



Higher Education Institutional Reforms in Poland

1. Polish Rectors Foundation and Institute of Knowledge Society
2. Institutional reforms in higher education system in Poland
3. What has been done?
4. The nearest future

Prof. Jerzy Woźnicki
Polish Rectors Foundation



Polish Rectors Foundation Institute of Knowledge Society



2

- In 2001, the group of 100 rectors of Polish universities – acting as citizens, established the Polish Rectors Foundation. Its mission is to act for the benefit of the system of education, science and culture in Poland, with special emphasis on higher education.
- In 2003, the Polish Rectors Foundation and the Consortium of Non-State Higher Education Institutions jointly set up the Institute of Knowledge Society. The mission of the Institute is to carry out analytical studies and research work on the system of higher education and scientific research, and on educational, scientific and innovation policy of the State.
- Both institutions act together for the benefit of the society, realizing *pro publico bono* their objective of supporting the development of the knowledge society and knowledge-based economy.



Institutional reforms

New act on higher education



3

- The new Act on Higher Education was enacted on July 27, 2005, to facilitate institutional reforms
- The academic community actively participated in its drafting, represented primarily by the representatives of Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland, but also by the Central Council of Higher Education, the State Accreditation Committee and the Parliament of the Students of the Republic of Poland.



Highlights of the new law



4

1. The role of the state and the scope of state responsibility in the higher education system was defined while asserting the autonomy of higher education institutions. The state is to perform a regulatory and supervisory role, among others, and must assure the quality of state diplomas.



Highlights of the new law



5

2. Concepts and regulations applicable to higher education studies (three-stage studies) were made more flexible and adapted to requirements of the Bologna Process;
3. The concept of standards as sets of teaching rules (instead of lists of lectures) was introduced.



Highlights of the new law



6

4. The rules of state financing of public and non-public higher education institutions were defined. Non-public institutions were given greater access to public funding without altering the existing constitutionally-sanctioned differences in ownership status among the various educational institutions. The goal is to make:
 - § all the full-time programmes free of charge (in both public and non-public higher education institutions)
 - § all the part-time programmes are financed by student's fees (in both public and non-public higher education institutions)



Highlights of the new law



7

5. Significant steps were made towards the convergence of the public and non-public sectors in the higher education system.
6. Conditions were created for greater variety of higher education institutions while increasing the role of their statutes as sources of law in the higher education system.



What has been done?



8

- The minister has issued some 40 ordinances by the end of 2007.
- The new ordinances herald significant changes in the higher education system — because some of them are indeed new. Poland is avoiding the situation whereby old ordinances effectively neutralize new initiatives by legislators.



Forthcoming national reforms



9

- Acceleration of the institutional consolidation of higher education institutions
 - „from small HEIs to universities”
- Effective solutions for greater mobility and internationalisation of polish higher education system
- Introduction of national qualifications framework on the basis of European Qualifications Framework as a way to define teaching standards.