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“The European Union is made up of 28 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 60 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms.

The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders”.

The Twinning project is implemented by the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC), the Estonian Higher Education Quality Agency (EKKA) and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan and funded by the European Union with a budget of 1.3 million Euro.



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TWINNING PROJECT

“Support to the Ministry
of Education of the Republic of
Azerbaijan for Further Adherence of
the Higher Education System to the
European Higher Education Area”

AZ/14/ENP/OT/31



Support to the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan for Further Adherence of the Higher Education System to the European Higher Education Area

The EHEA Twinning project is now progressing at full speed after successful first year. The project has analysed the present state of affairs and provided workshops and training sessions for 550 teachers, administrators and education experts from the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan and higher education institutions. The trainings have focused on enhancing knowledge and skills for quality assurance, assessment of learning outcomes and adopting qualification framework. One-week study visit to Helsinki and Tallinn in June 2016 was part of training Azerbaijani experts for quality assurance. The project's homepage (www.ehea.edu.az) disseminates information and knowledge on the European Higher Education Area and promotes networking between and within higher education institutions.

Second year shall focus on producing recommendations on embedding European quality instruments in Azerbaijani higher education.

Recommendations will be prepared on national standards and guidelines, quality-enhancing evaluation, research-based teaching, learning outcomes and national qualification framework. The project works closely with the newly-established Accreditation and Nostrification Office supporting the development of accreditation and quality assurance. Adoption of Azerbaijan National Qualification Framework (AzQF) is entering its final stage. Recommendations concerning institutional arrangements for improving communication, networking and coordination of international cooperation and higher education reforms are under preparation.



Concrete results in four areas:

- **Developing Azerbaijani standards and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education** in line with the European Standards and Guidelines and testing them in Azerbaijani universities.
- **Developing Azerbaijani Qualifications Framework** higher education sections in line with the European Qualification Framework in higher education.
- **Increasing the coordination and networking capacity of the Ministry of Education**, higher education institutions and stakeholders on the basis of good practice examples in Europe.
- **Making concrete recommendations for adapting legislation** relevant to quality assurance and higher education in Azerbaijan.



Twinning project is producing recommendations for Azerbaijani Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance in higher education (AzSG) together with Azerbaijani experts. The project will train pilot universities to make self-evaluation in autumn 2016. Joint Azerbaijani – European evaluation teams will make test evaluations using Draft Azerbaijani Standards and Guidelines in three pilot universities in spring 2017. Finnish, Estonian and Azerbaijan experts will prepare final recommendations for Azerbaijani Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance in higher education on the basis of the experiences from pilot universities' evaluations.

The EU-Azerbaijan Twinning project in a nutshell:

Objective: Enhance Azerbaijan's higher education through increased integration into the EHEA.

Purpose: Increase the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Education and higher education institutions.

Project partners: the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) and the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (EKKA).

Budget: Project is funded by the EU with a total budget of 1,3 M€, providing 470 expert days for Finnish and Estonian experts in Azerbaijan and study visits and internships for Azerbaijan experts in EU member states.

Duration: Two years, from September 2015 up to August 2017.

Key actors:

- **Project Leaders:** Ms. Helka Kekäläinen, the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre, Ms. Heli Mattisen, the Estonian Higher Education Quality Agency and Mr. Emin Amrullayev, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan.
- **EHEA Twinning Office:** Mr. Reijo Aholainen, Resident Twinning Adviser (RTA); Ms. Aytaj Atakishiyeva, RTA Assistant; and Mr. Tarlan Arzumanov, Language Assistant.
- **RTA Counterpart:** Mr. Tofiq Ahmadov, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan.
- **Project Steering Committee** consists of representatives of project partners, EU Delegation, PAO and RTA.