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I, the undersignedMerziha Idrizi..... hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. To the best of my knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted as part of the requirements of any other academic degree or non-degree program, in English or in any other language.

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Date:January 6th 2014.....

Name (printed letters):Merziha Idrizi.....

Signature:Merziha Idrizi.....

Quota for Minority Communities in Higher Education in the Republic of Macedonia

Affirmative Action: Policy Framework Review

By

Merziha Idrizi

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Supervisor: Professor Liviu Matei

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Abstract

Taking into account the challenges faced by most of the transition countries concerning the development of their economies, increased market competition, and in general the influx on higher knowledge standards, the importance of the higher education and access to higher education becomes a point of reconsideration on the policy makers agenda.

The purpose of this paper is to provide policy review on how the affirmative action policy, targeting minority groups is implemented in the practice in the multicultural country context such as the Republic of Macedonia. In order to reveal the reality I apply a case study approach of the University of “Ss Cyril and Methodius” Skopje which has almost 21 years implementation experience of affirmative action. The findings reveal certain drawbacks in the actual quota distribution for minorities in practice, as a result of absence of a proper implementation mechanism in place and the autonomy of the faculties. Based on the findings I provide recommendations to as how the policy could be improved by addressing the revealed policy drawbacks.

Key words: Higher Education, Minorities, Affirmative Action, Policy Implementation, Quotas.

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Abbreviations

AA- Affirmative Action

EU-European Union

HE- Higher Education

MoES- Ministry of Education and Science

UKIM- “Univerzitet Sv Kiril I Metodij” Skopje (translated by the author into English language:
University of “Ss. Cyril and Methodius”

US-United States of America

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Introduction

As we are witnessing the fast pace development of the Globalization processes into societies we live in, the spread of the economic crisis, the increasing demands on the labor market for highly competent population, challenges the policy makers to respond to these societal changes by creating adequate policies to embark upon the phenomena. This has highlighted the imperative of the higher education as a potential tool to address the challenges on a national level. According to the World Bank (2009, 4) “Tertiary education is a key factor in a nation’s efforts to develop a highly skilled workforce in a competitive global economy”.

Hence, in practice this would mean that country governments or decision-makers should create conditions that would provide a chance for a larger number of its citizens to obtain quality education in general, as well as higher education degrees. These citizens should include also marginalized groups such as Roma.

Nkomo (2012) in his study, as a part of the series of research studies -conducted worldwide-addressing the “lessons in educational equality”, “The Quest for Equity in Higher Education Across Racial, Ethnic and Gender Groups”, emphasize the high consciousness and efforts made on the equality to education in US, Australia and EU : “To rise up to these challenges of both local and global development it is critical that equity be deeply embedded in admission policies and institutional cultures to ensure a greater pool of human talent” (2012, 24). “The development of societies, as well as that of the global community, depends on the university’s capacity to produce knowledge, develop high-level skills, engender scientific and social innovation, and adapt to inexorable change” (ibid) (Nkomo 2012, 24).

The concern over the access to higher education, and equal opportunities is present on the EU agenda as well. Based on the study on “Modernization of the Higher Education Europe: Funding and the Social Dimension in Europe” (Eurydice 2011), EU efforts are shifting towards providing equal access to higher education adding the “social dimension” and emphasizing the

need to increase the level of the high-skilled population. “The analysis showed that, at European level, significant attention is devoted to making European higher education more equitable and inclusive. However, questions remain about the effects of these political declarations. In particular, what has been done at national level to make higher education systems more inclusive?”(Eurydice 2011, 9). Additionally to this, strong accent has been put on expanding the higher education for the “under-represented groups”: “In Leuven/Louvain-La-Neuve, the Bologna ministers made a commitment to: "set measureable targets to widen participation and widening participation of under-represented groups in higher education, to be reached by the end of the next decade" (Leuven/Louvain-La-Neuve Communiqué, 2009)” (quoted in Eurydice 2011 *ibid* p.9).

All the above elaborations confirm the rise of the interest for equal access to higher education and emphasize the importance of pursuing policies in practice on a national level considering the country context, with more “vivid” results. This is also the case in country in transition such as Republic of Macedonia.

Considering the multicultural dimension of the society in the Republic of Macedonia, and the recent history on conflict developments among majority and minority groups, seems its sets challenges to the policy makers and decision makers to address and cope with the world-wide changes.

Republic of Macedonia has become a signatory country of the “Bologna declaration in 2003” which reflected in an intensive process of changes in the higher education system (Tempus 2010, 2). Based on the last Census from (2002), the population of the country (in total 2.022.547) is composed by different minority groups with the following shares: Albanians 509.083, Turks 77.959, Roma 53.879, Vlachs 9.695, Serbs 35.939, Bosniachs 17.018, and others 20.993. The remaining 1.297.981 are the Macedonian majority (Census 2002, 34). The access of minority groups to higher education has been addressed under affirmative action policy through Quotas

for minority communities, introduced for the first time in 1992/93 (UKIM Analysis 1993/94, 13:15). This policy aims to facilitate the access of minority community students to public universities in the country. (ibid) The process of development of this policy into practice was accompanied with challenges as a result of the political context of the country, and low ethnic tolerance.

Newspaper (magazine) articles on national and international level reported allegations on the inconsistency of the policy implementation in practice, potential of ‘misusing’ of the special quotas for minority by the majority. According to a national ‘Forum Magazine’ (2007) research article on this topic, inconsistency on the implementation of the policy was reported, for the Roma minority places in higher education, as it turn out that based on the calculation of the quotas “only half student belonging to Roma minority” could be enrolled (2007, 51).

Times Higher Education (THE), UK based ‘weekly magazine on higher education news’ (THE, 1999), had a brief news article titled : “Macedonian unis fail to provide racial mix“ indicating the allegations of the Albanian minority political “Party for Democratic Prosperity” (PDP) claiming that quotas were misused by some students from the majority population: “According to the PDP Slavs-Macedonian and Serbs-are being entered on university rolls as ‘Albanians’, but the party questions, how students with typical Slavonic surnames become ‘Albanians overnight’”(1999). Seventeen enrolled students were doubted their ethnicity, out of the total number of seventy four enrolled Albanian students” (THE, 1999).

Considering the specificity of the country context, so far the research attention, on the access to higher education in the Republic of Macedonia and the affirmative action policy, has been given by the ‘conflict-prevention’ and/or ‘conflict-resolution’ theory approach. Hence, the findings of these researches set the evidence for difficult process of the development and particularities of this policy in the country. Daftary (2001) in his article provides insights on the ‘interethnic

relations' between the majority Macedonian and the Albanians the largest minority group (2001, 294).

Czaplinski (2008) in his book, "Conflict Prevention and the Issue of Higher Education in Mother Tongue" provides thorough review of the development of the higher education and its reforms and describes Macedonia as a "unique case study" to argue the importance of the higher education as a tool for "conflict prevention" theories and practice (2008, 17).

From the empirical perspective another research analyzed the discrimination of the Roma students in tertiary education based on their personal experience as students. This research study has been conducted by the European Center for Minority Issue, Flensburg, Germany ECMI (2005) on the Roma minority and their 'discrimination' elaborating on Roma students opinion on 'their treatment in the Macedonian higher education' and the existent affirmative action policy (2005). Based on the results from the study, it was confirmed that there are prejudice and stereotypes that lead towards discrimination of the Roma students (ECMI 2005, 57).

Despite the aforementioned researches addressing the affirmative action policy in the Republic of Macedonia, there is still a gap in the literature and practical study research on how the actual affirmative action policy is implemented into the practice.

Considering the challenged circumstances under which the policy of affirmative action was developed in the higher education in Macedonia, by means of analyzing the affirmative action policy implementation in the "University of Ss Cyril and Methodius" Skopje, and conducting semi-structured interviews, this research analyses how the affirmative action through the instrument of Quotas for minority communities in higher education is implemented and understood by the policy actors involved, and its beneficiaries in the country.

The purpose of this research is not to draw a general conclusion on the policy implementation in the country, instead its aim is to provide new knowledge on the potential drawbacks and good

practices of this policy, that could serve for further research analysis, taking into account the importance of the access to higher education as it becomes important part of the policy makers agenda.

To deal with the defined aims the thesis will have the following structure: In the first chapter I provide insights from the affirmative action theory debate basic concepts and definitions. These were used to provide investigative analysis for the case study of Macedonia. In the second chapter I am presenting the research methodology on how data were gathered in order to answer the research questions. Further, I am presenting the research findings and the analysis in chapter three. Finally, at the end I am presenting the concluding remarks and providing recommendations related to the potential perspectives of the policy and further research needs.

Chapter 1

Literature Review

This chapter condenses the literature review on the affirmative action debates, definitions and terms. Considering that in the literature the holistic grasp on the topic mostly comes from US, hence, most of the approach will be considered in the pro affirmative manner.

1.1 Affirmative action policy debates

A considerable amount of literature has been published on the matter of Affirmative action. Majority of them have a vast contribution to the current debates on the topic. The debate on the affirmative action policies and its instruments is not a new “phenomena”, however, it is always found to be “attractive” for researches in particular the implementation of this policy and its instruments. The research literature on and the practice experiences of affirmative action appears to confirm two streams in this debate. One stream supports the affirmative action policies; the other stream being against such type of policy measures addressing societal challenges.

But what do we actually talk about? It is known among the researches that defining the term affirmative action presents a challenge even today.

I find the book written by Sterba (2009) “Affirmative action for the future” capturing in a fair manner the challenges in the theory and providing the holistic picture of the two main founding arguments:

1. The understanding of Affirmative Action by those supporting the policy, the policy is defined as “equal opportunity” (2009.3) which is further transformed into a measures that are used by the leading structure of the countries with a purpose to ensure access of the members from marginalized group minorities, ethnic groups, socially-disadvantaged groups into public services.
2. The understanding of Affirmative Action by those against this policy they define it as “reversed discrimination”(2009.3)

Based on (Cohen, Nagel and Scanlon 1977, Introduction) book on the “ Equality and Preferential Treatment” the pro argument used for considering affirmative action measures is that they provide further elaboration why disadvantaged groups should be part of affirmative policy measures: “ The disadvantages of minorities are further amplified by poverty, poor education, and membership in families and communities whose other members are similarly deprived”. (Cohen, Nagel and Scanlon 1977 Introduction).

Further they also provide arguments against affirmative measure from a policy implementation perspective bringing in into the discussion its “ambiguity”: “Since, in addition to ending discrimination, the affirmative action program encourages reverse discrimination, it might be criticized for ambiguity, inconsistency, or hypocrisy in advocating one policy in writing and encouraging another in practice” (Cohen, Nagel and Scanlon 1977,202.).

Based on the brief summary of the main arguments in the theory the definition of the affirmative action provided by Anderson (2010) more or less to a certain extent I find it applicable for the case study of this research: “By ‘affirmative action’ I refer to any policy that aims to increase the participation of a disadvantaged social group in mainstream institutions, either through ‘outreach’ (targeting the group for publicity and invitations to participate) or ‘preference’ (using group membership as criteria for selecting participants)”(Anderson 2010,page 135: 136)

Considering that I will be reviewing the policy on the quota implementation in admission policies at the university of “Ss Cyril and Methodius” Skopje which is an instrument of the affirmative action policy in higher education (and its purpose is to secure places for students from the minority group in the country), I found applicable to the case study research the definition of the term as given by “Quota systems distribute benefits or burdens to members of social groups on the basis of the possession of characteristics, such as ethnicity or sex, which are deemed to be relevant to whatever it is that is to be dealt out” (Conrad, 1976, 136).

Chapter 2

Methodology

As this research attempts to provide narrative analysis and policy overview on the implementation process of the quota for minority communities as instrument for increasing the access to higher education of the target group in Macedonia, my aim is to provide answer on the following questions: How is the policy on quota for minority communities in higher education in Macedonia implemented in practice? How is understood by the actors involved? How it is reflected in their behavior and in the decision-making process? In order to answer these questions I have used the research strategy of the “case study” analysis. This method seemed to be suitable because as (Yin 2009) notes: “As a research method, the case study is used in many situations, to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena” (Yin 2009, 4). This approach I consider suitable in order to bring knowledge how different actors influence the implementation policy in practice.

The case study selected for the analysis is the “Ss. Cyril and Methodius University Skopje” (hereafter UKIM). This university was chosen due to the fact that this is the first public university in Macedonia established back in 1949 and the longest tradition in implementing the affirmative action policy since 1992. (www.ukim.edu.mk). This public university is the largest supplier within the country higher education system that provides study programs in different study fields such as natural science, technologies, humanities, medicine, biotechnical and art (UKIM Analysis 2011, 26), unlike the other public universities in the country. Further, UKIM is considered as a “prestigious” university where on all levels currently and where currently, (including the academic year 2012/13), 50.000 students are pursuing their studies. (www.ukim.edu.mk).

Considering the limited information available on this policy implementation, in order to gather data and insights on the affirmative action policy within the higher education in the country, I

have conducted semi-structured interviews with the decision-makers, implementers, and beneficiaries of this policy in the country, whose positions and knowledge are closely related to the implementation of the affirmative action (see Annex 2 List of Interviewees).

I have conducted 9 interviews in total in the country, in the period from June 25th till June 29th in 2012.

Each interviewee was approached in written with presenting the brief guideline on the purpose of the research and the technical aspects of the interview process, as well as with the list of semi-questions for discussion (See Annex 1). The length of the interview was thirty minutes to maximum one hour.

Considering the **decision-makers group**, I have conducted semi-structured interviews with the Ministry of Education and Science-Department for Higher Education representative, Directorate for Promotion and Development of the Languages in the Education for the Ethnic Minorities within the Ministry for Education and Science, and the UKIM Rector Office representative from sector on study program and science.

With the purpose of gathering comprehensive information on the actual empirical perspective, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the **direct policy implementers**, namely the Associate Deans of the study program of three faculties within UKIM, the Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Medicine and Faculty of Law. Their choice was as a result of a recommendation from the semi-structured interviews with “key-informant” from the decision-makers group, considered based on the trend of high enrolment rates in general for all students at these faculties.

In order to obtain knowledge on the general understanding of the policy, and its implementation as perceived by the **beneficiaries of the policy**, I have conducted semi-structured interviews

with the existing youth student associations and youth programs representatives from the Albanian and Roma minority community. The reason why I have chosen representatives from these two minority communities is based on the analysis of the enrolment rates where a tendency is noticed that Albanians are presented with the highest percentage of enrolment rate and Roma are with the lowest enrolment percentage among the minorities in the country. For example in the following academic years the Albanian minority was presented with the given enrolment rates: 2001/02 with 6.68%; 2002/03 with 8.98%; 2003/04 with 10.40% and in 2004.05 with 15.50%, whereas the Roma minority retrospectively the academic years with 0.28%; 0.29%; 0.19% and 0.31% (National Strategy for the Development of Education 2005-2015” 2004). Further elaboration on the details will be given in the Chapter 3.

As a student association providing the perspective of the Roma young students on the policy in question, “Romaversitas” Program office was chosen, due to the fact that this is a Program which provides financial and academic support (through various mentoring, and training programs) for Roma students pursuing higher education in Macedonia. This program provides the aforementioned support to Roma students in the country since 2001. Its funding comes from international donation the Open Society Foundation from Hungary and Macedonia (<http://www.romaversitas.edu.mk/>).

The non-governmental organization “Multikultura” was selected to provide insights to this research, from the Albanian minority perspective, as it implements programs targeting youth from all minorities in Macedonia. “Multikultura is leading organization for the civil rights by promoting the youth activism, participating in the decision making process and developing cultural and interethnic tolerance and cooperation”(www.multikultura.org.mk). Additionally, the representative interviewed for this research is Albanian who has the experience on the policy implementation from the time when the policy was initially introduced in practice, hence providing the historical background.

The analysis of the data gathered from the semi-structured interviews have been clustered and elaborated in the Research Findings and Analysis (Chapter 3) part of this paper in the following way: a) Knowledge and understanding of the policy; b) Potential benefits and challenges c) Future Perspective and proposal for overcoming the potential challenges.

Nevertheless, in order to understand more comprehensively the matter, I have conducted a document analysis on the strategic documents related to the higher education in the country Na, legal framework, statistical data and analysis available at the State Statistical Office (enrolments and graduation rates on students belonging to the minority communities) EU reports on Macedonian Higher Education, and national newspapers, covering topics on this very specific case.

Due to the limits, based on a lack of (and insufficient available) data, non-existing data before introducing the policy in practice, as well as the official requirements for this thesis, this study does not cover analysis and measurement on how much successful is the affirmative action through the Quota for Minority Communities in the higher education in Macedonia.

Chapter 3

Research Findings and Analysis

After presenting the main literature and the general debates on the affirmative action policies in theory in chapter 1, and the methodological approach in chapter 2, this chapter covers the empirical perspective, by presenting the research findings and analysis of the data gathered on the case study in question. It begins with brief presentation on the higher education system and admission policy at the UKIM. Further, it continues with presentation of the “current act of play”, through analysis of the semi-structured interviews and available statistical data for the enrolment rates of the students belonging to the minority communities.

1.1 Brief Introduction to the Higher Education System in the Republic of Macedonia

The developments of the higher education in Macedonia were followed by an intensive process of reforms, after the country independence in 1991. Most of the reforms were influenced by the political changes due to the transition period towards a democratic society and the ethnic pressure between the Macedonian majority and Albanian minority. Based on the program for development of the higher education (2004) the processes of privatization, enable private investments to access into the education, and contributed to increasing the number of available (private) universities in the country which lead to increase the offer on higher education institutions. (National Program for development of education 2004, 269).

There are five public universities: University of “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” Skopje, University of “St. Kliment Ohridski” –Bitola, University of “St. Apostol Pavle” Ohrid, University of “Goce Delcev” Stip and University of Tetovo (Tempus 2010), which implement the affirmative action policy for the students belonging to minority communities. The Higher Education system functions under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Science and it is regulated by a

Law on Higher Education. Public Universities and their faculties enjoy severe autonomy and hence, the government and University Rector do not have a great integrity to interfere in the university and faculty policies. “Each of the individual faculties has by law the status of legal entity (i.e. a legal entity within a legal entity) and is considered as an independent educational institution. The central management is weak and is not in the position to provide a strong policy leadership and quality control over all faculties” (Czaplinsky 2008, 112).

As a country signatory of the Bologna declaration since 2003, Macedonia pledged to undertake the development of the below given objectives: (“National Strategy for the Development of Education 2005-2015” 2004, 54:55) :

Box 1: Objectives based on the Bologna Declaration (Source: “National Strategy for the Development of Education 2005-2015” 2004, 54:55)

1. **Adoption of a system of easily recognisable and comparable degrees and introduction of a diploma supplement** in order to allow the employment flow of European citizens and the international competitiveness of the European higher education system.
 2. **Adoption of a system based on two main cycles – undergraduate and postgraduate.** Access to the latter is preconditioned by successful completion of the former study cycle which must take at least three years. The degree achieved after three years is considered the necessary degree of qualification on the European labour market. The second cycle will lead to a master’s degree and/or a doctorate, as is the case in many European countries.
 3. **Introduction of a credit system**, such as ECTS [European Credit Transfer System], as an appropriate means of promoting the widest possible student exchange. Credits can be earned outside higher education, including lifelong learning, provided that the admitting university recognises the same.
 4. **Promotion of mobility** by overcoming the obstacles to free movement, especially of:
 - students*: providing them with an opportunity to study, allowing them access to studies and the relevant services;
 - teachers, researchers and administrative staff*: recognising and valuing the time they have spent in Europe researching, teaching or learning, without prejudice to their statutory rights.
 5. **Promotion of European cooperation in ensuring quality** by developing comparable criteria and methodology.
 6. **Promotion of the required European dimension in higher education**, especially in the development of subject curricula, inter-institutional cooperation, mobility schemes and integrated study programmes, and training and research.
- The accomplishment of these objectives - which must take place with complete respect for the cultural differences, the language, the national education systems and the autonomy of universities - is to allow the development of a European higher education area. From the point of view of higher education in the Republic of Macedonia, this must result in:
- Increased efficiency in studying;
 - Mobility of students and academic staff;
 - Improved quality of the education process;
 - An active role of the students in providing quality;
 - Improved employment prospects for graduate staff on the national and the European labour market;
 - Enhanced scientific research work;
 - Ensured competitiveness on and compatibility with the European and world academic market.

Further to the set goals based on the Bologna process reforms. In order to increase the availability of the higher education institutions, 'dispersed studies' were opened from the main universities around the country, that contributed to increase in the enrolments rates of students in general. This was noticed and highly praised by the Tempus program review report (2010): "The most significant reform in the HE system is the implementation of the country's strategy for opening HE units of dispersed studies in almost every town in the country. The ultimate aim, with the opening of these dispersed study programmes in the towns outside the headquarters of the Universities, is to increase the number of graduates in the country and bring the universities closer to the rural areas. The increase in the number of universities and other higher education institutions has resulted in a significant increase in the number of students in the country" (Tempus 2010, 3).

"Since 2002-2003 adjustment of the higher education law took place with a purpose to accommodate the affirmative action policy by introducing the 'additional quotas' for students belonging to the minority communities" (National Program for development of education, 2004). Another significant development is the state accreditation of the public 'University of Tetovo' which accreditation took place in 2004, and it is significant considering the fact that the curricula is taught in Albanian language and its accreditation process was followed with unrest and protests by the Macedonian students and political tensions in the country.

The corner-stones of the developments in the higher education, as elaborated above, had a major contribution to the increase in the enrolment rates of the students into universities as it is proven by the illustrated data in the Table 1 below.

Table 1: "Divisions of students enrolled based on their nationality"

Source: National Program for development of the education in the Republic of Macedonia 2005-2015, 2004, p.270)

Year	Total	Macedonians		Albanians		Turks		Roma		Vlachs		Serbs		Other	
		Students	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No
2001/02	45493	39777	87.44	3040	6.68	601	1.32	127	0.28	417	0.92	822	1.81	709	1.56
2002/03	47798	40778	85.31	4292	8.98	683	1.43	140	0.29	440	0.92	807	1.69	658	1.38
2003/04	51311	43645	85.06	5335	10.40	608	1.18	100	0.19	359	0.70	701	1.37	563	1.10
2004/05	61556	48900	79.44	9540	15.50	825	1.34	188	0.31	478	0.78	936	1.52	689	1.12

As illustrated in the Table 1, the increased enrolments rates are noticeable for the most of the students in general. However if we observe the data for the academic year 2004/05, on the enrolled students from Albanian and Roma minority, it confirms the claims that Albanian minority has the largest enrolment rates 15.50% compared to the other minorities. On the other hand the enrolment rates of the Roma students are the lowest 0.31%.

Based on the captured introduction of the higher education developments in the country, it is clear that Macedonia invests efforts to reform the higher education system, so that it responds to the world wide trends addressing the access to higher education and increasing of the country highly qualified population, regardless of its characteristics.

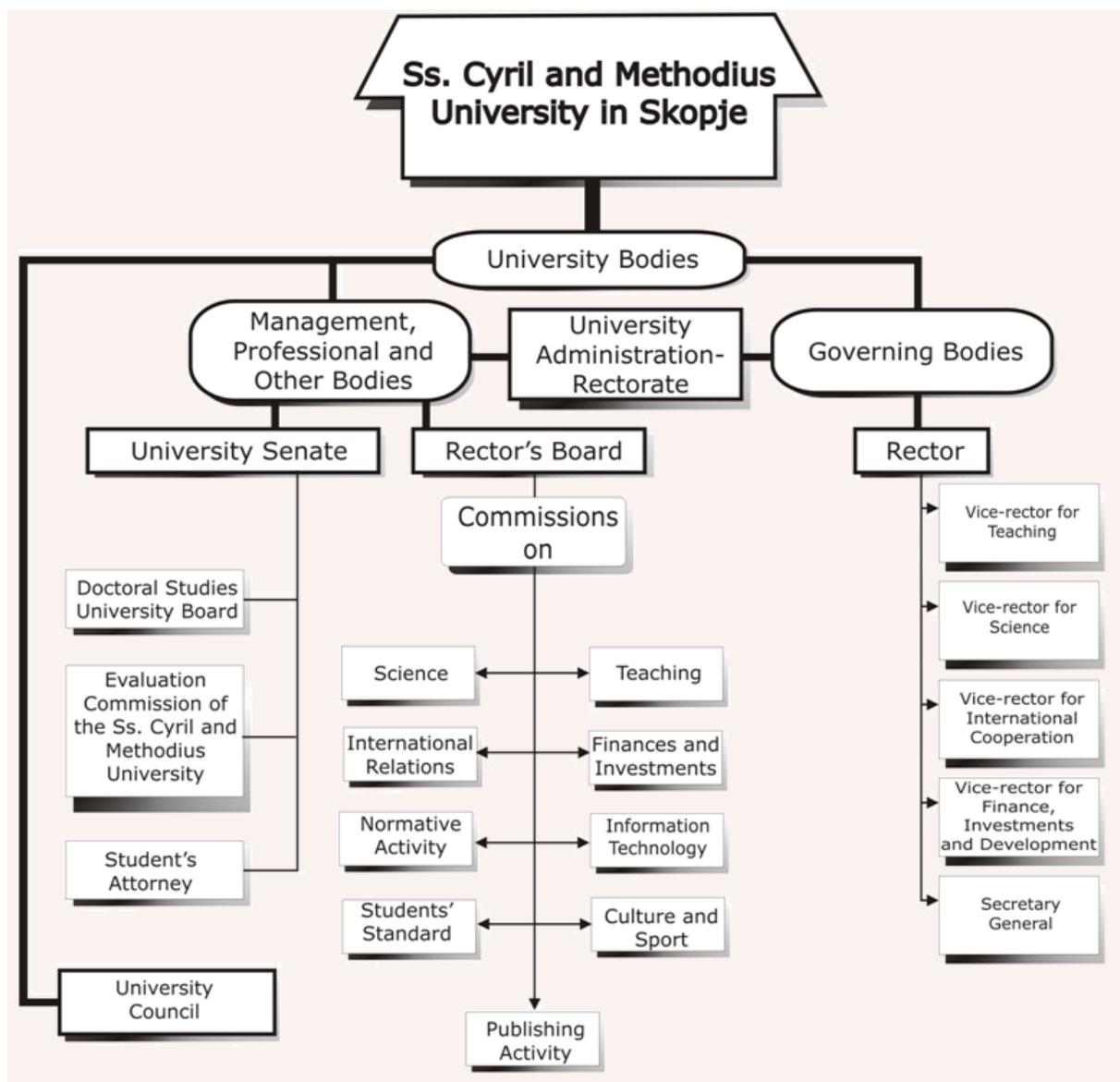
1.1.1 University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius Skopje

As the first public university in the country UKIM has the vast experience in applying the affirmative action into practice for the past 21 academic years (including the academic year 2012/13) through the 'additional quotas', into its admission process, from the time they were introduced for the first time back in 1992/93. It was founded back in 1949 with only three faculties, and today it counts 23 faculties covering broad field of studies in natural science, technologies, humanities, medicine, biotechnical and art (www.ukim.edu.mk). For the academic year 2012/13 it announced available places for total 12.157 secondary school graduates to be enrolled into first year studies within higher education. Compared with the second public University of Ss. Kliment Ohridski, founded in 1979, the intake of secondary school graduates

every year is 3000 places, and it covers the South-Western region of the country (www.uklo.edu.mk). This confirms the large scope of the coverage provided by the university of Ss Cyril and Methodius Skopje, for the entire country, where 50.000 students currently (2012/2013) are pursuing their higher education degrees on all levels (www.ukim.edu.mk).

Figure 1: University Governing Structure

"UKiM and its faculties are the higher education institutions with their own organizational and governing structure based on institutional autonomy." (Source:http://ukim.edu.mk/en_content.php?meni=63&glavno=63



The University Administration-Rectorate in communication with the faculties and the Ministry of Education and Science are planning and coordinating the total numbers of available places for

secondary school graduates to enroll within the university and per faculty, for each academic year.

Based on the University Governing Structure the department of the Vice-Rector for teaching, every academic year after the enrolment process is finalized is conducting analysis on the number and structure of the students, and students interest on study fields and provides recommendation for the admission policy of the university.

1.1.2 Admission process and policy

The actual implementation of the affirmative action of the UKIM takes place within the admission process. In order to understand the logic of the affirmative action it is important to comprehend the general admission process. Therefore the following lines include detailed description of the admission procedure.

According to the Law on higher education and the University Statute, each academic year the university announces the open competition for enrolment of students in the first study year within university faculties. Additionally, publishes a guideline for the realization of the open competition per academic year. This guideline in a transparent way describes the enrolment policy and announces the number of student places available per each faculty including the number available for the students belonging to minority communities i.e. the quotas. There are three rounds of applications procedure established, giving additional chance to applicants in case they failed to enroll in the first round of applications to a given faculty on their choice, they can apply to other faculties within the additional application rounds. Namely the first round of application is in June-July, the second round is in August and the third one in September each academic year (Guidelines for realization of the announcement for enrolment of students in the first cycle of studies for the academic year 2012/2013).

As of the academic year 2012/13, the application procedure has introduced an online based application process, supported additionally with the paper based application (Guidelines for

realization of the announcement for enrolment of students in the first cycle of studies for the academic year 2012/2013 p.1) hence, students must first to register in the online system and submit the paper based application afterwards in the given dates for enrolment.

When the application process is completed by the first deadline the online application system, based on the achieved scores calculated (with mathematical formulas described in the guidelines) from the grade average achieved in secondary school and the State Matura exam grades, provides ranking list in descending order of the applicants [on two subjects] (ibid p.5). The total score that can be achieved is 100 points (60 from the secondary school achievements and 40 from the state Matura exams (ibid p.5)

Based on the findings from the semi-structured interviews with the faculty Associate Deans, after the ranking list is received from the online system, there is a Selection Committee meeting (contained from 3 to 5 members, Professors at different study departments from the faculty) and it is chaired by the Associate Dean. After the final results become available they are accepting those applications till the ranking number corresponding with the total number that they were assigned to enroll per academic year on their faculty. The final results from the selection are announced at the faculties.

1.2 Quota for Minority Communities

Within the higher education system there are three types of quotas under which students can be enrolled in faculties, and are as a part of the admission policy procedure. Every student pays tuition fee and the amount of it varies depending under which quota the student is eligible to apply or enroll. The place under the '*State quota*' is earned if the students has the total number of the score bigger then 60, and it is obliged to pay the amount of 200 EUR per each study year. In case the total score is 40 the students is enrolled under the '*quota for self co-financing*' and the amount of the tuition fee varies per faculty and it can be from 400 EUR, 600 EUR or above.

The quota for minority communities is documented under the category of *'additional quotas'* which is determined for each year with the decision brought by the Government of the country, and it is announced in the Official Gazette of the country. For example for the academic year 2012/2013 the decision - (decision number 1.340, number 41-2322/1 available in original language only translated by the author of this research)- states the following:

“With the purpose to provide fair, equal representation in the higher education for students belonging to the minority communities, the public universities in the country are obliged to enroll 10% additionally to the total number of assigned students places per faculty. The representation of each minority group within this 10% should be based on the percentage which represents each minority group, within the total population of the country(decision number 1.340, number 41-2322/1 available in original language only translated by the author of this research).

Further, in those public universities, where there are studies program in the study fields that are also covered within the curricula of the State University in Tetovo, the additional quota for the Albanian minority community is not applicable, meaning that this minority community students should be enrolled under the state quota competing with the scores from the majority students. The percentage of enrolled students (belonging to the minority communities) within the state quota and the quota for self-financing should be till the percentage representativeness of the minority community within the total population”.

The research, planning, and decision making on the number of students to be enrolled (only the state quota and quota for self-financing) in university, involves four structures:

Each **Faculty** conducts analysis based on the application and enrolment rates budget availabilities and approved state money from the last year , and submits its proposal on the number of students to be enrolled for each quota separately (excluding the additional quotas) for the following academic year to the University Administration Rectorate.

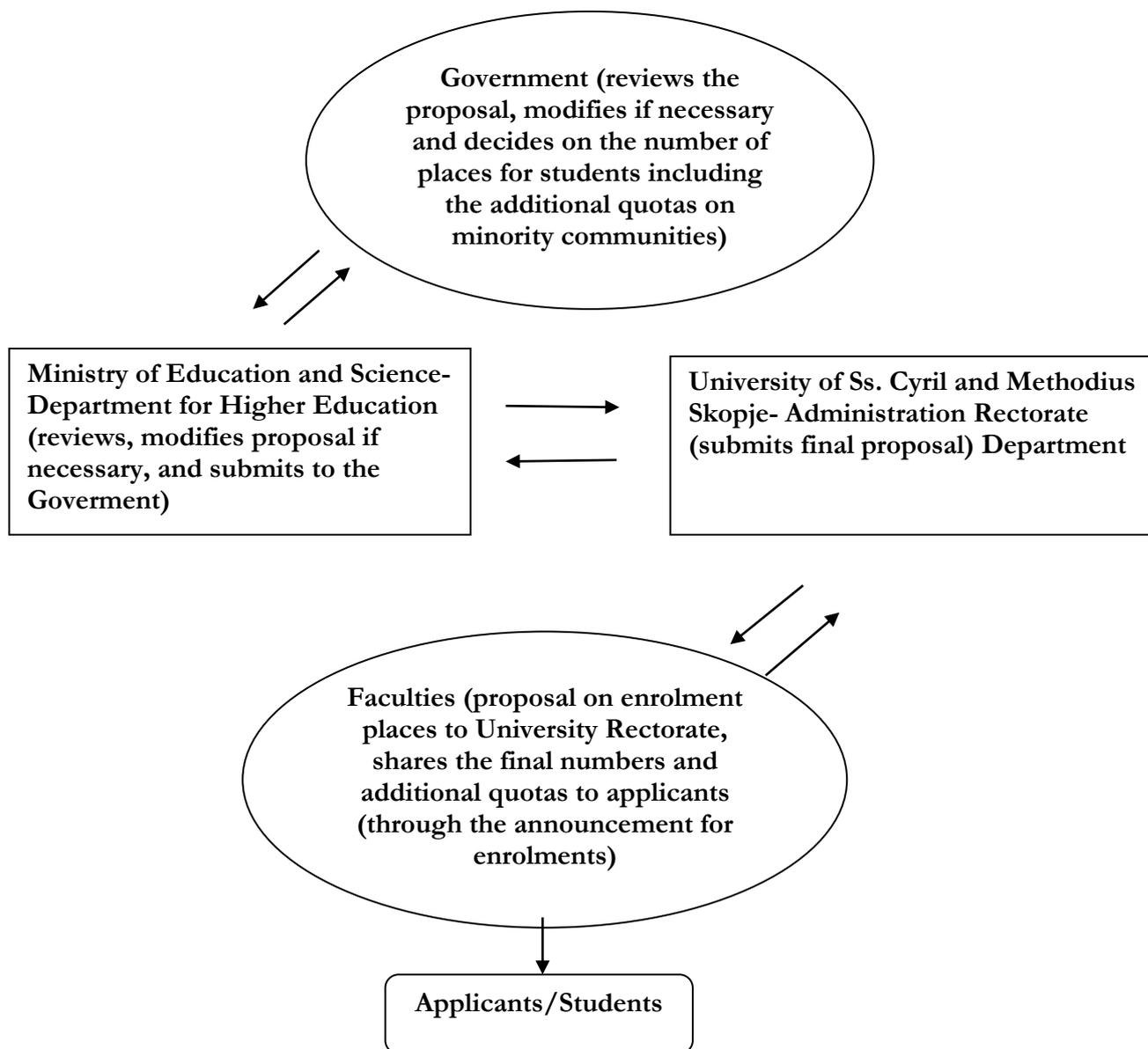
The **University Administration Rectorate** reviews the proposal from each faculty and has the authority to modify it on the university level. Further this proposal is sent for a review to the Ministry of Education and Science.

The Ministry of Education and Science reviews the received proposal and based on the analysis of the labor market needs, reviews on graduation rates, reviews on the population qualifications in the country, submits further proposal to the Government. The Ministry has the authority also not to announce the call for enrolment per academic year, in certain field of studies, if considered that sufficient number of graduated students is already available. This decision is based on the analysis of the labor marked needs and requirements by the Ministry itself.

Government discusses the proposal and brings the final decision on the quotas and approves each year the affirmative measure so far, fixed 10% additional quota on minority communities' enrolment.

With the purpose of illustrating the holistic picture on the decision making process, the below given Figure 2 presents the communication flow between the aforementioned four structures and includes how students receive the final information on the quotas.

Figure 2: Communication and decision making flow on the enrolment rates and quotas



Based on the document analysis the information on the ‘additional quotas’ for minorities are mentioned in the university announcement for the enrolment of students, the official gazette of the country, within the Law on higher education and Antidiscrimination Law. Even though the information in these documents is indicated as existent affirmative measure and in some mentioned as ‘positive discrimination’, there is no available information on what is the actual applied mechanism measure into practice.

1.2.1 Semi-structured interviews analysis

When conducting the semi-structured interviews and their analysis, notion on several challenges has been found to be common understanding between the interviewees. In this part of the thesis I will present the findings from the interviews in a clustered manner based on the actors involved in the implementation i.e.: decision-makers, policy implementers and policy beneficiaries. I will provide the findings on their understanding of the policy, benefits and challenges, proposed solutions, and future perspectives.

1. **Decision-makers: Ministry of Education and Science, UKIM and the Directorate for Promotion and Development of the Languages in the Education for the Ethnic Minorities within the Ministry for Education and Science**

Taking into account the finding that the decision on applying the additional quotas for enrolment of students belonging to minority communities per academic year, originates from the Government, the involved decision makers as defined in this research, demonstrate knowledge on the **understating** on the reasoning behind this policy. Considering that the percentage of the quota has not been changed since the beginning of the policy implementation in the early 90`s i.e. so far is considered as fixed 10%, none of the decision makers could provide answer on where this 10% came from.

On the **challenges** part, findings revealed that the actual mechanism of implementation is left completely on sole decision of the faculties within the university, due to the faculty autonomy.

From the interview with the Directorate one of the challenges that was raised it is connected in particular with the implementation i.e. the admission process. There is a shed of light on a doubt that, faculties are automatically assigning students from minority communities directly to the additional quotas, if the applicant/student indicated in the application that he/she belongs to the minority community. Based on the understanding of the policy if the student has the required entrance score achieved it allows he/she to enter university under the regular state quota. Regarding the **future perspective** of the policy there are no expectations that this policy will be terminated, even though its implementation decision is left on the Government will.

2. Implementers of the policy: Faculties of Law, Economics and Medicine

The Implementers of the policy as identified at the beginning of the research, based on the actual findings it turns out that in practice they are at the same time the ‘actual decision-makers’ and implementers of the policy. In the following lines I will elaborate on this finding.

Considering that faculties should enroll minority students additionally 10% on the top of the total number of approved student places, findings reveal inconsistency in the process of the quota distribution. Namely, in the situation when the quota is not achieved, meaning the total number of the enrolled students from the minority community is not 10% per faculty, it is expected that it will be completed within the announcement and final selection on the second and third round enrolment periods i.e. August or September.

What confirms the strength of the autonomy of faculties and the **inconsistency** in the policy implementation is the finding that comes from the Faculty of Economics. This Faculty, considering that the quota places for the Albanian minority are not applicable (since the study field of Economics is available at the State University of Tetovo in Albanian language),

distributes the percentage from the Albanian minority of the quota equally as an addition to the percent for the remained minority groups. This means increasing the number of the available places for the students coming from the remained groups of minorities, except the Albanian.

The **challenge** raised on the side of decision makers was also confirmed by the Faculty of Medicine. Namely, the interviewer revealed the so called: “ *“potential space for manipulation”, might took place when the ranking list is produced, some of the minority group students to be transferred from regular state quota into the additional one for minorities, the reasoning behind, is to increase the number of the majority group students..”* -(direct quote from the interviewee).

On the **future perspective** of the policy, their view is that if the Government continues to approve the decision in the upcoming years we will continue to implement it. From the personal point of view given by the Interviewee from the Faculty of Economics: “*[it is considered that] this policy on the additional quotas for minorities is State interference into the autonomy of the faculty*” (direct quote from the Interviewee).

3. Beneficiaries of the policy : “Romaversitas” and “Multikultura”

Based on the findings from the analysis on the understanding of the additional quota for minorities, reveals demonstrate knowledge on the **understanding** of the policy. However they declared that they do not understand the distribution correctly. The identified **challenge** was similar as it was elaborated above, faced by the part of the decision-makers and part of the policy implementers, on the potential for manipulating with the quotas distribution.

Namely, finding from the Romaversitas interviewee is that the act of manipulation directly to be assigned under the additional quota for minorities, despite the fact that you have achieved the required results to enroll in the regular state quota, the faculties are discriminating other students from the same minority group who achieved lower results, but would have made it enroll in the

university under the additional quotas”. The same interviewee shared his personal experience when he was applying to university at the late 90’s and beginning of 2000 that: *“When I applied to university my total score was 90 points , however I was not featuring on the enrolled students list , neither under the additional quotas for minorities. So I address the Faculty Rector office with complaint and I was approved to enroll.”* (Romaversitas Interviewee direct quote)

The interviewee from Mutlikutlura indicated that the affirmative policy in the country, referring to the quotas in higher education were perceived as a *‘bad gift’* considering that they did not increase the enrolment rates in the higher education of the Albanian minority. His statement is confirmed also by the Czaplinski (2008) research claiming that the accreditation of the State University in Tetovo which provides study programs in Albanian language had an impact on the increasing number of Albanian in higher education in the country: “However, the existence of the Tetovo University illustrated that the low percentage of Albanian students at the institutions of higher education in Macedonia could not be attributed to low demand, but rather to lack of opportunities. Its opening increased the awareness of all shortcomings regarding access of minorities to higher education” (Czaplinski 2008, p.135).

On the **future perspective** interviewees from the both student associations suggested that there should be different instruments or additional instrument added to the quota policy for minority students. The Romaversitas interviewee indicated as an example the policy on tuition fee waivers for students belonging to the Roma minority for their first year of studies in the public “University of Goce Delcev” in Stip.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this research was to provide Policy Review of the Affirmative Action in the higher education in the Republic of Macedonia, through a narrative analysis of the implementation process on quotas for minority communities.

The quota for minority communities is distributed for each minority (during the admission process) based on the representative percent of each minority group within the total number of the country population. As a basis for calculation is considered the last Census of the country from 2002, which in reality does not reflect the actual number. In 2011 the Government initiated a process for a new Census for the country population, however it was not successful due to controversies which are best captured in the following data from Freedomhouse on Macedonia:

“The Government failed twice in carrying out a national census, a decade after the last count ended in doubts about its accuracy, especially from Albanians who contend that it did not accurately reflect the minority populations and those who do season work outside of the country during the summer months. Albanians are the second largest ethnic group in the country, comprising about one-quarter of the population. Even before the second failed attempt in October, [2]011 the chairwoman of the Census Committee, Vesna Janavska, resigned stating that she feared falsification and suggested that she was under significant pressure from her colleagues of different ethnic communities. A new chairman was nominated and the Census operation resumed but was again canceled in a dispute over methodology just four days before it was supposed to be completed. The failure of the census reflects the depth of the governance problem and a continued lack of national unity.” (Freedomhouse, 2012).

Lack of updated Census on the country sets a certain drawbacks for any public policy implementation and its evaluation, or just simply creating new policies.

The findings revealed that the affirmative action policy is firmly established within the legislative framework of the country, however due to a lack of a clear official mechanism on the implementation it reveals certain inconsistencies and drawbacks.

The actors involved in the policy implementation seemed to demonstrate understanding of the policy whose knowledge is based from the available official documents that provide brief information and lack information on the implementation mechanism.

Further, it reveals that due to a strong autonomy of the faculties the policy implementation remains to be considered as “policy in a shadow”. This means that faculties are not only the implementers of the policy but also ‘decision makers’ on how this policy is reflected directly into the practice, hence influence on the fairness and equality principles in the higher education in the country.

One of the crucial findings reveals doubts on existent “space for manipulation” with the quota for minority communities. It reveals that student applying as a minority, is automatically assigned to be considered in the admission process under the additional quotas, ignoring the fact that the student total score qualifies him/her to be enrolled under the regular state quotas. Hence, the opportunity for those minority students with slightly lower achievement scores to enter higher education, through the additional quota, is not existent in practice.

Based on the aforementioned findings, the following Recommendations for improving of the policy implementation would follow:

- 1. Establishing a clear and standardized mechanism on implementation and monitoring of the policy implementation in all public universities and faculties.**

This would mean that the Government and the Ministry of Education should provide clear guideline to the University and Faculties on the implementation steps and calculations; this recommendation does hinder the autonomy faculties, however space for reconsideration of the autonomy at least for this type of policies should be given.

- 2. Possibilities for increasing the transparency of the policy for the public** should be examined. It is one way the doubts of the ‘misuse’ of the quotas to be eliminated.
- 3. Establishing an appeal mechanism.** Considering that the university already has the institution of the University Student Ombudsman established. This will enable students from the minority groups with a legal approach to address the inconsistencies found.

4. Taking into account that secondary school is mandatory in the country; the potential for developing **outreach activities** should be further examined. For example possibilities for “open days for the university” within the secondary schools could be an option. Another possibility would be having Advisory structure in place at the secondary school for the secondary school graduates.

Due to the limits of the study and the small sample size (one case study), these conclusions cannot be generalized for the entire policy. However, this research confirms that there are drawbacks in this policy that require further examination. Hence before Recommendations are to be considered, further research should be carried out to examine the implementation of the policy across the public universities in the country and evaluation on how successful is this policy.

ANNEX 1

Interview Questions:

1. What is the perception of the affirmative action in Higher Education and what are the policy measures in the country (through your institution)?
2. How engaged are you on this topic with your work (daily work)?
3. What is the policy on Quota for minority communities (your perception, its purpose, calculation and implementation)?
4. Whether and how does it increase the equality or access to Higher Education?
5. Did the policy changed since its establishment and why? How the changes or adjustment of the policy is communicated to the relevant institutions or implementation agencies and/or beneficiaries?

ANNEX 2

List of Interviewees:

1. Redzep Ali Cupi – *Ministry of Education and Science*- Director of the Directorate for Promotion and Development of the Languages in the Education for the Ethnic Minorities;
2. Jordanco Popovski – *Ministry of Education and Science*-Higher Education Department, Advisor for Networking with Universities and Faculties
3. Kostadinka Mokrova- *University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius Rector Department*, Vice Rector for teaching
4. Biljana Sekulovska- Gaber- Associate Dean of study programs *Faculty of Economics*- University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius
5. Ljubica Georgievska Ismail –Associate Dean of study programs (in the period 2005-2009) *Faculty of Medicine*- University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius
6. Todor Kalamatiev- Associate Dean of study programs *Faculty of Law*- University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius
7. Azdrijan Memedov-Project Assistant Romaversitas (Roma students Association)
8. Natasa Davceva- Project Assistant Romaversitas (Roma students Association)
9. Vulnet Zenki- Executive Director of the *non-governmental organization “Multikultura”* and assistant at the private university South East European University Tetovo.

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