

**Accreditation of Study Programmes  
Assessment Report**

**Institution: Institute of International Relations of Moldova, Republic of Moldova**

**Study programme: International Law**

**Assessment committee:**

- |                                     |   |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Aalt Willem Heringa (Chair)</b>  | – | <b>Professor of (Comparative) Constitutional and Administrative Law, Faculty of Law, Maastricht University, Holland</b>               |
| <b>Aušra Rauličkyte</b>             | – | <b>Adviser to the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Moldova, Moldova</b>   |
| <b>Aliis Liin</b>                   | – | <b>Legal Counsel, University of Tartu, Estonia</b>  |
| <b>Stela Buiuc (student member)</b> | – | <b>PhD student in Law, State University of Moldova; Deputy Director, Centre for Legal Approximation, Ministry of Justice, Moldova</b> |

**Coordinator: Ms Tiia Bach, Assessment Coordinator, Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education, Estonia**

**Date of the assessment visit: 20 May 2015**

**Assessment committee sent the preliminary report to EKKA: 6 July 2015**

**Assessment committee received the comments of the institution under accreditation: 22 July 2015**

**Assessment committee approved the final version of component assessment with 4 votes in favour and 0 votes against.**

**Date: 09 September 2015**

**I Summary of the assessment (mark with 'X'):**

	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
Study programme and its development			X
Teaching and learning			X
Teaching staff			X
Students			X
Resources		X	

**General introduction:**

The Institute of International Relations of Moldova (IRIM) is a state institution of higher education founded in 2003 with the aim to meet an urgent need for training highly professional specialists in Moldova who are able to carry out effective political, diplomatic, economic, legal, communicational activity. The Institute provides studies at 3 levels of education: Bachelor's (1st cycle), Master's (2nd cycle) and Doctoral (3rd cycle).

IRIM has 4 faculties in total. The Faculty of Law was founded by the decision of IRIM Senate in 2005. There are three Chairs at the Faculty of Law: International Law Chair, Public Law Chair, and Private Law Chair. In total, the Institute provides studies on programme in "Law" at Bachelor's level and 4 law programmes at Master's level: International Law, Criminal Law, Business Law, and Customs Law.

The professional master programme under evaluation – International Law – was initiated in 2009 and is carried out by the International Law Chair, which was established as a subdivision of the Faculty of Law for multilateral training of specialists in the field of international law. The programme is conducted in the form of full-time studies with the duration of 1.5 years and the volume of 90 ECTS.

**Comments:**

The Institute and the Chair of International Law have a Strategic Plan of institutional development for 2011-2016, but do not have action plans; the monitoring process of its implementation is not structured. The strategic planning and monitoring in general are not fulfilling their aims and do not help to direct and plan institutional development. The programme does not include any optional disciplines, therefore not being in full compliance with requirements established by the Framework Plan for master studies. The student workload of independent work is not clearly regulated and is not meeting the requirement of 90 ECTS (25-30 hours per credit point). Internships are part of the study programme, but are not well linked with the study programme objectives. The majority of the students are allowed to perform their internship in institutions not directly related to International law, and in these cases the internship is not supporting the achievement of the objectives of the study programme. The programme's content and learning outcomes do not seem to be internationally comparable, some of which are not directly related to the study programme content and not supported by the studies and internship. The study programme does not consider research skills as a learning outcome. The majority of lecturers do not include the sources of other than Romanian and Russian literature in their course programmes, which causes an isolation of the programme and the students from international law developments. There is also no clear evidence about substantial difference between the Master and Bachelor level programme. The high grades of students (in the range of 8-10 out of 10) also support the assumption that the Master programme is not difficult or challenging enough and does not differ sufficiently from the study programme at Bachelor level. The content of the MA study programme is very broad and not focused enough; the study programme includes courses on very different areas of international law and there is no explanation on their coherence within the same study programme. There is no clear logical succession of the courses included in the study programme. There are no clear channels established to get information on the needs of the labour market in order to adjust the study programme accordingly.

There is currently no system for using students' feedback for developing the study management. Teaching methods used by the teaching staff are outdated and do not encourage the students to take an active role in the learning process. The resources of IRIM library are insufficient; most of the books are in Romanian or Russian. The organisation of internship is regulated, but the duration of internships is too short to qualify for 10 ECTS. The duration of internships (5 weeks) and volume of work students are expected to do within that time should be revised. Too few places offering internship operate in the field of international law. The average grades of the students are unreasonably and unrealistically high. The management and teaching staff are aware of the public legislation about recognition of prior learning experience, but it has not been implemented. Steps have been taken to involve students in research and development activities. Students are, indeed, to some extent involved in research and development activities, mainly participating in conferences and workshops and writing articles for the publications of IRIM. Despite this, the satisfaction of the students with the quality of supervision is not measured and the involvement of students in research remains very limited. The research foundation of the programme should be strengthened.

The Committee finds the number of full-time professors too low for a full master programme, posing a threat to the sustainability of the programme. Although students expressed their satisfaction with lecturers' teaching competences, no clear evidences could be found to have full



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confidence that there is a system in place to keep the teaching staff regularly updated about modern teaching methods and offer adequate opportunities for developing other skills to constantly improve the delivery of courses. Thus, a clear staff development system is missing. More importantly, in order to become more competitive and international, it is indispensable for the study of international law to include more international source materials in English, French and/or other foreign languages. The limitation of foreign language command does not allow to foster staff mobility and participation in international networks and conferences, and doing research in the field. Presently, no members of visiting teaching staff are involved in teaching the programme. Currently, only the minority of teaching staff have international publications. Goals and plans for research activities should be made very specific and a system put in place for monitoring these activities.

Only a few applicants are willing to be enrolled in the programme and, as a rule, all of them are admitted even if they do not fulfil the necessary qualifications for the MA programme in International law (eg, foreign languages). Overall, the institute has no well-established systems for career guidance and monitoring career development, psychological counselling and advising on mobility opportunities. The mobility opportunities are oriented more towards the Bachelor students and predominantly focused on cooperation with countries from the Community of Independent States. Though the Institute has some information on the career development of its graduates, it is at present time incomplete and there is no clear understanding on who the main recipients are and what the needs of the labour market are. The drop-out rate is high and bearing in mind the small number of students enrolled for the programme this could pose threats to the MA programme's sustainability.

With regard to the financial situation of the Institute, all figures in the budget of the Institute as well as the Faculty indicate increase and the Institute even has an annual surplus; yet, it looks that insufficient resources have been used for the development of the programme, student and staff mobility, library resources, etc. On the one hand, the budget shows sustainability. On the other hand, the student numbers of the MA programme have decreased from 22 to 13 during recent years. A permanent situation of low student numbers and cross-subsidization of the study programme are indeed worrisome and a cause of concern in terms of the long-term sustainability of the programme. The Institute has adequate and all necessary facilities for conducting studies and part of the building has been newly renovated. But the library is extremely small and is not equipped appropriately for a master programme and the accompanying research.

In conclusion: The Committee does realise that the final overall grades (four overall non compliances) is a negative judgment of the program of International Law, as offered by the Institute of International Relations of Moldova. However, the Committee sincerely believes that the programme is far from being an internationally competitive programme which may stand the tests of quality, structure, and substance. Presently the Committee has encountered too many weaknesses in many of the domains covered by the key requirements. The Committee has no reason to doubt the drive of the responsible persons, but it has noted that a great deal of the key requirements cannot be considered to be met (nor partially met). And many of the issues that have arisen in that respect must be considered fundamental: depth of the programme and study load, library, coherency of the programme, foreign outlook and collaboration; exchange facilities. The Committee has opined that any programme on International (and this also applies for European law) must be open and active in exchange, offer a competitive programme which can stand the test of international benchmarks, and have a truly international outlook and be also truly academic in depth. And finally must be set in a structured environment for curriculum design and feedback and assessment.

**Commendation:**

- Despite the scarcity of resources the Committee commends the Institute for having invested in a renovation of its part of the building.

**Recommendations:**

- The MA programme needs to include development of research skills and thus become more research intensive and research linked, and be made definitely more intensive, challenging and ambitious in order to meet the requirements set for MA programmes.
- It is recommended to ensure that the internship is organised only in the institutions, which are directly related with the international or European law. Also, analyse the duration of the internship and the volume of work the students have to do during the internship
- The Institute must install a structure of feedback, curriculum assessment and evaluation, responsiveness to stakeholders and international benchmarks, as a continuous evaluation and development endeavour.
- Improve the foreign language skills of the staff and students and use more up-to-date literature and learning materials. All disciplines should include obligatory materials in English/French languages.
- Analyse the implementation of the grading system and give the teaching staff instructions about correct implementation of the system.
- Make the recognition of prior learning and work experience a common practice.
- The role of the Faculty in organising lecturers' scientific activities should be more active and well planned, and financial costs of lecturers' participation in forums, national and international scientific conferences should be fully covered by the Faculty.
- Establish a system for career guidance and psychological counselling for students.
- Create more mobility opportunities for students and establish a better organised system for tracking and monitoring the graduates' career development.
- Taking more effective measures targeted at reducing the high drop-out rates that could pose a threat to the sustainability of the MA programme.
- It is absolutely necessary to quickly work on a viable situation which can facilitate an academic programme such as International Law. That implies more students, a strong profile and quality upgrade.

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- The Institute is strongly advised to analyse its budget – revenues and expenses – and consider ways to allocate the necessary funds needed for updating its library resources, increasing the salary of the academic staff, support staff and student mobility, and foster other important aspects of the study process, such as supporting the development of didactical skills of teaching staff, facilitating their participation at local and international conferences, etc.
- Apart from the recommendations which we laid out above, our main recommendation here is that the programme will need a true and intensive and fundamental upgrade in design, structures, collaboration, course content and curriculum content, assessment, academic level of the courses and the other aspects referred to in our findings. The Committee advances the suggestion to consider a close collaboration/merger with other International / European law programmes in order to join forces in staff, students, facilities, and expertise and sustainability and to build a programme which can be competitive and better serve the interests of Moldovan students and society.
- The continuation of making plans with regard to research activities is strongly encouraged, but the content of such plans needs to be thoroughly revised in such a way that it would include activities directly connected with research and thus facilitating the monitoring and evaluation of achievement of the goals set.

### **Recommendations to the Ministry of Education:**

- The Committee is of the opinion that the requirement established by the state in terms of having a dormitory for *all* the students is superfluous and too expensive and should be revisited, since many students have their own abode. Instead of having its own dormitory, it could be considered to cooperate with other real-estate companies or proprietors offering accommodation. So is the requirement regarding the provision of medical service – it is outdated, too expensive, not efficient and, therefore, too much a burden on small institutions and programmes with low funding.
- The Committee is of the opinion that the present Framework Plan adopted by the Ministry of Education is far too inflexible in terms of stipulating the volume of fundamental, specialised and optional courses, allowing the volumes of courses to be strictly 5/10/15 ECTS and subsequently one semester up to 6-2 courses/modules. It is strongly advisable to reconsider giving higher education institutions greater freedom to decide upon the volume of obligatory and optional courses in the programme, thereby expanding students' choices. Furthermore, institutions could be allowed to have courses with volumes bigger or smaller than 5 ECTS, depending on the content of the specific course, and not simply 5 ECTS in order to fulfil some formal requirements.

**II Assessment areas and requirements**

1. STUDY PROGRAMME AND ITS DEVELOPMENT	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
mark with 'X'			X
<p><b>Collected evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strategic Plan of the Chair of International Law (Appendix 9 of the Self-Evaluation Report)</li> <li>- Master study programme and course descriptions in International Law (Appendices 4 and 5 of the Self-Evaluation Report)</li> <li>- Bachelor study programme in Law (Appendix to Self-Evaluation Report)</li> <li>- Information obtained during the meetings</li> <li>- Information obtained from the Self-Evaluation Report</li> </ul>			
<p><b>General comments:</b></p> <p>The Institute of International Relations of Moldova (IRIM) and the Chair of International Law have a Strategic Plan of institutional development for 2011-2016, but do not have action plans; the monitoring process of its implementation is not structured. The strategic planning and monitoring in general are not fulfilling their aims and do not help to direct and plan institutional development.</p> <p>The programme does not include any optional disciplines, therefore not being in full compliance with requirements established by the Framework Plan.</p> <p>The student workload of independent work is not clearly regulated and as it was identified during the meetings with the teaching staff and students, the student workload of independent work is not meeting the requirement of 90 ECTS (25-30 hours per credit point). Internships are part of the study programme, but are not well linked with the study programme objectives. The majority of the students are allowed to perform their internship in institutions not directly related to International law, and in these cases the internship is not supporting the achievement of the objectives of the study programme.</p> <p>The structure of the study programme is internationally comparable (studies, internship, master thesis), but not the programme's content and outcomes, some of which are not directly related to the study programme content and not supported by the studies and internship. The study</p>			

programme does not consider research skills as a learning outcome. Also, international law studies should be based on various sources of information available in different foreign languages; however, the majority of lecturers do not include the sources of other than Romanian and Russian literature in their course programmes, which causes an isolation of the programme and the students from international law developments.

There was no clear evidence about substantial difference between the Master and Bachelor level programme. The high grades of students (in the range of 8-10 out of 10) also support the assumption that the Master programme is not difficult enough and does not differ sufficiently from the study programme at Bachelor level.

The content of the study programme is very broad, not focused; the study programme includes courses on very different areas of international law and there is no explanation on linking them within the same study programme. There is no clear logical succession of the courses included in the study programme. There is also no clear logical distinction between fundamental and specialized courses.

There are no clear channels established to get information on the needs of the labour market in order to adjust the study programme accordingly. Information on the labour market demands are received in various ways, but it is not done systematic and organised, through constant established channels of communication with employers and social partners.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to develop detailed actions plans, which will not simply reflect the usual activities of the units, but will support reaching concrete aims and objectives of the Strategic Plan of institutional development. It is also important to ensure that the monitoring process of implementation of the action plans is in place and involves teaching staff, students and representatives of labour market.
- It is urgently needed to align the study load of students and the ECTS credits and the full time nature of the programme (60 ECTS per annum) in order to meet the international standards. This alignment has to be achieved by making the programme definitely more intensive, challenging and ambitious.
- It is recommended to ensure that the internship is organized only in the institutions, which are directly related with the international or European law application/approximation, ensuring that internship will support achievement of the objectives of the study programme.
- It is recommended to revise the study programme in order to ensure that studies are conducive to achieving the learning outcomes, including development of research skills. Also, it is recommended to ensure that all disciplines include obligatory materials in



English/French languages. Even if the programme might be considered as internationally comparable, the literature used and made available in the library definitely is not.

- It is recommended to ensure that there is a clear distinction between the master and bachelor studies, involving the Chair and the teaching staff in permanent monitoring of this requirement. All courses and the master thesis requirements have to be made urgently more challenging, intensive and academic in order to meet the master programme requirements.
- Develop a clear focus and strategy of the master programme with a coherent succession and selection of courses and skills.
- It is recommended to establish a formal network with possible employers in order to obtain and exchange the information on the needs of the labour market with the aim to adjust the study programme accordingly. Also, it is recommended to initiate communication and sign agreements with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other institutions dealing with international law issues more directly.
- Organise regular staff meetings in order to coordinate and harmonize the programme. Involve in these meetings input from employers, students and other relevant stakeholders.
- Furthermore, the Institute must install a structure of feedback, curriculum assessment and evaluation, responsiveness to stakeholders and international benchmarks, as a continuous evaluation and development endeavour.

**1.1. REQUIREMENT: A higher education institution regularly plans its development: the higher education institution has a development plan accompanied by an action plan to ensure sustainability both in the institution and in a given study programme. The implementation of the action plan is analysed and forms the basis for planning of the next development period.**

Comments:

The Institute of International Relations of Moldova (IRIM) and the Chair of International Law have a Strategic Plan of institutional development for 2011-2016, but do not have action plans. According to the interviews, the Institute is developing the IRIM electronic strategy; the Rector highlighted aims to develop distant learning studies, to enrich the library and improve teaching and learning process. The objective to attract more students was not mentioned. Generally, there are no clear aims and objectives in the strategic planning of the institutional development. As the Institute and the Chair of International Law do not have concrete actions plans, the monitoring process of its implementation is not structured. The strategic planning and monitoring in general are not fulfilling their aims and do not help to direct and plan institutional

development.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended to develop detailed actions plans, which will not simply reflect the usual activities of the units, but will support reaching concrete aims and objectives of the Strategic Plan for institutional development. It is also important to ensure that the monitoring process of implementation of the action plans is in place and involves teaching staff, students and representatives of labour market.

**1.2. REQUIREMENT: A study programme is authorized and functions in accordance with the normative acts in force.**

Comments:

The Master programme „International Law” is authorised by the Decision No 54 of the Ministry of Education (18.06.2010). The Framework Plan for higher education approved by the Order No. 455 of the Ministry of Education on June 3, 2011, establishes requirements for the master study plans. It is required for the professional master programmes (90 credits) to be structured in the following way: Master thesis (30 credits), Internship (10 credits), Fundamental disciplines (15-25 credits) and Specialized disciplines (25-35) among which up to 20% optional disciplines. The structure of the master programme “International Law” is as follows: Master thesis (30 credits); Internship (10 credits), Fundamental disciplines (30 credits), and Specialized disciplines (20 credits). The programme does not include any optional disciplines. The study programme is, therefore, not in full compliance with requirements foreseen in the Order of the Ministry of Education. It is advised to bring the programme into accordance with the requirements of the Framework Plan.

The Committee is of the opinion that the present Framework Plan adopted by the Ministry of Education is far too inflexible in terms of stipulating the volume of fundamental, specialised and optional courses, allowing the volumes of courses to be strictly 5/10/15 ECTS and subsequently one semester up to 6-2 courses/modules. It is strongly advisable to reconsider giving higher education institutions greater freedom to decide upon the volume of obligatory and optional courses in the programme, thereby expanding students’ choices. Furthermore, institutions could be allowed to have courses with volumes bigger or smaller than 5 ECTS, depending on the content of the specific course, and not simply 5 ECTS in order to fulfil some formal requirements.

**1.3. REQUIREMENT: The title of a study programme is consistent with its content.**

Comments:

The Self-Evaluation Report of IRIM (p.7) states that the title of the study program conforms to its contents, without providing any arguments for

such a statement.

The study programme is based on 4 fundamental courses (International Commercial Law, International Criminal Jurisdictions, International Business Law, and International and European Law Methodology) and 3 specialised courses (Law of International Security, Diplomatic and Consular Law, and European Criminal Protection of Minors). Yet, there is not clear logic in distinguishing between fundamental and specialized courses, but it can be concluded that the study programme includes both public and private international law subjects and the title corresponds to the content.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended to have greater clarity in the programme as to which fundamental disciplines form the bases for this study programme and which specialised disciplines are supporting the study programme and how they are related with the fundamental ones.

**1.4. REQUIREMENT: The conduct of studies, including the student workload of independent work and internship, support achievement of the objectives of the study programme.**

Comments:

The student workload of independent work is not clearly regulated and as it was identified during the meetings with the teaching staff and students, the student workload of independent work is not meeting the requirement of 90 ECTS (25-30 hours per credit point). During the meeting students informed that they are studying 10-12 hours per week; lecturers do not have a clear understanding about how much time students' individual studies take.

Internships are part of the study programme, but are not well linked with the study programme objectives. The majority of the students is allowed to perform their internship in the institutions not directly related to international law (police, prosecution system, courts, private companies, etc.), and in these cases, therefore, the internship is not supporting the achievement of the objectives of the study programme. The Institute has cooperation agreements with representatives of the labour market, such as union of bailiffs, state enterprise "Registru", national agency for intellectual property, centre for human rights, anti-corruption center (the agreements were available during the visit), but these institutions are not directly related with the domain of international law. The studies, internship and development of master thesis do not support the achievement of the objectives of the study programme in an effective way.

Recommendations:

- It is urgently needed to align the study load of students and the ECTS credits and the full time nature of the programme (60 ECTS per annum), meeting the international standards. This alignment has to be achieved by making the programme definitely more intensive,

challenging and ambitious.

- It is recommended to ensure that the internship is organized only in the institutions, which are directly related with the international or European law application/approximation, ensuring that internship will support the achievement of the objectives of the study programme.

**1.5. REQUIREMENT: The objectives and learning outcomes of a study programme are in coherence with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The structure and content of the study programme is internationally comparable.**

Comments:

The Self-Evaluation Report (p. 7) states that “the learning objectives and outcomes of the study programme are in line with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and conformed to master’s studies trends from European Universities: Romania, Luxembourg, France, Poland, Germany, and Belgium“. Yet, during the meetings with the representatives of IRIM there were no arguments provided about the concrete influence of European Universities in development or revision of the study programme.

The structure of the study programme is internationally comparable (studies, internship, master thesis), but not the programme’s content and outcomes. The ECTS credits are not based on the assessment of students’ real workload. The study programme does not consider research skills as a learning outcome, although the programme includes a fundamental course on International and European Law Methodology. The study programme foresees the following as learning outcomes: knowledge of European mechanisms to protect Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; knowledge and development of European Criminal Law; knowledge of European Business Law; case study and the issues of Private International Law; knowledge of the legal aspects of Moldova European Integration; knowledge of methods for resolving litigations arising in the domain of International Law including mediation and arbitration; knowledge of international investment methods and liabilities in foreign investment domain; knowledge of legal issues of globalization, which are not directly related to the study programme content and not supported by the studies and internship. International law studies are supposed to be based on various sources of information available in different foreign languages; however, the majority of lecturers do not include the sources of other than Romanian and Russian literature in their course programmes, which causes an isolation of the programme and the students from international law developments.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended to revise the study programme in order to ensure that studies are conducive to achieving the learning outcomes, including development of research skills. Also, it is recommended to ensure that all disciplines include obligatory materials in English/French languages. Even if the programme might be considered as internationally comparable, the literature used and made available in the library definitely is not.

<p><b>1.6. REQUIREMENT</b> The objectives, content and learning outcomes of the Master’s study programme are clearly distinguishable from those of the Bachelor’s study programme.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The Self-Evaluation Report stated (p. 7) and during the interviews with the Dean of the Faculty of Law, the Head of Chair of the International Law, students and teaching staff it was conveyed that objectives, content and learning outcomes of the Master’s study programme are distinguishable from those of the Bachelor’s study programme. Yet, there was no clear evidence in this respect. Students only told that studies at the Master level are more specialized and not as general and theoretical as in the first cycle of studies and that Master programme includes more practical examples. The Dean, the Head of Chair or the teaching staff did not explain clear principles of distinction of the Bachelor and Master studies. For the justification of not including the course on human rights, the explanation was provided that such a course exists at the Bachelor level studies, while it is worth considering that the course can differ in its level of complexity and content, and the main focus should not be on the title of the course.</p> <p>The grades of students (in the range of 8-10 out of 10) also support the assumption that the Master programme is not difficult enough and does not differ sufficiently from the study programme at Bachelor level.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is recommended to ensure that there is a clear distinction between the master and bachelor studies, involving the Chair and the teaching staff in permanent monitoring of this requirement. All courses and the master thesis requirements have to be made urgently more challenging, intensive, academic and truly at master level.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>1.7. REQUIREMENT:</b> Study disciplines of the study programme are presented in a logical succession.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The Self-Evaluation Report (p. 7) informs that “the disciplines of the study programme are presented in a coherent and logical consequence and conform to the acquired competence within cycle I of Law Faculty and as well as increasing knowledge in different areas of International Law, International Commercial Contracts, International Security Law, International Criminal Jurisdiction, Social and Legal Science Methodology, European Criminal Protection of Minors, Management of International Programmes and Projects“. The Master programme study plan, course descriptions and the interviews with the teaching staff and the Head of Chair confirmed that there is no clear logical succession of the courses in the study programme, as there is no clear logic in including them in the study programme in principle. There are no courses on human rights</p>	

in the MA programme; the Head of Chair explained that such a course exists in the Bachelor programme. This shows that it was not considered that the same course can be on both BA and MA levels, but just more difficult in the MA programme and based on concrete problem analysis. There are no courses on international commercial law (only on International Commercial Contracts), international organizations, and international trade. The study programme is based on 4 fundamental courses (International Commercial Law, International Criminal Jurisdictions, International Business law and International and European Law methodology) and 3 specialized courses (Law of International Security, Diplomatic and Consular Law and European Criminal Protection of Minors). There is no clear logic of distinction between fundamental and specialized courses.

The internship is organized in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester and the master thesis developed and defended in the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester. The content of the study programme is very broad, not focused; the study programme includes courses on very different areas of international law and there is no explanation on linking them within the same study programme. Meeting with the Dean and the Head Chair created reasonable doubts that the subjects are included in the study programme on the basis of the teaching staff available to give the courses and on their particular interests. The study programme simply reflects possibilities of the IRIM and lecturers' availability. The Dean and the Head of Chair explained the procedure of development of the study programme or its amendments, but did not provide explanation for the logical structure of the programme.

Recommendation:

- Develop a clear focus and strategy of the master programme with a coherent succession and selection of courses and skills.

**1.8. REQUIREMENT: Development of a study programme takes into consideration the needs of the labour market.**

Comments:

The Self-Evaluation Report and the interviews with the Dean, the Head of Chair, students and teaching staff did not provide sufficient evidence that the development of the study programme takes into consideration the needs of the labour market. Also, it was mentioned a few times that there is a plan to include a course on EU integration in the study programme, as Moldova and EU signed the Association Agreement, but even in this case the reaction to the labour market needs are somehow slow, since the Association Agreement was signed in 2013 and the plan to include the course is going to be realised only from 2016.

It became evident from the interview with employers that there are no clear channels established to get information on the needs of the labour market in order to adjust the study programme accordingly. Information on the labour market demands are received in various ways, but it is not done in a systematic way, through established constant channels of communication with employers and social partners. The Dean mentioned that information about the market needs was received from the Ministry of Justice and the Prosecutor General Office, but these institutions cannot be treated as the main beneficiaries, who need specialists graduated from the master programme in International Law. There are no agreements and communication with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other institutions dealing with international law issues

more directly. The Rector acknowledged that there is a very small labour market, that they do not receive the information from the employers and that there are no established channels of communication with them.

The meeting with the employers also revealed that students lack practical skills and the ability to apply knowledge in practical work; they need in average 6 months to adjust to the work after employment. To some requests of the labour market the Institute is not responding at all, although the public institutions need specialists of international law who are fluent in the English language. The study programme does not respond to this need, as it considers Russian language completely sufficient for the studies and for the master thesis development.

Employers are very satisfied that students have internships and would like the period of internship to be even longer.

There is no precise information on employability index of the graduates. The leadership of the institution believes that it is around 80%, but whether the graduates work in the field of studies was not clarified. Taking into account that around 70% of students are already working while studying (police, prosecution system, customs, and courts), the increase of employability after finishing studies is only 10%, and thus the employability cannot be considered as very high.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended to establish a formal network with possible employers in order to obtain and exchange the information on the needs of the labour market with the aim to adjust the study programme accordingly. Also, it is recommended to initiate communication and sign agreements with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other institutions dealing with international law issues more directly.

**1.9. REQUIREMENT: Study programme development is a continuous process which, among others, involves feedback from students, employers and other relevant stakeholders.**

Comments:

According to the information provided in the Self-Evaluation Report, the study programme is regularly reviewed at the meetings of Head of Chair of International Law, the Council on Quality Management, and the Quality Management Commission in International Law. The interviews with the Dean, the Head of Chair, students, and teaching staff provided information that study programme development involves feedback from students. The interview with employers showed that there are no clear channels established to get information on the labour market needs and feedback from the employers in order to adjust the study programme accordingly (see 1.8). During the meeting with the teaching staff it was explained that they are receiving information about the labour market needs via mass media. Yet, the collection of feedback from various stakeholders does not occur in a systematic and well-organised manner.

Recommendation:

- Although the Self-Evaluation Report and the interviews proved existence of sporadic communication with employers and receiving students feedback, it is recommended to organise and structure this in a more systematic way, establishing constant channels of communication with possible employers and ensuring more frequent collection of student feedback after each course, internship, master thesis development, etc.

**1.10. REQUIREMENT: The members of the teaching staff are aware of the objectives of a study programme and of their role in achieving these objectives.**

Comments:

The interviews with the teaching staff provided sufficient proofs that the staff are not aware of the objectives of the study programme and of their role in achieving these objectives. Lecturers were not able to describe objectives and outcomes of the study programme and explain how their courses are facilitating the achievement of the objectives; they could only state that the aim of the programme is to prepare good specialists in public and private international law.

Recommendation:

- Organise regular staff meetings in order to coordinate and harmonize the programme. Involve in these meetings input from employers, students and other relevant stakeholders.

**1.11. REQUIREMENT: Study programme provides opportunities for further education at doctoral level.**

Comments:

The Self-Evaluation Report provides information that “master degree programme in International Law provides opportunities for further studies at the 3rd cycle (doctoral degree), both in the country and abroad. Thus, a part of the master degree students continues to study at the 3rd cycle (doctoral degree) in the country and abroad in various fields of international law. For example, Sergiu Scobin, IRIM Law Faculty graduate, has completed his degree in Spain. Graduates from the Faculty of Law, having a Master Degree in International Law follow doctoral studies in co-tutorship due to the Agreement for scientific and educational exchange between the Institute of International Relations of Moldova and Università degli Studi Della TUSCIA in Viterbo Republic of Italy. For example, Scobin Sergiu follows a doctorate in ERASMUS, doctorate in co-tutorship with Institute of International Relations of Moldova and University of Tuscia in Italy in the field of European and Global Markets Regulation in the crisis. Valeriu Gureu, Master degree student in International Law follows a doctorate in Public European Management at the Police Academy of Moldova "Stefan cel Mare" (p. 7). The interviews with the Dean, the Head of Chair, students, and teaching staff confirmed that the study programme provides formal opportunities for further education at doctoral level, but implementation of these opportunities in reality is limited due to insufficient knowledge of foreign languages by the students, as it is an obligatory condition for starting doctoral studies



in the field of international law (Foreign language exam is an obligatory exam to start PhD study programme).

Recommendation:

- It is recommended to provide students with substantive possibilities to learn foreign languages, to include obligatory materials in foreign languages and to encourage students to study at the doctoral level studies in foreign countries, and enrich all courses with research based and linked aspects and study materials.

2. TEACHING AND LEARNING	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
mark with 'X'			X
<p><b>Collected evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regulations on study management (available during the visit)</li> <li>- Website of IRIM <a href="http://www.irim.md">www.irim.md</a></li> <li>- Samples of Master thesis (available during the visit)</li> <li>- Regulation on internship</li> <li>- The information obtained during the meetings</li> <li>- Information obtained from the Self-Evaluation Report of IRIM</li> </ul>			
<p><b>General comments:</b></p> <p>The up-to-date texts of the regulations of study management should be made publicly available on the website for the students in timely manner.</p> <p>There is currently no system for using students' feedback for developing the study management.</p> <p>Teaching methods used by the teaching staff are outdated and do not encourage the students to take active role in the learning process.</p>			

The resources of IRIM library are insufficient; most of the books are in Romanian or Russian. The use of other sources of legal literature and teaching materials is very limited. Yet, the staff and students do not consider the lack of international influence a threat to the quality of education.

The organisation of internship is regulated, but the duration of internship is too short for 10 ECTS. The duration of internship (5 weeks) and volume of work students are expected to do within that time should be revised.

There is a network of the employers offering students internship places, but only a few of them operate in the field of international law.

The average grades of the students are unreasonably high. The implementation of the grading system does not make it possible to distinguish the students according to their knowledge acquired.

The management and teaching staff are aware of the public legislation about recognition of prior learning experience, but it has not been implemented. Steps have been taken to involve students in research and development activities.

Students are, indeed, to some extent involved in research and development activities, mainly participating in conferences and workshops and writing articles for the publications of IRIM. Despite this, the satisfaction of the students with the quality of supervision is not measured and the involvement of students in research remains very limited. Research foundation of the programme is, in itself, limited and should be strengthened.

Recommendations:

It is recommended to:

- electronically publish the up-dated regulations about study management on the website in timely manner;
- improve the system of gathering feedback from the students and use feedback for the development of the study programme;
- encourage the teaching staff to use modern and interactive teaching methods;
- improve the foreign language skills of the staff and students;
- start acknowledging international law as a discipline of international scope and influence and encourage the students and staff to search for more up-to-date literature and learning materials;

- analyse the duration of the internship and the volume of work the students have to do during the internship and adjust them so that the weekly workload of the students would be reasonable and achievable and truly matches the ECTS requirements;
- to take a more active role in finding placements of internship to all students and in providing everybody with an internship place which is profiled to the learning outcomes of the study programme “International Law”.
- analyse the implementation of the grading system and give the teaching staff instructions about correct implementation of the system;
- make the recognition of prior learning and work experience a common practice.
- It is recommended to systematically gather feedback about the satisfaction with the quality of supervision from the students after they have defended their thesis and use this feedback for improving the skills of supervision of the teaching staff.
- Considering the students' study load, drastic steps have to be taken here to make the programme more research intensive and research linked.

**2.1. REQUIREMENT: Study management is regulated, publicly available, and supports the achievement of learning outcomes. In course of study management development, the results of feedback surveys and the analysis of learning activities are taken into account.**

Comments:

The study management is regulated, but during the site visit to the university the texts of the regulations were not publicly available. There is a compendium of regulations published in 2008 available in the library, but it is outdated, as according to the interviews the majority of regulations have been amended after that. For instance, the new regulation about the organisation of internship was adopted in 2014. However, the Committee notes that the webpage and regulations have been renewed after the visit and recommends that efforts be made to keep it constantly updated.

Some feedback from the students about the study process is gathered, but during the interviews nobody was able explain how the results of the feedback are used for developing the study management and the study programme. The Dean of the Faculty of Law said that the opinion of the students is heard and taken into account via their participation in the Senate.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to ensure that up-dated regulations about study management adopted by the University are constantly renewed on the website of IRIM.
- It is recommended to set up a systematic system of gathering feedback from the students and to take the results of the feedback into account in developing and teaching the programme.

<p><b>2.2. REQUIREMENT: Within the education process of study programme, efficient teaching strategies are applied (modern, interactive, teamwork-based, etc.) and oriented towards active learning of the students.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>During the interviews, the Committee was not convinced that the teaching staff uses modern and interactive teaching methods. The students mentioned that teamwork is used by some lecturers, and they expressed their sympathy towards professors who use PowerPoint presentations in their lectures. The Rector said that during the last years IRIM has invested into electronic devices, especially projectors in the lecture halls and that 45% of the teaching staff uses these devices. Making use of PowerPoint presentations and projectors is certainly valuable to deliver and illustrate the lecture material; yet, students are left as passive recipients of information and, thus, these cannot be considered as teaching methods involving and activating students in the teaching-learning process. Appropriate examples of modern and active methods would be, for example, role-plays, simulations, debates, case-study analyses, discussions, disputes, brainstorming, etc. The Committee did not hear of the usage of such methods oriented towards active learning of the students.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is recommended to introduce a regular training course for the teaching staff about modern and interactive teaching methods to encourage them to use these in the teaching process. This course ought to relate to modes of delivery and didactical aspects. This will also require an overall vision of the Institute and the programme.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2.3. REQUIREMENT: Within the education process of study programme, up-to-date teaching materials are used.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>In its Self-Evaluation Report, IRIM has stated that IRIM library ensures access to books and electronic support. During the visit, the Committee has found the resources of IRIM library remarkably insufficient. There is a very limited number of books and periodicals, vast majority of them in the Romanian and Russian languages. In their interview, the students considered the learning materials offered by IRIM sufficient and did not consider as a problem the fact that all the materials about international law which they use have been published in Moldova, Russia and to some extent in Romania. None of the members of teaching staff or students claimed that they used Public Law Library or any electronic databases for finding additional learning materials.</p> <p>The Self-Evaluation Report also contains an eminent list of materials, which the teaching staff of IRIM supposedly uses in the teaching process. During the interviews, the members of the teaching staff did not mention using these materials.</p> <p>In writing their MA thesis, students use out-of-date materials; the majority of the source materials have been published more than 15 years ago. There are no references to the materials in the English language and other foreign languages besides Russian. This must be considered as highly unusual for an International Law programme.</p>	

The small size of the Institute, programme and staff, and the limited resources in the library, make this a relatively inward looking programme, other than ought to be expected from a Master’s programme in international law.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended to start acknowledging international law as a discipline of international scope and influence. The management of IRIM should recognize that it is not possible to maintain the study programme of International Law without opening it to the world, improving the command of foreign languages of the staff and students and encouraging them to use foreign teaching materials and cooperate with international partners.

**2.4. REQUIREMENT: Organisation of internship is clearly regulated, the requirements for the completion of internship are determined, the instructions for conducting the internship are available and the supervision of students in work environment is ensured.**

Comments:

The organization of internships is regulated; the new regulation of internship has been adopted in 2014. According to the Self-Evaluation report, the requirements for the completion of internship and the responsibilities of different parties (student, internship coordinator and internship supervisor) are determined. The outcomes of the internship are discussed during the study process.

The duration of internship is 5 weeks, the students get 10 ECTS for the internship and are expected to work 300 hours for it. Accordingly, the work load per one week is 60 hours, which is clearly impossible for the standard 40-hour week. Thus, length and volume of internship should be adapted to right proportions. The employers suggested to extend the duration of internship.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended to analyse the duration of the internship and the volume of work the students have to do during the internship and adjust them so that the weekly workload of the students would be reasonable and achievable and truly matches the ECTS requirements.

**2.5. REQUIREMENT: The higher education institution has a network of partner organisations offering internship opportunities for students and supporting the achievement of learning outcomes of study programmes.**

Comments:

The university has a network of partner organisations offering internship opportunities for the students. The cooperation agreements have

been signed with these organisations. The list of the partner organisations is eminent, but only a few of them are dealing with the field of international law. According to the Dean of the Faculty of Law, students mainly find their own internship places, but if they cannot find one, the Institute will help. According to the Vice-Rector, none of the students have performed their internship abroad. Students said that it is also possible to perform internship in private companies which are not related to the field of international law.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that IRIM takes a more active role in finding placements of internship to all students and in providing everybody with an internship place which is profiled to the learning outcomes of the study programme “International Law”. It is important to try to find internship places also abroad.

**2.6. REQUIREMENT: Assessment of learning outcomes of students is performed in accordance with the existing requirements. Assessment methodology is consistent with learning outcomes and includes feedback supporting student development.**

Comments:

The assessment of learning outcomes is regulated, but the up-to-date regulations are not publicly available. According to the interviews, the average grade for both the exams and defence of MA thesis exceeds 9. The grades are incomprehensibly high, taking into account that the grading system used has “10” as the highest grade and “5” as the pass rate (lowest positive grade). It is also important to mention that the grading system used does not even formally conform to the ECTS grading scale, where “A” is the highest positive grade and “E” marks the pass rate. During the interviews the staff could not give any rational explanations about this situation and reasoned that the grades are so high because the students are so bright and experienced. The Dean of the Faculty of Law claimed that the grades are so high because only the best students are admitted to MA studies. However, 13 out of 13 applicants were admitted, meaning there was no selection of students. The Committee finds this explanation highly unlikely and improbable, taking also into account the low study load. It cannot but be concluded that the programme is less ambitious, academic and challenging than ought to be expected.

Recommendation:

- It is highly recommended to analyse the current grading system and the practice of implementing this system and give the teaching staff instructions about correct implementation of the systems. It is absolutely necessary to revamp the substance of the programme and make it more ambitious, challenging and academic.

**2.7. REQUIREMENT: The higher education institution recognizes prior learning and work experiences.**

<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>According to the interviews, the management and teaching staff are aware of the public legislation about recognition of prior learning experience, but there is no system of implementing it in IRIM and no cases of actual recognition. Prior work experience is recognised as performing the internship. According to the Report and also the interviews with the management of IRIM, practical experience of at least 6 months in international law field is recognised as performing the internship without any further assessment of the outcomes of this experience. The management of IRIM stated that if students have such experience, they are given 10 ECTS for performing the internship without any further questions.</p> <p><u>Recommendations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is recommended to implement the national legislation by creating a transparent and internationally comparable system of recognising prior learning experience acquired abroad or in other Moldovan universities as fulfilling the study programmes at IRIM in order to encourage academic mobility.</li> <li>• It is recommended to assess the actual achievement of the outcomes of one's work on the basis of the list of tasks fulfilled at the working place, the characterization and evaluation by the employer and the report completed by the student about his or her work experience.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2.8. REQUIREMENT: Systematic analysis of achievement of learning outcomes is performed and improvement measures are undertaken.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>During the visit the Committee was not convinced by and did not receive any evidences from the teaching staff that the analysis of learning outcomes is a systematic procedure and there is a system for using the analysis for improving the achievement of learning outcomes.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is recommended to make the analysis of the achievement of learning outcomes systematic and use such analysis as well as feedback gathered from the students and employers for building up a continuous process of developing the study programme.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2.9. REQUIREMENT: Students are involved in research and development activities, the supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, applied projects, final thesis) is well organised and the satisfaction rate with the quality of supervision is high.</b></p>	

Comments:

According to the Self-Evaluation Report and the interviews, students are to some extent involved in research and development activities, mainly participating in conferences and workshops and writing articles for the publications of IRIM. Special research conference is organised for the students.

According to the interviews, the satisfaction of the students with the quality of supervision is not measured. In their interviews, the students claimed that they are very satisfied with the supervision of their thesis by academic staff.

Involvement of students in research and literature is extremely limited. Taking into account previous comments as well, it must be said research foundation of the programme is limited, to say the least.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to systematically gather feedback about the satisfaction with the quality of supervision from the students after they have defended their thesis and use this feedback for improving the skills of supervision of the teaching staff.
- Considering the students' study load, drastic steps have to be taken here to make the programme more research intensive and research linked.

3. TEACHING STAFF	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
mark with 'X'			X
<p><b>Collected evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appendix 7 of the Self-Evaluation Report: General information about teaching staff</li> <li>- Appendix 8 of the Self-Evaluation Report: CVs of teaching staff</li> <li>- Research plans of individual teachers (available on-site)</li> <li>- The information obtained during the meetings</li> <li>- Information obtained from the Self-Evaluation Report of IRIM</li> </ul>			



**General comments:**

A programme of International Law at master level poses requirements of international competitiveness and quality and benchmarking, also relating to teaching staff. In that respect international standards are not being met. The Committee finds the number of full-time professors too low for a full master programme, which intends to cover the whole domain of international law, posing a threat to the sustainability of the programme.

Although students expressed their satisfaction with lecturers' teaching competences, in reality the adequacy of teaching competences was difficult to assess; no clear evidences could be found to have full confidence that there is a system in place to keep the teaching staff regularly updated about modern teaching methods and offer adequate opportunities for developing other skills to constantly improve the delivery of courses. Thus, a clear staff development system is missing: development activities are not planned in a longer perspective or implemented in a systemic way, but rather organised on ad-hoc basis. More importantly, in order to become more competitive and international, it is indispensable for the study of international law to include more international source materials in English, French and/or other foreign languages. The understanding that Russian/Romanian is sufficient for attaining international comparability and quality of the programme and the limitation of foreign language command is currently not allowing access to the vast variety of materials that are available in English/French nor fostering staff mobility, their participation in international networks and conferences, and doing research in the field.

Presently, no members of visiting teaching staff are involved in teaching the programme, which should definitely be fostered and implemented systematically. Also, for the local staff themselves to improve their teaching skills and knowledge at other higher education institutions must increase, since it is presently extremely limited – this should be helped and encouraged by, again, helping to increase the knowledge in foreign languages but also by ensuring the availability of financial means by the Institution.

Research skills of teachers must be increased and research encouraged; currently, only the minority of teaching staff have international publications. Goals and plans for research activities should be made very specific and a system put in place for monitoring these activities.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended that the Institute provides teaching staff a regular training course concerning didactics, modes of delivery and other teaching related aspects.
- It is recommended to make a shift in cultural attitude and approaches of international law. International Law (including European law)

cannot be fully studied in an academic setting without reliance only on Russian/Romanian academic literature. International law is and international and competitive field of the law and it is indispensable that in Moldova an internationally competitive international law programme is offered.

- In order to involve members of foreign teaching staff in the programme it is necessary to set up and facilitate an international collaboration and exchange policy.
- The role of the Faculty in organising lecturers’ scientific activities should be more active and well planned, and financial costs of lecturers’ participation in forums, national and international scientific conferences should be fully covered by the Faculty.
- It is recommended to invest heavily in staff, linguistic capabilities, research and teaching planning, international exchange and collaboration. An International Law master programme must certainly show and reflect what it teaches: an international outlook and perspective and openness.
- The continuation of making plans with regard to research activities is strongly encouraged, but the content of such plans needs to be thoroughly revised in such a way that it would include activities directly connected with research and thus facilitating the monitoring and evaluation of achievement of the goals set.

**3.1. REQUIREMENT: The number and qualification of full-time teaching staff complies with the requirements established by legislation. At least 60% of the study programme is covered by full-time staff. 100% of full-time staff involved in the study programme have PhD degree or equal.**

Comments:

The Self-Evaluation Report provides information that “The teaching staff meets the legal requirements for holding the teaching positions. The Master’s degree Study Programme of International Law is ensured by 7 staff members, all holding the title of PhD including 2 members who hold the title of doctor habilitate and university professor, one in the domain of international law and the other in political studies, 3 of them are PhDs of Public International Law, including one in private law, among whom there are 3 professors and 4 associate professors. Five out of seven members are full-time employees at the International Law Chair“. Appendix 7 (General information about teaching staff) provides different information, according to which for the Master programme is taught by 7 lecturers, 3 of them are full-time employees. 2 of full-time employed lecturers hold a PhD degree and 1 holds a Master degree (Lazari Constantin). All four part-time lecturers hold a PhD degree, 2 of them are in a position of associated professors, and 2 are professors. The analysis of lecturers’ CVs (Appendix 8) confirms that all lecturers (full and part time) hold a PhD degree. In 1997 Lazari Constantin received a PhD in Public International Law from “Babes-Bolyai“ University of Cluj Napoca in Romania. The CVs of teaching staff and the interviews confirm that the number and qualification of full-time teaching staff complies with the requirements established by legislation.

<p><b>3.2. REQUIREMENT: Distribution of full-time teaching staff by age, and the percentage of young members of the teaching staff, ensures the sustainability of studies in a higher education institution and a study programme.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The Self-Evaluation Report provides information that the structure of the teaching staff by age is as follows: 42% with the age under 45 years, 29% with the age between 46-60, and 29% with the age over 60 years; under the age 35 constitutes over 28% of the staff (this information is based from the point of view that 5 out of 7 academic staff members are full-time employees.)</p> <p>However, if considering information provided in Appendix 7 (General information about teaching staff), according to which 3 out of 7 lecturers are full-time employees, an average age of all full-time lecturers is 49 years (i.e., 33, 53, 63). The distribution of full-time teaching staff by age and the percentage of young members of the teaching staff, in either of the two cases, seem to ensure the sustainability of the study programme.</p>	
<p><b>3.3. REQUIREMENT: The total number and qualification of teaching staff is – based on their responsibilities, workload and the number of supervised students – sufficient and adequate for achieving the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programmes at MA level.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>According to the information provided, one lecturer, on average, is supervising the Master thesis development of 2-6 students per year. The interviews with students revealed that students' individual work is less than it is foreseen in the course programmes and is required for 90 ECTS credits (10-12 hours per week). It cannot be said that, overall, there is an imbalance between the number of staff and the few students. However, the Committee has reasoned that there is a too small student body to sustain a full sized staff.</p> <p>On the other hand, the Committee finds the number of professors (full time, and with also other teaching obligations) too low for a full master programme, which intends to cover the whole domain of international law. Coverage of a research led, master level programme, which requires experts and specialist knowledge, cannot be guaranteed with such a limited number of full timers. International law is such a vast and rapidly developing area that the present size of the staff puts the sustainability in question.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urgently consider possible solutions to the problem with regard to small staff size in order to be able to ensure the full coverage of the whole programme and its courses with relevant and necessary expertise and ensure the sustainability of the programme, e.g., collaboration with practitioners from the labour market, involvement of visiting professors, merging, etc.</li> </ul>	

<p><b>3.4. REQUIREMENT: The members of the teaching staff have an adequate teaching competence and improve their teaching methods.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The Self-Evaluation Report (p. 13) informs that the teaching staff members possess adequate competence of teaching and improving teaching methods as shown in the appendix. The appendix does not provide sufficient information about the teachers' teaching competences. There is no information on how the lecturers are informed on modern teaching methods and systematic this process is. The Self-Evaluation Reports only claims (p. 13) that the teaching staff of the study programme "International Law" followed specialised pedagogical training courses in accordance with the legislation and holds a certificate of associate professor or university professor. The CVs of the lecturers do not provide any info on their trainings for improvement of teaching competences (except one lecturer participating in international networks on education issues). Meeting with students showed that students are satisfied with lecturers' competences and were more emphasising the flexibility of the studies.</p> <p>The adequacy of teaching competences was difficult to assess and it is recommended that the Institute provides a regular training course concerning didactics, modes of delivery and other teaching related aspects.</p>	
<p><b>3.5. REQUIREMENT: The staff development system is effective: the members of the teaching staff have opportunities for self-improvement, staff development methods are applied by the higher education institution.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The CVs of the lecturers provide information on their publications, trainings, participation at the conferences, working groups etc. The interviews organised at the Institute revealed that IRIM does not have the staff development system. The staff development activities are not planned in advance and are not implemented in a systemic way, but rather organized on ad-hoc basis. For example, currently IRIM is preparing to organize trainings on using IT means in teaching process, but this is not part of a long term plan. The teaching staff mentioned trainings on mediation which they recently attended, but it is not related to the study programme implementation and was not organised by the Institute. The majority of self-development activities reported in the Self-Evaluation Report were related with lecturers' work in other institutions and not in IRIM. The trainings of English language were organised for the staff members, but lecturers were not attending these trainings and the Institute was not motivating/requiring lecturers to learn foreign languages. During the interviews it was also revealed that the teaching staff, alumni and employers were deeply convinced that for the study of international law it is irrelevant what language information sources are used – in Russian or in English/French languages. There is lack of understanding that foreign languages and literature are vitally important for the international law studies, and such attitude is dominating in the entire institution, also characterising the approach to the staff development system.</p>	

<p><u>Recommendations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is recommended to make a shift in cultural attitude and approaches of international law. International Law (including European law) cannot be fully studied in an academic setting without reliance only on Russian/Romanian academic literature. International law is and international and competitive field of the law and it is indispensable that in Moldova an internationally competitive international law programme is offered.</li> <li>• It is highly recommended to find means and possibilities to encourage the development of foreign language skills of the academic staff, which is paramount for being able to include more foreign language literature (especially in English and French) into the teaching-learning process, but also to participate actively in international networks, collaborate more freely with foreign higher education institutions, facilitate staff exchange and by doing so offer similar encouragement to the students.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3.6. REQUIREMENT: Visiting members of the teaching staff (including from foreign higher education institutions) are involved in teaching in a study programme.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The Self-Evaluation Report and the meetings confirmed that visiting members of the teaching staff (including from foreign higher education institutions) are not involved in the teaching process. Only public lectures with participation of some guests (ambassadors, etc.) have been organised, but such lectures are not incorporated in teaching of the study programme. The Self-Evaluation Report and the interviews confirmed that this requirement is not fulfilled.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obviously, the way to resolve this and involve members of foreign teaching staff is to set up and facilitate an international collaboration and exchange policy.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3.7. REQUIREMENT: The members of the full-time teaching staff of a higher education institution regularly develop their skills at foreign higher education institutions and participate in international networks.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The CVs of the teaching staff and meeting with the lecturers revealed that lecturers do not regularly develop their skills at foreign higher education institutions and participate in international networks. Information is provided only about the participation of one lecturer in international networks (Violeta Melnic). One of the causes of such limited participation must be inadequate knowledge of foreign languages by the teaching staff, which need to be improved, and such limited activity in terms of skill development cannot be assessed as fulfilment of this</p>	

<p>requirement.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the same vein as with respect to 3.6: set up and facilitate a policy of international exchange and collaboration for education purposes.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3.8. REQUIREMENT: Teaching staff are involved in national and international research projects and participate in forums, national and international scientific conferences.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The Self-Evaluation Report (p. 16) provides information that “the academic and teaching staff of the Master's International Law participated in 4 international projects, one institutional project, the annual International Conferences organized in the country and abroad, in high-level scientific forums for the participants and observers from Mali, Romania, Luxembourg, Belgium, Poland, Moldova, and Romania. Teachers are actively involved in research projects, national and international projects, individual research. Thus, the teachers of the Faculty of Law are involved in different projects shown in the appendix.” According the CVs of the lecturers, they are very rarely participating in international conferences related with the subjects they teach (only C.Lazari, V.Melnic). Only minority of lecturers have international publications. Participation of the teaching staff in international conferences, forums and international projects is very rare and has a sporadic character. During the meeting with lecturers it was stated that financial burden of participation in the international scientific conferences and publication of scientific articles is resting on lecturers. The proposals to participate in national and international scientific conferences are coming not from the Faculty or the Chair, but from the lecturers themselves. All this suggests that the role of the Faculty in organising lecturers’ scientific activities should be more active, well planned and financial costs of lecturers’ participation in forums, national and international scientific conferences should be fully covered by the Faculty.</p>	
<p><b>3.9. REQUIREMENT: Research activities of the teaching staff are planned and monitored efficiently.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The Self-Evaluation Report, the interviews with the head of the Chair and lecturers provided sufficient information on the planning of research activities. Research activities are organised by the Chair. Analysis of the documents provided during the visit at IRIM have shown that there is the plan of research activities of the Chair for 2013-2017 approved on December 3, 2012, and also the plans of the individual teachers. But these plans are very abstract and do not support the directing, planning and monitoring process of research activities. For example, the plan of the research activities of the Chair for 2013-2017 is on 2 pages and includes only very abstract activities, some of them not related with research (e.g., “participation in negotiations”, “participation in working groups”, etc). Due to these shortcomings in planning, the monitoring</p>	

system cannot be functional either.

Recommendation:

- The continuation of making plans with regard to research activities is strongly encouraged, but the content of such plans needs to be thoroughly revised in such a way that it would include activities directly connected with research and thus facilitating the monitoring and evaluation of achievement of the goals set.

4. STUDENTS	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
mark with 'X'			X
<p><b>Collected evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Internal Regulation on the organization of the master studies (<a href="http://www.irim.md/images/Acreditare_Drept/regulament%20masterat.PDF">http://www.irim.md/images/Acreditare_Drept/regulament%20masterat.PDF</a>)</li> <li>- Internal Regulation on the activity of the Bureau for professional orientation of the Law Faculty approved by the Senate on 21 June 2013 (the document was made available during the visit)</li> <li>- Internal Regulation on current and final examinations of 2007 (<a href="http://www.irim.md/images/Acreditare_Drept/regulamentul_cu_privire_la_evaluari.pdf">http://www.irim.md/images/Acreditare_Drept/regulamentul_cu_privire_la_evaluari.pdf</a>)</li> <li>- Regulation of the Faculty of Law's activity (<a href="http://www.irim.md/images/Acreditare_Drept/regulament_facultatea_Drept_partea_2.pdf">http://www.irim.md/images/Acreditare_Drept/regulament_facultatea_Drept_partea_2.pdf</a>)</li> <li>- Organisational chart of the institute (<a href="http://www.irim.md/images/Acreditare_Drept/1_organigrama.pdf">http://www.irim.md/images/Acreditare_Drept/1_organigrama.pdf</a>)</li> <li>- Regulation on the activity of the Senate</li> <li>- List of the members of the Quality Council approved by the Senate (the documents were made available during the visit)</li> <li>- List of the members of the Senate (12 members) (available on <a href="http://www.irim.md">www.irim.md</a>. (<a href="http://irim.md/index.php/ro/despre-irim/senat">http://irim.md/index.php/ro/despre-irim/senat</a>)</li> <li>- The references of foreign universities which could be found on IRIM website (<a href="http://irim.md/index.php/ro/referin-e">http://irim.md/index.php/ro/referin-e</a>)</li> <li>- Register on students' mobility and drop-outs (was available during the on-site visit)</li> <li>- Cooperation agreements with national universities: Academy of Economic Studies and Academy of Science (one Institute) (the agreements were available during the visit)</li> </ul>			

- Cooperation agreements with foreign universities: Romania(2), Italy(1), Germany(1) (German fund), Russia(3), Kazakhstan(1), Ukraine(3), Georgia(1), Belarus(3) (the agreements were available during the visit)
- Cooperation agreements with the representatives of the labour market: union of bailiffs, state enterprise “Registru”, national agency for intellectual property, centre for human rights, anti-corruption centre (the agreements were available during the visit)
- The information obtained during the meetings
- Information obtained from the Self-Evaluation Report of IRIM

**General comments:**

The process of admission and evaluation of the academic progress are regulated adequately by internal acts. Nevertheless, only few applicants are willing to be enrolled in the programme and, as a rule, all of them are admitted even if they do not fulfil the necessary qualifications for the MA programme in International law (foreign languages, for example).

Overall, the institute has no well-established systems for career guidance and monitoring career development, psychological counselling and advising on mobility opportunities.

The mobility opportunities are oriented more towards the Bachelor students and predominantly focused on cooperation with countries from the Community of Independent States. Currently, the student mobility depends mostly on the student’s own initiative rather than encouragement and opportunities provided by the institution. There have been no cases of student mobility related to this particular MA programme.

Though the Institute has some information on the career development of its graduates, it is at present time incomplete and there is no clear understanding on who the main recipients are and what the needs of the labour market are.

The drop-out rate is high (20-45%), and bearing in mind the small number of students enrolled for the programme this could pose threats to the MA programme’s sustainability.

**Recommendations:**

- Establish a system for career guidance and psychological counselling for students.
- Create more mobility opportunities for students, improve the list of references of foreign universities and have more cooperation relations with high rank universities from EU member states.
- Establish a better organised system for tracking and monitoring the graduates’ career development.
- Consider assessing the complexity of the Master programme, revising the policy on the evaluation of the academic progress and continue the efforts for combating academic fraud in order to ensure the quality and the competitiveness of the MA programme.



- Make further efforts aimed at learning about the labour market, establish co-operation agreements with various institutions with competences related to the field of the study programme and establish an efficient tracking and monitoring mechanism of its graduates that would facilitate a better understanding of the needs of the employers and the degree of the competitiveness of the graduates on the national and international labour market.
- Taking more effective measures targeted at reducing the high drop-out rates that could pose a threat to the sustainability of the MA programme.

**4.1. REQUIREMENT: The admission requirements for student applicants are based on qualities necessary for completing the study programme. The admission of students is performed by procedures stipulated in the normative acts.**

Comments:

Initially, the internal documents relevant for the accreditation process were not available among the annexes or on the institute's website. Nevertheless, they were presented and placed on the web-site during the visit. In this respect, the internal Regulation on the organization of the master studies which can be found on the web page of the institution ([http://www.irim.md/images/Acreditare\\_Drept/regulament%20masterat.PDF](http://www.irim.md/images/Acreditare_Drept/regulament%20masterat.PDF)) establishes the admission criteria for the Master studies, the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle. Among the admission criteria there is a special exam and an evaluation of IT and foreign language competences. For the current academic year the MA programme enrolled 15 students, 2 of them dropped their studies and currently there are 13 students studying on the programme. The number of applicants is usually low and it looks like all of them are enrolled. Such an approach does not seem to reflect a real selection process of the best applicants with necessary qualities for completing the study programme. For example, only some students the team met demonstrated knowledge of a foreign language (English). Nevertheless such skills are particularly important for an MA programme in international law.

**4.2. REQUIREMENT: The counselling system of students (including study, career and psychological counselling) is planned/targeted and effective.**

Comments:

The team was informed during the interviews that the institute has a Bureau for professional orientation, and the Regulation on the activity of the Bureau of the Law Faculty has been provided among the requested documents studied onsite (approved by the Senate on 21 June 2013). However, the team could not see any physical presence or meet the staff of this Bureau during the visit. The Bureau is also not included in the Organisation chart of the institute ([http://www.irim.md/images/Acreditare\\_Drept/1\\_organigrama.pdf](http://www.irim.md/images/Acreditare_Drept/1_organigrama.pdf)). The students the team met informed about the readiness of the teaching staff to help students in various issues, but were not aware of such career guidance centre. No

psychological counselling is available for students.

Recommendations:

- The institution is recommended to assess the implementation of the internal regulation on the professional orientation and to ensure that students' career guidance system is active in practice, efficient and that the students are aware of such services.
- Likewise, it is recommended that the institute has in place a system for students' psychological counselling.

**4.3. REQUIREMENT: Students are provided with internal and external mobility opportunities.**

Comments:

The Self-Evaluation Report states that students participate in international mobility programmes out of their own initiative and their participation depends on their involvement in using such opportunities. This was confirmed by the management of the institute – students have to find opportunities and the funding through individual projects or to cover the related expenses themselves. The stakeholders the team met informed about the need for more information on mobility opportunities and more proactive actions on part of the institution.

The Institute informed about three cooperation agreements with universities from Italy, Germany and Russia (it was, in fact, about a German fund and not a university), and there is one example when a student followed his PhD studies at an Italian university. The list of cooperation agreements with other foreign universities contained predominantly agreements with countries which are members of the Community of Independent State (former Soviet Union countries). It is of key importance for an international law Master programme to be more opened, including towards EU countries, and have more cooperation agreements with foreign/European universities which would offer better mobility opportunities for students. Likewise, among the references for students with regard to foreign universities which could be found on IRIM website, only one university from Moscow was listed (<http://irim.md/index.php/ro/referin-e>). Therefore, the Institute is recommended to improve the list of references, in terms of number and variety/diversity, in order to ensure a transparent and adequate level of information.

As far as internal mobility is concerned, the institute has cooperation agreements with two national universities: an institute of the Academy of science, and the Academy for Economic studies, which envisage the possibility of joint research activities. Nevertheless, the results of these agreements were not presented.

**4.4. REQUIREMENT: Students participate in international mobility programmes. The percentage of students participating in student mobility is stable or growing.**

<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>No cases of student mobility related to this particular MA programme were presented to the Committee. Based on the provided information it cannot be concluded that students' participation in mobility programmes is systematic and growing. It is rather a limited and random phenomenon and the institution is recommended to undertake targeted measures to improve this. The information on international mobility on the Institute's website is insufficient and no unit was established for providing information for students on mobility opportunities. The Institute is, therefore, advised to consider these aspects when planning the measures for improving mobility opportunities.</p>	
<p><b>4.5. REQUIREMENT: Students are involved in the decision-making process at different levels of the higher education institution.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>Students participate in the decision-making process at various levels: Senate, Faculty of Law Council, Quality Management Committees of both, the faculty and the university. This was confirmed by the representative of students in Senate and by the List of members of the Quality Council approved by the Senate (available onsite). However, the institution is advised to up-date systematically the information placed on its web-site and to ensure an adequate transparency of the process and its web-site , as no students were listed among the composition of the Senate (12 members) that was available on <a href="http://www.irim.md">www.irim.md</a>. (<a href="http://www.irim.md/index.php/ro/despre-irim/senat">http://www.irim.md/index.php/ro/despre-irim/senat</a>).</p>	
<p><b>4.6. REQUIREMENT: A system has been established for the detection and prevention of academic fraud.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The Institute has in place a special software for preventing academic fraud and there are rules for cases related to fraud during exams which can lead to expulsion from the Institute. Nonetheless, no cases of expelling for academic fraud occurred in practice and the team was informed by the stakeholders that there is still room for improving the quality of the software. Likewise, there did not seem to be a clear understanding among the staff and students on what plagiarism is.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The institute is recommended to continue its efforts aimed at combating academic fraud and to ensure that rules are respected and applied in practice and that there is a regular up-date and improvement of the existing anti-fraud system.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>4.7. REQUIREMENT: Higher education institution has a tracking mechanism of graduates' employment and is monitoring the</b></p>	

<p><b>evolution of graduates' career.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The Self-Evaluation Report (p. 17) indicates that the monitoring of the employment and professional development is performed by surveys, phone conversations, e-mails, conferences, regular meetings with alumni during the “Open doors days”. However, during the visit the team learned that the collection of contact information is basically performed at the beginning of the study process. The information about the process provided during the interviews was somehow conflicting and unclear indicating that it was not easy to collect such data. This leads to the conclusion that the Institute has some information about its graduates; however, the system in place is based on random activities for collecting information rather than on a well-established mechanism for tracking and monitoring the career of the graduates. There is no established unit with such competences and the activities are carried out by the Departments. The team also learned that the institute has an association for Alumni, but no other information could be found on the web-site or among the presented documents during the visit.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on the information above, the Institute is recommended to establish a better organised system for tracking and monitoring the graduates' career development. This could help the institution to better understand the needs of the labour market, who the recipient employers of its graduates are, and how to make the study programme more competitive. The setting up of an Alumni Association is a good step in this direction, and the Committee urges the Institute to pursue this vigorously and effectively.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>4.8. REQUIREMENT: The competitiveness of the graduates of a study programme is demonstrated by employment rate according to obtained qualification; unemployment rate; employment rate in other fields than the one studied within the programme.</b></p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The Self-Evaluation Report (p. 18) indicates that the employment rate is about 80%. The team also learned during the visit that about 70% of the enrolled students are already employed. This leads to the conclusion that the employment rate after the graduation improves by about 10%. It is not clear if these numbers comprise or not those employed in the field other than that of the study programme and how the university has reached such a conclusion, since there is no well-established mechanism for tracking the employment and career development of its graduates. The information about who the employers of the MA programme graduates are is conflicting and it appears that there is no embedded understanding among the management, teachers, employers and students with regard to the skills and competences of the graduates and who are the employers interested in hiring the graduates of this MA programme. The Report lists the following among the employers of the MA programme: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Information and Security Service, Ministry of Information Technologies, various foreign Embassies accredited in Moldova and Moldovan diplomatic missions abroad, etc. Nevertheless, the Committee was informed repeatedly during the interviews that the main recipient employers are the courts, the prosecutors' offices, ministry of internal</p>	

affairs, anti-corruption centre, lawyers' offices, etc. This conclusion is confirmed by the list of institution with whom the institute has cooperation agreements (union of bailiffs, state enterprise "Registru", national agency for intellectual property, centre for human rights, anti-corruption centre) and the employers' representatives whom the team met during the visit (supreme court of justice, ministry of labour and social protection, state enterprise "Registru", lawyer's office).

Recommendation:

- The institution is recommended to make further efforts aimed at learning about the labour market, establish co-operation agreements with various institutions with competences related to the field of the study programme and establish an efficient tracking and monitoring mechanism of its graduates that would facilitate a better understanding of the needs of the employers and the degree of the competitiveness of the graduates on the national and international labour market.

**4.9. REQUIREMENT: There is a system in place for monitoring academic progress. Graduation of students per each year meets the legal requirements. Effective measures are implemented to reduce the drop-out rates.**

Comments:

The academic progress is monitored according to the provisions of the Internal Regulation on current and final examinations of 2007 and of the Regulation on the activity of the Faculty of Law

([http://www.irim.md/images/Acreditare\\_Drept/regulamentul\\_cu\\_privire\\_la\\_evaluari.pdf](http://www.irim.md/images/Acreditare_Drept/regulamentul_cu_privire_la_evaluari.pdf) and [http://www.irim.md/images/Acreditare\\_Drept/regulament\\_facultatea\\_Drept\\_partea\\_2.pdf](http://www.irim.md/images/Acreditare_Drept/regulament_facultatea_Drept_partea_2.pdf)).

The provisions are quite detailed and describe the importance of the grades for individual work, academic performance during the course, final exams and absences.

The Self-Evaluation Report (p. 18) indicates that about 75-80% of the total number of enrolled students complete their studies. This means that the drop-out rates varies between 20-25%, which is a high rate. However, during on-site visit the Register on students' mobility and drop-out was presented and according to the information contained in the Register, the drop-outs are even higher and can be as high as 40-45% (in academic year 2011-2012 only 13 out of 21 students graduated; in academic year 2013-2014 – 10 out of 18). The institution mentions in the Report that it undertakes measures targeted at degreasing drop-out by granting scholarship, Government or merit scholarships, academic leave in case of special circumstances, etc. Nevertheless, these measures do not seem to be effective.

Recommendation:

- Bearing in mind the decreasing number of applicants and enrolled students (decrease from about 22 to 13) it appears that more effective measures are needed to be implemented to reduce the drop-out rate in order to ensure the sustainability of the MA

programme.

5. RESOURCES	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements
mark with 'X'		x	
<p><b>Collected evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annex 11 of the Self-Evaluation Report: financial data of IRIM for 2010-2014</li> <li>- The information obtained during the meetings</li> <li>- Information obtained from the Self-Evaluation Report of IRIM</li> </ul>			
<p><b>General comments:</b></p> <p>With regard to financial situation of the Institute, the income into the budget has increased over the last years; so have the annual revenues (gain or budget surplus) and also the annual budget of the Master programme. Likewise, the Faculty of Law has annually received extra funds for its operation – these have been stable over the last 3 years. It may well be that the overall budget of the institute is considered not that large for a total of 1000 students studying in IRIM, and this is why the institution has indicated as one its weaknesses the insufficient funds for the necessary supply of books and has noted the underpaid salaries. However, since there is no analyses in the Report regarding the financial situation and it gives an impressions as if it has the necessary funds for its operations and study process – at the same time stating that there is not enough money for books and staff salaries - it remains unclear how and for what this surplus is really used.</p> <p>On the one hand, the budget shows sustainability. On the other hand, the student numbers of the MA programme have decreased from 22 to 13 during recent years. A permanent situation of low student numbers and cross-subsidization of the study programme are indeed worrisome and a cause of concern in terms of the long-term sustainability of the programme.</p> <p>In general, the Institute has adequate and all necessary facilities for conducting studies (classrooms, labs, projectors, computers, printers, etc.) and part of the building has been newly renovated. However, the library is extremely small, has no room for students' independent work, and is not really equipped appropriately for a master programme and the accompanying research. The number of books and journals is limited and so</p>			

is specifically the number and quality of books and journals in English. Also, the working conditions of the staff seem to be inadequate, since they have to work in a cramped room with many desks on a tiny surface. Various modern IT solutions that support the teaching-learning process (e.g, Moodle) are available but need to be more vigorously implemented and utilised.

Commendation:

- Despite the scarcity of resources the Committee commends the Institute for having invested in the renovation of its part of the building.

Recommendations:

- It is absolutely necessary to quickly work on a viable situation which can facilitate an academic programme such as International Law. That implies more students, a strong profile and quality upgrade.
- The Institute is strongly advised to analyse its budget – revenues and expenses – and consider ways to allocate the necessary funds needed for updating its library resources, increasing the salary of the academic staff, support staff and student mobility, and foster other important aspects of the study process, such as supporting the development of didactical skills of teaching staff, facilitating their participation at local and international conferences, etc.

**5.1. REQUIREMENT: The financial resources of a higher education institution are adequate for conducting studies, development activities related to studies and supporting the development of the teaching staff.**

Comments:

In its Self-Evaluation Report (p. 20) the Institute has indicated as a weakness the insufficient funds for the necessary books supply and has noted the underpaid salaries.

However, the financial data presented in Annex 11 of the Report show an increase in the operating income of IRIM in the last 3 years, 2012-2014 (from 8 million to 12 million MDL); the income includes revenues from various projects (incl. research projects), which is also showing a trend in increase from 55,200 MDL in 2011 to 526,707 MDL in 2014. Furthermore, the financial chart demonstrates an annual gain (surplus of the budget), which is quite considerable (1,549,801 MDL in 2014) and which has also increased during the past years.

Likewise, the Report (p. 18) presents figures for the annual budget of the Faculty of Law (increase from 655,000 MDL in 2010 to 3.602,000 MDL in 2014) and the extra funds the Faculty has received (quite stable income of 210,000 MDL during 2012-2014).

Thus, the income of the whole institution has somewhat increased, the expenditures have remained rather constant (incl. the staff costs), and

the annual surplus has increased. At the same time, as demonstrated above: there is an increasing need for staff to improve their teaching skills and knowledge in other higher education institutions, participate in international networks, seminars, conferences, since it is presently extremely limited and should be ensured by the availability of financial means; the students currently need to find their own mobility opportunities and pay for it themselves. In other words, the Report refers to the lack of finances, the figures show the opposite. Financial means seem to be existing to at least a certain amount, so the issues described by the institution related to insufficient fund for study materials, salaries, and facilitating the mobility raise a serious question whether the finances, in fact, are there but simply not used to support the study process and development of the staff in the best possible way.

Recommendation:

- The Institute is strongly advised to analyse its budget – revenues and expenses – and consider ways to allocate the necessary funds needed for updating its library resources, increasing the salary of the academic staff, support staff and student mobility, and foster other important aspects of the study process, such as supporting the development of didactical skills of teaching staff, facilitating their participation at local and international conferences, etc.

**5.2. REQUIREMENT: Trends in the number of students and graduates, and the budget of a higher education institution in the last three to five years indicate sustainability.**

Comments:

The Institute has indicated as a threat the demographic decline of student numbers: enrolment in 2012/13 – 22 students; 2013/14 – 15 students; 2014/15 – 15 (of whom 13 have remained, since 2 have dropped their studies). And, indeed, the committee has also noted the declining trend in intake numbers as well as graduates: in the academic year 2011-2012 only 13 out of 21 students graduated; in 2013-2014 – 10 out of 18.

It was also brought to the attention of the Committee that the programme of International Law is cross-subsidised from other programmes in the Institute and this is how the costs of the studies on the MA programme in law can be covered. The budget of the Institute during the last 3 years has increased; extra funds for the Faculty of Law have been stable over the last years (see 5.1). Despite the stability of financial means the MA programme will not be sustainable if student numbers do not substantially increase. Even if they do, the necessary expenditure of investment in library, systems, facilities, staff and other relevant aspects will be huge so as to make it doubtful that the programme is financially sustainable.

The Institute is aware of this situation and has also indicated to the Committee that the numbers are (too) low. A permanent situation of low student numbers and cross subsidization, are indeed worrisome. The more so, whereas in the situation of the Institute and the International Law programme large investments will be needed in support systems, facilities and building and library.



<p><b>5.3. REQUIREMENT:</b> Teaching and learning environments have been developed according to the teaching and learning objectives, include all facilities necessary for conducting studies in a given study programme and are of adequate capacity considering the number of students (auditoriums, seminar rooms, laboratories, rooms for students independent work and recreation, video projectors, internet etc.).</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The Committee has noted that the Institute has made many efforts to renovate the parts of the building that are in use for the Institute and the International Law programme. Seminar rooms have been upgraded and meet necessary standards for the study process; 7 classrooms have projectors. Four labs are available for the students of the MA programme: Information Technology Laboratory, European Studies Centre, International Law Translation Laboratory, and Scientific Research Laboratory. IRIM has also a multimedia lab equipped with 17 computers and internet access.</p> <p>However, the library is extremely small and has no room for students' independent work; the staff has to work in a cramped room with many desks on a tiny surface.</p>	
<p><b>5.4. REQUIREMENT:</b> Both the conduct of studies and other activities of a higher education institution are supported by up-to-date information technology solutions, including the study information system, e-learning opportunities, and communication portals for students and teaching staff.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The systems are present but need full implementation and utilization. For example, the Moodle platform is in use and the institution plans to place all teaching materials there – this is still an ongoing process and is scheduled to be implemented by September 2016. According to management of the Institute, improving physical conditions for students and staff have been in the focus. In the last 2 years, for instance, classrooms have been equipped with modern IT solutions.</p> <p>The small size of the programme might make the less necessary, however in order to be a full-fledged programme they are necessary.</p>	
<p><b>5.5. REQUIREMENT:</b> The students are provided with dormitories and medical service.</p>	
<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The dormitory and medical services are available for students.</p> <p>The Committee is of the opinion that the requirement established by the state in terms of having a dormitory for <i>all</i> the students is superfluous</p>	

and too expensive and should be revisited, since many students have their own abode. Instead of having its own dormitory, it could be considered to cooperate with other real-estate companies or proprietors offering accommodation. So is the requirement regarding the provision of medical service – it is outdated, too expensive, not efficient, and therefore too much a burden on small institutions and programmes with low funding.

**5.6. REQUIREMENT: A library supports the conduct of studies ensuring that up-to-date information sources are available, and provides students with the opportunities for independent work.**

Comments:

The committee has visited the library and has noted that the library is not really equipped as a library supporting a master programme and the accompanying research. The number of books and journals is limited and so is specifically the number and quality of books and journals in languages such as English, which appears to the Committee of specific great relevance in the domain of International Law. The Committee, therefore, cannot but conclude that this requirement has to be assessed as not being met.

Recommendation:

- The Institution is encouraged to heavily invest into library resources to raise the level of quality of the programme.