

VERONIKA KUDROVÁ

**Legal aspects of education quality assurance and its external evaluation
in the higher education institutions of the Czech Republic. The role of the
Accreditation Commission**

Summary

The paper provides information on the legal aspects of education quality assurance in higher education institutions focussing on the example of the Czech model, with particular emphasis on the role of the key authority in this process – the Accreditation Commission. It begins with a presentation of the higher education system in the Czech Republic and its autonomous character. In analysing this system, the author deals with external evaluation of the quality of education provided by higher education institutions and identifies the basic measures which the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has been equipped with by the legislator, i.e. accreditation and state approval. These measures are applied on the basis of a standpoint taken by the Accreditation Commission, whose opinions, notwithstanding the fact that they are not administrative decisions, are nevertheless binding for the Ministry. The author goes on to present the main tasks and competences of the Ministry and the Accreditation Commission, as well as the relevant procedures. The issues of ‘flying professors’ and students of degree programmes whose accreditation has been withdrawn (or expired) are likewise discussed in this context. The core part deals with the Accreditation Commission as the body which maintains the whole system. Some problems related to its position and composition are highlighted, principally the danger of bias and the absence of any real mechanism for monitoring of the standpoint taken by the Commission. The problem of the lack of personnel and financial resources to satisfy the Accreditation Commission's requirements is also mentioned.

The conclusions formulated by the author suggest that in light of the design of the current law on higher education and the Administrative Procedure Code, the solutions to the outlined problems cannot be reached simply by minor amendments to the existing law. The system of education quality assurance needs to be significantly redefined and substantial amendments to the Act on Higher Education Institutions are necessary. As a matter of fact, work has started on new legislation to redefine the position and composition of the Accreditation Commission. There is, however, a potential risk that even if put to the vote, it will once again be rejected, because of the sensitive nature of this issue and the political situation in the Czech Republic.

Keywords: higher education in the Czech Republic – education quality assurance – higher education institutions – Accreditation Commission – accreditation