

## **Karadeniz Technical University**

### ***EVALUATION REPORT***

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## **1. Introduction**

This report is the result of the evaluation of Karadeniz Technical University, Turkey, undertaken at the request of the University as part of the European University Association, Institutional Evaluation Programme. The evaluation took place between May and September 2010.

### **1.1 Institutional Evaluation Programme**

The Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) is an independent membership service of the European University Association (EUA) that offers evaluations to support the participating institutions in the continuing development of their strategic management and internal quality culture.

The distinctive features of the Institutional Evaluation Programme are:

- A strong emphasis on the self-evaluation phase
- A European and international perspective
- A peer-review approach
- A support to improvement

The focus of the IEP is the institution as a whole and not the individual study programmes or units. It focuses upon:

- Decision-making processes, institutional structures and effectiveness of strategic management
- Relevance of internal quality processes and the degree to which their outcomes are used in decision making and strategic management as well as perceived gaps in these internal mechanisms.

The evaluation is guided by four key questions, which are based on a 'fitness for (and of) purpose' approach:

- What is the institution trying to do?
- How is the institution trying to do it?
- How does it know it works?
- How does the institution change in order to improve?

### **1.2 Karadeniz Technical University and the Turkish Context**

Karadeniz Technical University is located in the province of Trabzon, a coastal city in the northeast of Turkey on the historical Silk Road and regarded as the cradle of many civilisations with its known history of 4000 years. The population of the province is about 750.000 and that of the city is 230.000.

Karadeniz Technical University (KTÜ) was founded in May, 1955. The University originally had a regional characteristic. Between 2006 and 2009 the academic units in Rize, Ordu, Giresun, Artvin and Gümüşhane separated as new universities based on the policy of 'One University

in Every City” across the country, Karadeniz Technical University has become a higher education institution settled only within the borders of the province of Trabzon.

KTÜ currently has a total of 37,778 students in short and first cycle programmes. 24,568 of these students are enrolled in regular classes and 13,220 in evening education. 44% of these students are females and 56% males. 28,595 of the students attend classes at faculties, 782 at higher education schools and 8,411 at vocational higher education schools. There are 3,435 postgraduate students, 2,647 of whom are at second cycle programmes and 788 at third cycle. 80% of these second and third cycle students come from outside the city. In addition to these, there are also 409 foreign students enrolled at KTÜ from 36 different countries.

The province of Trabzon has a state dormitory with a capacity of 3,250 female students and 2,250 male students, managed by the State Credit and Dormitories Institution. There are also many private dormitories for the accommodation of students.

There are 14 faculties, 1 conservatory, 4 graduate schools, 3 higher education schools, 8 vocational higher education schools and 15 research and application centres. The Faculty of Medicine manages KTÜ Farabi Hospital which offers education to 980 undergraduate and 400 graduate students. It is a general regional health centre delivering health services to a population of over 3 million living in the region. The hospital offers health services to a total of 385,000 patients every a year. Additionally the KTÜ Faculty of Dentistry has a Dentistry Hospital. The Faculty of Pharmacy, the Faculty of Technology, Conservatory and Arsin vocational school are under construction and have not commenced education yet.

In 2009, KTÜ had a total of 3,842 staff members, 1,910 of whom are academic staff, 1,498 administrative staff and 434 technical staff. The academic staff is made up of 250 professors, 148 associate professors and 378 assistant professors, totalling to 776. There are 16 foreign lecturers serving at the university.

The University is based at eight different locations, the two largest of which are the Kanuni and the Fatih Campuses. The University has three separate culture and convention centres available for scientific, cultural and social activities. The Kanuni Campus has accommodation facilities with a capacity of 325 beds in three different settings, one social facility for 350 persons with sports areas and a swimming pool for the university staff and guests, and a separate social facility for 200 persons allocated for students. It also has a gym, a stadium, basketball fields, volleyball and football fields, and tennis courts. There are additional sports facilities on other campuses.

The following description of the Turkish Higher Education System is taken from the website of The Turkish Council for Higher Education (<http://www.yok.gov.tr/en/>).

The Council of Higher Education (YÖK) was established in 1981 to steer important activities of higher education institutions, i.e., planning, organisation, governance, instruction and research.

Higher education is defined as all post-secondary programmes with a duration of at least two years. The system consists of universities and non-university institutions of higher education (police and military academies and colleges). Each university consists of faculties and four-

year schools, offering bachelor's level programmes, the latter with a vocational emphasis, and two year vocational schools offering pre-bachelor's (associate's) level programmes of a strictly vocational nature.

Graduate-level programmes consist of Master's and Doctoral programmes, coordinated by institutes for graduate studies. Medical training programmes equivalent to doctoral level programmes are carried out within the faculties of medicine and the training hospitals owned by the Ministry of Health and the Social Insurance Organisation. Universities, faculties, institutions and four-year schools are founded by law, while two-year vocational schools and departments are established by the Council of Higher Education. Likewise, the opening of a degree programme at any level is subject to ratification by the Council.

Admission to higher education is centralised and based on nation-wide examination administered by the Student Selection and Placement Centre (ÖSYM) every year. The centre was established in 1974 and affiliated with the Council of Higher Education in 1981. The Student Selection Examination (ÖSS) consists of verbal and quantitative parts. [The] scores are calculated by taking into account the marks of the entrance examination as well as the high school grade point averages, with different weights.

The annual budget of each state university is negotiated jointly by the Council of Higher Education and the university concerned, with the Ministry of Finance and, in the case of the investment budget, with the State Planning Organisation. The result is a line-item budget with very specific earmarked budget figures. In addition to the annual state-provided budget, each university has three more sources of income. First, income from the services provided by the university, such as patient care in university hospitals, and contract research, is collected in a revolving fund. Second, student contributions towards highly subsidised services are collected in a separate fund. Third, each university has a research fund made up of a lump sum grant from the state-provided budget plus a portion of the income from the revolving fund and from earmarked projects given by the State Planning Organisation.

The above-mentioned three funds are also subject to laws, rules and regulations similar to those concerning the state-provided budget, which leave little room for manoeuvre. The major difference between these three funds and the state budget is that any money left in the former is carried over to the next fiscal year while that left unspent in the state-provided budget reverts back to the Treasury. The Scientific and Technical Research Council (TÜBİTAK) of Turkey also supports research projects after evaluating proposals submitted by faculty members. However, such grants are given directly to faculty members, and are thus not included in university income.

In 1992 new procedures for the nomination and appointment of rectors were implemented. According to the new procedures, six candidates from among full professors of that or any other university are elected by the assembly of faculty members, which includes all full, associate and assistant professors in that university. From among these six, the Council of Higher Education elects three nominees by secret ballot, and submits their names to the President of the Republic, who appoints one of them as the rector for a period of four years, renewable only once. Deans are appointed by the Council from among three full professors

nominated by the rector, while institute and school directors are directly appointed by the rector.

Both academic and administrative staff in state universities have civil servant status and, except for research assistants and assistant professors, have tenure. The numbers of academic and administrative staff posts allocated to each state university are determined by acts of Parliament, while staff appointments at all levels are made exclusively by the universities themselves, and are not subject to ratification by any outside authority. The law only sets forth the minimum requirements for academic promotions and the procedures to be followed in making appointments.

### **1.3 The self evaluation process**

The University chose to participate in the IEP for a number of reasons, which are described in the SER including,

*“ acquiring a better knowledge and understanding of the self evaluation process, creating a quality culture in the organization, creating awareness and institutional culture amongst academics administrative staff and students, and implementing new regulations and procedures to improve quality and performance based on external feedback .”*

The University established a Steering Committee consisting of key personnel from across the University to produce the Self Evaluation Report. In preparation for the IEP, some members of the Steering Committee visited universities in Turkey who had previously undertaken this process. The Head of the Committee also participated in a workshop in Brussels in 2009. In the course of the preparation of the self-evaluation report, the committee organised meetings with the staff members of the University to inform them of the issues related to the application and evaluation processes.

### **1.4 The evaluation team**

The self-evaluation report of Karadeniz Technical University along with the appendices was sent to the evaluation team in February 2010. The visits of the evaluation team to the University took place between 10 and 13 March 2010 and 27 and 29 September 2010. In between the visits the University sent the Strategy Plan to the evaluation team.

The evaluation team consisted of:

- Prof. Julio Pedrosa, from Portugal, Chair
- Prof. Hans Peter Jensen, from Denmark
- Prof. Christos Nikolaou, from Greece
- Ms Vanja Perovšek, from Slovenia
- Mr Andy Gibbs, from United Kindgom, Team coordinator

The team thanks the Rector, Prof. Dr. İbrahim Özen, and his team for the hospitality and facilitation of the visit, the self evaluation team and the University coordinator, Professor Ertugrul Bilgili.

## **2. Findings**

Overall, the Evaluation Team recognises and praises the capacity of the University to change and adapt to new circumstances and developments. This was exemplified during the major reorganisation of the University which took place between 2006 and 2009. This entailed a reduction from six regionally dispersed campuses to one main campus based in Trabzon. That the reorganisation and reduction took place in such a short period of time without any apparent ill effects represents a positive achievement on the part of the University. Managing this change effectively, whilst at the same time managing existing provision and looking to new developments represents a major institutional effort which tested its capacity for change.

It is in this context that the Evaluation Team, during its engagement with the University, has undertaken its work and developed a view in a way which is intended to act supportively to increase the University's autonomous strategic governance over the coming years when it is likely to face a very demanding and challenging context as Turkish higher education continues to respond to changing demands and priorities.

### **2.1 Institutional context and present situation**

The Evaluation Team is aware of the general legal framework and constraints under which Turkish Universities have to work to fulfil their goals. These are well documented in IEP reports from other Turkish Universities and summarised in the report "Higher Education in Turkey: Trends, Challenges, Opportunities" (EUA, 2008). There is evident complexity in university governance in Turkey and the imposition of Government Regulations impacts on strategic aspects of institutional operation, which reflect a lower level of autonomy than would be expected in many comparable European higher education Institutions.

Karadeniz Technical University is no exception to this and keeping this in mind, the Evaluation Team appreciates the way that the University has developed, created a positive image and built a strong relationship with the city and the region. However, on numerous occasions, the Evaluation Team noted that the existence of a rigid national framework for higher education was presented as a reason for inaction and avoidance of decisions which would benefit the University and its students. However, on closer examination, the Evaluation Team believes that on a number of areas and issues there is more scope to exercise autonomy than was expressed.

In fact, the national framework may be presented as a barrier to change when the decision making capacity is held or can be influenced by the University. This appears to be so in the case of Abdullah Kanca vocational school, where class sizes were adjusted to meet the needs of overseas validation requirements, and alternatively when implementing priorities for estates development. Furthermore many teachers have implemented innovative pedagogical approaches and introduced learning support for students, whilst others have not developed such approaches, citing the national framework as a reason for not doing so.

## **2.2. Mission and vision**

The Evaluation Team explored the mission and vision of the University in various meetings with staff and students, by examining decisions and considering how this was reflected in various documents. The University has articulated a mission and vision in its strategic plan, however it was not evident that these were known or understood consistently across the University.

Our opinion, which was confirmed in almost all of our meetings with staff, is that the vision and mission lack focus and need a higher degree of prioritisation. The Evaluation Team formed the opinion that the University would benefit from a shared vision and mission across the University. Currently there is a lack of ownership of a vision for the institution, among the different sectors of the University community. This means that some **efforts should be directed towards building the capacity for creating a more focused and shared vision and mission across the institution.**

In coming to this view, The Evaluation Team considered the level of critical self reflection within the University. It was clear that the group that formulated the Self Evaluation Report benefitted from the exercise and had learned from the process of self reflection. The Evaluation Team could not find such approach present elsewhere in the institution. This was confirmed in almost all of our meetings during the two site visits. There was a tendency, within all meetings and at all levels, for participants to avoid critical comment, and when this was expressed it was quickly suppressed by others within the group. The Evaluation Team considered this issue at length and concluded that a culture of critical self-reflection is not present within the University.

This is unfortunate as the basis of IEP and many forms of internal quality improvement processes is critical self-reflection. Not only is the University unable to benefit from an environment which is critically self-reflective, but also the Evaluation Team found it difficult to elicit the issues that the University wished to address through IEP. **The University needs to consider ways in which it can develop a culture of critical self reflection.**

The vision and mission would benefit from a greater degree of critical self reflection, as well as a more thorough, systematic analysis of the situation and context. From this would flow choice of research topics to create strengths, formation of research groups and interdisciplinary/cross disciplinary research. Without these actions the vision, mission and the strategy will be less likely to succeed and will fail to gain critical mass in certain areas, due to a lack of focus. It is not clear which way KTU wants to go and there is a possibility that it is attempting to take on too much and too many disciplines. Currently, the University is seeking not only to maintain its current level of activity but is also committed to a number of new actions as it seeks to develop and grow. The Evaluation Team felt that in the longer term the level of diversification inside the university may lead to the University over-extending itself and blurring its identity.

Within this context The Evaluation Team could not see what type of university KTU would like to be. It is not clear either how the University wishes to position itself according to the



regional, national and international context, or where the university wishes to see itself in relation to others – and this is the first step in moving from where it is now to where it wants to go.

The broad brush approach to strategy needs elaboration in some areas, for example what is meant by integration? What will make the University distinctive? What are the focal areas for developing research? What are the key values in the institution culture? These are amongst the issues which need to be addressed before the currently absent discussion of how to implement the strategic plan can be addressed.

Nevertheless the University has been mindful to ensure that its staff takes a wide, international view of higher education and has enabled a number of its academic staff to visit universities worldwide. This environmental scanning will assist the University to identify its competitors, cases of good practice and those with similar ambitions with whom it could benchmark, so that the future size, shape and structure of the University could be identified.

### **2.3 Governance structure and decision-making model**

The Evaluation Team considered the governance structure and decision-making model of the University and took good note of the information from previous evaluations of Turkish Universities. This information seems to point to a situation such that the external regulatory framework may stifle creative management and the imposition of governance structures may restrict the capacity of the University to react effectively to particular circumstances. Against this backdrop the Evaluation Team concluded that the current governance structure may not be adequate to serve the way the university is developing. However, even in the context of external impositions, there are issues that the University could address.

The current difficulties with the governance structure are exemplified in a number of ways. The University has a strong and active Rectorate Group consisting of the Rector, Vice Rectors and Advisors to the Rector. This group has shown leadership and vision in its actions, however it should engage more with other formal governance structures in a way that enables institutional ownership and involvement in decision making processes.

The Senate, The Administrative Board and the Faculty Academic Councils are key resources for the strategic management of the University. However, the role of Senate is unclear and both the Senate and the Administrative Board do not appear on the organisational diagram. Additionally, the size of the Senate is too large to be operational. The Faculty Academic Councils meet twice a term and the Evaluation Team could not determine the contribution of the Councils to university governance and decision-making. Indeed, the Councils, the Administrative Board and the Senate would benefit by learning from the experiences of the Self Evaluation Review Group in developing a greater degree of critical self reflection.

**Student participation in Karadeniz Technical University life and decision-making should be reviewed to enable the university to hear the students' views and benefit from these.** Students in European universities are considered partners in education as there are clear benefits to both the student experience and university governance. Students need support to

join and participate in formal bodies which could be provided by training and clear remits for their participation at various levels of University activity.

Governance processes lack clarity and could be made much more effective for the university at the moment, when new areas are being created, and functional units are added. These developments will benefit a lot with a clear thought about how and why, or what contribution these will make to allowing the University to accomplish its goals and targets. The governance structure should serve the way the university is developing and be clear and effective for the type of university that is taking shape at the moment. The current composition of a Technical University with a Conservatory, Education and Teacher Training, Health Sciences, Humanities, Social Sciences, Theology, Vocational Schools is unusual. Deciding what type of university the institution wishes to be will determine the shape, size and structure of the institution as well as the development plan and approach to it.

The Evaluation Team saw opportunity for the University to increase and improve regional lifelong learning opportunities by sharpening the vision, mission commitment and responsibility to Vocational Schools. **Vocational Schools need to have a clearer position in relation to the University mission in terms of a general lifelong learning strategy.** In addition, by developing articulated approaches to recruitment and taking advantage of Qualifications Frameworks the University will shape a distinctive vision which will bring an additional benefits for the region.

## **2.4 Teaching and learning**

The diversification of the student body in Turkey is, as elsewhere, continually increasing. This is a challenge for institutions everywhere since it asks for the development and consolidation of new approaches to teaching and learning. The Evaluation Team saw evidence that there are examples of good intention and initiatives taken in this area. **The leadership needs to take these good cases and create a strategy to disseminate these good practices across the university.**

These good practices seem to go hand in hand with efforts by the University to make changes associated with the introduction of the Bologna Process. The University is one of the few Turkish universities to have an ECTS label, which carries with it a set of benchmarks, which, when adhered to, offer a great example of good practice to share with other universities and are supportive to students in monitoring their workload. However, the Evaluation Team also heard that very traditional teaching is prevalent in a number of courses and classrooms, which could be problematic if not addressed. It was made clear by many members of staff from many areas of the University that students did not respond well to this type of traditional teaching. Many staff also appreciated that the reason for this is that for many students the University may be their third or fourth choice. In addition, most students have not performed well in the State examination.

It is apparent that teaching and learning approaches should be determined to meet the needs of the student body. This is especially important, as the student body is becoming more diverse, consequently methods and strategy should continue to be developed to manage this

challenge. Not managing this leads to, amongst other things, high dropout rates which represent a huge waste of effort and resources on the part of both students and the University.

One barrier to addressing this is academic staff expectations of students. A view commonly expressed is that the University has the “wrong” kind of student and discussion focuses on how to attract the “right” kind of candidates. Staff recognises that there is a problem but they think that the problem is the student. In the view of the Evaluation Team **the University should analyse the nature and needs of the student body and shape the teaching and learning strategy to respond to the situation.** Doing this and developing methods to address the learning needs of the current student body may well lead to more able students being attracted to the University in future, thus creating a virtuous circle. This is a long term project but will equip the University and its students for the future.

The Evaluation Team recognises the concerns of staff but takes a view that once a student enters the University, the institution has responsibility to build their self confidence, sense of responsibility and to foster their success. The University needs to manage expectations that staff have of students. **The University should develop a strategy to address how it will help students to learn the skills, knowledge and attitude to succeed.**

We noticed some good practices in various areas of the University which, if coupled with the outcomes based approach implicit in having the ECTS label, could be taken as a basis for disseminating good practices across the University.

## **2.5 Research**

The University is congratulated for raising the number of publications year on year since 1999. The University is also congratulated on the numbers of staff who have raised financial support through research bids in a competitive context. The Evaluation Team notes that this is a good direction for the University to be moving in.

However, the team can see also some difficulties if this effort continues without a clear link to the institution's strategy and development plan. In addition there is some limited reference to interdisciplinary collaboration which may be linked to the lack of strategy and focus on creating critical mass in key areas. **The Team stresses the need for research development and capacity building to be properly supported and stimulated within a cohesive strategy in order to bring the university to the level of international esteem which it seeks for itself.**

There is room and scope to build on the existing research strengths within the University and we have heard very good examples of internationalisation of the research activity and willingness to go in the right direction. The Evaluation Team suggests that the Revolving Fund could be an excellent instrument for seeding initiatives to promote the developments that reinforce the chosen strategic research options.

Currently the Team could see little differentiation between types of research and impact. In reality the Team acknowledges the difficulty for individuals who wish to undertake research,

in so much as it reduces their capacity to earn extra income through an additional teaching load. Nevertheless there are individuals who have undertaken research in these circumstances and the University should ensure that **any strategy which is developed is focused on those who show capacity for research and that this is built upon with the intention of joining other similar staff members to create focus and critical mass**. This will build capacity to approach projects/bids and other funding opportunities with confidence.

The development of research can be used to reinforce teaching and learning namely by devising an adequate regulation of the involvement of assistants and PhD students in teaching activities.

The Evaluation Team was made aware of differences in the reward of non-Turkish nationals in the payment for extra class hours. This approach runs contrary to notions of equity and may also be a disincentive to internationalisation.

## **2.6 Relationship with region**

The Review Team notes the strong support of regional stakeholders with regard to the contribution that the University makes to the city and the region. The Hospital and other health related services and infrastructures, the Techno Park and the placement of students in training facilities, projects and other co-operative ventures with companies build a good image of the University amongst external stakeholders and reflect the University's commitment to the region.

Regional and local governing entities and other bodies say that they have very good relationships with the University and value the input of the University. They find individuals within the University approachable and accessible to engage in new projects and have gained many grants to develop these.

**It seems that there is still space for improvement to reinforce the present platforms for co-operation and in creating a strategy and mechanisms for continuous rather than ad hoc support for developments.** These could include creating a permanent platform to provide critical input into university affairs, increasing acquisition of practical skills through increased training links, building potential employment contacts for students, involving business and industry experts in designing employment-relevant courses and linking research with economy to foster spin off companies. These developments will contribute to building the profile and contributing to making Trabzon and the region an attractive place for students and KTU graduates.

There are mixed messages about student employability. In some areas employability is high and the University enjoys a good reputation with employers nationally. Building relationships with local employers will create a platform which may help in boosting student employment opportunities and stem the loss of able graduates away from the city.

## **2.7 Student issues**

Students generally expressed satisfaction with the education they get at the University. When they did express dissatisfaction it was generally based on their experience of administrative and social issues. There are academic issues concerning teaching and learning to be addressed, which are mentioned elsewhere in this report.

The Evaluation Team noted that the University is taking steps to improve many areas of student dissatisfaction, in particular building more student dormitories by using an innovative approach towards the student Olympic Games to attract funding. The campus environment is comfortable for students, with many sports and other facilities.

**The University should devise ways to further build bridges between students and the residents of Trabzon, so that student life is readily integrated within the City.** Developing a closer relationship between the city and the students would make the university even more attractive to potential students.

The University is working hard to build its capacity to attract students. Students would like an opportunity to contribute to this and more systematic and consistent ways for their voices to be heard could be created. We suspect that this has previously had a low priority as the University neglected to include them in the Self Evaluation Group. Student participation in institutional governance is a pivotal constituent in the Bologna process and the University should find ways to engage students more effectively in University life and decision-making.

## **2.8 Finance/resources**

The Evaluation Team found that resource distribution inside the university is not universally perceived to be conducted with a shared, transparent model. Governmental transparency in the allocation of resources would also be welcomed and this should be reflected within the institution.

The team registered references to the benefits of the revolving funds and to the potential for capacity building related to support for successful bids for the financing of research. **The university should use the revolving funds in a transparent way to seed projects that offer potential to mobilise external funds for research and financing of PhD students.**

The University has assembled a number of key assets within its estate, including an International Congress Centre and a Hotel which will be useful in the drive for internationalisation. As the University continues to grow it would benefit from a model for the prioritisation of resource allocation, based on the Strategic Plan, so that planning choices and decisions can be understood.

## **2.9 Quality Assurance**

We note that the establishment of a Strategic Planning Commission aims, amongst other things, to improve the quality of the university, initially through the development of strategic plans. We register the University view that “a strategic plan is a total regulation of the university aimed at continuous improvement and quality.”

Despite these clearly articulated aims, the Evaluation Team have had difficulties in finding evidence of mechanisms to monitor strategic planning implementation and the role of the unit responsible for Quality Assurance at institutional level. Any steps taken towards the introduction of an internal quality structure seem to be directed towards compliance with the legal framework rather than improvement of quality. In this respect, the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance deserve adequate consideration.

The Senate of Karadeniz Technical University established the Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement Council and initiated studies for strategic planning. The strategic plan covering 2007-2011 was implemented as a result of an 18-month study. We note that the KTU Strategic Planning Commission submitted a new plan prepared with an incorporative understanding to ADEK on December 29, 2008. On December 30, the Senate and the KTU Administrative Board accepted this revised 2009-2013 Strategic Plan. We note the short timescale associated with this process which may be a contributory factor to the low awareness. **An implementation plan associated with the strategic plan with realistic timescales would enhance the potential for the development of effective internal quality processes.**

The team was informed of interesting developments on accreditation processes in Departments and programmes. Some areas report that student feedback is helpful and constructive and students expressed the view that their comments are usually taken seriously and result in positive change. The review team also took note of student questionnaires as instruments which are being used to improve teaching and learning. This development is welcomed but needs to be effectively implemented. In one area the Dean reported that a questionnaire was conducted each year by students whilst students from that area said that they had not seen any questionnaire. **Internal systems should ensure that the quality loop is completed and some centralised support would contribute to the effectiveness of this.**

Finally some students commented that they had presented a number of issues to the Rector, in annual student/Rector meetings and, following these meetings, steps were taken to rectify their concerns. Whilst it is welcomed that student concerns were listened to and addressed effectively, the Evaluation Team suggest that to maintain transparency, consistency and clarity of approaches, feedback from students should be systematic rather than ad hoc, with proactive monitoring mechanisms that enable action to be taken at appropriate levels within the organisation.

## **2.10 Internationalisation**

The University shows a great enthusiasm for internationalising its activities and curricula. It is well situated to benefit from links within the Black Sea region and the Caucasus, as well

expanding opportunities in Europe. Whilst the former is somewhat developed, the latter needs a clearer approach, especially towards the use of foreign languages. **This is really a given for any university that wishes to internationalise its activities and we recommend that addressing this should be a priority.**

The University offers preparatory programmes in English. However these received much criticism from students and from some academic staff. There is a widespread feeling that the focus of teaching needs to be on spoken English rather than grammar. **The Evaluation Team strongly encourages the University to continue with and strengthen its efforts in encouraging the use of spoken foreign languages amongst students and academic staff.** Students and academics need to use the language in practice. There is currently a very low level of spoken English within the University and the evaluation team heard examples of links with Europe through Erasmus which were unsatisfactory for some students. **Erasmus exchange agreements should be developed in a clearer and more reliable form and the office created to promote Erasmus links should ensure that it pro-actively provides support for incoming and outgoing students.**

The Evaluation Team recognises and appreciates the efforts the University is making in placing academic staff in favourable overseas teaching environments and notes the former links with Malta and proposed links with the United Kingdom as initiatives which should be built on and developed.

## **2.11 Strategic and human resources management**

The University provided a copy of the Strategic Plan for the Evaluation Team to consider. Additionally the Evaluation Team was able to discuss aspects of the plan in various meetings.

The present version of the strategic plan considers an ambitious list of targets. The review team could not find information on how the university is implementing the strategy in order to reach the goals and targets considered. **The plan would benefit from a review which would prioritise and shorten the current list, ensuring that the remaining items reflect the University vision and mission.**

Similarly, the SWOT analysis included as part of the strategic plan is commended although is difficult to understand in parts. For example, a list of over 20 University values is provided. The Evaluation Team believes that a modification and reduction of the list of values, together with a consideration of how these would be reflected in University life and decision-making, would be an asset in implementing the Strategic Plan. More generally, **a closer consideration and refinement of the SWOT analysis with a focus on how to utilise strengths and address weaknesses in order to minimise threats and maximise opportunities would be helpful in strategy development and would complement this report.**

In terms of Human Resources Management, the Evaluation Team noted that the University does not have autonomy for selecting non academic staff and that the current model is a centralised government responsibility. This is not compatible with the concept of autonomous universities and leads to a number of anomalies and inconsistencies, for

example the ratio of academic to non academic staff is much higher than in contemporary European universities.

Initiatives to monitor teacher effectiveness were noted as being in place in various areas across the University. The Evaluation Team recognises that feedback is an important supportive factor for individuals within a changing environment. Additionally the Evaluation Team concluded that to ensure that staff maintains a contemporary skill set in a rapidly changing environment **a formal system of appraisal should be developed to target professional development for teachers** which may have amongst its priorities Information and Communication Technologies, teaching and learning approaches, language learning and teaching foreign students.



### **3. Conclusion and summary of recommendations**

Karadeniz Technical University has successfully coped with major challenges and changes. We also found many areas in which the institution can build on this success and commend the University on the links it has created locally regionally and internationally, on the award of the ECTS label, for the development of excellent teaching practices in some areas, for the increase in research publication output.

This report includes a number of recommendations which are summarised here.

#### **Vision and mission**

The National Higher Education Framework may be presented as a barrier to change when in fact decision-making capacity is held by the University.

Efforts should be directed towards building the capacity for creating a more focused and shared vision and mission across the institution.

The University needs to consider ways in which it can develop a culture of critical self reflection.

#### **Governance and decision-making structures**

The University should promote an internal self reflection and debate on the present governance and decision-making structures, taking into account the institution culture, vision, mission and development plan.

Student participation in Karadeniz Technical University life and decision-making should be reviewed to enable the university to hear their views and benefit from these.

Vocational Schools need to have a clearer position in relation to the University, namely in terms of a general lifelong learning strategy.

Links in recruitment and proper articulation between the Vocational Schools and the University should be developed, taking advantage of Qualifications Frameworks.

#### **Teaching and learning**

The University should develop a (teaching and learning) strategy to address how it will help students to learn the skills, knowledge and attitudes to succeed.

The leadership needs to value the existing good examples of teaching and learning and create a strategy to disseminate these good practices across the university.

The University should analyse the nature and needs of the student body and shape the teaching and learning strategy to respond to them.

### **Research**

The Team stresses the need for research development and capacity building to be properly supported and developed within a cohesive strategy in order to bring the university to the level of international esteem which it seeks for itself.

Any strategy which is developed should give priority to areas, units and persons who show capacity for leading research. This development should be built upon with the intention of joining efforts of staff members to promote quality, create focus and enhance critical masses.

The university should use the revolving funds in a transparent way to seed projects that offer potential to mobilise external funds for research and financing of PhD students.

### **Relationships with the region**

There is still space for improvement to reinforce the present platforms for co-operation and in creating a strategy and mechanisms for continuous development.

The University should devise ways to build bridges between students and the residents of Trabzon, so that student life is readily integrated within the City.

### **Quality**

An implementation plan associated with the strategic plan with realistic timescales would enhance the potential for the development of effective internal quality processes.

Internal systems should ensure that the quality loop is completed and some centralised support would contribute to the effectiveness of this. The European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance should be taken as a relevant framework.

### **Internationalisation**

A foreign language policy should be created as a priority to aid internationalisation.

The Evaluation Team strongly encourages the University to continue with and strengthen its efforts in encouraging the use of spoken foreign languages amongst students and academic staff.

Erasmus exchange agreements should be developed in a clearer and more reliable form and the office created to promote Erasmus links should ensure that it pro-actively provides support for incoming and outgoing students.

### **Strategic planning and human resource management**

The strategic plan would benefit from a review which would prioritise and shorten the current list of goals and targets, ensuring that the remaining items reflect the University vision and mission.

A closer consideration and refinement of the SWOT analysis with a focus on how to utilise strengths and address weaknesses in order to minimise threats and maximise opportunities would be helpful in strategy development and would complement this report.

A formal system of appraisal should be developed to target professional development for teachers.

We believe that considering these recommendations will contribute to strengthening the University's capacity to change and to accomplish the strategic goals chosen to take the university forward.

## References

Visakopi, J., Stankovic, F., Pedrosa, J. and Rozsnyai, Chr., *Higher Education in Turkey: Trends, Challenges, Opportunities. Observations and recommended actions on the higher education system based on seventeen institutional evaluation reports of Turkish universities* , TÜSIAD and EUA, October 2008, available on [http://www.eua.be/fileadmin/user\\_upload/files/Newsletter\\_new/EUA\\_Higher\\_Education\\_Report\\_2008.pdf](http://www.eua.be/fileadmin/user_upload/files/Newsletter_new/EUA_Higher_Education_Report_2008.pdf).