



**European University Association (EUA)
Institutional Evaluation Programme**

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN UNIVERSITY

EUA EVALUATION REPORT

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Introduction:

The *Eastern Mediterranean University*, set up in 1986 on the basis of an Institute of Higher Technology created in Famagusta in 1979, has followed closely the development of the Institutional Evaluation Programme for the last few years. However, it was only in 2006, after EMU joined the EUA, that Rector *Halil Güven* asked the association to evaluate his institution, the main academic provider in the northern part of the island of Cyprus.

Set up in 1994, the institutional evaluation programme has already assessed more than 150 institutions of higher education in some 35 countries, in Europe and beyond. Its aim: to help university leadership teams – especially in EUA member universities - to understand the capacity for change of their own institutions. The process is based on a self-evaluation report assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the latter, a document intended to point to areas of possible transformation, for the university to meet the challenges linked both to its role in society and to the evolution of science and pedagogy. This report is then tested and validated by a team of outside experts, usually rectors or former rectors of European universities that have undergone a similar mirroring exercise. This explains the specificity of the EUA programme, i.e. to offer a supportive review of the process of institutional development as seen through the eyes of peers and colleagues rather than a judgement by auditors of the inherent quality of university activities. After two visits to the institution under review, the group of peers submits a report to the university assessing the situation and offering recommendations for enhancing its capacity to change. This is the present document.

The Steering Committee in charge of the programme appointed the following as members of the review team for the Eastern Mediterranean University: *professor Ferdinand Devinsky* - as chair -, the former Rector of Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia, and – as members – *professors Aine Hyland* and *Bertrand Weil*, respectively the former Vice-Presidents of the University of Cork, Ireland, and of Université Paris-12 Val de Marne, France. At the request of the assessed university, a student joined the group of academic peers, on behalf of ESIB, the national unions of students in Europe: *Bastian Baumann* is a graduate student in law from the Free University of Berlin, also studying higher education at the University of Kassel, Germany. *Dr. Andris Barblan*, former Secretary General of EUA and CRE, now in charge of the Magna Charta Observatory for fundamental university values and rights in Bologna, was asked to act as the team secretary.

The team made a preliminary visit to Famagusta on Monday 18 and Tuesday 19 December 2006 to validate the findings of the self-evaluation report. This is a comprehensive, informative, complex, well-organised and dense document of some 35 pages outlining a rather difficult situation – several appendices illustrating, with position papers, graphs and figures, the development of the university over the past few years. To complete their understanding of the situation, the group asked for some complementary data that was received in time for the main visit, (12 to 14 March 2007) in order to assess the institution's potential for change.

In the two visits, the EUA group of experts discussed the university situation with:

- *leaders and students* from **six faculties and schools** (the faculties of arts and sciences, engineering, law, education, business and the English Preparatory School – that is of special importance in an English teaching institution);
- *representatives* of **outside society** (the mayor of Famagusta, the president of the Chamber of Commerce, the chair of YÖDAK, the Higher Education Council for North Cyprus, as well as the President and some members of EMU Board of Trustees – for instance architects, builders and physicians committed to enlarging the university's role in the region).

There were also intense discussions with the **University leadership**: the Rector, his team and the self-evaluation team; with the key officials in the university administration in charge of accounting, quality monitoring or staff development; and last, but not least the students and staff organisations also active in institutional decision-making. The more than 250 people met by the EUA team showed vivid interest in discussing the future and potential of their university, **the oldest and largest on the island of Cyprus**. Despite a rather difficult situation characterised by the scarcity of resources, political isolation and the complexity of on-going changes, within and outside the institution, most EUA interlocutors showed keen interest in the specificity of an institution that has gambled from the first on developing a comprehensive range of studies to attract a wide audience of students well beyond Cypriot borders - as the Eastern Mediterranean reference of its name indicates. These many encounters were efficiently organised by *Mehmet Altınay*, the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, and his colleague at the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, *Nazmi Buldanlıoğlu*, who proved most professional in ensuring the best conditions for board and lodging – social programme included. The team would like to thank them, their staff and the many members of the university who received the EUA team for their willingness to help as well as their gracious hospitality.

The context of the evaluation

The environment: the city of Famagusta, on its southern side, borders the *Green Line* that cuts the island of Cyprus into two parts, Turkish-speaking in the North, Greek-speaking in the South. The Green Line, in fact, is a buffer zone a few kilometres wide, a no man's land where the neighbouring town of Varosha (Maras) is a ghost city that was abandoned some thirty years ago. In everyday life, this frontier means different electrical grids, different transportation systems, different economies, i.e., a real breakdown of relations between northern and southern Cypriots – who are all citizens of the European Union however, since the island, in May 2004, joined the EU as a whole.

The moment: the Annan plan, accepted by the Northern Cypriots but rejected by the Southern Cypriot majority in April 2004, represented the latest and, in our opinion, missed opportunity to face the obvious – two communities - by offering political legitimacy to all parts of the island. However, the wall that had divided for decades the main thoroughfare in old Nicosia was demolished in March 2007 – perhaps a sign of growing exchanges between the people of the island. As far as the academic community is concerned, **the European Higher Education Area** has also become the reference for possible integration into an international environment of real scope. This is true for the two communities. Anyway, considering that the Republic of Cyprus joined **the European Cultural Convention** in 1969 (when the island was still one entity), which legitimises an **inclusion in the Bologna process**, the Turkish minority contends that it has been brought into the agreement *de facto*, all the more so as the Constitution of 1960 devolved power to the two communities as far as education and culture were concerned, like in most federal states. As a result, North Cyprus is asking the London conference of Ministers of Education in May 2007 to recognise that matter as a fact justifying the official inclusion of its institutions of higher education into the Bologna process towards 2010 and the finalisation of the European Higher Education Area.

Constraints and institutional norms

For the evaluation group, *constraints* are the elements given by the situation that the institution must take into account – with little chance to change them, in the near future at least. Obvious ones are the **scarcity of resources**; others are more hidden and perhaps more

important in terms of institutional capacity for change as they reflect the **mentality and culture** of the region and its people.

Background: The northern part of Cyprus is small and has a population of less than 260 000 people (some 200 000 being Turkish Cypriots) – a little community for the setting up of some 6 universities! Six universities may make sense only if they are part of the larger Turkish academic community, thus serving students from Turkey as an offshore centre of training services. This is what has indeed happened. At present, some **39 000 young people are involved in TRNC higher education**, with 26 000 students (66.66%) coming from Turkey through the ÖSS selection process supervised by YÖK, the Higher Education Council in Ankara. As a result, the Northern Cypriots themselves only represent a quarter of the total number of students in the northern part of the island, with another 3 000 students coming from non-European parts of the world, the Middle East, Pakistan, Iran, Nigeria and the Cameroon, – a large part of these ‘international’ students is enrolled at EMU where teaching is provided in English. The Northern Cypriot identity of its higher education is thus at risk, since no other country has less than 25% of its nationals in its own institutions of higher education. Since 2004, moreover, the reality of EU citizenship calls for differentiated relations with Turkey and for the reaffirmation of the Cypriot identity as it opens to a much wider and varied community of belonging – so much so that Northern Cypriots now tend to register in English-speaking universities in Western Europe, as a way to breaking their isolation at individual level. Should this trend grow, the actual link of higher education in North Cyprus to the people of the island could become weaker still, with the young voting with their feet to achieve a normal existence on the continent they belong to. This could also be the consequence of the refusal of the Annan plan in the South, a situation regularly mentioned by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights – as recently as March this year when, in his report to the Human Rights Council, he wrote that ‘Turkish Cypriot students continue to be confronted with lack of access to the Erasmus, Socrates and Bologna processes or other European scholarship programmes. The issue has been linked to the non-recognition of Northern Cypriot universities. The right to education is a fundamental right, and the current situation prevents the free movement of students and staff and constrains academic freedom, the exchange of ideas and international competition’.

Economy: The northern part of the island lives on a budget of some 600 million US dollars (2006), local revenues covering only half that sum. The other half of the budget is supported by grants and subsidies from Turkey. Without it, the system would collapse even if the area enjoys a high level of GDP growth (10% in 2006) driven mainly by higher education and tourism. In other words, public money is scarce in the north. Nevertheless, higher education should be an important economic focus in these balancing efforts since it represents a key ‘industry’ in the northern part of the island, the reduction of which would have terribly destabilising consequences. Recently, direct trade between the two parts of the island has begun and EU money has been set aside from the structural funds to help develop infrastructures in the north.

Culture: Cyprus is part of the old Eastern Mediterranean culture that draws on a Roman and Ottoman past. This means that, next to the official system of rules and regulations, parallel structures of allegiance to the group and the family may validate or invalidate, may weaken or reinforce, decisions taken at public level. Knowing the right person could, sometimes, become more important than possessing the relevant piece of legislation. In fact, this adds another layer to the decision-making process, thus offering a more personal touch to the system of democratic deliberations. This could induce political arrangements that do not usually have the public good of the collective taken as a whole at heart. Political parties or social groupings thus may become key players in higher education.

In such a situation, any university must struggle, consciously and unconsciously, with the geographical, historical, cultural, legal, political and institutional factors the balancing of which for a constructive future requires **redefining its academic role, identity and ambitions**.

Such is the challenge the EUA team felt was being faced at the *Eastern Mediterranean University*, a name that articulates its specificity. From 1986 – when, under the sponsorship of YÖK in Ankara, it was decided to provide higher education to northern Cyprus - to 2004 and the referendum proposed by the ‘Annan plan’ for the reunification of Cyprus, EMU seems to have grown as an outpost of Turkish higher education, its specificity being its teaching in English (a not uncommon fact in Turkish higher education where several prestigious institutions conduct their work in foreign languages). In 2004, however, the ‘*cypriotisation*’ of EMU could be envisaged, with the aim of turning the institution – the oldest and the largest in the island - into a centre of learning for Cyprus as a whole, **a bridge** between peoples, cultures and nations of the Eastern Mediterranean region. Distancing themselves from Turkey did not equate to navel gazing but supposed collaboration with the Greek speaking University of Cyprus in Nicosia, while reinforcing the international specificity of the institution. This meant **investing in foreign students and foreign staff** in order to balance the Turkish influence that had presided over EMU beginnings. The failure of the Annan plan left EMU in an uncomfortable position, its ambitions being dampened, and several of its members wondering if the best solution did not consist in accepting its satellite status of the Turkish higher education system - certainly not the best way to live up to the name of the institution. Others considered that the international strategy associated with the name of Prof. Halil Güven, the Rector appointed on the eve of the 2004 referendum with a vision of the enlarged role EMU could play in the area, was worth pursuing – despite adverse circumstances. Thus linkages with outside partners should remain the cornerstone of a strategy that could, in the long run, pave the way to *de facto* reintegration of EMU in the Cypriot landscape of higher education - Europe acting as the gateway to international acknowledgement.

Assessment of the present-day situation

The people: EMU’s present leadership wants to close the gap between the academic reality in Famagusta and its partial isolation by many countries of the world. EMU is no ghost institution, indeed it caters for some 15 000+ students registered in 7 Faculties – covering most fields except medicine -, in 2 schools (Computing and Technology; Tourism and Hospitality) as well as in English preparatory courses; these students use a rather splendid campus not far from the sea shore, on the edge of the city, a campus neatly organised and well endowed – especially if one considers the scarcity of means in the TRNC. The EUA team, in its many meetings, could appreciate the vitality of EMU, an institution of relevance for Turkish Cypriots (3 845 of them in this academic year) but also for Turkish nationals (8 236) who represent an overwhelming proportion of the student body not to speak of the young people with other national backgrounds (2 002). With 621 academics, **the staff/student ratio** oscillates between 12,7 in Engineering and 50,9 in Law – not uncommon figures in European higher education. **The teaching staff** is mainly Northern Cypriot (many of them having been trained in foreign universities) but 77 come from Turkey and another 91 from the rest of the world – a rather high presence of foreigners if compared with average institutions of higher education in Europe.

One of EMU’s weak points is the declining number of students of Northern Cypriot origin, a 26% decrease from its level of 2002/2003 (5 216) that is compensated by a 17% increase of Turkish students (from 7 044 to 8 236) during the same period. In parallel,

students from elsewhere have grown by 43% from 1 403 in 2002/2003 to 2 002 today. Thus, all in all, EMU has remained stable over the last five years, with a 3% increase of some 420 students only. **The decrease of local students**, especially in 2005 and 2006, seems to reflect the advantage Northern Cypriots can take of their EU citizenship to obtain degrees more easily recognised in the world than those taken at EMU. As for the Turks, EMU's intake depends very much on the results of the entrance exams all candidates to Turkish higher education have to take (ÖSS). The level of achievement of candidates accepted in various institutions is modulated in Ankara, thus influencing the quality and numbers of EMU's potential students coming from Turkey. This dependency could be detrimental to EMU since the university does not really fix the conditions of access to its services. The EUA team heard, however, that the recent upgrading of the criteria decided in Ankara has led to a flow into Famagusta of better qualified Turkish students, a fact of importance considering that more than 60% of students at EMU come from its northern neighbour. The EUA experts felt that **counting on Turkish students to ensure the stability of student numbers at EMU is risky** since the receiving institution has little influence on who and how many may be invited to go to North Cyprus. When YÖK in Ankara changes its access policies, as it did recently, thus reducing drastically the number of students accepted in the system, this has immediate consequences on the island. Perhaps this is why, in the TRNC, efforts have been made to set up a Higher Education Council of their own, YÖDAK, that has just started to run entrance exams on the ÖSS model for the Northern Cypriots who had been accepted directly until then by each of the universities in the TRNC. It is too early to judge if, to counterbalance the Northern Cypriots' attraction to EU universities, YÖDAK could be tempted to lower entry qualifications.

The contingent from other countries is linked much more to the policies of EMU itself and, over the last few years, campaigns have been made to recruit students from Asia and Africa, with EMU representatives stationed in some of the target countries like Iran or Pakistan. The opening to nations, often with an English tradition, kills two birds with one stone: ensuring the better use of English-speaking teachers in Famagusta, on the one hand, and, on the other, bringing to Northern Cyprus students used to expressing themselves in English in their everyday life so that the Turkish-speaking students may be encouraged to switch from their native language to the *lingua franca* of our day and time - also outside of their courses.

The finances: Public universities usually depend for a good part of their income on the grants and subsidies from the government – up to 80% of their needs in several European countries. EMU, although public, **earns most of its finances through the fees** asked from its students since they cover some 2/3 of the 60 million Euros needed to pay last year's current costs. The main support from central authorities in the TRNC is supposed to come from **the compensation** the government has committed to in order to reduce by half the cost of studies for Cypriot nationals. The EUA team was rather surprised to hear that disbursement of the millions this represents, although promised, was often delayed. This contributes to the university **running deficits** on a regular basis, a sum representing, for the last academic year, 19% of the current budget. This obliges EMU to count on banks loans in order to cover some 6% of its regular expenditures. Efforts are certainly made to obtain *consultancy mandates* to fill the gap between needs and income but this proves rather difficult in a region with no real industrial development. Anyway, the revenue from consultancy work comes from the university itself, with no real support from public authorities. As for the investment budget, it depends nearly totally on earmarked grants from Turkey. The EUA team wondered indeed if it would not be *easier for EMU to become a private institution* – free to decide about its fees and to sell its services - at cost price at least. The visitors were told that this was not possible since the government of TRNC or Turkey would never allow the only

state university of North Cyprus to become bankrupt. In other words, the public status of EMU seems to represent a life insurance policy. Looking at the problem from a governmental point of view, the EUA evaluators deemed strange such slim support considering that the nation depends mainly on higher education to drive, together with tourism, the development of the region. Could not the success of the sector in attracting thousands of young people in North Cyprus be encouraged by real investments supporting the attractiveness of academic activities – in terms of infrastructure or support for foreign staff, for instance, when their conditions of service could be improved to levels comparable to what exists in their own countries?

If there is no financial back up to support the legal interest authorities have in defining EMU's administrative rules, this results, at best, in a weak institutional *sense of accountability* to the representatives of the nation. At worst, EMU members might deem they are taken advantage of by those people who benefit from the presence of a large university in the country – bringing money and employment to a city whose harbour has lost much significance after the embargo imposed on the TRNC, for instance. Indeed, with a population of some 50 000, Famagusta hosts today some 15 000+ students – a 30% proportion that would make it a university town in any other country. In 1996, the 8 500 students of EMU represented 21% of a population of 35 000. In other words, over the last ten years, the growth of the university seems to have been the motor of the 30% increase in the population of Famagusta. The EUA team was told by the local authorities that this was certainly the case but, apart from partnerships for water recycling and desalination or for cultural events, no real long term financial encouragement – even in terms of **subsidised bus fares for the students** – seemed to be envisaged although the construction boom in the area was certainly beneficial to local finances. Economic representatives recognised the importance of these new activities – as stimulated by EMU in the region – but considered that embargoed industry needed more support than universities if it is to survive and develop in better times – also as an expected stimulus to academic activities. Anyway, in the growing building industry, the **need was not for graduates** but for carpenters, masons, plumbers and electricians – all trades that needed to be imported from outside at a great cost. In short, the university was not considered as really relevant to the immediate needs of the community; even the *techno-park* may be perceived as an answer to future problems and, thus, is seen by stakeholders as useless for the moment. In any case – perhaps because of the uncertainty of the situation – the university was seen as slow to move, not ready to take risks, indeed as a spoilt child with too much staff, an object of envy. For the evaluators, **EMU is not at the core of town interests**: it was also obvious that the university, at that level too, has difficulty in being seen as a real – if not the main – provider of wealth and prestige in the region. The EUA team wondered in fact what would happen to Famagusta if EMU, for whatever reason, had to close down: this would certainly result in economic depression and could have a domino effect on North Cyprus as a whole. In other words, if any public institution is to be accountable to society – and EMU seems ready to help define the collective needs of the group – **society also has obligations** to that body. This means ensuring the best conditions for its development – at regional or local level. This is no one way street but an implicit agreement of partnership that could even be turned into an explicit contract that would determine each other's duties and services. Otherwise, EMU might feel a foreign body in its own territory. This is again a matter of reality that needs to be proven to all, in or outside the country.

The organisation

In the case of EMU, there is one structure that exists as a partner for dialogue to discuss and sustain the conditions of today to a foreseeable and planned future: **the Board of Trustees**. An interface between government and the university, consisting mainly of non-

academic members who represent the local community, the Board does not have more funds than the government it emanates from. Its mandatory role as a financial controller – checking the past – then takes over its strategic function – envisaging the future. Since it cannot provide the conditions of better times to come, the Board of Trustees is tempted into **administrative micro-management** of the legal and financial propriety of executive moves made at institutional level. As a result, and with no professional academic basis, it duplicates the role of EMU leadership, thus binding the latter into a maze of interventions that act as a brake rather than an engine for the future, which should be the Board's role. The EUA team heard complaints that, through detailed accounting procedures, the Board in fact decides about the teaching/learning orientation of curricula. It also heard that career development of the staff engaged in an English-speaking environment was blocked by the low interest the Board had in this matter – rather academic, perhaps, but essential for the future of the university. In other words, the trustees do not have the means of their ambitions, i.e., the funds that, for the university, would justify the call for its accountability. Rather than acting as a buffer between the authorities and EMU, the Board mirrors the government's monitoring role and finds itself in conflict with the institution it should defend and represent.

Basically, the university is owned by a *Foundation* whose *state-appointed Board* also acts as the trustee organ supposed to mediate between the needs of civil society and the provision of services EMU can render to meet those needs. A charter – called the university law in Famagusta – organised the university in 1986. It is now under review. The university is the main legal entity and is led by the rector – appointed by the Board on behalf of the government. Contrast this with the situation, for example, in the Netherlands where such a corporate organisation means that the Ministry appoints a Board of non-academics, which appoints the rector, who appoints the Deans, who appoint the department chairs. This chain of command corresponds to the line of responsibilities: chairs or departments are responsible for the use of the funds received from the Deans; Deans are responsible for the use of Faculty funds received from the Rector; the Rector is responsible for the funds received from the Board; and, finally, the Board is responsible for the funds received from the Ministry. Obligations thus dovetail with responsibilities. In North Cyprus, as mentioned earlier, the obligations do not correspond to responsibilities: the scheme is biased since resources do not flow from the top but are gathered at the bottom, for the moment by the university central offices. *Faculties*, however, are very much aware of the number of the students they serve – that is, of their contribution to the university budget: they would not mind being rewarded for their attractiveness, i.e., the number of students they accept. This factor is difficult to evaluate since each Faculty has a specific history having been created at different times. For instance, the older Faculty of Engineering and that of Computing and Technology are considered the strong points of EMU – backed by good research; less research-oriented and younger Faculties like Business Administration and Law seem to be more popular however. To take account of those differences, the present administration is now trying to devolve considerable **financial responsibilities to the Faculties** – so that, for instance, they may regulate the recruitment policy - an important privilege in a university where staff costs represent 80 to 90% of the budget. However, final decisions about personnel are always referred to the Board of Trustees, since its approval is needed for all decisions with financial consequences. The EUA team had the impression that empowering the deans could backfire if the formal management structure keeps them under tutelage. All the more so, as the Faculties tend to go it alone as though they were not accustomed to working together – with the exception of those, like Art and Science, that service given departments in other Faculties that require basic teaching in mathematics, physics or languages. Thus, the possible transfer of responsibilities to units through funding was not really clearly understood in many places. It is as if the culture of risk that this presupposes is not mature yet; people have long been accustomed to

obtaining their scarce resources for action in a semi-automatic manner, directly from a centre that takes a 30% overhead for university-wide activities.

The Academic Senate is another important structure in the organisational chart of EMU. However, as its remit is limited to academic affairs only, its work consists mainly in course evaluation and programme development in teaching and research – the fundamental activities of any university like EMU. By law, however, it does not discuss the organisational and financial consequences of the changes it might propose to improve academic affairs. The EUA team felt that this sharp division of **responsibilities between the Senate and the Board was not fully appropriate** considering that means should follow the ends. After all, it is of no use to decide to increase the learning content of curricula in order to develop a university centred on student experience rather than professors' expertise – an implication of the Bologna process – if the logistics cannot follow (more tutorials, more small working rooms, longer library opening hours, for instance) for obvious lack of resources. At least the framework of potential support should be made clear to Senate members so that they do not feel discouraged by the unreality of academic debates – that might remain 'academic' indeed. Moreover, apart from the Rector chairing the meetings, there was no direct line between the EMU executive and the Senate as the institution's legislative body. This was remedied when the leadership team was reorganised in February 2007: a Vice rector for Academic Affairs was appointed with, among other responsibilities, the mandate for quality development in university activities.

Quality strategies

How can one create a sense of belonging to EMU in the university community? This seems to be one of the main problems of the university and its leaders. In order to create an EMU **common identity** – as if the existence of the *institution as such* had to be proved not only outside the campus but also among its members – the present university leaders have decided to base group energy on becoming an internationally recognised academic body (hence the importance of the EUA and IAU memberships acquired in 2005) and to streamline a body of common references that would offer shared language and values to the institution as a whole (that is why quality performance has become a central concern over the last two years). True, all administrative units have to be certified **ISO 9001** by 2009 – an on-going process that, by now, has been implemented in several services. The English Preparatory School has been also innovating when forming '**quality circles**' of some fifteen staff members asked to support each other in function of the problems met – as they arise. Moreover, there have been structured quality exercises in various faculties in order to analyse their lines of academic interest: for instance, the Faculty of Business and Economics has started a process of accreditation with the help of **AACSB**, the US professional association that looks into the credibility of teaching in business administration in America, but also overseas, when it is invited to do so. The Faculty of Engineering has recently completed a similar process with **ABET**, the main accrediting agency in the technological field in North America. Using the US as a benchmark, however, could seem somewhat contrary to the will of EMU to gamble on Europe and the acceptance of the Bologna process as the key to its institutional identity.

Therefore at *EMU level*, EUA is considered the main benchmark to refer to, if it is to validate its claim to become a partner in the construction of the European Higher Education Area, i.e., a fully credible partner in European eyes. Thus European discussions of quality matter. When the EUA team arrived in mid-December for its first visit, it was greeted by large signs hung onto the Venetian walls of the old city announcing proudly, under the EUA blue logo, that '**Quality is our passion**'. These flags were not for the evaluation team's benefit, however, but represented what was left of an awareness-raising campaign in the university

and in its environment about the desired identity of EMU as a European provider of academic services. Indeed, the intranet system of the university was also beaming everywhere in the institution the quality ‘creed’ found in various documents of the Institutional Evaluation Programme of EUA – that has become in Famagusta the institutional ‘banner for change’. As a matter of fact, within EMU, electronic tools are at the heart of the *communication strategy* of the rector and his team.

For instance, the various drafts of the Self Evaluation Report were disseminated throughout the campus on the web, students and staff having direct access to the document with the possibility of commenting and amending those parts they were unhappy with. In the same way, when the strategic plan was discussed, electronic consultation was used to test the interest of the proposals that were also being negotiated with different partners in the institutions and beyond. **Student evaluations of their teachers** are also put on the web, the students of some faculties being much more participative than others. The results of those electronic enquiries are not made public. The professors, in several departments, still have to be convinced that **transparency is to the long term benefit of EMU**. However, the results of the students’ global satisfaction survey are made public. The EUA team recognised in these various efforts the recommendations made by the IEP to universities willing to *develop a quality culture* that goes beyond meeting specific performance indicators in a bureaucratic way. The idea is to involve all members of the institution in the discussions affecting their own judgement of university activities. The EUA team, however, wondered if making public documents on the web can count as making staff and students real partners in a joint venture run under the flag of EMU. Indeed, the return of answers usually seemed rather low, almost as if university members did not feel especially motivated to enter into a constructive dialogue – not only among the students who, as a rule, indicated that they did not see the results of their remarks on staff performances. In other words, is the web publication of texts and papers an opinion poll or is it the opening of a democratic debate? In market research, indeed, the questioner wants to know the needs of the group being surveyed; thus, the supplier can adapt to demand. In a university, however, that wants to become a *community of belonging*, questions should be the basis for a dialogue between equal but different people, so that opinions can be forged and policies turned around, if proved necessary. This means developing *forums of discussion* tolerant of the unexpected. Such a deeper understanding of ‘consultancy’ explains perhaps the recent setting up of ‘*student platforms*’ where some 200 students meet in one room and point to what needs to be fixed, from their own point of view. Then, following TQM principles, the Vice-Rector for academic affairs must answer these queries in less than a month, saying what has gone wrong and why, if complaints prove justified. Gathering people together, however, does not turn them into partners for discussions on the future of the institution, i.e., members responsible for its development. This would mean *moving from awareness to consciousness* – at both individual and group level.

The EUA team heard a lot about the **need for democracy** but felt that the definition above – the possibility to explore a problem and imagine its solution in common – was often obscured by the factionalised approach to representation of opinions. The important thing for the various partners was to be represented on the bodies that count, the Board of Trustees in particular. Lobbying capacity as an understanding of democracy was very much part of the discourse of **the Unions** which insisted upon being given a place in all decision-making circles. The ‘direct’ democracy tried by EMU leadership could be felt as a threat for representative organisational models and might explain some of the disappointment expressed by several staff members who had supported the change process initiated by the present Rector when he started surfing on the hopes of national reconciliation in early 2004. Europe, today, or international acknowledgement, may seem to many an illusion not worth pursuing any longer since, over the last two years, the strategy of European credibility has not brought

the legitimacy it was supposed to provide despite the dispersed efforts made at changing curricula or at adopting ECTS along the lines of the Bologna process. This effort, however, can be seen as limited to credit accumulation alone considering the minimal mobility with European universities that has ensued. Dampened hopes, unfortunately, do not build trust.

Making sense of one's own place in society

If the EUA visitors are right, the main problem in EMU today is to make sense of the many aspects of its academic and local environment where questions of acceptance of the past and review of the present overlap with each other very much on the model of Russian dolls. **Students and staff must believe in their university** to make the institution strong as an academic provider. **The institution must feel clear about its identity** in order to become a constructive partner in the development of its region. **The 'town' must be confident** in the potential contributions of the 'gown' to defend EMU's role in the organisation of higher education in North Cyprus. **The TRNC authorities must consider** the university as an asset in their own struggle for recognition as a Cypriot community vis-à-vis Turkey or the rest of the world. Such an axis is all the more important so that change, with no overall understanding, should not be perceived as simple agitation – thus falling into the trap of fakes and useless arguments, very much like on a Shakespearean stage.

In view of the partial isolation EMU and North Cyprus suffer from, the EUA team commends the strategy launched by the present rector – **international acknowledgement used as a common axis** around which all the *matrioshkas* mentioned above are to determine the how's and why's of their own existence. This is both EMU's target and *raison d'être* – as summed up in the Eastern Mediterranean segment of its official name. However, at field level, the EUA team was surprised by the low awareness of the necessary image the university has to project outside, a challenge often by-passed because of the urgency of the immediate moment: most of the people met focus on their daily problems – meeting students in crammed facilities, coaching their progress while giving between 12 to 15 hours of courses a week – a load that does not allow interest in the didactical support of individuals nor commitment to the research supposed to renew teaching by opening the minds to innovation and unexpected truths. **The heavy work load of professors** also translates into **the heavy work load of students**, thus condemning both groups – with some exceptions - to traditional 'lecture theatre' pedagogy. This is reinforced in Faculties like Law that, for instance, hire professors from Turkey who jet to Famagusta for two or three days of courses every two weeks. Obviously, these teachers cannot be fully dedicated to their students in North Cyprus - who regret the little chance they have of meeting those teachers when wishing to develop their own learning potential – or, even, when needing supervision for graduate work. In other fields, however, professors – despite the load of activities – are exploring new approaches to learning and take part in discussions on the ways to move from teaching to learning outcomes, a debate initiated by the will to follow the guidelines of the Bologna process. This often means they have little time to look over their shoulder, for instance, to the situation of academic provision in the Eastern Mediterranean, their official turf. The international opportunities at EMU itself could be taken better advantage of considering that the institution is already rather international with some 14% of non-Turkish native speakers, both among students and among teachers. However, this may open an unresolved question, that of the place of Turkey either as a foreign power or as a supporter of a wide cultural community that integrates North Cyprus. EMU could indeed face the question as an institution with a critical approach to even the most difficult problems, thus becoming the re-inventor of the Cypriot contribution to the specificity of the university and of the island - now that it is part of the European Union. The EU, as an international ground for a differentiated identity, has become a reality that could

help redefine the allegiances to the northern neighbour – a question that needs the capacity of objective reasoning to legitimise academic action.

The redefinition of an EMU identity should help frame the campaign of acknowledgement the university must launch to make it explicit. That is why EMU, as a member of the family of European universities, should go on doing all it can – for instance through EUA that represents all European universities – to develop the relations between EMU and the University of Cyprus, strictly on academic terms, thus planting the seeds of a new reality at a time when the separation is hindering more than helping the development of the island as a whole. This is certainly no easy proposition. As for the rest of the world – even if there are students and staff who would prefer the support of some American and Asian universities in order to be seen as a partner in world development -, the EUA team understands that, considering the whole island has become part of the European Union, non-European contacts and collaboration are certainly important but secondary to the links to Europe. This explains also why EMU would like to be given an *Erasmus charter*, not only as acknowledgement by the outside but also as a proof in its own ranks of the validity of its gamble on Europe. It would also legitimise the transformation of the institution when taking full account of the Bologna process, from study architecture, credits and diploma supplement to quality action. Even the ‘social dimension’ of the process might be met. Thus, in March 2007, EMU decided **to allot 10% of the seats in decision-making bodies to students**. In the reappraisal of its identity, the university must also reflect further on its **English-speaking specificity**: professors and students complained that the knowledge of English as a teaching language was often insufficient, especially when students arrived from Turkey with very little understanding of the medium. In a year of preparatory courses, it proves difficult to bring that knowledge up to an academic level, especially when the students live daily in a Turkish-speaking environment. As a result, professors complain that 4-year curricula are often completed in 6 to 7 years, thus reducing the ‘efficiency’ and increasing the cost of teaching at EMU when compared to other institutions. Can EMU select better-trained students as far as English is concerned – a problem that does not apply to the Asian or African students who arrive in Famagusta with a higher fluency? Or should it move to English taught to empower students with the knowledge of terms that are used in the particular discipline of their interest? Or should it turn the preparatory year into a kind of *studium generale* open to all kinds of general subjects that would help students open to a much wider understanding of their place in society? Or should remedial teaching be offered on a regular basis in order to help all students achieve expected results? Or might Turkish be used in remedial courses when specific learning outcomes need to be reached? All these questions were broached in the discussions the EUA team had about the use of a ‘foreign’ language at EMU, a language that should immediately give the university a strong international identity. The problem is linked to the student culture – another element that must be considered in the redefinition of EMU’s academic profile for the future. Students are active in the many clubs and activities that enrich the cultural life of a city: not an easy task considering that some of the non Turkish-speaking students, although they like the security and peace of Famagusta as a living place, also hoped, when they came, to arrive in a less ‘provincial’ city whose many young people would ‘colour’ daily life with more flamboyant happenings, both in work and leisure. The programme of general culture the university provides (the so-called **Spike project**) was heavily criticised for its irrelevance for undergraduates – especially considering that it called for compulsory attendance, sometimes of conferences spoken in languages not understood by all students (like Turkish) or focused on topics of little interest for opening the minds of listeners to new ideas, also in ideological and political terms. This general education offer was better accepted at graduate level, however.

The EUA team considered that the *revisited identity of EMU* would thus call for a change of culture among students so that they accept playing a part in academic politics in the various committees now opened to them. The passivity that was normal as long as their representation was symbolic should now be replaced by a much more pro-active attitude that also supposes better preparation and information on the potential of choices to be made for the university. That implies a reorganisation of EMU along the lines of ‘partnership’ rather than ‘consumption’; this means a new student culture based on feed-back and communication with the colleagues represented. Such a change of culture would also be in the interest of other interlocutors in the university, the unions in particular. For all university members, the challenge of specificity is by no means a small one and meeting it might certainly help EMU to open up new lines of action that could make it a necessary partner not only in Famagusta but also in Cyprus as a whole not to speak of the Eastern Mediterranean, including Turkey.

Capacity for change

The constraints mentioned in the first part of this report are being met or taken advantage of not only by the various policies the university leadership has been advocating over the last three years but also by the many initiatives taken in Faculties or Schools by staff and students, both at individual and collective level. The EUA team visited a vibrant institution although, sometimes, the actions taken were not cross-fertilising each other or converging towards a single goal for lack of communication or lack of confidence in the work, ideas and action of colleagues and partners. There is a culture of doubt about the real prospects of EMU - and recent salary cuts, although accepted by staff, certainly do not help the buoyancy of an institution where the precariousness of many positions does not encourage the feeling of being part of a unique venture that is worth the effort. This is very much linked to the ‘poverty’ of an institution that, basically, relies on its students’ fees. However the EUA visitors also encountered many staff committed to the development of the institution – both in administration and among the teachers and researchers – even if the latter have a marginal place now supported by the institution with only 1% of the budget. Transformation work has begun in many areas. It needs to crystallise along a few common lines so that the institution becomes a *true community of belonging*.

The students: from passivity to commitment

EMU has just initiated two new moves encouraging student participation: **the student forum and the 10% student representation in all decision-making bodies**. This is still very new and cannot be evaluated yet. However, these measures, if used to encourage the learning of a culture of commitment to the institution, should help students build up *trust in EMU*, as their own institution.

The staff: from defensive to pro-active behaviour

EMU, from a mode of protection of different interests that divide rather than unite the institution, should move to a **culture of partnership** in which staff contribute not only comments but also proposals. Such a discussion cannot be avoided if the university is to become a community all its members feel part of. This implies tolerance of others (who are not to be categorised in ideological terms) so that **transparency** opens on the unexpected, thus reducing to a minimum the fears of many to lose the little they have acquired in a difficult situation, be it cultural, political or economic. The leadership should offer stable points of reference, some kind of framework that helps conversations converge remembering that *a university is always more than the sum of its parts*. Until now, most changes have been initiated through the aggregation of suggestions, coming from here and there, with a vision of EMU’s future so distant that it could look as unreal as many of the institution’s features – since isolation questions EMU’s reality. That is the true basis for mistrust among partners.

The international dimension, the Eastern Mediterranean one in particular, should then become the normal reference that gives meaning to varied proposals and helps prioritise them. Indeed, not everything can be done and criteria for the *distribution of scarcity* will need to be accepted so that solidarity grows among the Faculties and Schools that are all parts of the same venture. This could have consequences on the revisited profile of the institution considering, for example, the mismatch of student demand – very much centred on business administration and economics – with supply, where the strong fields of EMU are engineering and technology, also in terms of resources, equipment and facilities. Who should help whom in a world of scarcity, how and what for? These are some the questions that will need reflection if EMU is to move from a defensive to a pro-active behaviour with the staff being considered as the main ‘stakeholders’ of the university’s future.

The institution: becoming a community of belonging

Changes are in the offing since the university charter is reaching the last stages of its reappraisal. It seems that, on some key points, it will align obligations and responsibilities. The EUA team can only welcome, for instance, the **budgetary devolution** to the Deans, who will have real power to manage Faculty resources – including salaries that will vary in function of merit. However, this will work only on condition that deans are fully responsible to central leadership for the use of those monies, the rector representing the university as a whole – with its specific mission. Devolution should never lead to fiefdoms taking over the working margin that EMU should have as an institution. The EUA team heard a lot about the **need for autonomy**: as far as it is concerned, and as shown in most European universities, institutional autonomy encompasses and makes sense of the initiatives taken at faculty or school level. It is never the result of those initiatives. Were it so, the institution would become a simple confederation of power brokers led by a weak rector with a representative function only. Everywhere in the European Higher Education Area rectors tend to have more and more responsibilities for the on-going development of their institution – especially if they have to report to the authorities that are providing taxpayers’ money, either directly through the Ministry or, indirectly, through a Board of Trustees that supervises the long term strategies of the university and validates its financial practices vis-à-vis the government as the ultimate paymaster.

However, if the EUA team has been well informed, it would feel most disturbed in terms of **EMU’s capacity for change** if the Board of Trustees of the older law were now to be supported by an Advisory Committee of some 30 people, not to speak of an Inspectorate and a Secretariat to co-ordinate these various bodies. As long as the government of the Board does not have the funds to justify its power, there is no reason to multiply the seats with the sole consequence of offering enough places for representatives from all pressure groups in the organisation. This is probably the best way to paralyse the system a little further even if the Board might be encouraged to delegate its powers, especially those with an executive dimension, to the Rector. This is supposed to rehabilitate the position of the university leader. Like in industry, **the rector should be the highest executive officer**, however, and, as such, he should report to the shareholders, the ‘owners’ of the firm – which is in some way the role of the Board as the directing group of the State Foundation ‘owning’ EMU.

The whole exercise involving EUA has been part of the **strategy of presence** started with the 2004 referendum. The rector saw the period of his mandate – that ends in 2009 – as **the window of opportunity** to transform EMU into a real academic player in the Eastern Mediterranean, a way out its isolation. At the time of this final report of the evaluation of EMU, there are still two years to go. This could explain the renewal of the leadership group in February 2007, an opportunity to increase the number of Vice-rectors and tighten their portfolio of responsibilities. The danger, of course, is to speed up changes that could prove

artificial if the rank and file is not brought on board. Expectations have been high, but so has disappointment. This change of personnel should be more than a last-ditch attempt at turning around a difficult situation. Well managed – with people fully dedicated to the success of EMU as an institution like those the EUA visitors met - this new effort should prove the right one to fulfil the great potential of EMU as a full academic provider.

Recommendations

Below are some suggestions for change derived from the EUA analysis that has also informed EMU reflections in the drafting of the self-evaluation report. These remarks could help the institution to focus and use its talents and past successes as effectively as possible – even in a transformed structural set-up - as analysed in the preceding pages.

Making the most of its *academic assets*, present and potential, EMU should revisit its identity and defend its unique profile of activities at all levels of academic recognition – thus obtaining its political autonomy from its various mentors, present or future, despite scarce human and financial resources. This means reinforcing its role as a *student-centred institution* consciously caring for the *quality of academic activities* enlightened by scholarship as much as by research and innovation. Europe as a benchmark should remain the reference of a common venture in institutional development that leads to setting up for North Cyprus a truly international university with English as a medium of learning and communication.

A. The university's mission and vision

EMU's self-evaluation report puts its vision in a nutshell: 'Aiming for the Peak of Quality', a motto that, for the institution, means reaching the highest European and international standards of excellence in learning, teaching and research. This is a common goal in many universities around the world, however. This mission needs to be revisited in view of EMU's present isolation, especially by *redefining the 'bridge' role* it would like to play in the Eastern Mediterranean. Practically, in the complex environment typical of the region, it would help decision-making if the 'vision' were discussed in a document other than *the 'mission statement'*. The latter *should set out EMU's role* and the allegiances this implies for the institution vis-à-vis its present and potential supporters, on the island and in the wider region of the Eastern Mediterranean. Then, this mission statement can become the framework for the *mission statements of individual faculties and institutes* that will reflect the specific character of individual subunits, while keeping within the framework of EMU's new circumstances.

B. The university's strategic plan

The translation of a modern university vision and mission into activities such as teaching and research is commonly articulated in a strategic development plan. EMU did not present the EUA team with such a specific document. The many objectives of the institution were spread over the Self Evaluation Report but with no sense of *prioritisation*. The review team understands that the drafting by EMU of a strategic plan is nearing completion: it is recommended that the criteria and tools for the selection of possible activities be made explicit so that this document is of use as a management tool for university development.

Thus *discussion should start* on a university-wide basis to agree *on a few basic, carefully chosen priorities and attainable goals* which should then develop into *a detailed and realistic financial plan* with concrete sums allocated to each project. As in the case of the mission statement, the university strategic documents should become the framework for *strategic plans elaborated by the faculties*.

To allow for institutional cohesion, it is recommended that some ***cross-university projects*** involving all the faculties, schools and institutes be put in place. Supported by central grants from a university ***stimulation fund***, such transversal projects should be supervised by EMU as a whole. One such programme could be the systematic ***introduction of curricula that are comparable and compatible with those used in the European Higher Education Area***. This would mean that EMU move away from the US credit system now prevailing in the university or at least make it compatible with the European credit transfer and accumulation system (ECTS). A second project could be the ***elaboration of a comprehensive quality assurance and enhancement system for the whole university***, so that the many and varied quality efforts made by staff and students in different contexts are encompassed in a common structure that would learn from the lessons of different experiences and methods in order to offer the university a transparent hierarchy of quality modalities for all to use.

C. The Bologna process and study programmes

Curricular reform has been mentioned in several units as a way to reduce the professors' teaching load as well as the students' workload by increasing the relevance of the learning process – more time for student self-study - thus creating a much more student-centred university. The Bologna process represents an opportunity to encourage such a transformation throughout the institution. This is also possible at EMU, as there is never 'exclusion from the Bologna process' and each institution is free to adopt and adapt the Bologna recommendations to its own activities. In North Cyprus, however, the 2005 Statute for HE indicates in its Chapter 5 that the ***duties*** of higher education institutions include harmonisation with the European Higher Education Area due for 2010 in accordance with the Bologna Process, thus making the arrangements that can lead to such an harmonisation a priority. EMU would like this commitment to be recognised by a Bologna charter. Yet, it can already happen, for instance, in the validation of its programmes, by taking as a basis the ECTS norm of ***30 credits per semester or 60 per academic year***, a norm based on workload rather than contact hours. Indeed, EMU should ***reduce the number of contact hours for teaching***, thus lowering the student workload and also creating some 'free space' for the teachers, time to be dedicated, for instance, to research activities. This implies that, should EMU wish to be competitive in the future EHEA, its educational philosophy must change. It is thus recommended that EMU increase its focus on learning while reducing its teaching: this implies great attention being given to the ***definition of the learning processes leading to specific learning outcomes*** of possible interest for future employers.

In the interests of transparency, the ***Diploma supplement*** already mentioned in the 1999 ministerial declaration should become routine procedure at EMU as soon as possible, all the more so as it is an important element for participating in the European Higher Education Area. The development of ***interdisciplinary programmes between faculties*** must go beyond the mere sharing of electives – much too marginal a cooperation. The Bologna process offers universities new opportunities to further genuine inter-faculty collaboration by developing new ***interdisciplinary Masters programmes***, a chance for building a community of belonging that EMU should not forego. Bologna also stresses the importance of ***distance education and e-learning***: using such tools for training could alleviate EMU's problems with the rapid increase of student numbers it has witnessed over the last few years. Such a policy could and should play a key role in developing a lifelong learning culture at EMU and in the region.

D. Research

Considering EMU's limited resources to face the challenge of globalisation or to meet the needs of the Lisbon objectives on the development of a vibrant society of knowledge in Europe, the review team considers it to be especially important for EMU to develop a

university-wide research policy. Research objectives should be part of the university strategic plan, thus defining the areas where research efforts should be concentrated. This would mean a clear set of priorities that should also take into account **the modalities by which research cross-fertilises the educational process.**

Such priorities should be based on **EMU's own expertise, criteria and needs.** The university can count on many distinguished professors who have gained experience abroad at top quality institutions and publish in high-level international journals. EMU should help develop synergies between the members of that pool of experts by fostering **collaboration between different departments** in order to engineer a critical mass in research focused on priority areas, whose strength could be reinforced by **targeted recruitment of new research collaborators** with the support of central administration in so far as these priorities underline the specificity of the institution's profile of activities.

The project of **performance-based rewards** - a policy that should not affect research workers only - should be revitalised and implemented across the University. Indeed, in terms of resources for research, EMU does not live up to its expectations when it allocates to R&D 1% of the yearly fees (or 0,6% of its total budget). On a small budget, this is already a sign of commitment. However, the University should take a **more active role in acquiring research funds from abroad.** For instance, it could ask for European support through the **7th Framework Programme** since, to quote an official document of the EU, '*researchers and organisations from countries other than Member States, candidate countries, or associated states may also participate in projects on a case-by-case basis*'. To help researchers to prepare their projects technically, it is recommended that the EMU leadership widen the scope of the existing **7th Framework Project Development Office** to all types of research, thus turning it into some kind of **Centre for International Projects.**

The creation of a **Research Newsletter** to spread information fast throughout EMU is a welcome operation. It could be completed by a **small series of specialised research journals** that could be published regularly with contributions from most Faculties with **external reviewers** validating all publications.

The review team believes that **supporting young researchers** is an essential tool to renew the blood of the university through high quality young people the University can benefit from. EMU's proportion of PhD students (1,6% of all of its students) is however well below one that could offer a critical mass for long-term action. A scheme of seed money for research exists at EMU but it targets the teaching staff only. The review team recommends **improving the University's research support scheme by extending it to young researchers especially,** for instance by setting up a university internal research grant system.

E. Financing and revenue streams

Since public authorities are not investing in EMU as a state institution, although it is the oldest and biggest university in Cyprus, the university should count on income brought in by extension and fund-raising activities. Neither the self-evaluation report, nor required additional documents have provided the EUA visitors with a plan showing how to control a situation of virtual bankruptcy – even if the government would never let down EMU as an institution. To live under the pressure of constant deficit is de-motivating, to say the least. The hope for state subsidies is not very helpful. The EUA team would thus recommend that EMU elaborates a **financial crisis plan** envisaging the measures to avoid too risky a situation.

Since the Rectorate collects **all tuition fees**, an agreed system should operate across the University as a whole. It should determine **the percentage both the faculty and the common university budgets should receive from earned income.** Set rules could stimulate Faculties to be more active in the search for money or for the efficiency of its use. The system

should also apply to continuing education, distance learning, e-learning or any paid activities that the faculties are performing as extension work.

According to the Statute for Higher Education, No. 65/2005, Chapter 9, some encouragement is provided by the State to facilitate outside investment in universities (exemption from taxes, stamps, fees or duties). This should create a welcome space for *donations from outside* the university. It is recommended that the university leadership not only launch a *country-wide campaign* to raise funds from people and firms in North Cyprus but also to *contact its alumni* (especially in Turkey), using the EMU Alumni centres that have been already set up in those countries interested in sending students to EMU.

As good research can also bring contract money and grants, the University should considerably increase its *efforts in the field of project activities* in order to obtain additional means, particularly from European resources.

The EUA team wonders whether EMU, as a former Higher Technological Institute, has developed a *policy for the protection of intellectual property rights* and if it monitors the patents university results may lead to and how it protects such intellectual property. But this may seem secondary compared to the needs the system has to meet. *Scarcity* represents a heavy external constraint. This could be soon be a thing of the past if the State were to pay the compensation it is supposed to in order to subsidise the study fees of Northern Cypriots. Any delay in this payment puts EMU under constant pressure, a dire fact if one remembers that *any institution is as autonomous and free as its financial autonomy and financial freedom*.

F. University governance and the role of students

According to the 2005 Statute for Higher education, Chapter 2, *'academic freedom and institutional autonomy have the highest priority'*.

The EUA team wonders how this fits with the role the *Board of Trustees* has taken over the last few years, reducing the competences of the rector and elected academic authorities to a shadow of influences by the constant interventions that are supposed to control the legality of financial management. In fact, such interventions equate to the micro-management of EMU by non-academics with little professional understanding of the institution. In other European countries this would amount to *interference with the institution's autonomy* that is under the Rector's responsibility. Indeed, the main role of a Board of Trustees is to ensure appropriate conditions for university development, in particular by raising funds, public and private. It is certainly not that of making up for the lack of these funds by controlling every penny of the money the university has earned mainly through fees and, in so doing, intruding into the everyday executive life of the University.

The *role of students in University governance*, according to the team's views, does not match one of the main targets in the Bologna process: *'students and staff should act as full partners in the governance of higher education'*. The review team understands that the participation of students in University decision-making bodies is being increased to some 10% - from a symbolic number, at present. However, to favour full participation and informed voting rights, *the student culture in such organs should move from passivity to commitment*, throughout EMU, since all decisions affect students in a way or another. University politics are no simple game however. The leadership of EMU will have to *inform students fully* so that their new role becomes routine.

G. International relations

A crucial point of the Bologna declaration calls for the wide *mobility of staff and students* to encourage the European dimension of university education. The review team

noted that at EMU, as a result of political isolation, *such activities are minimal* (some visiting professors and the students coming and returning home excepted). Anyway, short conference trips cannot be compared with longer-term teaching, research or study activities abroad. Despite some embargo measures at the level of North Cyprus, the university would be well advised to have a *strategic plan for international relations*. This could mean *revisiting the some 80 agreements* EMU has signed with universities around the world, reviewing in particular their mobility clauses. Anyway, here too, EMU should give *priority to European relations* in order to end its partial isolation, for instance by using the network of the some 700 universities that are members of EUA. The accession of Cyprus – as a whole - to the European Union, means the possibility of indirect participation in EU activities, at least at individual level.

H. Accreditation and Quality Assurance

The current quality assurance system is primarily based on the external evaluation and accreditation of programmes by YÖDAK, the North Cypriot Higher Education Council. EMU has had a strong interest in quality enhancement over the last few years and has started various processes leading to internal quality assessment. As a framework encompassing these many activities, the review team would recommend that EMU leadership adopt the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, that, as a Bologna requirement, are an attempt to achieve the correct balance between external and internal quality assurance.

As said earlier, such a framework approach could become a transversal project for EMU as a whole, thus becoming a key point of the strategic plan. The review team would recommend that the *quality assurance and quality enhancement system* be primarily focussed on teaching, research and university administration.

Although EMU has an elaborated and *anonymous evaluation system* of teachers by students available through modern electronic means, the EUA team understand that its results are rarely used for management decisions or for quality development. Such efforts are meaningless, however, if they remain at the level of data gathering. They must lead to action, transparency and proper *feedback to the students*.

Capacity for change and constraints: concluding remarks

Considering the heavy constraints analysed in the first part of the report (small size of the supporting community, isolation, heavy dependence on fees and on Turkey, etc.), EMU's existence could be at risk. To face such dangers, the university needs to adapt and change.

Rector Güven seized the opportunity of political change to launch an ambitious revival process for the university. Political vagaries, however, slowed down the transformation and undermined the motivation for change. Anyway, *implementation of change* is usually the most difficult part of any revitalisation process in any type of institution. It is definitely easier when the members of the institution accept change as normal development.

Therefore, the importance of optimal *internal communication* cannot be over-emphasised. Change cannot be imposed from above, although sufficient control must be maintained so as to guide the process. Indeed, any university is more than the sum of its parts. This requires a *good two-way communication* accompanied by thorough consultation and constant feedback from all partners in order have clear reporting of achievements. In other words, generally accepted and agreed processes or rules must operate in a trusting, clear, frank and transparent way if disillusionment is to be avoided or, at least, minimised. This

interactive process nurtures the *sense of belonging* the university must achieve as a community if it is to survive all kinds of difficulties.

Over recent years, the Eastern Mediterranean University has proved it can adapt to new challenges in the fields of teaching, learning and research. The review team congratulates the University on its students. We met dozens of them and *all were proud of their university*, several having chosen EMU for its recognised quality. From this point of view the review team believes that the University has a good future.

From the review process, the EUA team is confident that the University could successfully meet the challenges it is now facing despite a constantly changing environment. Thus *EMU's efforts to internationalise the university, to participate fully in the European Higher Education Area, the Erasmus and 7th Framework programmes while obtaining international funding, should be commended.*

The process is on-going, with all its ups and downs. To make it sustainable, however, the institution must distance itself from shortsighted problems and initiatives. To do so, EMU can keep to the goal defined by its present rector: *'to become the star institution of the Eastern Mediterranean region*, a knowledge centre whose light will be seen in Europe and internationally'. Although ambitious, these words can motivate the institution to prove its 'passion for quality', thus justifying a growing optimism despite formidable constraints. The latter could be alleviated – in Cyprus or beyond – when universities, for the sake of their students, do not become the pawns of international politics or the hostages of internal dissensions. Thus their autonomy and the freedom to enquire of their members, staff and students can be secured. Thus can they also become true partners in the development of their community, be it small, like in North Cyprus, or much larger, like the Eastern Mediterranean region, both areas being complementary dimensions for the possible scope of EMU's contribution to the peace and wealth of the region, a reality that transcends the old and new walls of Famagusta.