2005. Instead, academic staff seeking advice have tended to rely on telephone consultations and e-mail correspondence (R 2).

The effects that the BPE Platform have had on presentation and dissemination of information, including examples of good practice, within the quality assurance domain are hard to assess. It would be necessary to hold an in-depth inquiry into (a sample of) event participants, which lies beyond the scope of this thesis. In any event, lists of participants are not available for all the events (R 2). With regard to the quality assurance domain, it is reasoned that training events to some extent raised the proficiency of the experts in quality assurance matters, and that the information thus gained and processed was to some extent passed on to interested academics at the annual national conference, and less directly through the published conference proceedings. However, insufficient information is available for forming a legitimate judgement on the extent to which the information gathered, passed, and exchanged has been utilised in institutional decision-making.

5.4.5 Achievements and limitations

5.4.5.1 Reviewing available sources and evidence

An analysis of the achievements and limitations of the BPE Platform faces a significant obstacle due to the absence of literature *dealing with the Czech situation*. The only major source known to the author is the recent work of Veselý (2010), in which he critically reviews theoretical and methodological approaches to the utilisation of good practice, and discusses the potential for applying it in Czech education policy, including the higher education sector. His argumentation can be condensed as follows:

- The terms “good practice”, “best practice”, and “smart practices” are used either interchangeably or with different meanings; no terminological consensus exists;
- examples of good/best/smart practice are subject to research termed “best practice research” (BPR), which also comprises good and smart practices;

- BPR originated in the business and management sector, eventually finding its way into other sectors, including higher education;
- BPR aims at improving the functioning of a public or private institution by utilizing certain functional principles of another institution that appear to be successful;
- utilization of examples of good practice works as follows: target site ---> exemplar from source site ---> explanation ---> extrapolation ---> target site;
- there are two major BPR approaches: quantitative (microeconomic BPR), and qualitative BPR (based on a case study);
- each BPR approach has its methodological and practical limitations;
- examples of good practice are made in a competitive environment and have a commercial value. Hence those "in the know" have no interest in helping others to emulate them successfully. For this reason, if the examples are made publicly available, they are in such a (general) form that they are rendered virtually useless for practical application;
- integral research design is necessary to reduce the limitations, generate examples of good practice, and transfer them effectively (Veselý 2010).

In the main, Veselý argues that, in order to be beneficial in a true sense, the utilisation of examples of good practice must be research-based, using an integral research design. Mere publication and dissemination of good-practice examples, though it has some information value, cannot be expected to achieve the benefits that are hoped for, because they fail to take due account of the exemplar's context. The implication of this argumentation for the Platform is that the Bologna Promoters/Experts should aspire only to publish and disseminate relevant information. No utilisation of what are considered to be examples of good practice can be assumed to take place.

Before turning to actors' viewpoints, putting literature sources aside, one point based on factual, "hands-on" evidence should be made. This concerns the official Bologna web page under the Ministry's web site. It is immediately clear that this web site is available in Czech language only, which limits its information potential to the domestic audience. It has been argued that the post-2007 split of information on the BPE Platform between two sources, i.e. the Ministry's web page and the special section of the NAEP website, has proved problematic, leading toward duplication and unclear lines of responsibility. The result is that

neither of these two information sites is available in English to disseminate information beyond the national borders.

5.4.5.2 Letting respondents speak

Given the difficulties with setting up and administering the Platform (what qualifies as the Platform?), it is not surprising that it has been criticized. Acccording to Veselý's argumentation, the point lies rather in what the Platform can realistically be expected to achieve. To identify the potential and the limitations of the Platform, we need more specific information on: how the idea of supporting Platform(s) originated and what can be considered as support for the Platforms; how the Platform(s) should work; whether the Bologna Promoters/Experts qualify as a Platform and why; and whether there is potential within the Platform for accreditation, the HEDF, and the DPs. These are the four topics the respondents were asked to comment on. Selected comments on each of the topics follow.

How the idea originated, and what the Platform(s) should entail

> I myself wrote the sentence that the Ministry would support the creation of platforms for sharing examples of good practice [into the text of the Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010] … I was, I must admit, led by the idea that the Council of HEIs had five or six working groups that, in many cases, were informed. There was interest in the outputs of their work, but the organisation structure was cumbersome, so I wanted to bring them directly into play … The Council of HEIs and its working groups is certainly one of the platforms … there are deans' clubs, and these are platforms … but it can also be student organisations … I suppose that thematic conferences and seminars, national or international, can also be platforms. So, platforms do exist … in fact, they are what should typically exist in a democratic society, structures other than those rigidly set in law (R 11).

> I remember it perfectly clearly. When we were writing the Ministry's Plan, we talked about the goals, and that if we have goals, we also should have instruments for them. And the instruments are either financial or motivational–making something public, commending someone. So, this is the way it got there (R 10).

> I think this formulation [that the Ministry would support the creation of platforms to publish and disseminate examples of good practice] was the outcome of discussions,

that they [HEIs] should be rewarded not just financially, but if they did something useful, also in some other way (R 6).

How the Platform(s) should work

This is something I feel very much addressed by. I did a review recently of theories on good practice, and I found out there's little understanding of it, that, in fact, no one understands it. There's a mess in it, that's the point … The main thing is to look for the mechanisms, not that something happens to work somewhere but why it works (R 12)

For a long time, there have been manoeuvres through the Ministry's Plan, that the Plan is the concept. However, HEIs mostly tend to ignore it, fobbing it off … So, principally, what is needed is some CRM [Customer Relationship Management], a system that information is sent to, then processed and utilised … by those responsible for profiling higher education (R 11).

I don't know how something like this might work … it's not optimal, but I don't know what it should be like (R 6).

Bologna Promoters/Experts as the Platform

I'd certainly consider the Bologna Promoters as the Platform (R 11).

I'd say that Bologna Experts is not a Platform in true sense (R 6).

I don't see any examples of good practice published anywhere from the Ministry side, but I have found that Bologna Promoters could be considered a Platform (R 10).

Yes, Bologna Promoters do … From my point of view, in the first few stages under Socrates, the Bologna Promoters played a highly positive role … it helped to establish a group of people … a certain platform for those getting interested in Bologna who either came along themselves or sent someone else … of course, the weakness was that it would often stop at the level of the vice-rectors, and not reach down to individual academic staff (R 2).

Platform potential for HEDF, DPs, and accreditation, using electronisation

It doesn't work … the point is to encourage the institutions to make themselves known, but not through PR [public relations], but to promote the examples through research, as is done in the West … sure, presenting information on individual web sites is fine, it does not do any harm, but I'm afraid that no one will periodically monitor it and systematically search for it (R 12).

Absolutely, considering that 600 million is spent in individual projects with a system-wide impact, I'd say it's almost one's duty to make a step toward harmonizing the available data on accreditation, the HEDF, and the DPs … and, as it's always a question of money, there should be some grant support for platforms, for example within the centralised development projects (R 11).

It's not realistic to have just a single web site, because Bologna Experts and the Accreditation Commission have nothing in common, that wouldn't be good. What I'd see as a basis would be the Ministry's web site, which is horrible by the way, no question about it, with some logical structure from which one can easily log on to the HEDF and the DPs (R 10).

The easiest solution is to innovate the Ministry's web page … So, the best thing, I think, would be to have some central home page somewhere under the location of the Ministry's Plan [on the Ministry's web site] to include the basic categories branching out into individual activities, instruments … it should be coordinated by someone with a global reach, so it must be the Ministry, but the actual updating … should be subcontracted (R 2).

Dissemination of examples of good practice is needed, but I don't know how; what's been done so far doesn't work (R 6).

5.4.5.3 Resulting achievements and limitations

Based on the small amount of evidence that has been gathered, and on actors' viewpoints, it is argued that, more likely than not, the Bologna Promoters/Experts qualify as a Platform. However, three additional observations should be made. First, there is no consensus on what this Platform or these Platforms should constitute. Second, the actors' viewpoints strongly

suggest that the link between the Bologna Promoters/Experts and the Platform, as declared in the Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010, was coincidental and was decided on in an ex-post manner, rather than intentional and premeditated. Third, there is no information in English language on the BPE Platform, which limits its information and dissemination potential. Fourth, following Veselý's argumentation, the idea of using the BPE Platform for disseminating examples of good practice, leading to their successful adoption at other institutions, is to be regarded with some scepticism. The BPE Platform should rather be used as a discussion forum for presenting and disseminating information, including quality assurance matters; no further effects should be expected.

The resulting achievements and limitations of the BPE Platform can be formulated as follows:

+ potential for presenting, disseminating and sharing information, including quality assurance policy matters (lessened by the shifting focus of the BPE Platform);
+ the "no expert knows all" approach.

- no consensus on what constitutes a Platform (Bologna Promoters/Experts as a "last resort example");
- the ex-post claim that the Bologna Promoters/Experts were set up as a system policy instrument;
- the lack of information on BPE Platform activities in English;
- limited awareness of how the transfer of examples of good/best practice should proceed *in order to be effective*.

Finally, two questions are raised. First, "What other information-base platforms may exist and how they should be supported", and second, "What information sources for system-wide quality assurance implementation are available". In response to the first question, the research-informed approach proposed by Veselý is seen as suitable for addressing identification and support-related issues by initiating a special research project. The second question relates to the fact that information on system-level quality assurance policy and its implementation instruments, i.e. accreditation, the HEDF, the DPs, and the BPE Platform is fragmented, split into two specific web sites providing informing on accreditation[119] and on the HEDF[120] and one specific web page, under the Ministry's web site, presenting information

[119] Available at <http://www.akreditacnikomise.cz/>.
[120] Available at <http://www.frvs.cz/>.

on the DPs[121]. Of these three sources, only the web site on accreditation presents some of the information in English, while the other two are in Czech language only, giving a false impression that the Czech system-level policy on higher education quality assurance concerns only accreditation. Moreover, the inclusion of the BPE Platform among the instruments of system-level quality assurance policy has added two more information sources in Czech language[122]. *Hence, it is concluded that although five different sources are available for disseminating information on quality assurance matters, no information hub on Czech higher education quality assurance policy and its implementation exists, either in Czech or English.*

6. System-level instruments for implementing Czech higher education policy on quality assurance: An overview

The analysis of the four system-level implementation instruments made in Chapter 5, based on the rationale, functioning, interaction patterns, effects, achievements, and limitations of the instruments, has produced rich and complex information. Aiming at analytical parsimony, the information most pertinent to each of the instruments will now be presented in a condensed form. This will reduce the complexity, facilitate a comparison of the instruments, and aid in identifying differences, similarities, and overlaps of a conceptual kind. To facilitate the comparison, the four implementation instruments will be reviewed against ten criteria. These criteria are: *instrument type, activities supported, limitations in support, state subsidy (total), highest grant (total), administrative costs, success rate (total average), ex-ante evaluation, mid-term evaluation, ex-post evaluation. With the exception of instrument type and mid-term evaluation[123], these criteria have been chosen to encapsulate major characteristics that cut across the instruments, irrespective of the type of instrument*. Most of the criteria are generally applicable in comparisons of implementation instruments across different policy sectors. For greater clarity and comprehensibility, the achievements and limitations of the instrument have been appended as two complementary categories. A review of the instruments is followed by an analysis of the interactions among the actors involved, drawing

[121] Available at <http://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/rozvojove-programy>.
[122] Available at <http://www.bologna.msmt.cz/>, and at <http://www.naep.cz/index.php?a=view-project-folder&project_folder_id=361&>.
[123] Mid-term evaluation has been chosen to represent the evaluation-type activities of the AC (institutional evaluation, evaluation of accredited activities), which constitute circa 30% of the AC's workload.

on Actor-Centred Institutionalism (Scharpf 1997). Finally, based on the comparison of the instruments, some concluding points of a tentative nature will be made.

6.1 Accreditation

The turning point in the 20-year history of the Accreditation Commission was in 1998, when the content and scope of its competencies changed significantly. It is against this backdrop that the overview of the AC's activities should proceed. The AC was set up in October 1990 with no clear idea of what accreditation as an instrument for sectoral quality assurance should entail (cf. Vinš 2004). This lack of clarity reflected the hastily drawn up post-1989 transformation of Czech higher education, including the construction of the legal framework (Hendrichová and Šebková 1995). Under these conditions, the AC interpreted its legal responsibilities set by the Act of 1990 as being compatible with improvement-oriented institutional evaluation, focusing on faculties in related fields of study. Institutional evaluations at faculties in related fields of study comprised the bulk of the AC's activities in the 1990-1998 period. A total of 66 evaluations were carried out. In addition to institutional evaluations, in the 1990-1998 period the AC issued standpoints on faculty matters, and between 1990-1992 it approved the establishment of six new public HEIs.

From 1999, the competencies of the AC were considerably extended as a result of the passage of the Act of 1998. The competencies newly entailed programme accreditation, including habilitations and professorial appointments, and approval of new private HEIs. Mandatory programme accreditation and approval, along with restructuring of degree programmes to correspond to the Bologna Bachelor/Master template, as required by the 2001 Amendment, brought the AC's agenda near to congestion. Between 1999-2002, the AC handled 70 approval requests and circa 4,000 programme (re)-accreditation requests through its standing working groups (institutional approval always entails accreditation of at least one degree programme). After coping with the initial pressures of mandatory programme accreditation and institutional approval, the AC was able to re-initiate institutional evaluations coupled with evaluations of accredited activities. Evaluations of accredited activities were seen as a form of quick check on institutional/faculty educational provision in cases when problems emerged rather unexpectedly. Special AC working groups were established to conduct institutional evaluations and evaluations of accredited activities. It was assumed that in the mid and late 2000s evaluation-type activities would be of rising importance on the AC's agenda (AK 2006, 2007, 2008). However, this expectation proved false, as the expected reduction in the number of requests did not materialise, and the AC's workload remains very

heavy, with approximately 70% of it involved in accreditation/approval issues (Hodulík et al. 2010).

The overload of the AC by accreditation/approval issues can be statistically demonstrated. In the 1999-2009 period, the AC issued 14,836 standpoints on all types of accreditation procedures, i.e. 1,484 per year, of which 13,827 (93%) were positive and 1,009 (7%) were negative. As regards approval of new institutions in the same period, the AC handled 178 approval requests with 85 (48%) positive standpoints issued. Taken together, the AC has handled about 1,500 accreditation/approval requests per year. The number of institutional evaluations, including evaluations of accredited activities, is obviously much smaller. On average, the AC conducts nine evaluations per year, and the total number of evaluations is 65 (49 institutional, 16 of accredited activities), thus showing a tendency toward institutional evaluations.

Organisationally, the AC's activities are supported by its secretariat. Organisational costs allocated as a state subsidy are CZK 2.5 million per year. For 2010, the subsidy was increased by CZK 900,000 to account for the AC's high workload, including undergoing a review of its practices against the ESG. The AC's workload is exacerbated by limited computerization of its work, though plans have been made to address this problem.

It is argued that limited computerization and high administrative demands are not the only factors hindering the AC's performance of its activities. Other, more serious limitations concern especially the AC's focus on accreditating study branches rather than programmes; its composition (including the standing working groups, and limited transparency in naming their members); the unclear link between accreditation and evaluation processes; the prevailing focus on inputs; and limited effectiveness in combating the "flying professor" phenomenon. On the other hand, the AC's strengths lie in being a respected, established body that has helped to limit uncontrolled provision of private higher education, has been involved in international structures, has initiated internal evaluation (since 2007), and has serious intentions to perform institutional rather than programme accreditation.

The legally mandated tasks and responsibilities of the AC suggest that *accreditation is a regulatory type of policy instrument based on prescription (a **stick**).* An analysis of the rationale and functioning of the AC shows that, *in the 1990-1998 period, due to the legally unspecified status of accreditation in the Act of 1990* (the term "accreditation" was used, but was undefined), *there existed no programme/institutional accreditation as a policy instrument for assuring minimum quality standards.* The AC concentrated on improvement-oriented

institutional evaluations at faculty level, consisting of stands on faculty matters[124]. *The situation changed from 1999 onwards, following the passage of the Act of 1998, which made programme accreditation along with institutional approval mandatory*, thus triggering the chain of events described above. An overview of accreditation is given in Table 12.

Table 12: **Accreditation: Overview**

Instrument type	Legal, regulation
Activities supported	1990-1998: institutional evaluation 1999-present: programme accreditation[1], institutional approval[2], institutional evaluation[3]
Limitations in support	None. Repeated submissions allowed free-of-charge, 1,484 requests per year
State subsidy (total)	CZK 2.5 million per year (CZK 3.4 million for 2010)
Highest grant (total)	N/a
Administrative costs (%)	CZK 2.5 million (100%)
Success rate (total average, %)	93% (accreditation), 48% (approval)
Ex-ante evaluation	Yes, for approval of new institutions, accreditations of new programmes
Mid-term evaluation	Yes, for institutional evaluations, evaluations of accredited activities
Ex-post evaluation	Yes, for programme re-accreditations
Achievements	Respected status, some limitation of substandard private higher education provision, ENQA and CEEN membership, regular internal evaluation (from 2007), involvement of students in institutional evaluations (from 2006), intention to move to institutional accreditation
Limitations	Accreditation of study branches, unbalanced composition (including standing working groups and lack of transparency in naming standing working group members), the unclear link between accreditation and evaluation processes, concentration on inputs, the "flying professor" phenomenon, heavy-handed administration and a low level of computerisation, low awareness of current trends, limited interaction with the higher education community and the wider public

[1] Including habilitations and professorial appointments, [2] Including stands on faculty matters and on type of HEI, [3] Including evaluations of accredited activities
Source: author

6.2 Higher Education Development Fund

The HEDF is another system-level instrument for implementing higher education policy on quality assurance. The HEDF was set up in 1992 with the rationale of facilitating the transformation of HEIs in given priority areas by means of targeted funding. Since 1993, the

[124] I.e. standpoints on the right to award doctoral degrees, hold rigorous examinations, or carry out habilitations/professorial appointments.

Fund has been jointly operated by the Ministry and the Council of HEIs, and has been organisationally backed up by the Agency of the Council of the HEIs. From the outset, the Fund's targeted support met with a favourable response from HEIs (Valenta 1993). The Fund first interpreted its own function, deciding to focus on *improving the educational activities of public HEIs and parts of HEIs*. By the mid 1990s, the HEDF became the system-level policy instrument for enhancing educational, artistic, and creative activities at the public HEIs.

In 2000, a further step was taken toward making the HEDF a system-level policy instrument for institutional quality improvement by the formulation of the Ministry's Plan for 2000-2005. In this strategic policy document, the HEDF is declared to be an essential system instrument for developing degree programmes and information technologies. Agreement was reached in 2001 between the Council of HEIs and the Ministry, codifying the HEDF as a system-level policy instrument for implementing the Ministry's priorities. The Agreement declares that the rationale of the Fund shall be in line with the Ministry's Plan, its annual updates, and the plans of HEIs. The agreement also concretises the process for allocating the Fund's budget.

The link between the HEDF and quality assurance is maintained in the Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010. In it, the HEDF is declared as the instrument for implementing the Ministry's goals in the area of quality and excellence of academic activities. It follows that the Fund's rationale has to take into account the priorities of the Ministry's Plan and its annual updates in the sense of supporting institutional development of education-related activities where applicable, thus broadly encompassing the contents of the plans of each HEI.

Parallel to clarification of the Fund's rationale went the process of specifying priority areas. Support for research and development-type activities and for large-scale infrastructure investments were scrapped. By the end of the 1990s, the priorities annually declared for grant support from the HEDF were stabilised in seven areas (A-C, E-H): A. ICT at HEIs, B. teacher training, C. Bachelor student internships, E. libraries, F. innovation of degree programmes, G. student creative activities, H. innovation and development of laboratories, studios and workplaces for practical instruction. Further changes were made in the 2000s. These involved: merging investment priorities (A, H) into one (A), replacing Bachelor student internships by support for counselling and information centres (C), re-designing programme innovations to include innovation of study courses (F), modifying the system for supporting student creative activities to provide support only for projects enhancing education-related activities of PhD students in the on-site mode of study (G), and termination of support for teacher training (B). Thus, five priority areas (A, C, E, F, G) are declared at the present time.

State subsidisation of the HEDF from 1992 to 2010 totalled CZK 4,699 million, of which CZK 1,602 million were allotted in the first nine years of the Fund's existence (1992-2000) and CZK 3,097 million in the following ten-year period (2001-2010)[125]. The average grant subsidy per year has been CZK 247 million. A total of 15,393 projects have been funded (5,033 in 1992-2000; 10,360 in 2001-2010), i.e. 810 per year, on average. The administrative costs were CZK 62 million (3.9%) between 1992-2000 and CZK 49 million (1.6%) in the 2001-2010 period, i.e. CZK 111 million in total (2.75% as the overall average). The largest part of the subsidy, i.e. CZK 2,471 million (CZK 770.5 million in 1992-2000; CZK 1,700 million in 2001-2010) was allocated as investment support within priority area A (ICT, laboratories, workplaces). The largest part of the grant per institution, totalling CZK 613.3 million, was obtained by Brno University of Technology (CZK 128.5 in 1992-2000; CZK 484.8 million in 2001-2010), with Charles University in second place with CZK 578.7 million (CZK 262.9 million in 1992-2000; CZK 315.8 million in 2001-2010), and the Czech Technical University in third place, with CZK 482.5 million of grant support (CZK 152.6 million in 1992-2000; CZK 329.9 million in 2001-2010). The average success rate (submitted projects vs. funded projects) was 43.2% in the 1992-2000 period, and 44.2% in the 2001-2010 period, making an overall average of 43.7%. The Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts scored highest in both periods (60.2%, respectively 62%). Finally, the results of the ex-post evaluation proceedings for the 2001-2009 period[126] show that 8,909 out of 9,342 projects, i.e. 95.4%, were evaluated as meeting all the goals set (verdict A–Achieved).

The HEDF has become the established instrument of higher education quality assurance policy. It has stabilised priority areas, oriented on organisational units up to faculty level (course, department, faculty). Moreover, despite the sophisticated and robust system of ex-ante and ex-post evaluation, the HEDF has very low administrative costs, currently at a level of 1.6% of the yearly budget, thanks to the use of computerization (ISSAR-F system). As far as limitations are concerned, the grant support from the HEDF takes the form of one-year start-up grants only, with submission limits applied to each of the priority areas. Despite the stability of the priority areas, there is some contention over the design of priority area G (student creative activities). The conceptual link between the priority areas of the Fund and the Ministry's system priorities, as set in the Ministry's Plan and its updates, is considered

[125] The data overview is deliberately divided into the 1992-2000 period and the 2001-2010 period, in order to enable comparisons with the DPs, which started up in 2001.
[126] The results for the 1992-2000 are not statistically available; the results for 2010 are also unavailable.

rather formal, which may, alongside the current pressures for budgetary cuts (RVŠ 2010), generate doubts about the Fund's relevance to present-day higher education policy.

The rationale under which the HEDF operates indicates that *the HEDF is an economic type of policy instrument based on funding incentives (a **carrot**)*. The targeted financial support provided by the HEDF to faculty and lower-level organisational units (departments, individuals) takes the form of start-up grants of one-year duration only. Only public HEIs are eligible for the targeted support, which makes the HEDF different from the grant agencies operating in the Czech Republic (the Czech Science Foundation, the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic). An overview of the HEDF is given in Table 13.

Table 13: **Higher Education Development Fund: Overview**[1]

Instrument type	Economic, funding incentive
Activities supported	Quality improvement of educational activities in five areas: ICT, laboratories, workplaces (A); Counselling and information centres (C); Libraries (E), Innovation of study courses (F), Student creative activities (G)
Limitations in support	Yes, cost ceiling (A, C) and submission limits (A, C, E, F, G)
State subsidy (total)	CZK 4,699 million [CZK 1,602 million] [CZK 3,097 million]
Highest grant (total)	CZK 613.3 million by VUT [CZK 128.5 million] [CZK 484.8 million]
Administrative costs (%)	CZK 111 million (2.75%) [CZK 62 million (3.9%)] [CZK 49 million (1.6%)]
Success rate (total average, %)	43.7% [43.2%] [44.2%]
Ex-ante evaluation	Yes, three-level
Mid-term evaluation	Not mandatory, possible at faculty/department level
Ex-post evaluation	Yes, standard project presentation and defence, 95% of projects excellent
Achievements	Long-term functioning, support for quality assurance policy goals, oriented toward faculty and lower-level units (department, individual), stability of priority areas, robust ex-ante and ex-post evaluations, agenda computerisation, very low administrative costs
Limitations	Targeted support in the form of one-year start-up grants only, submission limits are a "mixed blessing", contention over priority area G, formal link to strategic policy documents, some doubts about the Fund's relevance to current policy developments (also due to sectoral financial stringency)

[1] The figures in square brackets refer to the 1992-2000 period [first figure] and to the 2001-2010 period [second figure]
Source: author

6.3 Development Programmes

Since their inception in pilot form in 2000, the DPs have become a stable constituent of higher education policy. The DPs are designed to consolidate and strengthen governance of the higher education sector from the system level, which involves implementing the Ministry's priorities in the domain of quality assurance. The use of the DPs to implement the priorities set in the Ministry's Plan (plus its annual updates), is based on a combination of institutional funding (a special block grant) and targeted funding, which the public HEIs use to develop institutionally in the areas annually declared for support in the Declaration of the DPs. It is assumed that this design is congruent with the aim of the DPs, which is to fulfil the development goals set by the Ministry and to motivate HEIs to improve on their strengths and reduce their weaknesses. Organisationally, the DPs are managed by the Programme Council, which is composed of representatives of the Ministry and the Council of HEIs.

A link between the DPs and quality assurance was first made in the 2002 update of the Ministry's Plan for 2000-2005, and was cemented in the Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010. The 2006-2010 strategic policy document explicitly refers to the DPs as a system-level instrument for implementing the goals in three major policy areas:. internationalisation, quality and excellence of academic activities, and quality and culture of academic life. The development goals for these areas are subject to prioritisation and concretisation in the Declaration of the DPs (based on the contents of the Ministry's Plan and its annual updates). Alongside internationalisation, the development goals implemented through the DPs during the 2006-2010 period can be encapsulated as: development and innovation of degree programmes, including restructuring according to the Bologna Bachelor/Master template, lifelong learning, technology and personnel, support for handicapped students and for talented students, operational programme support (project development), and other quality-related issues such as effectiveness of institutional governance and the National Qualifications Framework. Importantly, *institutional quality enhancement by means of improving on strengths and reducing weaknesses has been repeatedly declared as a policy goal for support through the DPs* (MŠMT 2002-10).

Starting from 2007, the DPs have been classified into two categories: decentralised and centralised. The category of decentralised development projects is used for projects that fit the Ministry's priorities and are congruent with the development strategy of a given HEI. The category of centralised development projects comprises projects whose realisation in certain demarcated areas is in a top-priority interest of the Ministry.

There are different funding strategies for each category. For decentralised projects, each institution receives a block grant calculated on the basis of a five-parameter formula (a four-parameter formula for 2011). The sum of the block grant is made known to each HEI in June, i.e. three months after the DPs are announced. For centralised projects, grant support is provided on the basis of free competition among the eligible units, i.e. public HEIs.

The total state subsidy for the DPs for the 2001-2010 period was in excess of CZK 9,700 million, i.e. an average of more than CZK 970 million per year. The administrative costs total CZK 4.5 million, i.e. only about 0.05% of the subsidy. The largest part of the grant per institution has been allotted to Charles University (maximum CZK 338.14 million in 2006), with the amount of support since 2001 totalling CZK 1,958 million, followed by Masaryk University (CZK 1,127 million), and the Czech Technical University (CZK 905 million). The average success rate is 79.7%. The results of the ex-post evaluation proceedings, including randomised on-site controls, have revealed no significant distortions either in the implementation of the projects or in management of the funds.

On the positive side, the DPs are considered to be an established instrument of higher education policy, aiding in system-wide implementation of the quality assurance goals. Until now, the DPs have supported projects for more than one year without a co-financing requirement, thus bringing elements of contractual funding and strategic governance into the system. Grant support from the DPs concentrates on faculty and higher-level organisational levels (rectorate, system) so that, as a policy implementation instrument, the DPs function as a convenient complement to the HEDF. In this respect, support for institutional development through improving on strengths and reducing weaknesses, which has a positive impact on institutional quality culture, is seen as an asset. Finally, the DPs have an outstandingly low level of administrative costs, totalling only 0.05% of the average subsidy.

On the negative side, there are several limitations. These concern especially the faulty rationale behind the centralised category. It is aimed at implementing the Ministry's top priorities by inter-institutional cooperation but, at the same time, it enables projects to be implemented by a single institution only. The decentralised category is also problematic for two reasons. Firstly, there are very significant differences in the scope and the area of effect of the projects (a small number of faculty unit(s) vs. several faculties) and in the sizes of the grants that are allocated (ranging from CZK 0.06 million to CZK 104 million). Secondly, enhancing institutional strengths and reducing weaknesses does not always combine easily with implementing the Ministry's priorities within the same category. Moreover, in reality, there is little stability in the priority areas of the DPs, and the link between the goals of the

strategic documents and the priorities of the DPs proves to be rather formal, due to the "jungle of mutually related strategic policy documents" (the Ministry's Plan, its annual updates; the plans of HEIs, their annual updates; faculty plans and their annual updates). The remaining reservations are due to the limited rigour of the ex-ante evaluation proceedings, limited computerization of the agenda, and the three-month time lag between the announcement of the DPs and specification of the level of the block grant level (decentralised category).

Though it may be somewhat problematic, the rationale under which the DPs operate suggests that *the DPs are a policy instrument of the economic-type, based on providing funding incentives (a **carrot**)*. Only public HEIs are eligible for this grant support. The grant support from the DPs is provided to the faculty and upper-level organisational units (rectorate, cooperation at system level) and is thus complementary to support from the HEDF. In contrast to the HEDF, however, the DPs have so far made it possible to finance development projects lasting more than one year, without institutional co-funding. An overview of the DPs is given in Table 14.

Table 14: **Development Programmes: Overview**

Instrument type	Economic, funding incentive
Activities supported	Quality and excellence of academic activities/life namely: innovation and restructuring of degree programmes, lifelong learning, technology and personnel, support for handicapped students and talented students, operational programme support, effective institutional governance, National Qualifications Framework, *improvement of institutional strengths and reduction of weaknesses*
Limitations in support	Yes, cost ceiling[1] and submission limits[2] for decentralised projects only, public HEIs only
State subsidy (total)	CZK 9,788 million
Highest grant (total)	CZK 1,958 million by UK
Administrative costs (%)	CZK 4.5 million (0.05%)
Success rate (total average, %)	79.7
Ex-ante evaluation	Yes, one-level
Mid-term evaluation	Not mandatory, possible at rectorate/faculty level
Ex-post evaluation	Yes, routine verification + random on-site checks, 100% projects found to be excellent
Achievements	Projects lasting more than 1 year without co-financing, facilitation of contractual funding and strategic governance, orientation on faculty and upper-level structures, enhancement of institutional quality culture through improving on strengths and reducing weaknesses, extremely low administrative costs
Limitations	Faulty rationale behind the centralised category, problematic project support and conceptual incongruence within the decentralised category, low stability of priority

	areas, time lag between priority-area declaration and specification of the block grant[3], limited rigour of ex-ante evaluation proceedings, limited agenda computerization.

[1] Equal to the block grant obtained by each HEI, [2] Since 2011, [3] Pertaining to decentralised development projects
Source: author

6.4 Platform for disseminating examples of good practise

The system-wide platform for publishing and disseminating information, including examples of good practice, started as the Bologna Promoters in 2004 (Bologna Experts since 2007). Acting on the initiative of the European Commission, the Ministry, organisationally helped by the then Socrates National Agency, set up a national team of 12 Bologna Promoters, comprising senior academe members, students, and experts. Obtaining up-to-date information on the Bologna Process agendas and deepening their expertise by training abroad, the Promoters were to spread the information obtained in this way to the Czech academic community at a number of national dissemination events (conferences, seminars, workshops). To this end, a special web page was set up on the Ministry's web site, containing information in Czech and English.

From 2007, the name of the BPE Platform was changed to Bologna Experts, and organisational support was taken over by NAEP Agency (successor to the Socrates National Agency). Although the functioning of the BPE Platform remained unchanged, its focus shifted from the degree structure and quality assurance to recognition-related issues (including ECTS and DS Labels) and qualifications frameworks.

An explicit link between the system-wide Platform and quality assurance is made in the Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010. In this plan, the Ministry places the task of *setting up and developing* the platforms for publishing examples of good practice and disseminating them in the area of "Quality and Excellence of Academic Activities" and "Quality and Culture of Academic Life".

However, available evidence strongly suggests that although there were certain individual assumptions on what the Platforms should constitute and how they should operate, there was no general consensus on this issue at the time when the Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010 was drafted and adopted. Indeed, as the selected viewpoints of the respondents demonstrate, there is still no general consensus. Hence, the Bologna Promoters/Experts were identified only ex-post as fitting the Platform, in response to direct questioning in 2010. Between 2004-2009, 11 expert training events, 27 national dissemination events, including the national conference on quality assurance held annually, and 34 counselling visits were

registered. Nonetheless, it should be added that the Bologna Promoters/Experts are only reluctantly and not universally recognised as the Platform.

The reluctance to consider the Bologna Promoters/Experts as the Platform is in some cases associated with doubts as to whether emulation of good practice can result from public presentations. The view has been expressed that good/best practice examples cannot be successfully emulated without a concerted research effort (Veselý 2010). The implication is that the BPE Platform is best confined to presentation and dissemination of relevant information only.

Aside from the theory-based reservations about the suitability of the BPE Platform for good/best practice emulation, two more limitations have been identified. They concern lack of consensus on the definition of, and the terms of support for such a Platform, and the dispersion of information between the Ministry's web page and the NAEP agency web site, both of which are available in Czech language only.

On the positive side, the BPE Platform can be seen as beneficial for raising information awareness on the Bologna Process priority agendas, especially on the part of academics in executive positions. The annual national quality assurance conference, listed from 2004 to 2009 as a BPE Platform event, can also be considered of having some information value, though no further effect than information presentation and exchange is suggested. Finally, the application of the "no expert knows all" approach is seen as a strength of the BPE Platform.

By its rationale, *the BPE Platform is an information-type policy instrument, providing information of an affirmative character (a **sermon**)*. An overview of the BPE Platform is given in Table 15. It is concluded that the information on implementation of system-level policy on quality assurance is split between five different sources, and that there exists no information hub on Czech higher education quality assurance policy and its implementation, either in Czech or in English.

Table 15: **Bologna Promoters/Experts platform: Overview**

Instrument type	Information
Activities supported	Expert training events, national dissemination events (conferences, seminars, workshops), individual counselling
Limitations in support	Only the subsidy level and the capacity of the experts
State subsidy (total)	CZK 1.525 million
Highest grant (total)	N/a
Administrative costs (%)	CZK 1.525 million (100%)
Success rate (total average, %)	N/a

Ex-ante evaluation	N/a
Mid-term evaluation	N/a
Ex-post evaluation	N/a
Achievements	Potential for raising awareness among the academic community about the Bologna developments and priority lines, diploma supplement template, "no expert knows all" approach
Limitations	No consensus on what constitutes the Platform(s), BPE Platform declared a policy instrument ex-post, split responsibility and lack of coordination between Ministry and the NAEP agency, lack of awareness of how to make *effective* transfer of examples of good/best practice

Source: author

6.5 Key characteristics of the instruments

A comparative review of the four implementation instruments, i.e. accreditation, the HEDF, the DPS, and the BPE Platform will enable their key characteristics to be identified. The principles of commonality (what is common to the implementation instruments) and importance (what underlies the rationale and functioning of the instrument) were applied to help identify the key characteristics. The key characteristics of the four implementation instruments are given in Table 16. Common characteristics shared by two and more instruments analysed are highlighted in grey.

Table 16: **Key characteristics of instruments**

Instrument type	Key characteristics
Accreditation	Composition of AC
	Type of accreditation
	Habilitations/professorial appointments
	Guarantors of programme quality
	Standing working groups of AC
	Institutional evaluation
	Training of AC members
	Presentation of results
	Budget of AC
Higher Education Development Fund	Terms of grant support
	Ex-ante evaluation in HEDF
	Ex-post evaluation in HEDF
	Presentation of results
	Formulation of HEDF priory areas
	Budget of HEDF
Development Programmes	Terms of grant support
	Focus of decentralised projects
	Focus of centralised projects
	Ex-ante evaluation in DPs

	Ex-post evaluation in DPs
	Presentation of results
	Budget of DPs
Platform for dissemination of information	Form of the Platform
	Administration of the Platform
	Funding of the Platform

Source: author

The key characteristics of the Platform deserve a brief commentary. Given the dissent on what the Platform(s) should constitute, a broader view is taken that includes more than just the BPE Platform. Taking the spread of information on Czech higher education quality assurance as a case in point, *the Platform is viewed as a website that helps to bring together all relevant information on Czech higher education, including quality assurance*. The form, administration, and funding of the website are seen as key characteristics for the development of the Platform.

6.6 Actors' interactions

An overview of the four implementation instruments of system-level quality assurance policy would be incomplete without a theory-based analysis of participating actors' interactions, drawing on Actor-Centred Institutionalism (Scharpf 1997). Aiming at analytical parsimony, Actor-Centred Institutionalism posits that the complexity of the actors' interaction process can be reduced by distinguishing the following units of analysis: policy issues, actors acting upon their capabilities and orientations, actors' constellations, modes of interaction, and policy decisions (ibid.). Hence, ideo-typically, actor's interactions entail policy issues being taken up by actors forming constellations and arriving at policy decisions through a particular interaction mode. The identified units of analysis will be employed below to identify the level of influence that the actors involved have on each of the quality assurance instruments, i.e. accreditation, the HEDF, the DPs, and the BPE Platform.

6.6.1 Policy issues and policy decisions

With regard to the implementation instruments under analysis, there are two basic types of issues requiring decisions. These are: conceptual/design-related issues and funding-related issues. Obviously, decisions on each of them affect the functioning and the effects of the instrument.

6.6.2 Actors

There are three major categories of actors in higher education policy settings. These are: academic actors (academe members as well as students), governmental actors (Ministry and Ministry-subordinated agencies), and societal actors (employers, professional associations) (Fredericks, Westerheijden, and Weusthof 1994). The individual actors involved in decisions on each of the implementation instruments under analysis are identified in Chapter 5.

Academic actors are typically involved through four representative bodies. The representative bodies are the Council of HEIs, the Czech Rectors' Conference, and, to a lesser extent, the Labour Union, and the Club of Registrars. These differ in their capabilities, i.e. the statutory mandated competencies and rights of participation. This also holds true for the quality assurance domain, see Table 17.

Table 17: **Capabilities of academic representative bodies in quality assurance**

Council of HEIs (including Students' Chamber)	Right to nominate members to: the AC (21 members appointed), the Representative Commission (3 members), Committee of the HEDF (6 members) Supervisory Board of the HEDF (2 members), Working Group for the DPs (3 members), Programme Council (6 members)[1]
Czech Rectors' Conference	Right to nominate members to: the AC (21 members appointed), the Representative Commission (6 members), Working Group for the DPs (3 members)
Labour Union	Right to nominate members to: the Representative Commission (1 member), Working Group for the DPs (1 member)
Club of Registrars	Right to nominate members to: the Representative Commission (3 members), Working Group for the DPs (2 members)

[1] The rule is that for each organ, except the AC, one of the nominees is a student representative. Student participation in the activities of the AC is limited to delegating representatives for special working groups carrying out institutional/faculty evaluations.
Source: author

However, the orientations of the academic representative bodies are largely the same, i.e. they promote and defend the interests of the academic community. This is done mainly in terms of maintaining academic rights and freedoms, negotiating the level of the total state subsidy for higher education, and participating in drafting acts and other legal regulations of higher education.

So far so good, but a closer look at the member-composition of each body reveals that *the co-opted academic representatives belong to the academic oligarchy*, i.e. they are senior academe members (professors, associate professors) also in executive positions (rectors, vice-rectors, registrars, deans, vice-deans). This need not mean, however, that "street-level

academics" are ruled out of participating in putting the instruments into operation. Aside from participating as applicants for projects/requests or as event (conference, seminar, workshop) audience, street-level academics figure in the organisational structures of the HEDF as ex-ante evaluators (members of the thematic commissions) and as ex-post evaluators (members of evaluation committees).

As a central unit of the state administration, the Ministry and agencies subordinated to it (NAEP agency) are oriented toward pushing through state interests and priorities. To this end, the Ministry uses its authority as a major provider of state funding. With regard to quality assurance, the Ministry's capabilities comprise: awarding accreditation/approval based on the standpoint of the AC, nominating members to the Committee of the HEDF (5 members), to the Fund's Supervisory Board (1 member), to the Work Group for the DPs (4 members), to the Programme Council (6 members *including the chair*), and naming members of the Bologna Promoters/Experts team (12 members). These nominations are mostly made by the Vice-Minister for Higher Education from the staff of the Department of Higher Education (including the department's head). In the case of naming the Bologna Promoters/Experts team, nominees are selected from the wider academic community (the academic oligarchy again) and experts.

The review of actors associated with the implementation instruments analysed here shows that *the role of societal actors, i.e. experts, is marginal*. Experts possess authority based on their knowledge, but their capabilities are reduced to participation in the Working Group for the DPs (3 members) and the Bologna Promoters/Experts team (1 member). Experts thus do not figure either in the AC (with the exception of some limited participation in special working groups) or as evaluators in the structures of the HEDF or the DPs, though they do have some say on design of the DPs. Foreign trainers of domestic Bologna Experts form a special sub-category of experts.

6.6.3 Actors' constellations and mode of interaction

An overview of the actors participating in interactions over the design and application of the four implementation instruments under analysis here presents a predictable picture, with *the representatives of the Ministry and the academic oligarchy as central* and *the representatives of street-level academics and experts as peripheral* to the decision-making processes taking place. Another similarly predictable finding is that, despite some variety in the types of bodies that the actors are organisationally affiliated to, the interactions are very much inward-oriented, taking place within a close set of meetings between academic oligarchs and top-

Ministry representatives. The mode of actor's interactions is clearly negotiations and bargaining, leading to *negotiated agreements* (cf. Scharpf, 1997). In this respect, the role of the Representative Commission, composed of academic oligarchs (and also one student and one labour-unionist), as the advisory body of the Vice-Minister for Higher Education, which in reality has a decisive say on the level of the state subsidy for higher education and its itemisation (including the HEDF and the DPs) is of special importance.

6.6.4 Actors' power over individual instruments

The discourse on quality assurance in higher education is a discourse on power (Barnett 1994; Brennan and Shah 2001; Morley 2003). Following an overview of the actors, especially their capabilities, the scope of the actors' power over each of the implementation instruments studied is identified. The key to identifying the powers of the actors lies in the actors' capability to co-opt or nominate their representatives into the organs overseeing and operating each instrument. A secondary criterion is the real actors' role in putting the instrument into operation. As an illustration, though officially responsible, the members of the Programme Council delegated by the Council of HEIs do not participate in ex-post evaluations of development projects. Though somewhat arbitrary, identifying the power the actors in this way should be of analytical value. For each of the analysed implementation instruments, the scope of the power of the actors is identified in Table 18.

Table 18: **Actors' power over system-level implementation instruments of quality assurance policy**

Instrument	Actors' power
Accreditation	75% academic oligarchy, 20% Ministry, 5% students[1]
Higher Education Development Fund	40% Ministry, 30% academic oligarchy, 30% street-level academics[2]
Development Programmes	60% Ministry, 40% academic oligarchy
Bologna Promoters/Experts platform	30% Ministry (incl. NAEP), 30% academic oligarchy, 30% street-level academics, 10% experts[3]

[1] For participation in special work groups, [2] As evaluators, thematic commission members, [3] Also as foreign trainers
Source: author

This identification of the power of the actors over the individual instruments suggests that accreditation is controlled by the academic oligarchy, the HEDF jointly by academic oligarchy and street-level academics, the DPs by the Ministry, while the power over the BPE Platform is equally divided between the Ministry, the academic oligarchy, and street-level academics as event participants. Control over the four implementation instruments is thus

distributed between academic and governmental actors; no involvement of societal actors has been identified (foreign trainers hardly quality for such a category).

6.7 Tentative conclusions: One stick, two carrots, one sermon

Based on the review of the four instruments, i.e. accreditation, the HEDF, the DPs, and the BPE Platform, some concluding points of a tentative nature can now be made. These concluding points take into account the interaction patterns among the actors involved in putting the instruments into operation.

First, the appropriateness of applying the Cerych and Sabatier stages framework (formulation-implementation-reformulation) to the study of policy implementation in higher education is contested. The empirically documented annual reformulation the goals of the Ministry's Plan through the updates disproves the policy formulation-implementation divide. The reformulation of the Plan's goals to a large extent concerns the domain of quality assurance (see the Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010), with the domain-specific goals implemented through the HEDF and the DPs. Again, the changes in the priority areas of the HEDF and the DPs, introduced in line with the annual updates to the Plan, point to domain-specific goal reformulation in the process of quality assurance policy implementation. The fact that the priorities of the HEDF remain more stable than the priorities of the DPs as a result of this obligatory reformulation does not destroy the validity of the argument. Similarly, post-1999 accreditation as a quality assurance implementation instrument has been subject to several modifications[127], suggesting repeated reformulations in reflection of domestic needs and international trends. The same finding applies to the BPE Platform, especially after it was changed in 2007 from Bologna Promoters to Bologna Experts.

To add to the criticism, implementation analysis undertaken in the thesis also points to theoretical limitations of the Cerych and Sabatier framework. The grounding of the framework in top-down theory gives weight to the central-level actors, such as the Ministry representatives. However, the analysis of the patterns guiding actors' interactions over the implementation instruments in question identifies the influence of actors positioned at a lower level (from academe). Their influence is achieved through being coopted into the decision-making bodies (the AC, the Committee of the HEDF, the Programme Council, the team of Bologna Promoters/Experts). Though the places are largely secured by members of the

[127] Namely: introduction of the evaluation of accredited activities (2003), of students as members of special working groups for institutional evaluation (2006), and of regular internal evaluations (2007).

academic oligarchy, with accreditation as somewhat exceptional[128], the effects of the other three instruments are subject to the discretionary authority of front-line academics. The discretionary influence of front-line academics over the analysed implementation instruments suggests against the application of top-down implementation theory to the study of implementation of higher education policies, even if implemented from the system level. Due to the empirical as well as theoretical limitations of the Cerych and Sabatier stages framework, the thesis thus upholds the oft-made argument that such a framework is best confined to heuristic purposes.

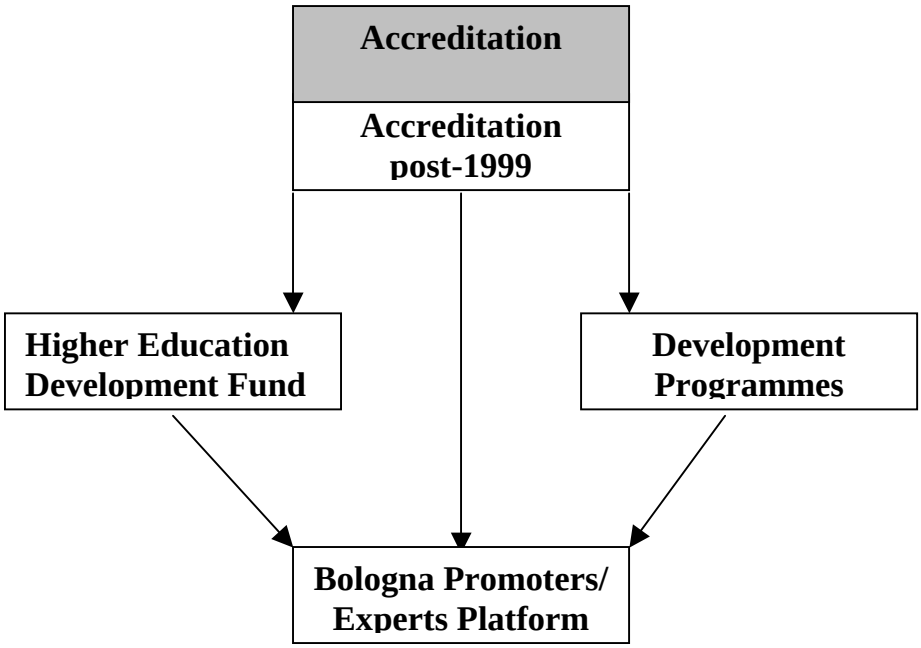
Second, the theoretical assumption that, in decentralised settings with autonomous actors, implementation should be studied as a continuum of the action of actors putting the policy into effect through implementation instruments provides a more promising starting point. By applying Vedung's typology of policy instruments to the four implementation instruments under study, we identify accreditation as a legal, regulatory type of instrument (a stick), the HEDF as an economic, funding incentive type of instrument (a carrot), the DPs as another economic, funding incentive type of instrument (a carrot), and the BPE Platform as an information-type instrument (a sermon). Thus, the result is a mix of four policy implementation instruments in three ideo-typical categories (one stick, two carrots, one sermon). All the four implementation instruments are applied simultaneously from the system level. However, only accreditation and the BPE Platform have a truly system-wide reach, as the HEDF and the DPs apply only to public HEIs, private institutions of higher education being ineligible for financial support from either of the two "carrots".

Furthermore, utilisation of Vedung's argumentation on packaging policy instruments makes it possible to arrange the four instruments vertically (hierarchically) as well as chronologically. In the vertical arrangement, accreditation, functioning on the principle of passing a minimum set of standards, forms a basis which, once successfully accomplished, makes public HEIs eligible for funding to improve their educational activities through grant support from the HEDF and the DPs. To be precise, it should be added that before 1999 accreditation did not function as a prerequisite for support from the HEDF, which started in 1992. However, the minimum standards of existing public HEIs and their programmes were implicitly assured by listing the institutions in the annex of the Act of 1990. Once successfully approved, with the programme(s) accredited as stipulated by the Act of 1998, private HEIs are entitled only to present the relevant (good-practice) information through the BPE Platform-

[128] The programme accreditation scheme per se provides the periphery level with little leeway, which is only partly true for institutional evaluations due to the limited controllability of the follow-up measures.

related events to which public HEIs may add their (good-practice) information on the grant support from the HEDF and the DPs. The resulting vertical arrangement of the four quality assurance implementation instruments is shown in Figure 5.

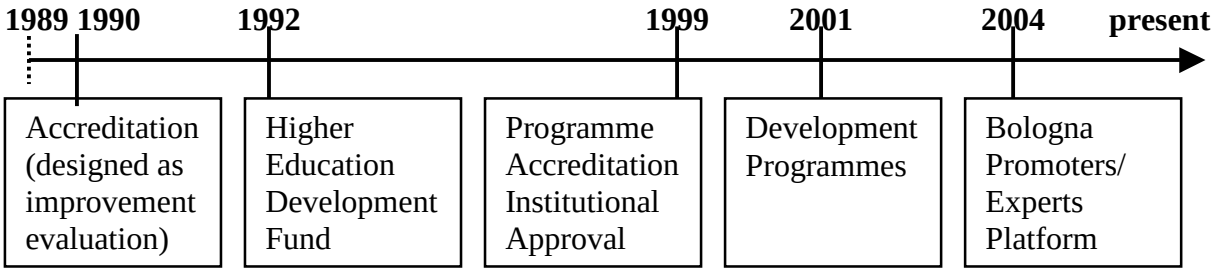
Figure 5: **Vertical arrangement of the four quality assurance instruments**



Source: author

As to the chronological arrangement, accreditation is the longest-existing policy instrument, and has been in place since September 1990. Importantly, till 1998, accreditation as a minimum-standard quality assurance instrument was not in existence, as the AC concentrated on improvement-oriented, peer review-based evaluations of faculties in related fields of study. The sectoral orientation on improvement of educational activities was strengthened by grant support from the HEDF, starting in 1992. The changeover in 1999 to mandatory programme accreditation and approval of new institutions, signalling the initiation of an accountability orientation, was followed by a financially more robust system of grant support from the DPs, which has been in systemic operation since 2001. The existing combination of three system-level, quality assurance implementation instruments was supplemented in 2004 by the BPE Platform, which was, however, identified only ex-post as an information-type policy instrument. Again, as in case of the vertical arrangement, it holds that since 1999 accreditation has functioned as a formal prerequisite for the other three implementation instruments. The resulting chronological arrangement is shown on the timescale in Figure 6.

Figure 6: **Horizontal arrangement of the four quality assurance instruments**



Source: author

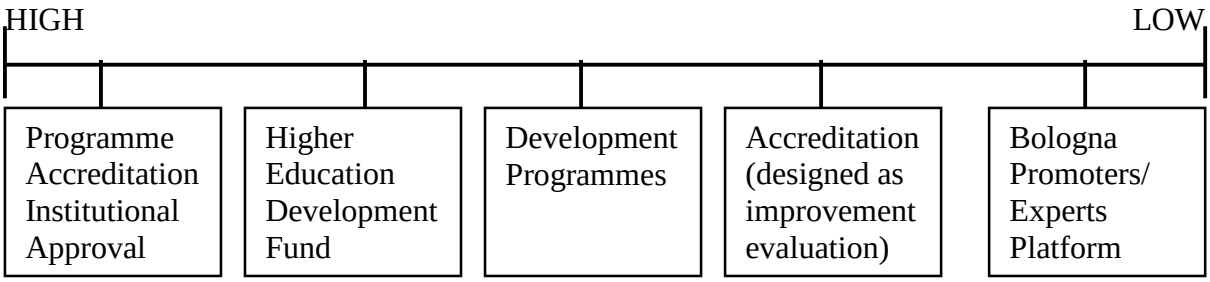
The next conclusion concerns specifications of the rationale for the instruments, which were presented ex-post as a part of the design of the instruments. The analysis indicates that two out of the four instruments, i.e. accreditation in the 1990-1998 period and the BPE Platform, had their rationale specified only some time after they were put into operation. In the case of accreditation, it took three years of protracted debates to turn the accreditation scheme as it is known nowadays, i.e. as assurance of minimum-standard quality, totally on its head by commencing improvement-oriented evaluations. It is not that improvement-oriented, peer review-based external evaluations are objectionable. However, the adoption of such a rationale for accreditation as a system-level policy instrument, completely contradicting the very purpose of accreditation, i.e. to set minimum quality standards, attests to the lack of awareness on quality assurance matters in the 1990s. Similarly, the rationale on which the BPE Platform should operate was declared ex-post to be in line with the goals of the Ministry's Plan for 2006-2010 in the quality assurance domain. This declaration was made as late as 2010, in response to direct questioning. This state of affairs most likely reflects a lack of attention on the part of policy makers.

To a lesser extent, continuing modifications to the rationale for the instrument after it had been adopted, can also be observed in the case of the HEDF and the DPs. However, the rationale behind the HEDF, i.e. to support education-related activities only, was clarified in the first half of the 1990s and, with the exception of the controversy over priority area G (student creative activities), has never been wavered from since. In contrast, the DPs present a case where ex-post incremental modifications of the rationale, extending the instrument's scope by the centralised category, have only muddied the waters. There have been many rationale modifications: at first the DPs were a system-level instrument for harmonising sectoral governance by providing funding incentives for public HEIs to develop in Ministry-preferred domain-specific areas; *then* they also became an instrument for institutional quality enhancement through improvement on strengths and reduction of weaknesses; *and then* the

centralised category introduced top priority of the Ministry for inter-institutional cooperation, though still making it possible to undertake projects individually. When we see so many major changes, we may come to the conclusion that the rationale has been made up on the hoof, rather than effectively planned in advance.

Two points of a comparative nature merit further attention. First, the overlaps in priority areas supported from the HEDF and the DPs that have been identified are not seen as problematic, due to the different foci of the instruments, with the HEDF providing support up to faculty level and the DPs providing support for faculty and higher-level organisational units (rectorate, systemic cooperation). Second, the DPs operate on a three-times higher subsidy than the HEDF (CZK 9,788 million: CZK 3,097 million), display a nearly twice as high success rate (79.7: 43.7), but have less developed evaluation procedures (1-level ex-ante evaluation, ex-post evaluation based on routine verification and randomised controls). *The DPs thus show less orientation toward accountability than the HEDF*. If issues concerning accountability orientation are extended to cover the two other instruments, accreditation and the BPE Platform, the resulting scale will be as follows (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: **Accountability orientation of the four quality assurance instruments**



Source: author

Predictably, through adherence to fulfilling minimum standards, post-1998 programme accreditation and institutional approval emerge as the instrument with the highest accountability orientation. Given the more rigorous evaluation procedures that have been identified along with lower subsidisation, the HEDF shows a higher accountability orientation than the DPs. The “symbolic” accreditation that was in place between 1990-1998 can be seen as having even less accountability orientation than the DPs, because its improvement function was attained by non-binding peer recommendations. The BPE Platform displays the lowest accountability orientation, due to its focus on dissemination and sharing of information that, as a rule, has only a universal value. Therefore there is little of substance to be held accountable for.

Notwithstanding criticism centering on the ex-post specifications of the rationales for the instruments, some positive aspects of accreditation, the HEDF, and the DPs remain. Despite its limitations, accreditation should be credited with instituting external improvement evaluation. This, in turn, brought prestige to the AC in the 1990-1998 period, somewhat reducing the threat of sub-standard education provision from 1999 onwards, though at the expense of continuous overload of the AC. The corresponding ex-post evaluations suggest that both the HEDF and the DPs have had a considerable effect, though, presumably, this is also due to the "safe" way of goal formulation[129], which has ensured that the project goals are formulated in a way that is easily met from the outset. In contrast, the effects of the BPE Platform are hard to ascertain, not least due to the prevailing dissent on what constitutes a Platform and how it should operate.

Nevertheless, the finding that information on the implementation of Czech system-level higher education quality assurance policy is split into five different sources has an analytical value. The same can be said about the identification of the capabilities of the individual actors which, through negotiations and bargaining, result in control over the instruments being distributed primarily between the academic oligarchy and the Ministry, with a lower level of control in the hands of street-level academics and experts. No involvement of societal actors (employers, etc.) in controlling the instruments has been found. The theoretical insights from Actor-Centred Institutionalism have been of use here.

To conclude, two points bearing on policy implementation theory should be made, followed by an observation for policy practice. First, the chronological arrangement of the four analysed instruments, comprising a mix of "one stick, two carrots, and one sermon", disproves the theoretical assumption that, within a given policy domain, implementation instruments are applied with an increasing degree of coercion, i.e. accountability orientation (cf. Vedung 1998). Second, these reservations on the four analysed instruments indicate that the policy design-policy implementation relationship has been neglected. In reality, there is a tendency to put the four implementation instruments into operation without prior specification of the rationale behind their selection and application. The instrument rationales have been subject to ex-post specifications to account for:

- the non-specificity of, and the changes to the legal framework (see "symbolic" accreditation as a result of the Act of 1990 vs. post-1998 programme accreditation, introduced by the Act of 1998);

[129] With the formulation typically taking the form "the project will support …".

- the shifting goals of conceptual policy documents (see the annual Declaration of the DPs and the CP Declaration of the HEDF, both based on annual updates to the Ministry Plan);
- lack of awareness / knowledge of the issue (see the Bologna Promoters/Experts platform, also "symbolic" pre-1998 accreditation).

The idea of modifying the instrument rationale ex-post to reflect changes in legislation and policy priorities is rather common in policy practice. Nonetheless, with reference to Czech higher education and the four instruments analysed here, it is debatable whether the multitude of policy goals reformulated annually in newly produced updates to the Ministry's Plan contribute to the feasibility of (quality assurance) policy implementation along with transparency of sectoral governance. The suggestion is that the pattern of policy-making in place since 2000 is conducive to "muddling through" with formally adopted measures, accumulation of agendas, dissolution of existing capacities, and belated attention to some of the officially stated goals (BPE Platform).

7. Accountability and trust in Czech higher education quality assurance: Tuning system instruments to policy options

7.1 Accountability and trust revisited

The amount of control and discretion of front-line policy deliverers has been a long-standing concern in the theory and practice of policy implementation. The top-down and bottom-up schools of thought take different theoretical stances to this issue, with top-downers promoting fidelity to policy goals and bottom-uppers emphasizing discretionary authority in goal realization. Empirical studies into the extent and controllability of front-line discretion have produced mixed results (Meyers and Vorsanger 2003). Under the influence of New Public Management, the general tendency seems to be toward accountability of front-level staff to higher authority, represented by state officials (Thomas 2003). At its most basic, accountability refers to answerability for one's actions or behaviour (D. Dunn 2003) through a system of external controls that may be formal or informal (L. DeLeon 2003). Promoting external control, however, accountability aims to inhibit responsible proactive commitment and professional discretion based on justifiable levels of trust, although trust is the basic

precondition for the effectiveness of most organisational processes (Gregory 2003; L. DeLeon 2003). In effect, it can be argued that "[a]ccountability is a form of quality control. We avoid the really bad, but we have to forego the really good" (Lucas. In: Gregory 2003, 558).

This pattern of policy development also applies to higher education. Several studies document the dissolution of trust in academe (Massy 2003; Enders 2005; Amaral 2007; Huisman, Stensaker, and Kehm 2009; Amaral and Rosa 2010; Stensaker and Harvey 2010a). With regard to the quality assurance domain, accountability of academe to the state as the major provider of funds is thought to have been achieved by the implementation of external, mostly accreditation-type of policy measures. As a rule, these measures executed by government-designated agencies have led to a dissolution of trust (Harvey and Williams 2010). It is a paradox that at least some of the accountability-oriented external policies on quality assurance were initially launched to promote trust, though the term itself is left unspecified (Stensaker and Harvey 2010b). Stensaker and Gornitzka (2009) address this deficiency by identifying two theoretical perspectives on trust–the rationalist-instrumental perspective and the normative perspective. While rationalist-instrumental perspective is based on the actors as rational-utility maximisers that can be trusted as a result of external checks on the standards they are supposed to follow, the normative perspective refers to trust established through personal adherence to professional/social norms that become internalised. The two perspectives overlap. In real-time policy settings, actors will typically use a combination of calculative and norm-based judgements. This suggests that trust and accountability are both "hybrid phenomena" (ibid).

This thesis promotes the view that accountability and trust are contextually important for the design and implementation of higher education policies on quality assurance. Although present-day government policies seem to have a strong accountability brief (Harvey and Newton 2004, 2007; Harvey and Williams 2010), the accountability orientation is contested on the grounds that, in order to be effective, policy implementation processes must combine accountability with trust in front-level policy enactors (Lane 1997, 2000). The most productive way forward thus seems to be to design and implement quality assurance policies that make front-level academics accountable but also trusted, through adherence to professional norms. The same, however, should also apply to top-level policy makers (Ministry representatives), who should be trusted but also, in a representative democracy, held to account to the government for their actions. The implication is that in policy practice the normative perspective on trust should take precedence over the rationalist perspective, whenever possible.

7.2 Accountability and trust in policy options for higher education quality assurance in the Czech Republic

Once the roles of accountability and trust have been clarified, steps can be taken to further develop present-day Czech policy on assuring the quality of higher education. This policy development may take place through devising three policy options along the lines described in the methodology for this thesis (Section 2.2). The options are underlain by 25 key instrument characteristics, identified by the instrument analysis (see Section 6.5). The results of the instrument analysis (Chapter 6), the viewpoints of the respondents (Chapter 5), and the policy context (Chapter 4) were taken into consideration when formulating the factual content of the options. The content of the policy options differs in the extent of accountability and trust in the actors.

The first option, "Accountability Land", centres on accountability. Its underlying rationale is that the actors involved in operating the four instruments must be publicly controllable for their actions. The second option is "Moderate Instrumentation". Under this option, the actors operating the policy instruments are principally trusted, but are also held to account to higher authorities for their actions. The third option, "Trustworthy Partnerships", gives weight to the normative perspective on trust. The actors operating the instruments are seen as internalising and adhering to high professional standards, so that no form of external control is needed. In light of the argumentation in Section 7.1, Moderate Instrumentation is seen as the most promising basis for developing the Czech system policy on higher education quality assurance. Accountability Land is developed in view of the primacy of accountability in quality assurance, while Trustworthy Partnerships are added as an alternative, "what if " option. A description of each of the three options follows.

7.2.1 Accountability land

In Accountability Land, the Accreditation Commission is composed of representatives of academe (25%), students, employers, practitioners[130], and experts. All degree programmes of all HEIs should be accredited. Ranks of associate professors and professors inhere in the person. This means that once the ranks have been obtained, following the positive standpoint of the scientific board of the faculty (for associate professor) or of the whole institution (for professor), they are retained for person's lifetime. Professors and associate professors act as

[130] Persons with grounding in what the practical abilities, skills, and competences of students and graduates should be.

sole quality guarantors. Members of the standing working groups of the AC are nominated and appointed by the Commission, the Council of HEIs, the Czech Rectors' Conference, the Confederation of Industry, and experts. External institutional evaluations are carried out on a regular basis by a special *standing* working group of the AC. All members of the AC and its work groups are professionally trained. The AC presents the results of its activities on a special website, including all documentation and a complete English version. A special annual report is made to the academic community. The budget of the AC is negotiated between the members of the AC and the Representative Commission on the basis of the results that have been achieved.

Support from the HEDF is given as a start-up grant, for one year only. Three-level ex-ante evaluation of submissions to the HEDF is in place (two evaluators, thematic commissions, the Committee). Ex-post evaluation also goes through three levels (final report, two evaluators, final presentation and defence). The results of the HEDF projects are presented on a special website together with all documentation, including the Bulletin of the HEDF and press reports, and a complete English version of the website is available. The priority areas supported from the HEDF are formulated on the basis of a broad debate that includes external stakeholders (employers, practitioners). The budget of the HEDF is negotiated between the Committee of the HEDF and the Representative Commission, in which consideration is given to the results that have been achieved.

Support from the DPs takes the form of a one-year start-up grant. The decentralised projects follow the priorities of the Ministry, as do the centralised projects. However, cooperation among several HEIs is required for centralised projects. A two-level ex-ante evaluation is made of submissions to the DPs (2 evaluators, Programme Council), with explicit criteria for both centralised and decentralised projects. Ex-post evaluation entails three levels (final report, 2 evaluators, Programme Council), and the results are presented on a special website together with all documentation, including the Bulletin of the DPs, and with a complete English version. The budget of the DPs is negotiated between the Programme Council and the Representative Commission, taking into account the results that have been achieved.

The Platform takes the form of a special website with major information on Czech higher education, which also covers individual policy domains, including quality assurance. Basic notification is provided about information and dissemination events (conferences, seminars) held in the Czech Republic. A complete English version of the website is available.

The website is run and regularly updated by an external agency, in cooperation with the Ministry. The Platform is co-funded by the Ministry and the external agency.

7.2.2 Moderate instrumentation

Under Moderate Instrumentation, the Accreditation Commission is composed of representatives of academe (50%), students, and practitioners. Private HEIs operate under programme accreditation, while public HEIs operate under institutional accreditation. Ranks of associate professors and professors can either be conferred for person's lifetime or be made limited-term work positions filled on the basis of deans' decisions. Quality of education is guaranteed not only by (associate) professors but also by academics with a doctoral qualification (PhD). Members of the standing working groups of the AC are nominated by the Commission, the Council of HEIs, the Czech Rectors' Conference, the Confederation of Industry, and experts. However, they are appointed only by the AC. External institutional evaluation is carried out only if it is considered necessary by a special working group of the AC. There is professional training only for selected members of the AC and its working groups. The AC presents the results of its activities, including its annual report, on a special website with selected information available in English. A set percentage of the state subsidy for higher education is allotted for the AC's budget

Grant support from the HEDF is awarded for up to two years, and does not exclusively have a start-up character. Ex-ante evaluation is organised at two levels (2 evaluators, thematic commissions) complemented by random controls by the Committee of the HEDF. Ex-post evaluation involves writing a final report, which is assessed by two evaluators. Thus it is a two-level procedure. The results achieved are presented on a special website, which provides the basic information including the Bulletin of the HEDF. Selected information is available in English (the Bulletin is not). The priority areas for support from the HEDF emerge from a debate between the academic community, represented by the Council of HEIs, and the Czech Rectors' Conference. The budget of the HEDF is a set percentage of the state subsidy for higher education.

The DPs distribute grants for one to two years, and the grants do not have solely a start-up character. The decentralised projects reflect Ministerial priorities and also enhancement of institutional strengths and removal of weaknesses. The centralised projects follow the major priorities of the Ministry and are undertaken by one HEI, while the results are shared with several other HEIs. Submitted projects are evaluated ex-ante by the Programme Council, i.e. at one level, with explicit criteria for both decentralised and

centralised projects. Ex-post evaluation is conceived as a two-level procedure that involves making the final report and evaluation of the report by the Programme Council. The results of projects funded from the DPs are presented on a special website with basic documentation, including the Bulletin of the DPs, in Czech, and some selected information in English (excluding the Bulletin). The budget for the DPs is a set percentage of the state subsidy for higher education.

The Platform is conceived as a special website providing basic information on Czech higher education, its actors, and information events (conferences and the like). The website is regularly updated. Selected information is given in English, but individual policy domains are not covered either in Czech or in English. The Platform is administered and funded by the Ministry.

7.2.3 Trustworthy partnerships

In Trustworthy Partnerships, accreditation is seen as an instrument to be handled internally within academe. For this reason, the Accreditation Commission is composed only of academe members. The representation of individual ranks and disciplines is subject to agreement through the academic representative bodies. Institutional accreditation applies to all HEIs, irrespective of their type. Professorial and associate professorial posts are filled for a fixed period on the basis of open competition, with international participation encouraged. Quality of education within the programmes is guaranteed by a person holding at least a Master degree, who has proved his/her qualification for delivering the given programme[131]. Members of standing working groups of the AC are nominated and appointed by the AC. External institutional evaluations are carried out from time to time by a specialised agency, not necessarily by the AC. The institution chooses the evaluation agency. Professional training is a voluntary initiative of any member of the AC. No special website is set up to present the results of the activities of the AC. The AC has full control over its budget. The Ministry makes increases if they are asked for by the AC.

The terms of support from the HEDF allow grants lasting from one to five years. Start-up grants are distributed only in a limited number of cases. Ex-ante evaluation of submissions to the HEDF is essentially one-level (2 evaluators), complemented by random checks by the thematic commissions. Ex-post evaluation is also essentially conceived as one-level, based on submission of the final report and random controls by the Fund's Committee. The Fund's

[131] In most cases, this can be relevant academic and/or professional experience, depending on the type and characteristics of the degree programme.

website is used for electronic submission of projects through ISSARF, not for presenting information on results. Priority areas for support from the HEDF are kept stable, with changes made only on an evidence-based request from the Fund's Committee. The same applies to the Fund's funding.

Grants from the DPs are distributed for up to five years. As in the case of the HEDF, start-up grants are provided only in exceptional cases. The decentralised projects focus on institutional development through improvement on strengths and removal of weaknesses, while the centralised projects reflect the major Ministerial priorities to be implemented solely within the institutional remit. Ex-ante evaluations of the DP projects are carried out by the Programme Council (one level), with implicit criteria for the decentralised category and explicit criteria for the centralised category. Ex-post evaluation entails submission of a final report (one level) followed by random checks by the Programme Council. There is no special website for the DPs. Declarations of the DPs are made public through the Ministry's website in the section on higher education. The budget of the DPs is kept stable over the long term, with increases made on the basis of an evidence-based request from the Programme Council.

Given the orientation of Trustworthy Partnerships toward highly professional and autonomised execution of tasks, no special website for Czech higher education is maintained (current practice).

7.2.4 Assessment of policy options

The three policy options–Accountability Land, Moderate Instrumentation, and Trustworthy Partnerships–were subjected to assessment by a group of experts. The expert assessment was based on the Delphi method, organised in two rounds (for methodological details, see 2.2). A special questionnaire was designed, asking experts to identify with one of the three available responses[132] for each of the key instrument characteristics. The aim was to find out which (combination of) the three options is most viable for developing Czech system-level higher education policy on quality assurance.

For the first round, the results are based on the responses of 19 participating experts. Not all participants could identify with one of the available responses for each key characteristic, either because they did not feel knowledgeable enough or because they firmly held a different viewpoint. The frequency of the responses on the key instrument characteristics across the three policy options is given in Table 18. Responses not fitting any

[132] Always with the first response for Accountability Land, the second response for Moderate Instrumentation, and the third response for Trustworthy Partnerships.

of the options are listed under "Other". The key characteristics on which the majority of participants agreed are marked in blue colour[133]. The results show that a major consensus was formed on 14 key characteristics equally distributed between Accountability Land and Moderate Instrumentation (6 characteristics each), with Trustworthy Partnerships trailing behind (2 characteristics). A more elaborate analysis of the results of the Delphi-based enquiry is reserved for the second, final round so that comparative observations can be made.

Table 18: **Delphi on Czech higher education quality assurance (1st round)**

Tool	Tool Key Characteristics	Accountabi-bility Land	Moderate Ins-trumentation	Trustworthy Partnerships	Other
	Composition of AC	5	9	3	2
A	Type of accreditation	4	4	10	1
CC	Hab./prof. appointments	4	7	7	1
RE	Guarantors of progr. quality	12	5	2	0
DI	Standing work groups of AC	4	12	2	1
TA	Institutional evaluation	12	4	3	0
TI	Training of AC members	8	5	3	3
ON	Presentation of AC results	10	7	0	2
	Budget of AC	5	12	1	1
	Terms of HEDF grant support	5	5	6	3
H	Ex-ante evaluation in HEDF	5	9	2	3
E	Ex-post evaluation in HEDF	8	7	1	3
D	Presentation of HEDF results	5	11	0	3
F	Formulation of priory areas	9	6	1	3
	Budget of HEDF	8	7	1	3
	Terms of DPs grant support	1	6	12	0
	Focus of decentralised projects	2	10	7	0
D	Focus of centralised projects	10	6	2	1
P	Ex-ante evaluation in DPs	5	8	5	1
s	Ex-post evaluation in DPs	5	10	3	1
	Presentation of DPs results	5	12	1	1
	Budget of DPs	7	9	2	1
PLA	Form of Platform	11	6	2	0
TFO	Administration of Platform	13	4	2	0
RM	Funding of Platform	8	9	2	0

Source: author

The results from the first round formed part of the questionnaire sent for re-assessment in the second round. The second round shows the participation of 15 experts. The results for the second round are given in Table 19. The results are listed in the same way as in the first round. Following the results of the second round, several comparative observations are made. In comparison with the first round, the second round registers an increase in the number of

[133] With more than nine responses per characteristic. More detailed results on the frequency of responses *for the first round* of the Delphi can be found in Table 2, Annex III.

key characteristics with major consensus from 14 to 21[134]. Correspondingly, the number of key characteristics showing no major agreement dropped from 11 to 4, and there was also a drop in the total number of alternative (Other) viewpoints from 34 to 8. In terms of the frequency of responses in the second round, preference is given to Moderate Instrumentation (11 characteristics), followed by Accountability Land (8 characteristics) and, in last place by a wide margin, Trustworthy Partnerships (2 characteristics). The preferred option for developing Czech system-level policy on higher education quality assurance is thus Moderate Accountability.

The elements of trust of the resulting policy option should take into account the type of accreditation and the terms of support from the DPs (as in the first round). This can be interpreted as a reminder that no matter how much is (financially) at stake (study places, incentives worth CZK millions), trust in the actors involved is a prerequisite if the policy instruments are to function effectively. Interestingly, the majority of respondents suggest refraining from this logic for grant support from the HEDF and when formulating its priorities. This indicates some inconsistency in the favoured development options for the DPs and the HEDF. A more detailed description of the Moderate Accountability option follows.

Table 19: **Delphi on Czech higher education quality assurance (2nd round)**

Tool	Tool Key Characteristics	Accounta-bility Land	Moderate Ins-trumentation	Trustworthy Partnerships	Other
	Composition of AC	3	8	2	2
A	Type of accreditation	3	3	9	0
CC	Hab./prof. appointments	4	5	6	0
RE	Guarantors of progr. quality	8	4	3	0
DI	Standing work groups of AC	5	9	1	0
TA	Institutional evaluation	9	4	2	0
TI	Training of AC members	12	2	1	0
ON	Presentation of AC results	6	9	0	0
	Budget of AC	3	12	0	0
	Terms of HEDF grant support	2	8	4	1
H	Ex-ante evaluation in HEDF	2	10	2	1
E	Ex-post evaluation in HEDF	6	7	1	1
D	Presentation of HEDF results	2	12	0	1
F	Formulation of priory areas	7	7	0	1
	Budget of HEDF	9	4	1	1
	Terms of DPs grant support	0	4	11	0
	Focus of decentralised projects	0	10	5	0
D	Focus of centralised projects	10	4	1	0
P	Ex-ante evaluation in DPs	5	6	4	0

[134] With more than seven responses per characteristic needed for a majority in the second round. More detailed results on the frequency of responses for *the second round* of the Policy Delphi can be found in Table 3, Annex III.

s	Ex-post evaluation in DPs	3	10	2	0
	Presentation of DPs results	3	11	1	0
	Budget of DPs	9	6	0	0
PLA	Form of Platform	12	3	0	0
TFO	Administration of Platform	13	2	0	0
RM	Funding of Platform	3	12	0	0

Source: author

7.2.5 Moderate accountability as a resulting option

In the Czech case, the moderately accountable policy on higher education quality assurance is characterised by the following facets. The Accreditation Commission is composed of internal and external actors (academics, students, practitioners). All HEIs, irrespective of their type, function under the institutional accreditation scheme. Professors and associate professors are eligible to guarantee programme quality. The preference is to offer professors and associate professors limited-term work positions, and to fill these positions on the basis of open competition. Members of the standing working groups of the AC are nominated by the AC, the Council of HEIs, the Czech Rectors' Conference, the Confederation of Industry, and experts. However, they are appointed by the AC only. Institutional evaluations are regularly carried out by a special standing working group of the AC, with the working group members nominated and appointed by the AC, the Council of HEIs, the Czech Rectors' Conference, the Confederation of Industry, and experts. The AC's members are required to take part in training, as are the members of the working groups. The results of the activities of the AC are made available on a special website, with selected information presented in English. The budget of the AC forms a set percentage of the state subsidy for higher education.

Project support from the HEDF is provided for one to two years. Ex-ante evaluation of the projects submitted to the HEDF is a two-level process that involves two evaluators and thematic commissions. The resulting evaluations made by thematic commissions are nonetheless subject to random controls by the Committee. There is a preference for ex-post evaluation of the HEDF projects to consist of a final report assessed by two evaluators (two levels). The results of the HEDF projects are presented on a special web site, including the Bulletin (issued twice a year), with selected information available in English. The priority areas for support from the HEDF should be formulated on the basis of a debate between the Ministry and the academic community, in which external stakeholders *may* also be invited to participate. The budget of the HEDF is negotiated between the Fund's Committee and the Representative Commission on the basis on the results that have been achieved.

Projects within the DPs are funded for one to five years, depending on the characteristics of the project. This means that the terms of support are not limited to start-up grants. Decentralised DP projects focus on supporting the priorities of the Ministry as well as institutional development. Centralised projects support realisation of the Ministry's priorities, and require inter-institutional cooperation. Ex-ante evaluation of projects submitted to the DPs is carried out by the Programme Council (one-level), with explicit criteria applied both to decentralised projects and to centralised projects. Ex-post evaluation of projects within the DPs entails a final report, which is assessed by the Programme Council involving its members representing HEIs (two-level). The results of the DPs are made available on a special website, which includes the Bulletin (issued twice a year). Selected information is available in English. The budget of the DPs is negotiated between the Programme Council and the Representative Commission.

The Platform takes the form of a special website that presents basic information on Czech higher education, its actors, and the policy domains including quality assurance. The Platform web site also contains information on major dissemination events (conferences, seminars, workshops). All the information displayed on the website is available in English. The website is regularly updated, and is administered jointly by the Ministry and the external agency. The Platform is funded by the Ministry.

To make Moderate Accountability a full-fledged policy option requires two additional considerations. First, the four key characteristics on which no major agreement exists[135] should be reconsidered and possibly redesigned to achieve consensus. The characteristic concerning the focus of decentralised DP projects should be treated in the same way, despite the consensual standpoint that the focus should be on the priorities of both the Ministry and the HEIs. This standpoint is contested on the grounds that the decentralised category should not serve "two masters", i.e. the Ministry and HEIs, at the same time. Moreover, under the current rationale of the DPs, the category of decentralised projects to some extent duplicates the centralised category, which also focuses on support for the Ministry's priorities. The solution is to re-design the decentralised category to support only institutional development through improving on strengths and removing weaknesses, and to keep the centralised category strictly for supporting the priorities of the Ministry, with or without cooperation among HEIs.

[135] These are: the nature of habilitations and professorial appointments, ex-post evaluation in the HEDF, formulation of priority areas of the HEDF, and ex-ante evaluation in the DPs.

Second, the relations among certain instrument characteristics should be considered when developing the Moderate Accountability option. In this respect, the factor analysis applied to the responses in the second round of the Delphi shows correlations between:

- ex-ante and ex-post evaluations of the HEDF and the DPs, type of accreditation, and guarantors of quality;
- presentation of results of the HEDF, the DPs, and the Platform;
- terms of grant support from the HEDF and the DPs, the form and administration of the Platform.

In the main, these correlations suggest that the development of the Moderate Accountability option is underlain by three factors, i.e. *approaches to evaluations including quality of tuition* (Factor 1), *presentations of the results* (Factor 2), and *conceptual matters affecting non-regulatory instruments* (Factor 3) (see Table 5, Annex III). The distribution of the four "funding-type" variables (budget of AC, HEDF, DPs, and funding of the Platform) across the three factors suggests that the funding of each instrument be considered individually when debating the feasibility of the Moderate Accountability option.

8. Concluding reflections

8.1 What are the questions?

This thesis has built on the assumption that implementation of quality assurance policies is a complex, multifaceted process that evades narrow confinement into a single policy stage. This assumption is particularly pertinent to higher education settings, which are characterised by significant decentralisation, autonomy, and professional discretion of front-line academics. The complex, multifaceted nature of higher education policy implementation in the quality assurance domain can be reduced by applying approaches from public policy theory. In this respect, the thesis has utilised the policy action continuum concept to overcome the limitations of the top-down/bottom-up dichotomy, and the instrument-context approach for decomposing the policy studied into analytical segments to make the study more empirically grounded and more replicable. Insights from Actor-centred Institutionalism have been used to identify the patterns of actor interactions in the design, choice, and application of the implementation instruments that have been studied.

The enquiry into the Czech system-level policy on higher education quality assurance has been underlain by six questions (see Section 2.1). After finalising the enquiry by presenting the resulting policy option, we are now in a position to provide answers to each of the questions. The answers are as follows.

1. *How can public policy and higher education policy implementation be studied?*

The study of 30 years of theory guiding research into public policy implementation and into higher education policy implementation shows these two research strands converging toward alternative, public policy conceived lines of enquiry. Present-day higher education implementation research thus utilises alternative concepts linked to the public policy field, such as institutional theory, the Advocacy Coalition Framework, or the instrumental approach to policy implementation. Despite the linkage between the theory behind the seminal study into implementation of higher education reforms by Cerych and Sabatier (1986) and public policy implementation theory, there was no systematic reflection and cumulation of theory in higher education implementation research until the mid 2000s. The belated 2005 reflection points to the theoretical and empirical obsoleteness of the Cerych and Sabatier top-down framework, which is confirmed by the findings of the present study. The reasons for the belated theoretical reflection lie in the underlying characteristics of higher education research, specified as sectoral isolatedness, application drift, and sensitivity to political agendas. It is argued that due to the paucity of critical reflection on the 1986 seminal study in the subsequent decade (the 1990s), implementation research in higher education missed out on the opportunity to develop sector-specific, testable theories and the corresponding hypotheses.

2. *Does a Czech system-level higher education quality assurance policy exist, and, if so what are its goals?*

Yes, the policy in question does exist, though its formation was rather haphazard. The elements of a system-level policy on higher education quality assurance were identifiable in the reform thrust of the early 1990s through the establishment of the Accreditation Commission and the Higher Education Development Fund. However, the orientation of the reform on democratising the sector, followed by efforts to develop a new legislative framework (to curb extreme sectoral decentralisation) made the AC and the HEDF rather isolated phenomena, not yet mapped into an explicit, “put on paper” quality assurance policy, which formed later. As a result, no programme accreditation was in operation until 1999, though accreditation was formally introduced by the Act of 1990.

The situation started to change from 1999 onwards as a result of the stipulations of the Act of 1998. Building on legally mandatory programme accreditation and institutional approval, the policy goals were made more nuanced in the two long-term plans of the Ministry (2000-2005, 2006-2010) and their annual updates. Taking into account the stipulations of the Act of 1998 and the other strategic policy documents, *the goals of the present-day system quality assurance policy are to assure minimum quality standards, and to promote institutional excellence through continuous improvement in areas in which institutional capacities exist*. The promotion of institutional excellence (high quality) is contingent on assurance of minimum quality standards, and the aspect of efficiency in resource management is stressed overall.

3. *What instruments are used for implementing Czech system-level higher education quality assurance policy?*

On the basis of our enquiry into the policy, four implementation instruments have been identified. These are: accreditation, the Higher Education Development Fund, the Development Programmes, and the Bologna Promoters/Experts as a platform for disseminating examples of good practice. Using Vedung's (1998) typology, accreditation is a regulatory policy instrument based on prescription (a stick), the HEDF and the DPs are both funding instruments based on financial subsidies (carrots), and the BPE Platform is an informative instrument based on encouragement to present and disseminate information (a sermon). The timeline showing the establishment of the instruments is as follows: 1990-accreditation, 1992-the HEDF, 2001-the DPs, 2004-the BPE Platform. However, in the case of the BPE Platform, the available evidence indicates that it was made into a policy instrument ex-post only, due to the lack of an agreed perspective.

4. *How do the system-level implementation instruments function?*

The functioning depends on the type of instrument. Basically, accreditation involves two schemes: programme accreditation[136] and institutional evaluation based on the evaluation of faculties in related fields of study[137]. Institutional evaluation was already in place as "symbolic" accreditation between 1990-1998. Programme accreditation takes the form of a "behind the desk", three-level evaluation of documentation that is required. Institutional

[136] Including accreditation of habilitations and professorial appointments, institutional approval, and the Accreditation Commission's stands on faculty matters.
[137] Including evaluations of accredited activities.

evaluations principally follow the general, four-stage model of quality assurance procedures[138]. The functioning of both the HEDF and the DPs involve formulating priority areas, submitting projects, ex-ante evaluation and approval, and ex-post evaluation. The functional procedures of the HEDF are under more detailed regulations than the procedures for the DPs. The functioning of the BPE Platform boils down to organising training events, events focused on disseminating information, and counselling visits. The members of the Czech team of Bologna Promoters/Experts play an active role in all these activities.

The type of instrument and the way of functioning are fundamental for identifying the extent of the accountability orientation of the instrument. Programme accreditation[139] shows the highest accountability orientation, followed by the HEDF, the DPs, and the BPE Platform. The higher accountability orientation of the HEDF than of the DPs is due to the more rigorous ex-ante and ex-post evaluation procedures of the HEDF. Predictably, the BPE platform shows the lowest orientation towards accountability, due to its focus on presenting information that has general applicability, with little of substance to be accountable for. The four instruments can also be arranged into a functional hierarchy as regards the type of instrument and the way in which it functions. In the hierarchy, funding from the HEDF and the DPs channelled to public HEIs is contingent on meeting programme accreditation requirements. The same rule applies to the BPE Platform for which, in the case of public HEIs, information and examples drawn from the HEDF and the DPs may be used. This has given rise to the "the stick-carrot-sermon" policy instrument set-up as a distinct style by which Czech system-level policy on higher education quality assurance has been implemented.

5. *What are the effects of the system-level implementation instruments, and to what extent do they match the policy goals?*

In the case of the accreditation scheme, the Accreditation Commission handled 14,836 requests for programme accreditation between 1999-2009, with a success rate of 93%, and also 178 requests for approval[140], with a success rate of 48%. Taken together, the AC handles about 1,500 accreditation/approval requests per year. As to the evaluation scheme, the AC carried out 66 faculty evaluations between 1990 to 1998 and 65 evaluations under the new

[138] The stages are: notification of the evaluation by the coordinating agency, institutional self-evaluation, external evaluation, and reporting the results (Van Vught and Westerheijden1994).
[139] Not referring to "symbolic" accreditation. In terms of its accountability orientation, symbolic accreditation can be placed between the DPs and the BPE Platform.
[140] Of which 43 requests were on faculty matters, where the AC's standpoint is not legally binding.

legal framework from 1999 to 2009[141]. However, the links between the two schemes are not clear, with likely spill-over effects of institutional evaluations on programme accreditation. Despite repeated attempts to concentrate on institutional evaluations, about 70% of the AC's workload involves accreditation/approval issues. Administrative costs reached CZK 2.5 million in the mid/late 2000s, and increased to circa CZK 3.5 million in 2010.

Higher Education Development Fund projects have obtained grant support since 1992. From 1992 to 2010, the state subsidy allocated to the HEDF totalled CZK 4,699 million, i.e. CZK 247 million per year. A total of 15,393 projects were funded. The administrative costs amounted to CZK 111 million, i.e. 2.75% of the total subsidy. The average success rate was 43.7%, with the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts scoring highest (about 61%). The largest part of the grant per institution totalling CZK 613.3 million was obtained by Brno University of Technology. Finally, the results of the ex-post evaluation proceedings for the 2001-2009 period showed that 95.4% of the projects were adjudged to have met all the goals that had been set (verdict A–Achieved).

The Development Programmes have been in systematic use since 2001. From 2001 to 2010, the state subsidy exceeded CZK 9,700 million, i.e. more than CZK 970 million per year. The number of supported projects totalled 6,339. The administrative costs were only 0.05% of the subsidy (CZK 4.5 million). The average success rate was 79.7%. The highest amount of grant support, CZK 1,958 million, was obtained by Charles University. No significant errors in project implementation or mismanagement of project funds were found in the ex-post evaluation procedures.

As suggested, the Bologna Promoters/Experts were identified as the Platform only ex-post, in response to direct questioning in 2010. Between 2004-2009, 11 expert training events, 27 national dissemination events including the annual national conference on quality assurance, and 34 counselling visits were held. The total number of persons participating in dissemination events is estimated to have been 1,620. The administrative costs reached CZK 1.5 million. Lack of relevant data precludes any further analysis of the effects the BPE Platform.

The "stick-carrot-sermon" instrument set-up is a distinct implementation style that seems to be congruent with the goals of Czech system-level policy on higher education quality assurance. The policy goal of assuring minimum quality standards is implemented through accreditation (the programme accreditation scheme). The policy goal of enhancing

[141] Out of which 16 evaluations concerned evaluations of accredited activities.

the institutional quality of educational activities where capacities exist is also implemented through the HEDF, the DPs, and, to a lesser extent, by the BPE Platform[142]. The effectiveness of quality enhancement processes though the HEDF and the DPs has been extremely high (see the results of the ex-post evaluations), *though this must be regarded with some caution due to the "staying on the safe side" approach to project goal formulation*. The requirement of resource efficiency is also met in the case of the HEDF and the DPs, whose administrative costs are below 3%, respectively, 1% of the subsidy that they receive. Resource efficiency is no issue for the BPE Platform either, with yearly administrative costs of CZK 250,000, which is negligible compared to the total state subsidy for education (25.9 billion CZK in 2009). In the case of accreditation, the situation is not so straightforward. The annual budget currently amounts to CZK 3.5 million, which suggests high efficiency. However, this may be compromised by the resources spent on preparing accreditation requests at institutional level. There is no available corresponding data, but this may be a factor not to be taken lightly.

6. *What can be done to make Czech higher education quality assurance policy function more effectively?*

Unlike the previous questions, the answer to the sixth question requires a more differentiated and detailed treatment. The wording of the question entails the formulation of recommendations for policy practice (see Section 8.3). As researching higher education quality assurance needs theorising (Harvey and Newton 2007), implications for policy theory are also considered (see Section 8.2).

8.2 Implications for policy theory

The enquiry into Czech system-level policy on higher education quality assurance suggests that the Cerych and Sabatier 1986 conceptual framework is obsolete from both the empirical and the theoretical point of view. The empirically documented annual reformulation of the goals of the Ministry's Plan through the annual updates disproves the policy formulation-implementation divide in general. With regard to the policy domain of quality assurance in particular, the formulation-implementation divide is disproved through the annual declaration of priorities supported by the HEDF and the DPs in line with the annual updates to the Ministry's Plan. Also, in the process of putting the system-level policy on quality assurance into effect, the rationale of post-1998 accreditation has been subject to several modifications,

[142] Given the argument that successful emulation of examples of good practice should be research-based.

especially the introduction of: evaluations of accredited activities (2003), students as members of special working groups for institutional evaluations (2006), and regular internal evaluations of the AC (2007). The same applies to the BPE Platform after it was changed in 2007 from Promoters to Experts, which involved a re-orientation from the degree structure and quality assurance to recognition-related issues and qualifications frameworks.

The enquiry undertaken in this thesis adds to the contestation of the Cerych and Sabatier framework on theoretical grounds. The grounding of the framework in top-down implementation theory accentuates the power of central-level actors, i.e. ministerial officials, to structure the implementation process to the point of policy delivery. However, the analysis of the patterns of actors' interactions concerning accreditation, the HEDF, the DPs, and the BPE Platform has identified the influence of lower-level positioned actors (academe). They have achieved influence through being co-opted into the instrument decision-making bodies (AC, Committee of the HEDF, Programme Council, the team of Bologna Promoters/Experts). Though the places are largely secured by members of the academic oligarchy (especially in the case of accreditation), the real effects of the HEDF, the DPs, and the BPE Platform are subject to the discretionary authority of front-line academics. The process of implementing Czech system-level policy on higher education quality assurance is thus underlain by negotiations between the representatives of the Ministry, the representatives of academe, and front-line academics. This points to a mismatch between top-down implementation theory and the study of implementation processes in higher education quality assurance.

Speaking of theory, the utilisation of alternative, public policy conceived approaches seems to be a more promising line to follow in analysing higher education policy implementation. The conceptual framework used in this thesis, combining insights from the policy-action continuum, the instrumental approach to policy implementation, and Actor-centred Institutionalism, may help to develop sector and quality assurance domain-specific theories in three respects. These are:

- alerting the attention of the research community to the fundamental relationship between policy design and policy implementation when conducting implementation analyses;
- studying policy implementation through a combination of policy instruments, thus helping to deliver a distinct "stick-carrot-sermon" implementation style;
- replicating the study to verify/falsify the "stick-carrot-sermon" implementation style, ideally though a cross-national, comparative study.

Finally, identifying accreditation, the HEDF, the DPs, and the Platform as "one carrot, two sticks, and one sermon" also has implications for the stakeholder-specific approach to quality assurance, originally developed by Harvey and Green (see Section 3.1.5). Each of the implementation instruments fits a certain stakeholders' concept of quality in higher education. In this respect, accreditation comes under the quality conceptualised as exception (in the sense of achieving minimum standards), the DPs and the HEDF come under quality as fitness for purpose (purpose defined by project goals), and the Platform, conceptualised in a wider sense as the central information site on Czech higher education quality assurance, comes under quality as value for money (displayed though the relevant data and statistics on the website). Importantly, priority area G (student creative activities for innovation of education) of the HEDF helps toward empowering students, and thus bears on the highly valued transformative approach to quality (Harvey and Newton 2004, 2007). Overall, the fulfilment of a variety of stakeholders' concepts of quality being congruent with the stated policy goals bodes well for the implementation of Czech system-level policy on higher education quality assurance.

8.3 Recommendations for policy practice

8.3.1 Overall recommendations for sectoral quality assurance policy

Quality assurance has come to be regarded as the central domain of Czech higher education policy. The further development of system level quality assurance policy should follow the lines of the Moderate Accountability option. When following this option, attention should be paid to *approaches to evaluations including quality of tuition*, *presentation of results*, and *conceptual matters affecting non-regulatory instruments* as three factors bearing on implementation of the option.

Before forming more specific recommendations for the four policy instruments that are complementary to Moderate Accountability, a comment on policy goal formulation is in order. Despite the congruence between the policy goals and policy means (the stick-carrot-sermon instrument set-up), the goals of the present-day system-level quality assurance policy had to be reconstructed from a number of legal and strategic policy documents in time[143]. At system level, there is no strategic-policy document concentrating on quality assurance. I consider this situation sub-optimal. Further development of system-level quality assurance policy, including the policy goals, should be delineated in a single document and based not

[143] Especially the Act of 1998, the Long-term Plan of the Ministry for 2000-2005 (including the annual updates), and the Long-term Plan of the Ministry for 2006-2010 (including the annual updates).

only on normative judgements of policy-makers but also on empirical evidence. In other words, I argue for a changeover from "jungle-based" policy to more evidence-based policy. A changeover of this kind will necessitate the collection and processing of data with a particular focus on the micro-institutional level (institutes, departments). Some additional enquiries are likely to be needed in order to acquire a "fuller" picture of the situation. Funding for these enquiries can be provided from the Individual National Programmes (IPn) for Tertiary Education[144], namely from the "Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education" programme, which runs till July 2013.

8.3.2 Recommendations for accreditation

The Accreditation Commission owes its prestige to its 20-year history and its focus on improvement-oriented institutional evaluations undertaken in the 1990s. From the long-term perspective, the post-1998 extension of the AC's competences has turned out to be problematic in two respects. First, the 93% of the responses to programme accreditation requests are positive, which shows the low effectiveness of the procedure which continues to generate the majority of the AC's workload. Second, the parallelism between the accreditation and evaluation schemes limits institutional improvement in response to external viewpoints and recommendations. These issues factor into the discussion on the replacement of programme accreditation by institutional accreditation, including considerable modifications to the AC's working methods (Matějů et al. 2009).

The implementation of institutional accreditation has been further exacerbated by the expansion in student enrolments and numbers of degree programmes since the 1990s, with the sector nowadays registering universal access. However, the corresponding discussion misses one fundamental point, i.e. that a changeover to institutional accreditation is possible only on condition that mature institutional internal quality management mechanisms are in place. Empirical evidence on internal quality management mechanisms (Kohoutek et al., 2006; Sojka, Höschl, and Sobota 2007; Chvátalová, Kohoutek, and Šebková 2008) is mixed and inconclusive. In light of the argument for evidence-based policy, an enquiry into the mechanisms of institutional quality management at all HEIs is considered a prerequisite for bringing this discussion to a conclusion. Funding for the enquiry should be secured from the IPn "Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education". Before concluding the debate on institutional

[144] These are EU-ESF funded programmes under the Operational Programme "Education for Competitiveness". The Individual National Programmes are undertaken by and serve the needs of central public administration, i.e. the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

accreditation, the AC should work along the lines of the Moderate Accountability option, and the momentum gained from the changes induced by preparations for the ESG review (especially regular internal evaluations) should not be lost.

8.3.3 Recommendations for Higher Education Development Fund

The Higher Education Development Fund also has a considerable, 18-year history. Unlike the problems of accreditation, the fundamental problems concerning the Fund's operations were resolved in the 1990s, making the HEDF an "all-round" robust instrument in the 2000s. Considered as the "family silver of the Council of HEIs", the HEDF represents a vital instrument for enhancing the educational quality of micro-institutional units (institutes, departments), for which financial resources are often scarce. Specifically, the support for student creative activities within priority G introduces a transformative element, empowering the participating students to affect educational quality where it really matters–i.e. at the point of learning. Given the need for a transformative take on quality in higher education, I argue for piloting an extension of the terms for support within priority G. Priority area G would be newly accessible to students in Master and doctoral programmes, irrespective of their mode of study, with a limit of one application per student per sub-priority. Enhancing the Fund's transformative function as suggested would be worth an increase in administrative costs up to 2.0% of the budget (currently 1.6%), and would be "assured" by the Fund's robust evaluation procedures. Overall, the orientation of the HEDF toward the micro-institutional level is the reason why the thematic overlaps in project support between the HEDF and the DPs have been found irrelevant. This orientation of the HEDF, is, again, not clearly stated in any publicly available policy document. Making the corresponding modifications to the Fund's statute should solve this problem.

8.3.4 Recommendations for Development Programmes

The Development Programmes are a policy instrument that has not yet matured. The contractual funding basis and the support for implementing the Bologna Process priorities (namely the Bachelor/Master structure) cannot compensate for unclarities in the instrument rationale and underdeveloped evaluation mechanisms. To clarify the rationale, the category of decentralised development projects should focus squarely on institutional development at mezzo level (faculties) and at integral level (rectorate) through removal of weaknesses and enhancement of strengths *in line with the goals of the institutional long-term strategy*. No other (ministerial) priorities should be supported within this category. On the other hand, the

category of centralised projects should only support the Ministry's priorities, with or without collaboration among HEIs. The priorities within the centralised category should be stabilised by giving support primarily to four areas: access of students with disabilities and from lower socio-economic groups, quality assurance, internationalisation, and lifelong-learning. The funding mechanisms would remain unchanged, i.e. the centralised category would be supported through targeted funding, with HEIs using the support to their competitive advantage[145]. The funding ratio should start at 70:30 in favour of the decentralised category, but should be amenable to changes depending on the results of ex-post evaluations.

The evaluation mechanisms within the DPs should also be modified, as the DPs show lower accountability orientation at present than the three-times less subsidised HEDF. Under Moderate Accountability, ex-ante evaluations by the Programme Council should use explicit criteria for both decentralised and centralised projects. As there is no major consensus on the approach to ex-post evaluations, I argue for an accountability-oriented solution, combining two evaluators and a final presentation and defence before the Programme Council. The modifications outlined here should help the DPs on their way towards maturation. By differentiating support from the DPs between the faculty/rectorate level and the Ministry, complemented by support from the HEDF oriented at institutional micro-level, a win-win quality enhancement strategy is likely to be achieved.

8.3.5 Recommendations for Platform for disseminating examples of good practice

Put succinctly, any attempt to make the relevant policy recommendations should start from the agreement on what the Platform is, what purpose it should serve, how it should be funded, and whether there should be one Platform or several ones. In this respect, it is necessary to initiate the wider debate than just between the Ministry and academic representatives. As the initial step, I suggest the setting-up of a central information website, bringing together dispersed information on Czech higher education including quality assurance. Through its information function, in the wider sense, the Platform should be instrumental in documenting value for public investments into higher education to prevent the introduction of burdensome on-site quality controls in the future. The funding of the Platform should be secured preferably though IPn "Effective Institutions" (run till May 2012), and the Platform should be set up and administered along the lines of the Moderate Accountability option. The initiation

[145] It is expected that HEIs not capable of obtaining targeted funding for these ministerial priority lines would be forced to fund their development "from their own pocket" in order to remain competitive in the mid and long term.

of a project researching identification and emulation of the examples of good practice in the Czech context, funded from the same IPn, would also be worthwhile.

8.4 Democratising quality

On occasion, implementation research has been labelled as "misery research" (Rothstein 1998). This is because of the tendency of implementation research to concentrate on complex policies that are likely to go wrong when enacted. Following the enquiry into implementation on Czech system-level policy on higher education quality assurance, I consider implementation research more as the matter of seeing the glass either half full or half empty (cf. O'Toole 2000). With regard to the policy in question here, several shortcomings have been identified. The shortcomings owe much to the mistreated relationship between policy design and policy implementation, thus attesting to the trial-and-error approach to policy implementation (cf. Potůček, Vass, and Kotlas 2005). On the other hand, arriving at the stick-carrot-sermon policy after 20 years of a "long night's journey into day", the actors involved may be hopeful for the future, because of the essentially democratic nature of this policy.

Making higher education quality assurance more democratic with implications for future research (Harvey 2009; Marton 2006) is the central message that the thesis wishes to deliver. In democratising system-level, quality assurance policies, accountability should be sought only where it is due. In this respect, Moderate Accountability is the policy option that has a future. Democratic system-level quality assurance policies should allow not only for "accreditation-like sticks", but also for "funding incentive-like carrots" and various types of "sermons" to provide and spread information. By this combination, the pluriformity of stakeholders' interests can be served and win-win solutions can be created. Importantly, allowing for a variety of quality concepts is conducive to the much needed student empowerment in learning. These facets are well represented in present-day Czech system-level policy on higher education quality assurance.

The democratic nature of present-day Czech system-level policy on higher education quality assurance is its biggest asset. In particular, the support for the transformative concept of quality through the Higher Education Development Fund is enough to warrant the Fund's existence. The other three implementation instruments, i.e. accreditation, the Development Programmes, and the Platform, are not such "shining examples of good practice". However, I believe that their identified shortcomings can be ameliorated in the mid-term perspective by following the policy recommendations presented here.

I also believe that the real policy threat lies elsewhere. It lies in making a direct link between quality of higher education and funding of higher education, as stipulated in the latest policy documents of the Ministry[146]. This direct link is likely to cripple the current democratic policy orientation by embedding the rift between quality pulls for a "compliance culture" and for "student improvement". In this respect, fine-tuning of the current policy set-up is preferred to yielding to managerial radicalism and on-the-spot solutions. Direct linkage between quality and funding of higher education should be resisted in order to prevent the following paradox: within a higher education system that has learning as its purpose, quality as demonstrated conformance to accountability requirements is privileged over quality as learning how we can do better towards achieving our purpose (Houston 2010).

It has been an inspiring period of 20 years–let us avoid the implementation of policy paradoxes as much as we can.

[146] See the Long-term Plan of the Ministry for 2011-2015 and the Rules for the allocation of subsidy for education to public higher education institutions.

9. References

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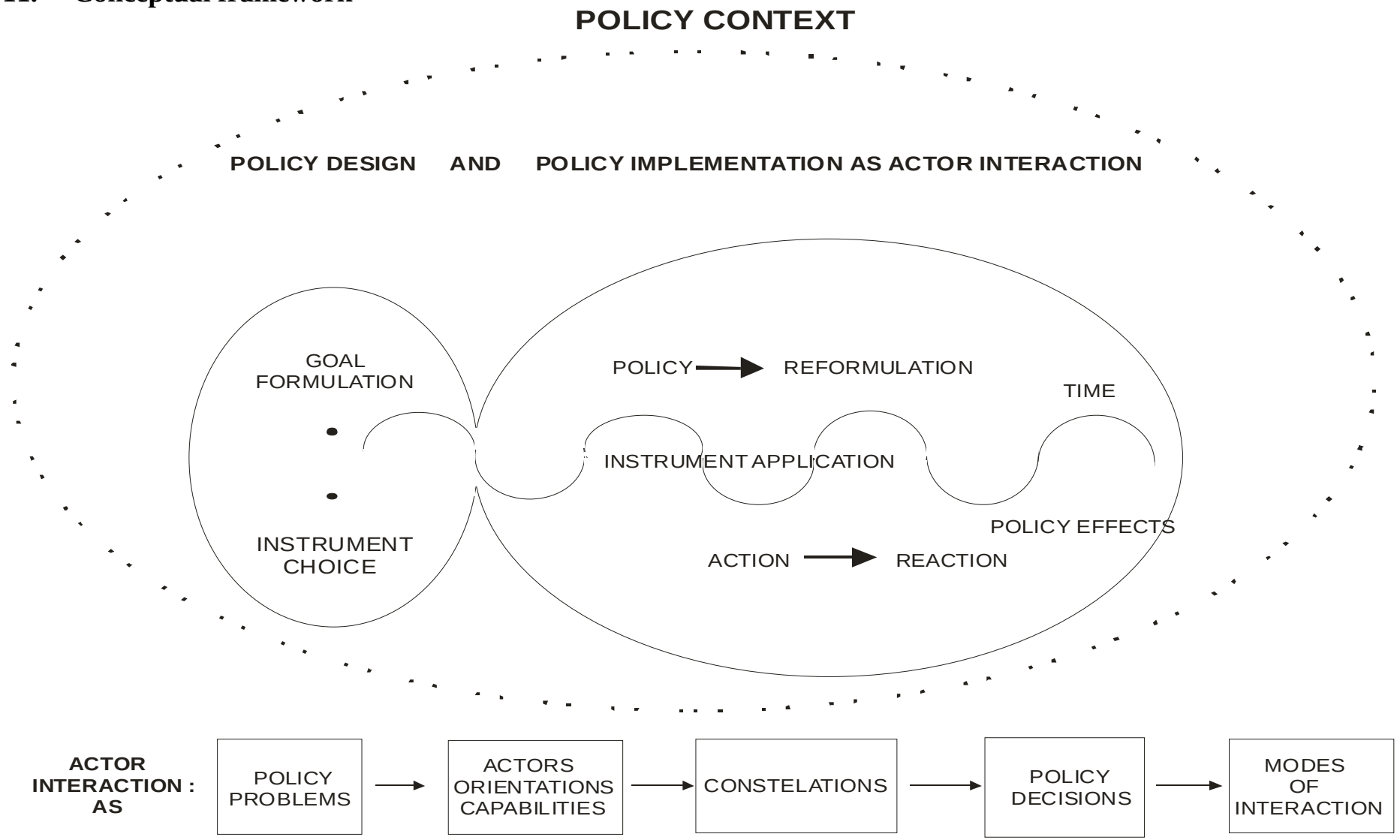
10. List of abbrevitations

AC – Acrreditation Commission
Agency of the Council of HEIs – Agency of the Council of Higher Education Institutions
BPE Platform – The Bologna Promoters/Experts platform
CEE – Central and Eastern Europe
CEEN – Central and Eastern European Network for Quality Assurance
CHES – Centre for Higher Education Studies
Council of HEIs – Council of Higher Education Institutions
CP Declaration – Declaration of the Competitive Procedure
Declaration of the DPs – Declaration of the Development Programmes
DPs – Development Programmes
ENQA – European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQAR – European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education
ESG – Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
HEDF, Fund – Higher Education Development Fund
HEIs – higher education institutions
Higher Education Act No. 172/1990 Coll. – the Act of 1990
Higher Education Act No. 111/1998 Coll. – the Act of 1998
INQAAHE – International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies for Higher Education
Ministry's Plan – Long-term Plan of Educational and Scientific, Research, Developmental, Artistic or Other Creative Activities in the Area of Higher Education
Ministry, MEYS – Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
Platform – Platform for disseminating examples of good practice

11. Conceptual framework



Source: author

12. Annexes

12.1 ANNEX I: Statistical data on four implementation instruments

Table 1: **Accreditation Commission activity 1990-1998**		
Evaluation date	**Faculty**	**Number**
1992-1993	Electrical engineering	4
1992-1993	Math-physics	1
1992-1993	Natural sciences	4
1993-1994	Chemical engineering	7
1993-1994	Nuclear and physical engineering	1
1993-1995	Education	9
1995-1998	Economics	22
1995-1998	Law	3
1996-1998	Engineering	4
1997/1998 *	Medicine	7
From 1992 to 1998	**T o t a l**	**66**

*Evaluations finalised in 1999
Source: author

Table 2: **Accreditation Commission activity 1999-2009**

			1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Activity	**Programme or other**	**Verdict**	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year
ACCREDITATION	Bachelor[1,2]	Yes	23	27	132	721	198	263	250	272	469	598	523
		No	15	9	14	47	69	33	33	53	63	69	62
	Master[1]	Yes	51	31	120	665	480	163	9	38	256	177	96
		No	7	9	5	2	3	1	1	0	0	19	0
	Continuing Master[1]	Yes	0	7	0	645	371	140	235	226	287	403	269
		No	0	2	0	14	37	5	5	25	37	32	43
	Doctoral[1,3]	Yes	151	78	135	485	36	68	214	213	490	654	801
		No	9	5	0	8	2	1	8	8	20	9	37
	Habilitations	Yes	710	N/a	8	8	161	24	19	23	570	32	24
		No	88	N/a	2	0	22	1	0	1	8	0	6
	Professorial appointments	Yes	[6]	N/a	[6]	7	139	19	15	22	527	28	21
		No	[6]	N/a	[6]	1	37	2	0	1	13	1	5
Total		**Yes**	**935**	**143**	**395**	**2 531**	**1 385**	**677**	**742**	**794**	**2 599**	**1 892**	**1 734**
		No	**119**	**25**	**21**	**72**	**170**	**43**	**47**	**88**	**141**	**130**	**153**
APPROVAL	State approval	Received	19	23	22	11	17	6	4	10	8	9	6
		Yes	4	7	9	7	7	4	3	3	3	3	0
	Stand on faculty matters[4]	Received	1	3	5	2	3	0	6	5	6	7	5
		Yes	1	3	5	1	1	0	6	5	3	7	3
	Stand on HEI type	Taken	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	0x	0x	1x	4x	0x	1x
Evaluation	Institutional evaluation[5]		[7]	0	0	0	2	4	6	7	11	9	10
	Evaluation of accred. act.[5]		0	0	0	0	6	4	1	4	1	0	0

N/a – Not available. [1] Including renewal, extension, and limitation of accreditation, [2] Including collaboration of HEI with a tertiary professional school, [3] Including collaboration of HEI with institutes of the Academy of Sciences, [4] Including establishment, merger, amalgamation, division, or dissolution, [5] Only evaluations finalised by the end of the calendar year counted, [6] Included in habilitations, not accredited independently, [7] Finalisation of evaluations started before 1999

Source: author

Table 3: **HEDF: Priority areas 1992-2010**	
Year	**Priority areas**
1992	1. Teacher-training for Roma population, 2. Preparation and establishment of higher education studies in tax and control areas, 3. Teacher-training for foreign-language teaching at primary schools, 4. Implementation of selected projects within the programme "ICT in education", 5. Preparation and further education for basic schools with artistic profile, 6. Development of higher education by programmes in the distance mode of study, 7. Training of graduates with non-teaching specialisation to obtain a pedagogical qualification, 8. Education of handicapped citizens, 9. Establishment of centres of German studies, 10. Training of teachers and management staff in higher education governance.
1993	1. Development of new doctoral programmes, 2. Enhancement of research capacity at HEIs in collaboration with the Academy of Sciences and other research institutes, 3. ICT in higher education and science, 4. Energy-saving in higher education, 5. New areas and interdisciplinary branches of study aimed at human health and environmental protection, 6. Modernisation of artistic higher education studies, 7. Education of handicapped citizens, 8. Education of minorities, 9. Counselling services and centres at HEIs, 10. Training of staff for the social sphere, 11. Development of programmes in the distance mode of study.
1994	1. Newly accredited programmes; new doctoral programmes, 2. Enhancement of research capacity at HEIs (interdisciplinary research), 3. ICT in higher education, 4. Efficiency of HEI economics and management, 5. Human health and environmental protection, 6. Development of pre-graduate and post-graduate studies at artistic HEIs, 7. Development of education- related aspects at HEIs, 8. Widening access to education, 9. Fellowships for visiting professors, 10. Transformation and integration of libraries, 11. Counselling services and centres at HEIs.
1995	1. Development of HEIs, 2. Student creative activities, 3. Development of ICT, 4. Teacher-training, 5. Transformation and integration of libraries, 6. New forms (methods) of artistic and artistic-pedagogical development, 7. Factors influencing quality of life and life-expectancy*, 8. Education of minorities, 9. Humanities and humanisation of higher education studies, 10. Development of laboratories and other places for practical tuition, 11. Fellowships for visiting professors.
1996	1. Development of HEIs, 2. Student creative activities, 3. Development of ICT, 4. Teacher-training degree programmes, 5. Technology programmes, 6. Artistic and creative programmes, 7. Biomedicine programmes, 8. Education of minorities and handicapped citizens, 9. Humanities and humanisation of higher education studies, 10. Development of laboratories and other places for practical tuition, 11. Fellowships for visiting professors, 12. Employability of HEI graduates, 13. Further education of teachers.
1997	A. High-speed information networks and ICT, B. Teacher-training, C. Employability of HEI graduates, D. Support for HEI entrance examinations, E. Transformation and integration of libraries, F. Innovation of degree programmes**, G. Student creative activities**, H. Development and innovation of laboratories, I. Fellowships for visiting professors.
1998	A. Information infrastructure of HEIs, B. Teacher-training, C. Employability of HEI graduates, D. Support for HEI entrance examinations, E. Transformation and integration of libraries, F. Innovation of degree programmes, G. Student creative activities, H. Innovation and development of laboratories, studios and other (experimental) workplaces.

1999	A. ICT at HEIs, B. Teacher-training, E. Libraries, F. Innovation of degree programmes, G. Student creative activities, H. Innovation and development of laboratories, studios and workplaces for practical tuition.
2000	A. ICT at HEIs, B. Teacher-training, C. BA-student internships, E. Libraries, F. Innovation of degree programmes, G. Student creative activities, H. Innovation and development of laboratories, studios and workplaces for practical tuition.
2001	A. ICT at HEIs, B. Teacher-training, C. Bachelor's degree programmes, E. Libraries, counselling and information centres, F. Innovation of degree programmes, G. Student creative activities, H. Innovation and development of laboratories, studios and workplaces for practical tuition.
2002	A. ICT at HEIs, B. Teacher-training, C. Bachelor's degree programmes, E. Information centres, libraries and counselling centres, F. Innovation of degree programmes, G. Student creative activities, H. Innovation and development of laboratories, studios and workplaces for practical tuition.
2003	A. ICT at HEIs, B. Teacher-training, C. Counselling and information centres, E. Libraries, F. Innovation of degree programmes, G. Student creative activities, H. Innovation and development of laboratories, studios and workplaces for practical tuition.
2004	A. Innovation and development of laboratories, studios and workplaces for practical tuition incl. libraries and ICT, B. Teacher-training, C. Counselling and information centres, E. Libraries, F. Innovation of degree programmes, G. Student creative activities.
2005	A. Innovation and development of laboratories, studios and workplaces for practical tuition incl. libraries and ICT, B. Teacher-training, C. Counselling and information centres, E. Libraries, F. Innovation of degree programmes, G. Student creative activities.
2006	A. Innovation and development of laboratories, studios and workplaces for practical tuition incl. libraries and ICT, B. Teacher-training, C. Counselling and information centres, E. Libraries, F. Innovation of study courses, G. Student creative activities for innovation of education.
2007	A. Innovation and development of laboratories, studios and workplaces for practical tuition incl. libraries and ICT, B. Teacher-training, C. Counselling and information centres, E. Libraries, F. Innovation of study courses, G. Student creative activities for innovation of education.
2008	A. Innovation and development of laboratories, studios and workplaces for practical tuition incl. libraries and ICT, B. Teacher-training, C. Counselling and information centres, E. Libraries, F. Innovation of study courses, G. Student creative activities for innovation of education.
2009	A. Innovation and development of laboratories, studios and workplaces for practical tuition incl. libraries and ICT, C. Counselling and information centres, E. Libraries, F. Innovation of study courses, G. Student creative activities for innovation of education.
2010	A. Innovation and development of laboratories, studios and workplaces for practical tuition incl. libraries and ICT, C. Counselling and information centres, E. Libraries, F. Innovation of study courses, G. Student creative activities for innovation of education.

* support for biomedicine degree programmes, ** till present in six sub-areas (technology, arts, bio-medicine, living-nature, humanities and economics, non-living nature)

Source: author

Table 4: **HEDF: Sub-priority areas within priority areas 2009-2010**	
Priority area	Sub-priority
A *Innovation and development of laboratories, studios and workplaces for practical tuition incl. libraries and ICT*	1. establishment, development or innovation of laboratories, studios, and other workplaces for practical tuition and experimental student work with the aim of obtaining equipment, accessories, and other means of technology
	2. establishment, development and innovation of computer rooms, laboratories, studios, and other workplaces for practical tuition, experimental and individual student work with the aim of obtaining ICT technology
	3. development of computer-networks and open-space computer rooms supporting implementation of ICT in educational activities at faculties and HEIs
C *Counselling and information centres*	1. establishment, innovation or extension of counselling centres at faculty or HEI, in the areas of study, pedagogical-psychological counselling, and in the area of project support aimed at disadvantaged groups and persons with special educational needs incl. specification of the impact of the project
	2. establishment and updating of active, web-based electronic services in information centres
	3. solutions to problems causing termination of study
E *Libraries*	1. establishment of digital libraries and institutional repositories in support of educational activities at HEI
	2. use of up-to-date ICT in support of electronic and referential services in libraries and making accessible the instruments for connection and effective use of electronic information resources
	3. use of up-to-date ICT in support of activity and performance measurement of libraries; making of instruments for presentation, assessment, and dissemination of results made by library in the area of study support
F *Innovation of study courses*	1. innovation of technology study courses
	2. innovation of artistic study courses
	3. innovation of bio-medicine study courses
	4. innovation of live-nature study courses
	5. innovation of humanities and economic study courses
	6. innovation of non-live nature study courses
G *Student creative activities for innovation of education*	1. student creative activities aimed at technology study courses
	2. student creative activities aimed at artistic study courses
	3. student creative activities aimed at bio-medicine study courses
	4. student creative activities aimed at live-nature study courses
	5. student creative activities aimed at humanities and economic study courses
	6. student creative activities aimed at non-live nature study courses

Source: author

Table 5: **HEDF: Registered evaluators**	
Year	**Registered evaluators**
2004	**735**
2005	**634**
2006	**854**
2007	**629**
2008	**696**
2009	**678**

Source: author

Table 6: **HEDF: State subsidy 1992-2000**										
Year	**1992**	**1993**	**1994**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**	**2000**	**Total**
Capital/Investment	N/a	N/a	60 000	100 000	120 000	120 000	60 000	81 665	120 000	N/a
Current/Non-Invest.	N/a	N/a	120 000	100 000	80 000	80 000	80 000	80 000	100 000	N/a
Total	**150 000**	**150 000**	**180 000**	**200 000**	**200 000**	**200 000**	**140 000**	**161 665**	**220 000**	**1 601 665**

Source: author

Table 7: **HEDF: Projects funded in priority areas 1992-2000**										
Priority area/Year	**1992**	**1993**	**1994**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**	**2000**	**Total**
ICT (A)	27	59	56	31	26	27	17	39	69	**351**
Libraries (E)	0	0	22	31	10	27	18	24	37	**169**
Laboratories, workplaces (A)	0	0	0	42	55	76	34	52	76	**335**
Teacher-training (B)	38	27	17	35	72	59	47	61	81	**437**
Innovation of courses within programmes (F)	38	218	240	176	207	300	233	264	300	**1 976**
Student creative activities (G)	0	0	0	65	107	143	231	271	239	**1 056**
Counselling and information services (C)	0	19	31	1	0	0	0	0	0	**51**

Fellowships for visiting professors	0	0	22	46	64	75	0	0	0	**207**
Other	10	255	114	18	2	27	25	0	0	**451**
Total	**113**	**578**	**502**	**445**	**543**	**734**	**605**	**711**	**802**	**5 033**

Source: author

Table 8: **HEDF: Subsidy for priority areas 1992-2000**

Priority area/Year	**1992**	**1993**	**1994**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**	**2000**	**Total**
ICT (A)	55 077	58 609	90 567	81 777	57 680	40 171	28 562	37 743	51 875	**502 061**
Libraries (E)	0	0	11 562	12 138	5 825	11 119	6 595	9 170	12 824	**69 233**
Laboratories, workplaces (A)	0	0	0	22 305	49 899	65 887	36 350	43 624	50 414	**268 479**
Teacher-training (B)	28 438	9 040	2 612	3 830	8 239	5 772	4 031	5 515	5 882	**73 359**
Innovation of courses within programmes (F)	15 285	44 232	47 368	32 986	50 049	51 158	37 896	41 679	46 508	**367 161**
Student creative activities (G)	0	0	0	8 962	9 235	13 113	18 783	22 575	21 805	**94 473**
Counsel., information services (C)	0	2 817	3 926	100	0	0	0	0	0	**6 843**
Fellowships for visiting professors	0	0	1 915	3 890	5 182	6 243	0	0	0	**17 230**
Other	37 050	34 111	20 250	30 559	11 891	3 486	3 497	0	0	**140 844**
Total	**135 850**	**148 809**	**178 200**	**196 547**	**198 000**	**196 949**	**135 714**	**160 306**	**189 308**	**1 539 683**

Source: author

Table 9: **HEDF: Grant per institution 1992-2000***

Year	**1992**	**1993**	**1994**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**	**2000**	**Total**
AMU	482	2 140	5 178	6 527	5 785	10 568	6 952	5 327	5 086	**48 045**
AVU	-	300	992	1 116	489	2 044	666	3 726	1 381	**10 714**

ČVUT	24 199	27 600	14 710	8 125	16 736	13 717	12 644	17 810	17 041	**152 582**
ČZU	1 543	3 340	1 146	2 518	1 338	3 517	3 444	3 237	8 622	**28 705**
JAMU	627	2 643	2 209	7 943	6 989	5 716	2 891	2 789	4 706	**36 513**
JU	876	4 998	8 678	7 613	6 784	8 921	3 502	8 518	7 894	**57 784**
MU	5 670	14 126	38 440	50 443	48 074	24 174	12 631	14 548	14 368	**222 474**
MZLU	-	1 122	1 688	4 250	4 743	5 294	2 760	5 878	10 690	**36 425**
OU	2 767	1 165	1 381	3 838	3 148	3 788	1 540	2 699	3 772	**24 098**
SU	1 566	1 512	2 808	844	465	317	1 926	2 622	2 328	**14 388**
TUL	3 361	4 170	3 838	6 183	9 603	9 501	8 434	5 860	10 509	**61 459**
UHK	-	1 182	176	2 339	1 017	1 077	1 178	1 454	1 645	**10 068**
UJEP	2 510	2 763	878	1 755	1 794	3 146	2 259	4 450	4 412	**23 967**
UK	12 045	30 712	40 031	24 206	29 998	34 693	27 732	34 411	29 169	**262 997**
UPOL	3 973	11 461	12 581	13 826	10 981	7 318	3 301	3 486	7 793	**74 720**
UPA	6 598	2 749	2 455	3 667	1 560	3 623	1 668	2 027	2 030	**26 377**
UTB	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**-**
VFU	2 294	1 058	834	5 940	5 226	9 886	8 364	10 518	5 708	**49 828**
VŠB-TUO	12 465	8 219	8 814	9 193	9 149	8 818	5 901	5 556	9 493	**77 608**
VŠE	4 029	2 630	3 255	4 297	2 380	2 121	2 721	1 220	1 150	**23 803**
VŠCHT	-	5 275	8 055	5 036	4 430	7 364	2 490	3 854	3 465	**39 969**
VŠPJ	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**-**
VŠTE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**-**
VŠUP	-	990	910	1 232	1 067	1 498	979	721	983	**8 380**
VUT	11 011	8 103	8 479	9 280	16 335	19 821	16 730	15 671	23 083	**128 513**
ZČU	8 800	11 559	9 526	15 376	9 929	10 027	5 001	3 979	12 647	**86 844**
Total	**104 816**	**149 817**	**177 062**	**195 547**	**198 020**	**196 949**	**135 714**	**160 361**	**187 975**	**1 506 261**

* Not including CZK 33.4 million allocated to other institutions
Source: author

Table 10: **HEDF: Projects per institution 1992-2000**			
	Projects submitted	Projects funded	Success rate (%)
AMU	294	153	52.0
AVU	105	35	33.3
ČVUT	760	359	47.2
ČZU	446	167	37.4
JAMU	259	156	60.2
JU	620	285	46.0
MU	980	446	45.5
MZLU	495	148	29.9
OU	287	113	39.4
SU	138	57	41.3
TUL	386	142	36.8
UHK	288	50	17.4
UJEP	343	155	45.2
UK	2 218	1 094	49.3
UPOL	709	324	45.7
UPA	198	83	41.9
UTB	-	-	-
VFU	311	148	47.6
VŠB-TUO	851	296	34.8
VŠE	157	54	34.4
VŠCHT	305	176	57.7
VŠPJ	-	-	-
VŠTE	-	-	-
VŠUP	83	36	43.4
VUT	907	364	40.1
ZČU	540	204	37.7
Other	3	3	
Total	**11 683**	**5 048**	**43.2 (average)**

Source: author

Table 11: **HEDF: State subsidy 2001-2010**											
Year	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**Total**
Capital/Investment	150 000	150 000	100 000	157 000	157 000	236 488	250 468	244 626	249 531	N/a	N/a
Current/Non-Invest.	120 000	120 000	120 000	123 000	123 000	124 000	110 420	116 262	111 357	N/a	N/a
Total	**270 000**	**270 000**	**220 000**	**280 000**	**280 000**	**360 488**	**360 888**	**360 888**	**360 888**	**334 000**	**3 097 152**

Source: author

Table 12: **HEDF: Grant required and projects submitted per institution 2001-2010**						
	Capital		**Current**		**Total**	
Institution	Requirement	Number of projects	Requirement	Number of projects	**Requirement**	**Number of projects**
AMU	76 019	80	78 451	350	**154 470**	**430**
AVU	35 162	28	7 680	39	**42 842**	**67**
ČVUT	420 706	317	250 336	1 663	**671 042**	**1 980**
ČZU	207 271	183	122 995	1 023	**330 266**	**1 206**
JAMU	39 241	46	47 232	319	**86 473**	**365**
JU	159 771	141	109 400	984	**269 171**	**1 125**
MU	293 071	272	219 707	1 799	**512 778**	**2 071**
MZLU	175 056	145	149 283	1 270	**324 339**	**1 415**
OU	126 859	117	43 627	317	**170 486**	**434**
SU	114 744	92	29 591	254	**144 335**	**346**
TUL	194 638	172	64 006	531	**258 644**	**703**
UHK	93 352	101	36 893	344	**130 245**	**445**
UJEP	131 813	133	54 060	433	**185 873**	**566**
UK	586 133	515	276 163	1 931	**862 296**	**2 446**
UPOL	256 507	218	158 846	1 153	**415 353**	**1 371**
UPA	125 240	123	60 464	468	**185 704**	**591**
UTB	169 911	124	39 607	356	**209 518**	**480**
VFU	146 149	113	69 457	487	**215 606**	**600**
VŠB-TUO	326 048	260	174 668	1 400	**500 716**	**1 660**
VŠE	36 806	42	26 158	212	**62 964**	**254**

VŠCHT	144 357	101	46 232	345	**190 589**	**446**
VŠPJ	12 956	8	5 259	20	**18 215**	**32**
VŠTE	2 871	3	2 198	15	**5 069**	**18**
VŠUP	26 081	28	7 505	39	**33 586**	**67**
VUT	424 098	318	468 496	2 950	**892 594**	**3 268**
ZČU	223 954	212	99 969	830	**323 923**	**1 042**
Total	**4 548 814**	**3 892**	**2 648 283**	**19 532**	**7 197 097**	**23 428**
Private HEIs	1 410	6	183	7	1 593	13

Source: author

Table 13: **HEDF: Subsidy for priority areas 2001-2010**

Thematic area	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**Total**
A	***67 512***	***68 549***	***49 856***	***156 623***	***156 612***	***236 663***	***250 637***	***260 379***	***249 531***	***217 281***	***1 713 643***
B	6 254	4 029	3 803	3 647	3 230	4 462	4 106	3 651	0	0	**33 182**
C	3 072	3 403	2 435	2 073	1 624	853	1 459	1 228	997	916	**18 060**
E1		***9 715***	***5 260***								***14 975***
E2		3 203	3 186								**6 389**
E	16 995			4 028	3 131	3 687	3 924	2 171	1 112	1 171	**36 219**
F1	18 710	19 867	14 942	21 808	22 301	32 982	32 201	31 570	36 511	42 688	**273 580**
F2	7 587	8 437	5 656	6 492	8 802	11 000	6 517	8 970	8 919	7 277	**79 657**
F3	11 227	11 518	9 308	9 869	7 040	7 082	5 273	5 518	5 259	7 257	**79 351**
F4	15 784	16 932	7 428	9 031	8 761	9 900	6 408	5 022	7 800	6 437	**93 503**
F5	7 109	7 488	7 279	9 810	9 638	18 122	14 816	11 576	15 282	16 019	**117 139**
F6			4 025	6 326	5 346	6 934	5 982	4 908	6 066	4 567	**44 154**
G1	10 824	15 260	19 632	19 607	24 822	13 503	13 890	10 062	15 425	16 142	**159 167**
G2	2 593	5 067	4 143	1 847	1 380	582	1 085	885	1 442	1 139	**20 163**
G3	7 584	6 633	8 112	6 074	4 389	3 153	2 057	927	1 556	1 765	**42 250**
G4	14 285	17 746	15 095	11 192	9 704	4 222	4 404	3 566	3 539	2 794	**86 547**
G5	3 349	3 027	3 615	2 540	3 232	1 920	2 954	1 995	1 763	1 581	**25 976**
G6			6 285	5 194	5 196	2 873	2 151	2 588	2 035	1 968	**28 290**

H	***67 703***	***63 896***	***44 299***								***175 898***
Total	**260 588**	**264 770**	**214 359**	**276 161**	**275 208**	**357 938**	**357 864**	**355 016**	**357 237**	**329 002**	**3 048 143**

A, E1, H: capital costs
Source: author

Table 14: **HEDF: Grant per institution 2001-2010**

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
AMU	6 804	9 746	2 274	8 593	5 654	7 676	9 485	6 655	9 670	5 030	**71 587**
AVU	619	1 063	80	1 839	179	192	2 247	1 856	450	328	**8 853**
ČVUT	18 426	16 332	17 195	33 662	37 985	38 097	35 429	38 038	49 937	44 805	**329 906**
ČZU	9 826	7 597	6 903	7 902	13 964	15 763	16 972	15 985	13 505	14 363	**122 780**
JAMU	4 620	4 159	4 596	6 352	3 174	4 721	7 298	4 682	6 095	1 913	**47 610**
JU	10 727	6 228	4 716	10 967	7 686	11 480	9 819	7 371	7 249	8 430	**84 673**
MU	22 724	14 909	19 662	16 656	19 718	26 184	27 797	27 812	23 789	20 359	**219 610**
MZLU	13 182	7 375	10 128	15 553	11 688	17 398	14 163	20 597	17 771	23 350	**151 205**
OU	4 067	9 168	5 516	2 803	5 326	6 921	8 524	10 043	10 288	7 222	**69 878**
SU	4 830	9 063	7 732	6 525	4 871	7 296	9 710	9 303	14 110	10 979	**84 419**
TUL	9 186	11 144	7 616	11 407	10 257	13 006	10 652	17 397	15 635	10 793	**117 093**
UHK	2 218	3 338	1 285	3 738	1 103	5 998	2 175	8 308	3 946	5 306	**37 415**
UJEP	5 498	7 083	4 894	4 690	2 528	3 542	2 714	2 406	6 003	5 436	**44 794**
UK	39 964	38 874	18 612	44 330	23 268	35 608	35 883	25 458	19 265	34 556	**315 818**
UPOL	15 348	12 956	14 923	9 748	13 741	19 704	24 110	19 285	20 953	19 074	**169 842**
UPA	5 262	6 170	3 243	3 779	7 442	7 102	10 268	11 959	10 733	17 198	**83 156**
UTB	4 860	3 596	4 026	2 469	5 047	7 241	7 029	11 323	11 426	3 634	**60 651**
VFU	9 402	15 184	7 538	9 596	9 608	15 132	6 779	4 886	5 035	4 955	**88 115**
VŠB-TUO	16 743	14 949	14 832	14 917	22 346	24 648	25 465	24 353	27 999	14 905	**201 157**
VŠE	5 870	2 834	838	2 465	415	2 567	729	171	894	395	**17 178**
VŠCHT	5 170	6 206	3 291	6 594	10 286	11 940	12 461	12 274	9 340	8 306	**85 868**
VŠPJ						367	1 880	617	3 742	0	**6 606**
VŠTE						0	0	0	76	0	**76**

VŠUP	216	2 040	1 928	145	0	2 050	3 848	298	0	3 259	**13 784**
VUT	28 680	37 908	44 984	41 773	47 156	59 315	56 065	61 716	58 531	48 627	**484 755**
ZČU	16 346	16 148	7 547	9 658	11 766	13 990	16 362	12 223	10 795	15 779	**130 614**
Total	**260 588**	**264 070**	**214 359**	**276 161**	**275 208**	**357 938**	**357 864**	**355 016**	**357 237**	**329 002**	**3 047 443**

Source: author

Table 15: **HEDF: Grant per institution 2001-2010 detail, incl. capital/current costs**										
Year	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**
AMU capital	2 358	4 295	1 230	5 544	0	2 857	5 902	2 910	6 346	2 376
AMU current	*3 988*	*4 359*	1 908	2 999	*5 512*	*4 388*	3 378	*3 628*	3 259	*2 654*
AMU total	**6 346**	**8 654**	**3 138**	**8 543**	**5 512**	**7 245**	**9 280**	**6 538**	**9 605**	**5 030**
AVU capital	415	780	0	1 720	0	0	2 063	1 706	0	328
AVU current	204	95	191	119	179	150	184	150	450	0
AVU total	**619**	**875**	**191**	**1 839**	**179**	**150**	**2 247**	**1 226**	**450**	**328**
ČVUT capital	7 774	9 784	15 738	20 991	26 924	26 252	23 501	26 570	33 144	24 061
ČVUT current	10 107	6 327	6 307	12 222	11 258	11 941	11 796	11 468	16 505	20 587
ČVUT total	**17 881**	**16 111**	**22 045**	**33 213**	**38 182**	**38 193**	**35 297**	**38 038**	**49 649**	**44 648**
ČZU capital	5 209	3 474	2 123	3 440	8 446	11 069	11 745	14 424	9 386	11 858
ČZU current	4 453	3 815	4 858	4 444	5 586	4 691	5 268	1 556	3 798	2 497
ČZU total	**9 662**	**7 289**	**7 071**	**7 884**	**14 032**	**15 760**	**17 013**	**15 980**	**13 184**	**14 355**
JAMU capital	1 848	455	1 251	2 330	0	1 121	5 061	2 076	3 341	359
JAMU current	*2 475*	*2 569*	*2 771*	*3 945*	*3 092*	*3 482*	2 237	*2 386*	2 724	*1 554*
JAMU total	**4 323**	**3 024**	**4 022**	**6 275**	**3 092**	**4 603**	**7 298**	**4 462**	**6 065**	**1 913**
JU capital	5 345	589	358	5 192	2 185	7 896	5 658	4 373	4 992	6 630
JU current	4 544	*6 182*	*4 049*	*5 551*	*5 574*	3 457	3 942	2 997	2 131	1 770
JU total	**9 889**	**6 771**	**4 407**	**10 743**	**7 759**	**11 353**	**9 600**	**7 370**	**7 123**	**8 400**
MU capital	8 176	5 143	9 913	5 980	8 889	16 947	19 588	19 861	17 785	12 718
MU current	*12 330*	*9 291*	*13 342*	*10 298*	*10 656*	8 828	8 053	7 666	5 748	7 342
MU total	**20 506**	**14 434**	**23 255**	**16 278**	**19 545**	**25 775**	**27 641**	**25 527**	**23 533**	**20 060**

MZLU capital	4 259	2 561	3 735	8 018	4 929	10 021	8 583	17 447	13 048	18 269
MZLU current	*7 183*	*4 515*	*7 319*	*8 010*	*6 662*	7 136	5 549	3 147	4 557	4 878
MZLU total	**11 442**	**7 076**	**11 054**	**16 028**	**11 591**	**17 157**	**14 132**	**20 594**	**17 605**	**23 147**
OU capital	1 838	5 769	6 136	1 716	4 079	5 385	7 276	9 195	8 565	6 207
OU current	1 975	2 949	1 216	939	1 129	1 375	1 151	848	1 544	1 006
OU total	**3 753**	**8 718**	**7 352**	**2 655**	**5 208**	**6 760**	**8 427**	**10 043**	**10 109**	**7 213**
SU capital	3 430	6 985	8 698	4 951	4 303	5 838	8 569	8 265	13 055	10 373
SU current	1 276	1 721	1 003	1 578	568	1 346	1 136	1 038	1 008	602
SU total	**4 706**	**8 706**	**9 701**	**6 529**	**4 871**	**7 184**	**9 705**	**9 303**	**14 063**	**10 975**
TUL capital	7 229	9 135	5 934	8 529	7 547	9 906	7 937	15 209	13 309	8 524
TUL current	1 982	1 959	1 658	2 897	2 700	3 020	2 500	2 063	2 373	2 233
TUL total	**9 211**	**11 094**	**7 592**	**11 426**	**10 247**	**12 926**	**10 437**	**17 272**	**15 628**	**10 757**
UHK capital	631	1 318	0	2 470	0	4 768	745	6 511	2 757	4 041
UHK current	1 375	1 870	1 112	1 260	1 003	1 230	1 357	1 797	1 149	1 250
UHK total	**2 006**	**3 188**	**1 112**	**3 730**	**1 003**	**5 998**	**2 102**	**8 308**	**3 906**	**5 291**
UJEP capital	2 686	4 370	7 001	3 469	1 787	1 324	2 037	718	4 719	3 236
UJEP current	2 822	2 565	1 806	1 194	741	2 124	632	1 585	1 236	2 125
UJEP total	**5 508**	**6 935**	**8 807**	**4 663**	**2 528**	**3 448**	**2 669**	**2 303**	**5 955**	**5 361**
UK capital	18 064	20 624	3 084	27 283	13 298	25 067	26 824	19 184	11 879	25 656
UK current	18 413	16 909	19 048	16 332	10 170	10 006	8 690	6 139	7 087	8 645
UK total	**36 477**	**37 533**	**22 132**	**43 615**	**23 468**	**35 073**	**35 514**	**25 323**	**18 966**	**34 301**
UPOL capital	7 235	7 925	12 453	3 449	7 955	11 700	18 150	12 862	14 149	12 130
UPOL current	6 841	4 589	4 944	6 117	5 579	7 769	5 556	6 268	6 605	6 754
UPOL total	**14 076**	**12 514**	**17 397**	**9 566**	**13 534**	**19 469**	**23 706**	**19 130**	**20 754**	**18 884**
UPA capital	3 488	4 536	1 915	1 668	4 818	4 297	7 119	9 503	8 288	13 685
UPA current	1 762	2 137	2 087	2 090	2 696	2 770	2 995	2 484	2 384	3 503
UPA total	**5 250**	**6 673**	**4 002**	**3 758**	**7 514**	**7 067**	**10 114**	**11 987**	**10 672**	**17 188**
UTB capital	3 258	2 617	3 135	1 212	3 401	6 011	5 179	9 798	10 108	3 447
UTB current	2 505	942	812	1 168	1 663	1 112	1 797	1 681	1 248	217
UTB total	**5 763**	**3 559**	**3 947**	**2 380**	**5 064**	**7 123**	**6 976**	**11 479**	**11 356**	**3 664**

VFU capital	4 400	9 985	4 843	6 706	6 546	11 552	4 979	3 135	3 972	4 174
VFU current	4 278	4 787	4 322	3 249	3 167	4 049	1 780	1 697	1 063	781
VFU total	**8 678**	**14 772**	**9 165**	**9 955**	**9 708**	**15 601**	**6 759**	**4 832**	**5 035**	**4 955**
VŠB-TUO cap.	10 499	7 891	13 528	8 586	15 739	17 378	18 844	17 304	20 611	8 590
VŠB-TUO cur.	5 850	6 681	6 326	6 107	6 714	7 125	6 722	6 869	7 383	6 205
VŠB-TUO tot.	**16 349**	**14 572**	**19 854**	**14 693**	**22 543**	**24 503**	**25 566**	**24 173**	**27 994**	**14 795**
VŠE capital	4 708	1 225	188	1 719	0	1 736	280	0	0	0
VŠE current	1 014	1 454	818	606	380	709	*390*	*171*	*851*	*380*
VŠE total	**5 722**	**2 679**	**1 006**	**2 325**	**380**	**2 445**	**670**	**171**	**851**	**380**
VŠCHT capital	2 634	3 881	1 050	5 081	6 543	10 150	10 104	10 649	8 346	6 895
VŠCHT current	2 340	2 179	2 165	1 486	3 613	1 720	2 324	1 625	994	1 400
VŠCHT total	**4 974**	**6 060**	**3 215**	**6 567**	**10 156**	**11 870**	**12 428**	**12 274**	**9 340**	**8 295**
VŠPJ capital	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 624	0	2 941	0
VŠPJ current	0	0	0	0	0	246	256	617	801	0
VŠPJ total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**246**	**1 880**	**617**	**3 742**	**0**
VŠTE capital	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
VŠTE current	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	76	0
VŠTE total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**76**	**0**
VŠUP capital	165	1 361	1 883	0	0	1 669	3 848	0	0	3 049
VŠUP current	51	660	45	140	0	372	0	274	0	210
VŠUP total	**216**	**2 021**	**1 928**	**140**	**0**	**2 041**	**3 848**	**274**	**0**	**3 259**
VUT capital	14 165	19 312	28 459	20 979	20 982	33 403	31 641	39 080	33 002	18 485
VUT current	12 811	17 493	21 339	19 843	26 162	25 532	24 298	22 462	25 368	29 929
VUT total	**26 976**	**36 805**	**49 834**	**40 822**	**47 144**	**58 935**	**55 939**	**61 542**	**58 370**	**48 414**
ZČU capital	10 186	10 891	6 128	5 967	8 241	10 141	13 211	9 543	5 788	12 190
ZČU current	5 627	5 064	3 304	3 869	3 383	3 857	3 029	2 680	4 937	3 473
ZČU total	**15 813**	**15 955**	**9 432**	**9 836**	**11 624**	**13 998**	**16 240**	**12 223**	**10 725**	**15 663**

Source: author

Table 16: **HEDF: Projects obtained per institution 2001-2010**		
Institution	**Projects funded**	**Success rate (%)**
AMU	221	51
AVU	16	24
ČVUT	949	48
ČZU	437	36
JAMU	228	62
JU	459	41
MU	974	47
MZLU	644	46
OU	160	37
SU	159	46
TUL	291	41
UHK	161	36
UJEP	207	37
UK	1 128	46
UPOL	599	44
UPA	256	43
UTB	153	32
VFU	275	46
VŠB-TUO	601	36
VŠE	78	31
VŠCHT	201	45
VŠPJ	11	34
VŠTE	1	6
VŠUP	24	36
VUT	1 595	49
ZČU	420	40
Total	**10 248**	**44 (average)**

Source: author

Table 17: **HEDF: Ex-post evaluation results 2001-2009**

Institution	2001							2002						
	A	**ASM**	**AM**	**ASM+ AM**	**NE**	**NA**	**Total**	**A**	**ASM**	**AM**	**ASM+ AM**	**RIF**	**NA**	**Total**
AMU	17		1				18	17						32
AVU	1						1	1						2
ČVUT	84	1	1				86	84	1	2				72
ČZU	39	1					40	46		2		1		49
JAMU	28						28	23						23
JU	47	4	2				53	61						61
MU	104	6	1				111	102	3	1				106
MZLU	72						72	56		2				58
OU	15	1	1				17	29	1	1		1		32
SU	12	1					13	22		2				24
TUL	25	1	1				27	32	2	1				35
UHK	16	1	2	1			20	17	2	1				20
UJEP	38						38	34	2					36
UK	153	6	15	1			175	165	1	4	1			170
UPOL	54		2				56	45	1	2				48
UPA	14		3				17	24		1				25
UTB	16	2	1				19	15						15
VFU	40						40	54	2					56
VŠB-TUO	56	1					57	79	1					80
VŠE	14						14	13						13
VŠCHT	21						21	23						23
VŠPJ	-							-						
VŠTE	-							-						
VŠUP	1						1	5						5
VUT	106	3	2				111	156	2	2	1			160
ZČU	61						61	49						49
Total	**1034**	**28**	**32**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**1096**	**1152**	**18**	**21**	**2**	**2**	**0**	**1194**

A: Achieved, ASM: Achieved with Reservation on Subject Matter, AM: Achieved with Reservation on Management, NE: Not Evaluated, RIF: Reservation on Institutional co-Funding, NA: Not Achieved

Table 17: **HEDF: Ex-post evaluation results 2001-2009 (continued)**

	2003							2004						
Institution	**A**	**ASM**	**AM**	**ASM+ AM**	**RIF**	**NA**	**Total**	**A**	**ASM**	**AM**	**ASM+ AM**	**NE**	**NA**	**Total**
AMU	12		2				14	21						21
AVU	2						2	2						2
ČVUT	58		2				60	100		23	1	1		125
ČZU	49	1	3				53	41		4		1		46
JAMU	27						27	29						29
JU	43	1	2				46	33				31		64
MU	127	3	4				134	99						99
MZLU	79						79	66	2			10		78
OU	10	1	5		1		17	8						8
SU	13	1	1				15	15	1					16
TUL	24	1			1		26	26	2		1			29
UHK	10						10	0				14		14
UJEP	23						23	17						17
UK	137	1		2	1		141	140	5	6				151
UPOL	47	3	1				51	49		2				51
UPA	22	1					23	21						21
UTB	10						10	14						14
VFU	33	2					35	26						26
VŠB-TUO	56		2	1			59	56	1	1			1	59
VŠE	6						6	8				1		9
VŠCHT	21						21	16		1				17
VŠPJ	-							0						0
VŠTE	-							0						0

VŠUP	3						3	0		1				1
VUT	156		2				158	144	1	1				146
ZČU	36	1					37	41						41
Total	**1 004**	**16**	**24**	**3**	**3**	**0**	**1 050**	**972**	**12**	**39**	**2**	**58**	**1**	**1 084**

A: Achieved, ASM: Achieved with Reservation on Subject Matter, AM: Achieved with Reservation on Management, NE: Not Evaluated, RIF: Reservation on Institutional co-Funding, NA: Not Achieved

Table 17: **HEDF: Ex-post evaluation results 2001-2009 (continued)**

	2005							**2006**						
Institution	**A**	**ASM**	**AM**	**ASM+ AM**	**NE**	**NA**	**Total**	**A**	**ASM**	**AM**	**ASM+ AM**	**NE**	**NA**	**Total**
AMU	15				11		26	24						24
AVU	0		1				1	0		1				1
ČVUT	114	1					115	100	1	1				102
ČZU	56		1				57	49		6				55
JAMU	23						23	26						26
JU	53	1	1				55	21				24		45
MU	107	1			1		109	100	3					103
MZLU	63		2				65	61	1			17		79
OU	13						13	17						17
SU	12						12	16	1					17
TUL	34	1	1				36	34		1				35
UHK	10						10	19						19
UJEP	10						10	22		1				23
UK	80	1	3		1		85	89				14		103
UPOL	55		1				56	70						70
UPA	28						28	29						29
UTB	19						19	17						17
VFU	25		2				27	37						37
VŠB-TUO	67		2				69	68	1					69

VŠE	3				1		4	8	2					10
VŠCHT	24				10		34	21						21
VŠPJ	0						0	1						1
VŠTE	0						0	0						0
VŠUP	0						0	5						5
VUT	179	1	1				181	191		1				192
ZČU	39	2					41	45						45
Total	**1 029**	**8**	**15**	**0**	**24**	**0**	**1 076**	**1 070**	**9**	**11**	**0**	**55**	**0**	**1 145**

A: Achieved, ASM: Achieved with Reservation on Subject Matter, AM: Achieved with Reservation on Management, NE: Not Evaluated, NA: Not Achieved

Table 17: **HEDF: Ex-post evaluation results 2001-2009 (continued)**

	2007							**2008**						
Institution	**A**	**ASM**	**AM**	**ASM+ AM**	**NE**	**NA**	**Total**	**A**	**ASM**	**AM**	**ASM+ AM**	**NE**	**NA**	**Total**
AMU	25						25	21				N/a		21
AVU	3						3	2				N/a		2
ČVUT	82	1	1		3		87	81				N/a		81
ČZU	47		3				50	21				N/a		21
JAMU	20						20	18				N/a		18
JU	39	3		1			43	35				N/a		35
MU	82		1				83	79				N/a		79
MZLU	56		1				57	43				N/a		43
OU	13				1		14	16				N/a		16
SU	19						19	15				N/a		15
TUL	25		1				26	25	1			N/a		26
UHK	15						15	21				N/a		21
UJEP	9						9	15		1		N/a		16
UK	84	1	3				88	60				N/a		60
UPOL	59	3					62	67	1			N/a		68
UPA	27						27	30				N/a		30

UTB	18						18	19		1		N/a		20
VFU	18						18	14				N/a		14
VŠB-TUO	49						49	51				N/a		51
VŠE	4			1			5	3				N/a		3
VŠCHT	21						21	17				N/a		17
VŠPJ	2						2	3				N/a		3
VŠTE	0						0	0				N/a		0
VŠUP	3						3	2				N/a		2
VUT	159						159	137	2			N/a		139
ZČU	38						38	29				N/a		29
Total	**917**	**8**	**10**	**2**	**4**	**0**	**941**	**824**	**4**	**2**	**0**		**0**	**830**

A: Achieved, ASM: Achieved with Reservation on Subject Matter, AM: Achieved with Reservation on Management, NE: Not Evaluated, N/a: Not applicable, NA: Not Achieved

Table 17: **HEDF: Ex-post evaluation results 2001-2009 (continued)**

	2009						
Institution	**A**	**ASM**	**AM**	**ASM+ AM**	**NE**	**NA**	**Total**
AMU	21	1			N/a		22
AVU	1				N/a		1
ČVUT	108	1			N/a		109
ČZU	45				N/a		45
JAMU	15				N/a		15
JU	32				N/a		32
MU	64		1		N/a		65
MZLU	53				N/a		53
OU	14				N/a		14
SU	16		1		N/a		17
TUL	28				N/a		28
UHK	15				N/a		15

UJEP	13		1		N/a	1	15
UK	66	1	6		N/a		73
UPOL	68				N/a		68
UPA	21		2		N/a		23
UTB	16				N/a		16
VFU	12				N/a		12
VŠB-TUO	59	1			N/a		60
VŠE	7		3		N/a		10
VŠCHT	12				N/a		12
VŠPJ	5				N/a		5
VŠTE	1				N/a		1
VŠUP	0				N/a		0
VUT	172				N/a		172
ZČU	43				N/a		43
Total	**907**	**4**	**14**	**0**		**1**	**926**

A: Achieved, ASM: Achieved with Reservation on Subject Matter, AM: Achieved with Reservation on Management, NE: Not Evaluated, N/a: Not applicable, NA: Not Achieved

Source: author

Table 18: **Priorities for DPs 2001-2005**	
2001	1. Programme for development of Bachelor's degree programmes and other demarcated programmes to support implementation of the Bologna declaration; 1. Programme in support of lifelong learning; 2. Programme in support of degree programmes provided by tertiary professional schools in collaboration with higher education institutions (collaboration incl. guarantee of programme quality); 3. Programme in support of international mobility of students from public higher education institutions; 4. Programme in support of development of degree programmes aimed at teacher-training and other education-oriented activities.
2002*	1. Programme for developing Bachelor degree programmes and other demarcated programmes to support implementation of the Bologna declaration; 2. Programme in support of lifelong learning; 3. Programme in support of international mobility of students from public higher education institutions; 4. Programme in support of degree programmes provided by tertiary professional schools in collaboration with higher education institutions (collaboration incl. guarantee of programme quality); 5. Programme in support of developing degree programmes aimed at teacher-training and other education-oriented activities; 6. Programme in support of implementing/extending ICT and ICT-related methods into the educational activities of a higher education institution and its governance; 7. Programme in support of complex solutions to technical requirements set by generally binding regulations/norms of civil service bodies; 8. Programme in support of integration of students with disabilities and for reducing inequities on entry with regard to applicants from socially disadvantaged groups; 9. Programme in support of international student mobility based on international contracts.
2003	1. Programme to support and develop educational activities of public higher education institutions; 2. Programme in support of lifelong learning; 3. Programme in support of international mobility of students from public higher education institutions; 4. Programme in support of degree programmes provided by tertiary professional schools in collaboration with higher education institutions (collaboration incl. guarantee of programme quality); 5. Programme in support of integrating students with disabilities and for reducing inequities on entry with regard to applicants from socially disadvantaged groups; 6. Programme for upgrading the information and technical infrastructure of educational activities and governance at public higher education institutions.
2004	1. Programme in support of structural development incl.: restructuring (BA-MA-PhD) and modularisation of degree programmes,

	development and implementation of new degree programmes in demarcated areas**, projects promoting lifelong learning, support for degree programmes provided by tertiary professional schools in collaboration with higher education institutions, development of ICT and multimedia educational supports, fulfilment of requirements set by generally binding regulations/norms of civil service bodies, support for integration of students with disabilities and for reducing inequities on entry with regard to applicants from socially disadvantaged groups; 2. Programme in support of internationalisation incl.: involvement of higher education institutions in projects supported from the European structural funds, transformation of degree programmes in the field of medicine to meet EU requirements, international student mobility, development of degree programmes in foreign language (esp. English), collaboration of higher education institutions in development and provision of joint-degree programmes, granting of scholarships to talented students from developing countries, development of active involvement of the Ministry in OECD-IMHE and the corresponding activities of higher education institutions.
2005	1. Programme in support of structural development incl.: restructuring (BA-MA-PhD) and modularisation of degree programmes, development and implementation of new degree programmes in demarcated areas**, projects promoting lifelong learning, support for degree programmes provided by tertiary professional schools in collaboration with higher education institutions, development of ICT and multimedia educational supports, fulfilment of requirements set by generally binding regulations/norms of civil service bodies, support for integration of students with disabilities and of reducing inequities on entry with regard to applicants from socially disadvantaged groups; 2. Programme in support of internationalisation incl.: involvement of higher education institutions in EU-funded projects aiming at quality enhancement of higher education, implementation of EU-compatible degree programmes in the field of medicine, international student mobility, development and implementation of degree programmes in foreign language (esp. English), collaboration of higher education institutions in development and provision of joint-degree programmes, development of higher education scholarship programmes for talented students from developing countries, involvement of higher education institutions in the activities of international organisations such as OECD-IMHE; 3. Programme for developing Long-term plans of educational, scientific, research, development, artistic, and other creative activities of higher education institutions and their parts (faculties).

* Priorities 6-9 declared in the second round of calls.

** Such as: teacher-training programmes (incl. personal and professional profiling of students, enhancement of didactic, methodological and practical aspects of tuition), programmes in combined (part-time) mode of study, internships.

Source: author

Table 19: **Priorities of DPs 2006-2010**	
2006	1. Programme in support of structural development and modularisation of degree programmes; 2. Programme for preparing and developing teacher-training programmes; 3. Programme for training and developing human resources; 4. Programme for developing up-to-date technologies; 5. Programme in support of students with disabilities and applicants from socially disadvantaged groups; 6. Programme for developing joint courses of action between higher education institutions and employment partners; 7. Programme in support of internationalisation; 8. Programme for enhancing the quality of governance of public higher education institutions; 9. Programme for enhancing the interest of talented young people in technology and natural sciences.
2007	**Decentralised projects:** 1. Programme in support of internationalisation; 2. Programme for enhancing quality and effectiveness of governance of public higher education institutions; 3. Programme for enhancing the quality of activities of higher education institutions; 4. Programme for developing and innovating degree programmes; 5. Programme for developing and innovating degree programmes for training pedagogical staff and further education programmes for pedagogical staff; 6. Programme for training and development of human resources; 7. Programme for developing joint courses of action between higher education institutions and employment partners; 8. Programme for developing equipment and up-to-date technologies; 9. Programme for enhancing collaboration between higher education institutions and regional education institutions; 10. Programme in support of equal opportunities for higher education entry and study including development of counselling services; 11. Programme for removing weaknesses and enhancing strengths of a higher education institution. **Centralised projects:** 1. Projects undertaken by more than one institution, or by one institution only with project outcomes available to other institutions (availability based on contractual agreement); 2. Projects in support of study conditions for students with disabilities and applicants from socially disadvantaged groups; 3. Projects for enhancing the interest of the talented young people in technology and natural sciences; 4. Projects aiming at reducing social inequities on entry to higher education; 5. Projects supporting the development of degree programmes training civil servants for central/regional public administration in all modes of study (incl. lifelong learning programmes and courses).
2008	**Decentralised projects*:**

	1. Programme in support of internationalisation; 2. Programme for training and developing human resources; 3. Programme for developing equipment and up-to-date technologies; 4. Programme in support of equal opportunities for higher education entry and study including development of counselling services; 5. Programme for development of activities of universities of the third age (U3A) and other types of lifelong learning for senior citizens; 6. Programme for removing weaknesses and enhancing strengths of a higher education institution. **Centralised projects:** 1. Projects undertaken by more than one institution, or by one institution only with project outcomes available to other institutions (availability based on contractual agreement). This priority also supports the development of universities of the third age (U3A); 2. Projects in support of study conditions for students with disabilities and applicants from socially disadvantaged groups; 3. Projects aiming at reducing social inequities on entry to higher education; 4. Centralised projects from past years, in cases when evaluation shows that continuation is practicable; 5. Projects aiming at areas of study with the priority development (identified on the basis of cross-country analysis) i.e. dentistry, civil-service training, teacher-training incl. further education focusing on support for the reform of regional education institutions.
2009	**Decentralised projects:** 1. Programme for developing equipment and up-to-date technologies; 2. Programme for implementing the National Qualifications Framework at institutional level; 3. Programme for evaluating the re-structuring and innovation of degree programmes; 4. Programme in support of mobility of higher education students and staff; 5. Programme for developing projects to be submitted to operational programmes; 6. Programme in support of the socially, economically and health-handicapped youth on entry to higher education, during their studies, and after graduation; 7. Programme in support of the talented students and graduates immediately after successful completion of their of studies; 8. Programme for development of education for senior citizens; 9. Programme for removing weaknesses and/or enhancing strengths of a higher education institution based on a rigorous SWOT analysis of the previous development and current situation. **Centralised projects:** 1. Programme for developing collaboration between higher education institutions in areas of activities which cannot be supported from operational programmes; 2. Programme for developing education in the area of dentistry; 3. Programme for developing projects of Prague-based higher education institutions aiming at priorities not supported by the

	"Adaptability" Operational Programme but which are priorities of the "Education for Competitiveness" Operational Programme; 4. Programme in support of disadvantaged persons on entry to higher education and during their studies including lifelong learning; 5. Programme for development of education of senior citizens; 6. Programme for development of lifelong learning reflecting the requirements of public/state administration and the European Union; 7. Programme for development of collaboration between Czech and foreign higher education institutions in preparing and/or implementing joint degree or double degree programmes**.**
2010	**Decentralised projects:** 1. Programme for developing equipment and up-to-date technologies; 2. Programme in support of international cooperation in higher education; 3. Programme for developing projects to be submitted to operational programmes; 4. Programme in support of socially, economically and health-handicapped young people on entry to higher education, during their studies, and immediately after graduation; 5. Programme in support of personnel development for higher education staff; 6. Programme for development of further education; 7. Programme for removing weaknesses and/or enhancing strengths of a higher education institution. **Centralised projects:** 1. Programme for developing collaboration between higher education institutions in areas of activities that cannot be supported from operational programmes; 2. Programme for developing education in the area of dentistry, engineering and natural sciences; 3. Programme for developing Prague-based higher education institutions aiming at priorities not supported by the "Adaptability" Operational Programme but which are priorities of the "Education for Competitiveness" Operational Programme; 4. Programme in support of disadvantaged persons on admission to higher education and during their studies including lifelong learning; 5. Programme for development of education for senior citizens; 6. Programme for development of education reflecting the requirements of public/state administration and the European Union; 7. Programme for developing collaboration between Czech and foreign higher education institutions in preparing and/or implementing joint degree or double degree programmes; 8. Programme for developing collaboration with higher education institutions in Georgia.

* Also declared as priorities for centralised projects (the declaration of development programmes for 2008 included a total of 11 centralised project priorities).

Source: author

Table 20: **DP: Projects submitted 2001-2010**										
Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Decentralised projects (DEP)	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	283	474[3]	456[4]
Centralised projects (CEP)	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	100	89	135
Total	**1 030[1]**	**1 274[2]**	**1 116**	**840**	**N/a**	**N/a**	**N/a**	**383**	**563**	**591**

[1] Incl. support for development of teacher-training programmes, [2] Out of which: 1088 (1st round), 186 (2nd round), [3] Out of which 90 for Charles University, [4] Out of which 94 for Charles University
Source: author

Table 21: **DP: Projects funded 2001-2010**										
Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Decentralised projects (DEP)	n	n	n	n	n	n	292	275	474	451
Centralised projects (CEP)	n	n	n	n	n	n	48	55[3]	62[4]	88
Total	**584[1]**	**991[2]**	**712**	**729**	**851**	**727**	**340**	**330**	**536**	**539**

n: not distinguished, [1] Incl. support for development of teacher-training programmes, [2] Out of which: 848 (1st round), 143 (2nd round), [3] Out of which: 4 supporting CZE-FRA collaboration, [4] Out of which: 7 supporting CZE-FRA collaboration
Source: author

Table 22: **DP: State subsidy 2001-2010**										
Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Capital/Investment	x	198 339[1]	269 361	255 009	408 808	465 281	386 177	429 616	462 354,5	466 844
Current/Non-Invest.	x	182 204[1]	409 154	588 640	702 808	913 394	800 483	791 489	776 837,5	665 499
Total	**194 819**	**800 448[2]**	**678 515**	**843 649**	**1 111 616**	**1 380 014**	**1 186 660**	**1 221 105**	**1 239 192**	**1 132 343**

[1] Data only for second round, [2] Out of which: 419 905 CZK (1st round), 380 543 CZK (2nd round)
Source: author

Table 23: **DP: State subsidy 2006-2010 in detail, incl. centralised projects (CEP) and decentralised projects (DEP)**					
Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
DEP Capital/Investment	n	370 088	333 208	357 122,5	308 282
DEP Current/Non-Invest.	n	734 102	646 257	637 094,5	514 568
CEP Capital/Investment	n	16 089	96 408	105 232	158 562
CEP Current/Non-Invest.	n	66 381	145 222	139 743	150 931
Costs total	**1 380 014**	**1 186 660**	**1 221 105**	**1 239 192**	**1 132 343**

n: not distinguished
Source: author

Table 24: **DP: Projects per institution 2001-2010**										
Year	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**
AMU	6	7	8	8	5	14	7	7	8	7
AVU	0	1	2	3	3	6	4	5	4	6
ČVUT	17	26	20	80	92	86	27	19	48	82
ČZU	8	22	13	24	46	42	24	17	26	22
JAMU	3	11	11	9	13	17	9	5	7	11
JU	20	36	31	56	78	19	9	9	14	12
MU	80	175	145	30	35	40	26	22	27	25
MZLU	6	9	11	25	34	29	12	14	16	18
OU	24	33	24	14	16	12	10	10	11	12
SU	22	27	29	39	40	13	7	8	10	7
TUL	26	34	17	17	24	18	15	12	11	13
UHK	32	47	15	14	14	13	11	7	9	8
UJEP	23	39	28	28	32	15	12	10	13	12
UK	93	118	78	121	130	105	28	38	112	114
UPOL	56	92	75	40	52	69	18	29	65	32
UPA	23	22	44	26	26	37	12	8	6	8
UTB	9	36	23	20	26	19	8	8	12	11

VFU	9	7	7	9	19	12	7	5	4	6
VŠB-TUO	21	57	41	54	67	57	18	21	47	45
VŠE	39	63	25	41	27	19	14	18	21	17
VŠCHT	1	2	16	24	30	20	16	13	17	18
VŠPJ	0	0	0	0	2	4	3	1	2	2
VŠTE	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	4
VŠUP	0	2	6	3	8	7	3	3	3	4
VUT	12	29	20	20	18	35	21	24	24	23
ZČU	57	83	23	24	14	19	18	16	18	20

Source: author

Table 25: **DP: Grant per institution 2001-2010**

Year	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007***	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**
AMU	1 020	6 581	6 088	10 127	11 745	15 452	13 016	14 549	12 842	13 138
AVU	0	1 607	790	2 197	2 356	2 505	2 761	3 404	2 011	2 591
ČVUT	8 081	52 409	27 890	79 776	99 617	140 779	115 314	119 488	127 582	134 023
ČZU	2 935	26 112	16 431	27 077	42 259	45 338	44 079	51 795	53 746	45 391
JAMU	392	5 173	8 740	4 690	9 406	6 245	6 337	6 356	6 673	6 683
JU	5 664	17 982	14 041	27 986	28 043	37 092	37 666	36 877	33 902	31 975
MU	38 882	102 624	82 106	70 933	94 919	147 475	139 502	167 932	168 617	113 766
MZLU	909	16 169	25 955	31 712	32 674	33 940	28 580	46 439	50 936	44 892
OU	4 064	15 608	12 718	18 440	19 239	22 495	20 377	25 085	25 919	23 228
SU	5 494	12 229	24 590	13 544	13 212	14 892	12 571	15 994	16 307	15 884
TUL	7 625	18 122	8 248	22 051	23 061	25 712	30 582	36 120	31 778	27 805
UHK	5 055	16 736	6 246	12 884	17 589	18 783	15 066	16 242	16 965	14 447
UJEP	3 633	15 305	16 060	18 330	22 146	22 060	22 369	16 853	24 657	19 292
UK	22 113	103 342	105 065	177 511	196 079	338 139	287 171	244 090	251 828	232 733
UPOL	10 328	42 088	31 862	49 423	66 337	68 404	66 898	72 692	72 923	59 324
UPA	6 880	32 007	24 513	18 006	38 195	35 725	31 885	34 808	37 647	32 879

UTB	13 621	70 214	56 485	26 330	59 960	53 190	24 146	23 756	26 213	24 135
VFU	1 395	8 064	12 159	16 921	23 298	16 927	15 468	12 495	12 836	11 498
VŠB-TUO	17 147	59 648	36 240	43 624	86 570	59 556	60 691	58 400	59 068	55 901
VŠE	18 178	67 572	53 817	33 324	36 138	42 810	48 851	46 761	39 232	34 746
VŠCHT	315	7 118	15 053	29 566	33 516	37 172	33 787	29 248	30 352	34 591
VŠPJ	0	0	0	0	12 944	3 539	3 938	1 928	4 067	4 568
VŠTE	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 239	110	1 534	2 441
VŠUP	0	2 103	2 642	2 845	4 463	6 142	2 860	3 756	3 129	4 596
VUT	6 212	61 927	60 975	68 870	97 124	130 109	76 100	83 883	81 761	69 759
ZČU	14 876	39 708	26 769	37 482	40 726	55 533	45 406	52 074	46 657	42 012

Source: author

Table 26: **DP: Grant per institution 2001-2010 in detail, incl. capital/current costs**										
Year	2001	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**
AMU capital	n	3 100*	1 765	1 845	4 640	8 717	5 175	5 260	4 540	4 080
AMU current	n	3 207*	4 323	8 282	7 105	6 735	7 841	9 289	8 302	9 058
AMU total	**1 020**	**6 581**	**6 088**	**10 127**	**11 745**	**15 452**	**13 016**	**14 549**	**12 842**	**13 138**
AVU capital	n	1 607*	0	1 667	551	1 157	1 219	1 775	962	352
AVU current	n	0*	790	530	1 805	1 348	1 542	1 629	1 049	2 239
AVU total	**0**	**1 607**	**790**	**2 197**	**2 356**	**2 505**	**2 761**	**3 404**	**2 011**	**2 591**
ČVUT capital	n	9 734*	9 952	18 956	26 148	39 576	47 015	53 769	51 634	63 225
ČVUT current	n	28 242*	17 938	60 820	73 469	101 203	68 299	65 719	75 948	70 798
ČVUT total	**8 081**	**52 409**	**27 890**	**79 776**	**99 617**	**140 779**	**115 314**	**119 488**	**127 582**	**134 023**
ČZU capital	n	8 247*	1 650	3 952	13 136	9 180	11 605	18 017	18 272	17 890
ČZU current	n	10 757*	14 781	23 125	29 123	36 158	32 474	33 778	35 474	27 501
ČZU total	**2 935**	**26 112**	**16 431**	**27 077**	**42 259**	**45 338**	**44 079**	**51 795**	**53 746**	**45 391**
JAMU capital	n	775*	5 300	1 800	5 914	2 370	1 530	2 150	2 900	1 502
JAMU current	n	2 367*	3 440	2 890	3 492	3 875	4 807	4 206	3 773	5 181
JAMU total	**392**	**5 173**	**8 740**	**4 690**	**9 406**	**6 245**	**6 337**	**6 356**	**6 673**	**6 683**

JU capital	n	7 932*	4 667	10 126	7 832	17 827	17 903	16 380	20 681	12 422
JU current	n	2 267*	9 374	17 860	20 211	19 265	19 763	20 497	13 221[4]	19 553
JU total	**5 664**	**17 982**	**14 041**	**27 986**	**28 043**	**37 092**	**37 666**	**36 877**	**33 902**	**31 975**
MU capital	n	25 603*	26 445	22 900	28 903	60 381	28 946	43 909	42 025	28 878
MU current	n	10 992*	55 661	48 033	66 016	87 094	110 556	124 023	126 592	84 888
MU total	**38 882**	**102 624**	**82 106**	**70 933**	**94 919**	**147 475**	**139 502**	**167 932**	**168 617**	**113 766**
MZLU capital	n	6 982*	20 500	16 185	7 574	10 928	5 527	17 705	26 010	21 587
MZLU current	n	4 835*	5 455	15 527	25 100	21 673	23 053	28 734	24 926	23 305
MZLU total	**909**	**16 169**	**25 955**	**31 712**	**32 674**	**33 940**	**28 580**	**46 439**	**50 936**	**44 892**
OU capital	n	2 500*	2 900	1 720	2 220	3 121	5 382	9 115	8 790	8 925
OU current	n	5 929*	9 818	16 720	17 019	19 374	14 995	15 970[1]	17 129[5]	14 303
OU total	**4 064**	**15 608**	**12 718**	**18 440**	**19 239**	**22 495**	**20 377**	**25 085**	**25 919**	**23 228**
SU capital	n	4 064*	20 460	2 708	360	3 202	2 145	7 525	10 280	8 148
SU current	n	2 145*	4 130	10 836	12 852	11 690	10 426	8 469	6 027	7 736
SU total	**5 494**	**12 229**	**24 590**	**13 544**	**13 212**	**14 892**	**12 571**	**15 994**	**16 307**	**15 884**
TUL capital	n	3 638*	3 000	10 111	9 824	6 210	16 961	22 628	19 344	17 345
TUL current	n	6 892*	5 248	11 940	13 237	19 502	13 621	13 492	12 434[6]	10 460
TUL total	**7 625**	**18 122**	**8 248**	**22 051**	**23 061**	**25 712**	**30 582**	**36 120**	**31 778**	**27 805**
UHK capital	n	3 999*	4 289	2 992	7 138	8 705	4 172	6 418	9 602,5	3 856
UHK current	n	2 588*	4 989	9 892	10 451	10 078	10 894	9 824	7 362,5	10 591
UHK total	**5 055**	**16 736**	**6 246**	**12 884**	**17 589**	**18 783**	**15 066**	**16 242**	**16 965**	**14 447**
UJEP capital	n	6 718*	6 246	2 593	8 390	6 862	14 054	11 250	20 056	12 439
UJEP current	n	1 357*	9 814	15 737	13 756	15 198	8 315	5 603	4 601	6 853
UJEP total	**3 633**	**15 305**	**16 060**	**18 330**	**22 146**	**22 060**	**22 369**	**16 853**	**24 657**	**19 292**
UK capital	n	50 428*	63 148	78 007	71 144	123 721	82 732	49 157	62 475	72 836
UK current	n	19 344*	41 917	99 504	124 935	214 418	204 439	194 933	189 353	159 897
UK total	**22 113**	**103 342**	**105 065**	**177 511**	**196 079**	**338 139**	**287 171**	**244 090**	**251 828**	**232 733**
UPOL capital	n	3 460*	5 000	11 107	23 487	14 961	23 954	27 803	33 664	38 134
UPOL current	n	17 941*	26 862	38 316	42 850	53 443	42 944	44 889	39 259	21 190
UPOL total	**10 328**	**42 088**	**31 862**	**49 423**	**66 337**	**68 404**	**66 898**	**72 692**	**72 923**	**59 324**

UPA capital	n	6 275*	8 200	5 320	22 305	15 624	20 308	26 595	26 362	25 012
UPA current	n	1 895*	16 313	12 686	15 890	20 101	11 577	8 213	11 285	7 867
UPA total	**6 880**	**32 007**	**24 513**	**18 006**	**38 195**	**35 725**	**31 885**	**34 808**	**37 647**	**32 879**
UTB capital	n	2 769*	4 650	5 042	40 711	27 927	14 823	11 364	11 159	14 925
UTB current	n	5 497*	51 835	21 288	19 249	25 263	9 323	12 392	15 054	9 210
UTB total	**13 621**	**70 214**	**56 485**	**26 330**	**59 960**	**53 190**	**24 146**	**23 756**	**26 213**	**24 135**
VFU capital	n	3 200*	8 259	5 430	11 430	8 607	6 428	5 500	8 482	7 667
VFU current	n	2 610*	3 900	11 491	11 868	8 320	9 040	6 995	4 354	3 831
VFU total	**1 395**	**8 064**	**12 159**	**16 921**	**23 298**	**16 927**	**15 468**	**12 495**	**12 836**	**11 498**
VŠB-TUO cap.	n	7 486*	10 500	10 175	45 604	17 615	19 784	23 259	23 417	29 772
VŠB-TUO cur.	n	16 782*	25 740	33 449	40 966	41 941	40 907	35 141	35 651	26 129
VŠB-TUO tot.	**17 147**	**59 648**	**36 240**	**43 624**	**86 570**	**59 556**	**60 691**	**58 400**	**59 068**	**55 901**
VŠE capital	n	7 439*	28 900	10 060	10 642	10 440	8 229	10 187	1 400	4 853
VŠE current	n	15 259*	24 917	23 264	25 496	32 370	40 622	36 574	37 832	29 893
VŠE total	**18 178**	**67 572**	**53 817**	**33 324**	**36 138**	**42 810**	**48 851**	**46 761**	**39 232**	**34 746**
VŠCHT capital	n	0*	3 200	8 420	11 819	15 138	12 205	14 292	13 028	20 180
VŠCHT current	n	7 118*	11 853	21 146	21 697	22 034	21 582	14 956	17 324	14 411
VŠCHT total	**315**	**7 118**	**15 053**	**29 566**	**33 516**	**37 172**	**33 787**	**29 248**	**30 352**	**34 591**
VŠPJ capital	n	0*	0	0	11 225	2 364	1 287	1 387	1 730	2 548
VŠPJ current	n	0*	0	0	1 719	1 175	2 651	541	2 337	2 020
VŠPJ total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**12 944**	**3 539**	**3 938**	**1 928**	**4 067**	**4 568**
VŠTE capital	n	0*	0	0	0	0	540	0	1 200	1 140
VŠTE current	n	0*	0	0	0	0	699	110	334	1 301
VŠTE total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1 239**	**110**	**1 534**	**2 441**
VŠUP capital	n	1 062*	1 200	1 585	3 299	4 155	898	1 362	1 875	599
VŠUP current	n	1 041*	1 442	1 260	1 164	1 987	1 962	2 394	1 254	3 997
VŠUP total	**0**	**2 103**	**2 642**	**2 845**	**4 463**	**6 142**	**2 860**	**3 756**	**3 129**	**4 596**
VUT capital	n	15 613*	23 440	16 008	23 832	30 952	13 200	26 700	28 198	31 939
VUT current	n	11 885*	37 535	52 862	73 292	99 157	62 900	57 183[2]	53 563[7]	37 820
VUT total	**6 212**	**61 927**	**60 975**	**68 870**	**97 124**	**130 109**	**76 100**	**83 883**	**81 761**	**69 759**

ZČU capital	n	15 708*	5 690	6 300	10 680	15 541	20 155	16 139	14 258	16 068
ZČU current	n	1 254*	21 079	15 737	30 046	39 992	25 251	35 935[3]	32 399[8]	25 944
ZČU total	**14 876**	**39 708**	**26 769**	**37 482**	**40 726**	**55 533**	**45 406**	**52 074**	**46 657**	**42 012**

n: not distinguished

* Costs only for second round

[1] Incl.1 CZE-FRA collaboration project, [2] Incl. 1 CZE-FRA collaboration project, [3] Incl. 2 CZE-FRA collaboration projects, [4] Incl. 1 CZE-FRA collaboration project, [5] Incl. 1 CZE-FRA collaboration project, [6] Incl. 1 CZE-FRA collaboration project, [7] Incl. 1 CZE-FRA collaboration project, [8] Incl. 3 CZE-FRA collaboration projects.

Source: author

12.2 ANNEX II: Semi-structured interviews (sources)

List of respondents interviewed		
Name	**Institutional affiliation/specialisation**	**Date**
Arnošt Veselý	Charles University, higher education policy analyst	16 July 2010
František Ježek	University of West Bohemia, higher education policy analyst	4 June 2010
Helena Šebková	CHES, higher education policy analyst	26 May 2010
Iva Ritschelová	University of Jan Evangelista Purkyně, rector	28 May 2010
Jan Krejčí	MEYS, member of Committee of HEDF	27 May 2010
Jiří Smrčka	Accreditation Commission, head of secretariat	21 May 2010
Josef Beneš	CHES, higher education policy analyst	27 May 2010
Petr Zemánek	Charles University, chair of Committee of HEDF, member of Programme Council	27 May 2010
Stanislav Štech	Charles University, vice-rector for institutional development	26 May 2010
Václav Vinš	MEYS, chair of Programme Council	3 June 2010
Věra Šťastná	MEYS, Department of Higher Education	3 June 2010
Vladimíra Dvořáková	Accreditation Commission, chair	19 May 2010

Source: author

Matrix for interviews							
Nástroj				**FRVŠ**	**RP**	**Akreditace**	**Platforma**
FRVŠ	***Pojetí***	Silné stránky	v relaci na	Překryv tematických okruhů (A,C,E) s RP Rektorátní projekty A Limity při podání			
		Slabé stránky					
	Organizace	Silné stránky	v relaci na	Ex-ante hodnocení Výborem Ex-post hodnocení (posudky a ZOŘ)			
		Slabé stránky					
	Výsledky a dopad	Silné stránky	v relaci na	Výsledky „na papíře“ vs. realita			
		Slabé stránky					
RP	***Pojetí***	Silné stránky	v relaci na		Dec. Projekty (DEP) (kategorie „volná“) Cen. Projekty (CEP) Jak dělba rozpočtu		
		Slabé stránky					
	Organizace	Silné stránky	v relaci na		Ex-ante hodnocení DEP Ex-post hodnocení		
		Slabé stránky					
	Výsledky a dopad	Silné stránky	v relaci na		Výsledky „na papíře“ vs. realita		
		Slabé stránky					
Akreditace	***Pojetí***	Silné stránky	v relaci na			Akreditace programů vs. hodnocení akred. činností Rozpočet (i Sekret.) „Strategie“ pro profesury a habilitace	
		Slabé stránky					
	Organizace	Silné stránky	v relaci na			Složení AK Profesionalizace Elektronizace	
		Slabé stránky					
	Výsledky a dopad	Silné stránky	v relaci na			Programová vs. institucionální akred. Prezentace výsledků	
		Slabé stránky					
Platforma	***Pojetí***	Silné stránky	v relaci na				Funguje? Bologna Experts
		Slabé stránky					
	Organizace	Silné stránky	v relaci na				Využití expertních, závěreč. zpráv, PPT Elektronizace
		Slabé stránky					
	Výsledky a dopad	Silné stránky	v relaci na				Využití pro FRVŠ, RP, akreditaci Součást webu AK?
		Slabé stránky					

Source: author

12.3 ANNEX III: Delphi on Czech higher education quality assurance

Table 1: **Experts invited to participate in Delphi on Czech higher education quality assurance**

Name	**Affiliation**
Alena Chvátalová	academe
Aleš Vlk	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
Arnošt Veselý	academe
Barbara Köpplová	academe
Eva Pasáčková	academe
Eva Stuchlíková	academe
František Ježek	academe
František Kalvas	student
František Koliba	academe
František Ochrana	academe
František Sehnal	academe
Helena Šebková	Centre for Higher Education Studies
Irena Karlová	student
Iva Ritschelová	academe
Ivana Kraftová	academe
Jakub Fisher	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
Jan Hálek	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
Jan Krejčí	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
Jaroslav Kalous	academe
Jiří Smrčka	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
Josef Beneš	Centre for Higher Education Studies
Josef Jettmar	academe
Karel Rais	academe
Karel Šima	Centre for Higher Education Studies
Lenka Valová	academe

Libor Prudký	Centre for Higher Education Studies
Marek Hodulík	student
Martin Nekola	student
Martin Potůček	academe
Miroslav Jašurek	student
Pavel Höschl	academe
Petr Matějů	Institute for Social and Economic Analyses
Petr Pabian	Centre for Higher Education Studies
Petr Zemánek	academe
Renata Kysilková	student
Stanislav Štech	academe
Václav Vinš	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
Věra Šťastná	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
Vladimír Roskovec	Centre for Higher Education Studies
Vladimíra Dvořáková	academe

Note: 19 out of 40 experts as participants in the first round, 15 out of 19 experts as participants in the second round.
Source: author

Table 2: **Delphi on Czech policy on higher education quality assurance: 1st round results**

O	CH 1		CH 2		CH 3		CH 4		CH 5		CH 6		CH 7		CH 8		CH 9		CH 10		CH 11	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
A	5	26.3	4	21.1	4	21.1	12	63.2	4	21.1	12	63.2	8	42.1	10	52.6	5	26.3	5	26.3	5	26.3
B	9	47.4	4	21.1	7	36.8	5	26.3	12	63.2	4	21.1	5	26.3	7	36.8	12	63.2	5	26.3	9	47.4
C	3	15.8	10	52.6	7	36.8	2	10.5	2	10.5	3	15.8	3	15.8	0	0.0	1	5.3	6	31.6	2	10.5
N	2	10.5	1	5.3	1	5.3			1	5.3			3	15.8	2	10.5	1	5.3	3	15.8	3	15.8

O – option, CH – instrument characteristics, No – number of answers, % – percentage (out of 100%), N – not any of A, B, C options

O	CH 12		CH 13		CH 14		CH 15		CH 16		CH 17		CH 18		CH 19		CH 20		CH 21		CH 22	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
A	8	42.1	5	26.3	9	47.4	8	42.1	1	5.3	2	10.5	10	52.6	5	26.3	5	26.3	5	26.3	7	36.8
B	7	36.8	11	57.9	6	31.6	7	36.8	6	31.6	10	52.6	6	31.6	8	42.1	10	52.6	12	63.2	9	47.4
C	1	5.3	0	0.0	1	5.3	1	5.3	12	63.2	7	36.8	2	10.5	5	26.3	3	15.8	1	5.3	2	10.5
N	3	15.8	3	15.8	3	15.8	3	15.8					1	5.3	1	5.3	1	5.3	1	5.3	1	5.3

O	CH 23		CH 24		CH 25	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
A	11	57.9	13	68.4	8	42.1
B	6	31.6	4	21.1	9	47.4
C	2	10.5	2	10.5	2	10.5
N						

Source: author

Table 3: **Delphi on Czech policy on higher education quality assurance: 2nd round results**

O	CH 1		CH 2		CH 3		CH 4		CH 5		CH 6		CH 7		CH 8		CH 9		CH 10		CH 11	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
A	3	20.0	3	20.0	4	26.7	8	53.3	5	33.3	9	60.0	12	80.0	6	40.0	3	20.0	2	13.3	2	13.3
B	8	53.3	3	20.0	5	33.3	4	26.7	9	60.0	4	26.7	2	13.3	9	60.0	12	80.0	8	53.3	10	66.7
C	2	13.3	9	60.0	6	40.0	3	20.0	1	6.7	2	13.3	1	6.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	26.7	2	13.3
N	2	13.3																	1	6.7	1	6.7

O – option, CH – instrument characteristics, No – number of answers, % – percentage (out of 100%), N – not any of A, B, C options

O	CH 12		CH 13		CH 14		CH 15		CH 16		CH 17		CH 18		CH 19		CH 20		CH 21		CH 22	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
A	6	40.0	2	13.3	7	46.7	9	60.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	10	66.7	5	33.3	3	20.0	3	20.0	9	60.0
B	7	46.7	12	80.0	7	46.7	4	26.7	4	26.7	10	66.7	4	26.7	6	40.0	10	66.7	11	73.3	6	40.0
C	1	6.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	6.7	11	73.3	5	33.3	1	6.7	4	26.7	2	13.3	1	6.7	0	0.0
N	1	6.7	1	6.7	1	6.7	1	6.7														

O	CH 23		CH 24		CH 25	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
A	12	80.0	13	86.7	3	20.0
B	3	20.0	2	13.3	12	80.0
C	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
N						

Source: author

Table 4: **Factor analysis of Delhi results: 1st round**

CHARACTERISTICS	COMPONENT		
	1	2	3
Administration of Platform (CH 24)	,856	,098	-,001
Ex-post evaluation in DPs (CH 20)	,817	,196	-,209
Ex-ante evaluation in DPs (CH 19)	,745	,266	-,081
Ex-post evaluation in HEDF (CH 12)	,724	,123	,165
Funding of Platform (CH 25)	,688	,040	,180
Budget of HEDF (CH 15)	-,596	,285	-,152
Composition of AC (CH 1)	-,530	,292	-,025
Training of AC members (CH 7)	,298	,234	,258
Standing work groups of AC (CH 5)	-,532	-,728	-,178
Focus of DPs decentralised projects (CH 17)	-,016	-,716	-,233
Presentation of DPs results (CH 21)	,130	,709	,001
Presentation of AC results (CH 8)	-,222	,671	-,182
Habilitations/professorial appointments (CH 3)	,472	,634	,072
Terms of DPs grant support (CH 16)	-,043	-,573	,488
Type of accreditation (CH 2)	,504	-,531	-,014
Focus of DPs centralised projects (CH 18)	-,130	,488	,098
Presentation of HEDF results (CH 13)	,222	,392	,304
Terms of HEDF grant support (CH 10)	-,242	-,390	,785
Ex-ante evaluation in HEDF (CH 11)	,156	,366	,774
Guarantors of programme quality (CH 4)	,021	,229	,755

Formulation of HEDF priory areas (CH 14)	,186	,317	-,696
Budget of AC (CH 9)	-,152	-,199	-,630
Form of Platform (CH 23)	,535	-,011	,548
Budget of DPs (CH 22)	-,461	,157	-,484
Institutional evaluation (CH 6)	-,105	-,161	-,222

Source: author

Table 5: **Factor analysis of Delhi results: 2nd round**

CHARACTERISTICS	COMPONENT		
	1	2	3
Ex-post evaluation in DPs (A20)	,823	,077	-,226
Ex-ante evaluation in DPs (A19)	,752	,234	,217
Composition of AC (A1)	-,741	-,015	-,129
Guarantors of programme quality (A4)	,709	,159	,171
Type of accreditation (A2)	,708	-,357	,069
Ex-post evaluation in HEDF (A12)	,607	,336	,210
Budget of DPs (A22)	-,603	,465	-,195
Standing work groups of AC (A5)	-,584	-,365	-,222
Ex-ante evaluation in HEDF (A11)	,429	-,116	,426
Budget of HEDF (A15)	-,147	,866	,069
Presentation of AC results (A8)	,189	,750	,052
Focus of DPs centralised projects (A18)	-,038	,718	-,357
Funding of Platform (A25)	,520	-,712	,094

Institutional evaluation (A6)	,131	,582	,172
Presentation of HEDF results (A13)	,547	,572	,032
Habilitations/professorial appointments (A3)	,223	,547	,167
Presentation of DPs results (A21)	,414	,426	-,025
Terms of HEDF grant support (A10)	,273	,018	,814
Training of AC members (A 7)	,024	,043	,813
Form of Platform (A23)	,121	,525	,757
Focus of DPs decentralised projects (A17)	,205	,430	,695
Budget of AC (A9)	,103	,522	-,632
Formulation of HEDF priory areas (A14)	-,123	-,122	-,622
Administration of Platform (A24)	-,246	-,378	,609
Terms of DPs grant support (A16)	,177	-,042	,573

Note: the characteristics forming Factor 1 (approaches to evaluation incl. quality of tuition), Factor 2 (presentation of results), and Factor 3 (conceptual matters affecting non-regulatory instruments) are given in yellow, orange, and red.
Source: author