

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

**HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY  
*EUA EVALUATION REPORT***

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***The EUA Review Team***

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## **1. Introduction**

The Hacettepe University (HU) asked to participate in the Institutional Evaluation Programme of the European University Association (EUA) as part of the university policy for implementing a culture of continuous quality improvement and of strategic planning throughout the institution. After having taken office, Rector Tunçalp Özgen, a professor of neuro-surgery at the Hacettepe medical faculty, initiated a series of assessment exercises in 2002, with the establishment of the Hospitals Quality Coordination Office. The positive results of this initiative led the Senate to extend these quality activities throughout the university. In 2006 the HU decided to internationalise the quality activities by participation in the EUA institutional evaluation programme.

After reception of the self-evaluation report (SER) prepared by the university the review team made a preliminary visit to HU from 13<sup>th</sup> December to 15<sup>th</sup> December 2007. Based on this first information gathering the review team asked the university to review the SER to improve the consistency of terminology and data and the quality of the translation into English, as well as a set of additional data including a clear separation of the budgets of HU and their hospitals and sample values of indicators used to measure performance. After receiving most of this additional information from HU, the review team visited the university for the second time, from 20<sup>th</sup> May to 23<sup>th</sup> May, 2007.

The review team is grateful to HU, and to the rector, Professor Tunçalp Özgen, for the warm hospitality received . The team wants to express its appreciation to all members of the university who have participated in a large number of meetings in order to help the review team to form a clearer view of the institution and of its strong and weak points. The review team has appreciated the lively and open discussions with the members of HU. A special “thank you” of the EUA team goes to Professor Nuran Özyer, Vice-rector of the university, who has coordinated the two visits, acted as liaison officer and made an invaluable contribution to the smooth organisation of the meetings and to facilitating the daily life of the reviewers.

The HU hospitality, the open atmosphere as well as the flexibility shown during the visits were highly appreciated. Translation was offered throughout the process and was overall satisfying. The programme of the visits covered all required components, including visits and meetings at the Faculties of Medicine, Letters, Engineering and Economics, as well as a visit to the second Beytepe campus.

## **2. Some general considerations about EUA audit programme**

David Dill defines audit as an externally driven peer review of internal quality-assurance, assessment, and improvement systems. Unlike an assessment, an audit does not evaluate quality: it focuses on the processes that are believed to produce quality and methods by which academics assure themselves that quality has been attained. And, unlike accreditation, it does not determine whether an institution or a programme meets threshold quality criteria and, therefore, certifies to the public the existence of minimum educational standards. Audits do not address academic standards, or determine the quality of teaching and learning outcomes, but evaluate how an institution monitors that its chosen standards are being achieved.

The present EUA Institutional Audit programme has been run well over ten years and in some audits it became obvious that the institutions were looking for some kind of quality stamp provided by EUA or for a statement regarding their standing from an international perspective, some form of mitigated accreditation. It must be made very clear that EUA does not provide such labelling services.

The comments of the review team are based upon a written self-evaluation report and upon information and impressions collected in a large number of interviews during a short preliminary visits and a two and half days final visit.

The higher education systems of the evaluated universities -Turkey's higher education system in this case - differ from the national higher education systems of the reviewers. This implies that the reviewers can only provide a broad impression about the institution and this means that its comments will be limited to major problems without going into much detail.

## **3. First impressions**

Hacettepe University is one of the most prestigious and privileged public universities in the country and one of the three leading public institutions in the capital (the other two being the Ankara University and the Middle East Technical University). It ranks first nationally in international scientific publications and appeared in the 2005 Jiatong/Shanghai Global Ranking of the best 500 world universities.

Hacettepe University has in its origins in the Paediatrics Department that was established in 1954 as an affiliation of the Faculty of Medicine of Ankara University. The Act 892 of 8 July 1967 established the Hacettepe University, providing education in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, the Faculty

of Science and the Faculty of Social Sciences. Further expansion has led to the present structure of HU, comprising 11 faculties, 14 schools, 1 conservatory, 13 institutes and 35 research and application centres.

The HU enrolls around 30,000 students offering two-year vocational school degrees, bachelor degrees of various durations depending on the discipline, master degrees and PhD programmes. Roughly 76% of the students are registered for bachelor level degrees and almost 10% are registered for 2 year vocational degrees (associate degree), while 8,7% are registered for master degrees and 5% for doctoral programmes, reflecting a general situation in the country which has a very high demand and need for basic higher education but still lacks the necessary level of output on master and PhD levels.

The review team formed the impression of a University with a clear predominance of the health sector in terms of budget, human resources and infrastructure (quality of buildings), probably a consequence of the overwhelming contribution of this part of the university to the revolving fund, which represents 53% of HU's revenues in 2006. It is also significant that so far all the HU rectors have been professors of Medicine.

The review team became also aware that the health sciences and the excellent medical services the university provides through its hospitals and health services are the major source of its social relevance and reputation. This also generates intensive relationships with the government. HU is a major player in the field of the national health sector, acts as consulting agent to various Ministries and as the preferred hospital and health care support for the political class in Ankara. Patient surveys (on average HU's hospitals and services see about 750,000 patients/year) indicate a very high level of trust and satisfaction. In the SER report it is stated "*Hacettepe University has been well known in the healthcare field and has established itself as a trademark both nationally and internationally based on its initial mission*" (page 6) and "*...Hacettepe University Hospitals, which are the showcase of the university*" (page 9).

The rector, in its seven years of service, has engaged the whole institution in a large change process since several years and wants this EUA audit to push the various change processes further. In particular the goal is to accelerate the position of the HU both in the Bologna driven European higher education and research area and on an international level. Internally, strategic planning, decentralisation and performance management appear as the main goals.

For the SER Committee the rector called representatives from the main faculties, mostly drawn from the quality coordination offices, under the chair of Vice-Rector Nuran Özyer. Although the HU has provided the review team with a

wealth of information in the first and in the revised version of the SER, some inconsistencies and confusing presentation of data still remained. The SER team acknowledged the difficulty of ensuring complete data consistency given that there is yet no coherent central data collection system.

#### **4. Constraints**

The Turkish university system is very centralised and the level of institutional autonomy is low by European standards, although a political process of awarding more autonomy to higher education institutions is apparently underway. There are 93 universities in Turkey today, out of which 68 are public institutions charging relatively low tuition fees, and 25 are private (the so called foundation universities) and claim higher fees.

A powerful buffer institution, the Higher Education Council (YÖK) regulates higher education. The YÖK is an autonomous body with juridical personality “which governs all higher education, directs the activities of the institutions of higher education, within the context of duties and powers given by law” (article 6 of the Higher Education Act, no. 2547). The YÖK includes the Higher Education Supervisory Board and the Student Selection and Placement Centre, together with relevant units responsible for planning, research, development, evaluation, budget, investment and coordination.

The YÖK presents to the Ministry of National Education proposals or views on the establishment or merger of new universities, as well as the budgets prepared by the universities after examining and approving them. Other relevant functions include approving the establishment, merger or closing down of new units (departments, research centres, vocational schools) of universities, to specify the principles ruling the minimum number of hours of educational curricula, to fix the number of positions of the academic staff in each institution, to determine the number of new students into each academic programme and to offer to the cabinet the level of student fees. Additionally, many budget related decisions have to be endorsed by the Ministry of Finances (salaries) or even the Cabinet and Parliament (the whole budget).

The number of academic staff are allocated by YÖK upon proposals and applications by the universities. Demand for administrative staff has to correspond to centralised profiles that may not match the effective need profiles of the respective institutions. It is thus difficult for a university to allocate academic and administrative staff based on its own priorities. The rector reports

an additional difficulty to fill the allocated academic posts with appropriate people due to a lack of quality staff.

TUBITAK, the Council of Science and Research, governs large parts of the funding of university research, which has increased considerably over the past two years, mainly driven by Turkey's strong intention to become a fully recognised member of the European Higher Education and Research Area and of the European Union.

The number of students who apply for university access lies above 1.5 million (in 2006), of which less than half a million obtain a place (the overall number of students in the higher education system is over 2.3 million, some 547,000 being enrolled in the Open University). The Student Placement Centre of the YÖK is responsible for the centralised selection of students for bachelor degrees, after sitting in a centralised entrance examination.

The budget of HU originating from the Ministry is a line budget and the university is only allowed to transfer 20% from one budget item to another in the same budget category within the course of that year. HU is also not entirely autonomous in the development of entrepreneurial activities.

The review team concluded that the actual autonomy of Turkish universities is very limited as the government or the YÖK control central elements such as the budget and its allocation, admissions of students and the number and internal allocation of academic and administrative staff.

## 5. Funding

HU is doing better than most Turkish universities in the public funding of its activities. Not only has the HU been able to keep total enrolments rather stable but *per capita* funding in US \$ has not decreased as has been the case of many Turkish universities who were forced to increase the number of students massively without proportional increase of the budget.

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
<b>Enrolments per degree type</b>					
Associate (2 year vocational)	3 531	3 995	3 486	3 010	2 973
Bachelor (4 year schools)	3 306	3 032	2 632	2 466	2 368
Bachelor (4/5/6 years university)	19 094	19 698	19 442	20 121	20 713
Master	2 462	2 584	2 730	2 379	2 650
Doctor	1 407	1 456	1 536	1 485	1 541
Total	29 800	30 765	29 826	29 461	30 245
<b>Funding for education</b>					
Government Budget (US \$)	92 480 472	123 966 882	158 103 282	153 479 355	163 282 242
Per capita funding	3 103	4 029	5 301	5 210	5 399

Funding for research					
Government Budget (US \$)	1 843 357	2 451 428	8 101 101	2 617 845	10 120 012
Total Funding					
Government Budget (US \$)	94 323 829	126 418 310	166 204 383	156 097 200	173 402 254

The HU has also been able to contain the number of students in vocational degrees (their number actually is decreasing). In Turkey, the vocational schools are designed to absorb the mass of low educated youth and provide them with basic qualification for the labour market, but are often underfunded and understaffed. At HU, this duality in the university system is less marked than in other Anatolian universities. Still, on a general level the review team believes it is difficult to preserve the quality of an institution that has simultaneously two very different educational objectives, unless the intake of those students is limited as seems to be the case with HU.

An additional major component of HU's budget is the so-called revolving fund that in 2006 represented 53% of the total budget, constituting a remarkably higher independence from direct government funding than most Turkish universities. The government contributes with 42.5%, the other components being tuition fees (3,5%) and other revenues (1,0%). The contribution of the different units to the revolving fund is extremely unbalanced, the Health Sector contributing (in 2006) with 93.8%, followed by the Faculty of Dentistry with 3.1% and the units in the Beytepe campus (economics, humanities) with 1.2%. All other units contribute below 1% each.

Up to 10% of the revolving fund is allocated to funding research projects on a competitive basis, but apparently the University does not charge any additional significant overheads, most of the funds being returned to the unit where they were generated.

The detailed line budgeting system and the cumbersome rules for the use of public funds lead to their less efficient utilisation and to heavy and time consuming administrative duties. The allocation of the public budget to universities does not seem to be transparent as it relies more on political negotiations with YÖK and the Ministry of Finances than on clear standards or a funding formula. So far the newly introduced Performance Based System and the implementation of Strategic Planning do not seem to have attenuated this problem.

The administrative rules for additional income generating activities (revolving fund) do not stimulate contract research or other service oriented activities. The review team was told that the bureaucratic procedures are very heavy and payment uncertain. The rules of the revolving fund are not clearly and uniformly



used across the institution: The review team was given different accounts of its components and even accounts of private revolving funds outside the control of the University. On the other hand, the clear advantages provided by the Techno-Park (in terms of tax exemptions and absence of overheads) create an unfair competitive system inside the University.

As part of the Strategic Planning policy HU is decentralising its administration by transferring to each unit the responsibility for spending the public component of its budget. However, as salaries are paid directly to the HU employees, the amount of money entrusted to the Dean is quite small. As an example, in 2005 the Faculty of Engineering had for the general budget items (200+300+400+620) a total of approximately 98,000 US \$, which seems inadequate.

## **6. Staff**

The HU has (November 2006) 3,934 academic staff and 5,989 administrative staff, 1,800 of them being contracted personnel. Of the academic staff 1,996 are teaching staff (including professors, associate professors, assistant professors, teaching assistants and other personnel with lecturing responsibility) and 1,938 research assistants. With a total of 30,245 students this represents an average student/staff ratio of 15.2, which is acceptable. However, the internal allocation is quite unbalanced, even taking into account the needs of the different disciplines, ranging from a minimum of 3.9 in a university faculty (Medicine) to a maximum of 57.5 in a school. For instance, the value of around 42 for the 2005 Computer Engineering programme is not acceptable in a quality culture.

The qualification of the academic staff is good; of the 1,405 teaching staff at the university programmes 1,021 (73%) are professors or associate professors. There is a strong effort to increase their international experience and the HU's standards for academic promotion are high. However, like in general observed in Turkish universities, inbreeding is a problem. Most of the teaching staff consists of HU graduates, a situation that is made more critical by the rule that in house academic personnel have priority in the event of a vacancy.

The SER also refers that one of the weak points results from lack of motivation or low salaries of the academic staff that has caused either some teaching staff to leave the university or to switch into part time. This problem is enhanced by the competition from private foundational universities offering better salaries, but the SER does not provide concrete data about the extension of the phenomenon.

The number of administrative staff – 5,989 – is apparently very generous, corresponding to a ratio of ‘administrative staff/academic staff’ equal to 1.52. However, such as in the case of the academic staff their allocation to the different units seems rather unbalanced, although the review team acknowledges the need for non-academic staff in the hospitals.

## 7. Research

HU is the leading research university in Turkey and the performance of a number of its faculties is remarkable despite in some cases having unfavourable student/staff ratios and an excessive number of teaching hours. However, a number of faculties could possibly increase its performance significantly.

The review team would like to emphasise the case of the Faculty of Engineering, with an average annual research performance of 0.86 for the period 2001-2005, was responsible for the publication, in the period 2000-2005, of 54 books, 165 papers in national journals, 892 papers in international journals, 475 papers in national proceedings and 631 in international proceedings; the number of approved thesis was 1101 for Masters and 576 for PhDs. However the student staff ratio is on average 18.3 with a maximum close to 40 for Computer Engineering, while the number of teaching weekly hours varies from 5.8 for Chemical Engineering to 18 in Physics.

Comparing the data for the period 1995-1999 against the period 2000-05 we observe a very substantial improvement of research performance across the whole university.

Name of Faculty	Number publications (SCI-SSCI-AHCI)	Number of academics	Performance
Engineering	808	170	0.86
Sciences	586	144	0.74
Pharmacy	279	70	0.66
Medicine	1781	521	0.62
Dentistry	157	86	0.30
Education	43	89	0.08
Economics	10	64	0.03
Letters	20	152	0.02
Fine Arts	-	45	-

Özgen, T. and Demirel, I.H., 2005, Hacettepe University 1070-2005 Scientific Activities, October 2005.

The funding structure for research shows that there is an increasingly important contribution from the HU revolving fund and more recently also from TUBITAK and the European Union. The data also show that the direct contribution from the government budget is quite unstable and has varied between a minimum contribution of 17.1% in 2005, to a maximum contribution of 42.2% in 2004.

HU has an internal system for funding research projects on a competitive basis. This structure (a high commission and three specialised commissions) seems to work well and in an independent way, and control of the final results is also under the remit of the high commission. HU mainly relies on the individual research initiatives of the academic staff, but has formulated broad priority areas: social sciences, interdisciplinary and applied research.

Year	Revolving fund	%	Gov. Budget	%	Total	TUBITAK	EU	Total
2002	6 042 340	76.6	1 843 357	23.4	7 885 697	0	0	7 885 697
2003	5 710 206	70.0	2 451 428	30.0	8 161 633	0	0	8 161 633
2004	11 100 470	57.8	8 101 101	42.2	19 201 571	0	172 139	19 373 710
2005	12 685 919	82.9	2 617 845	17.1	15 303 764	1 170 520	457 958	16 932 242
2006	14 781 472	59.4	10 120 012	40.6	24 901 484	6 024 263	921 320	31 847 068

## 8. Students

Due to its very high reputation in Turkey, HU is able to attract some of the best students. In many cases HU recruits most students from the top 2% of the over 1.5 million students applying for a place in higher education. However, as students are placed through a national competition it happens frequently that they are placed in courses that do not correspond to their first choice, which might create some problems of motivation.

All students recognise the high prestige of HU, which was the main reason supporting their choice of institution. They are in general pleased with the institution and their professors, the most negative comments being on transportation difficulties (at the Beytepe campus outside Ankara) and the quality of buildings. Other complaints referred to the high fee paid by the shopping centre in the Beytepe campus, which reflects on the prices paid by students, and lack of social activities there, especially on weekends.

As part of the TQM initiatives, the HU has run a survey on student satisfaction that was included in the SER. The results of this survey (on a five point scale from 1 to 5) show a moderate picture of satisfaction and a substantial

deviation between expectation and satisfaction, the lowest satisfaction value being 1.85 (laboratory services and others, at the Faculty of Dentistry) and the highest value being 3.42 (physical maintenance and hygiene, at the Faculty of Medicine). These results show that there is some room for improvement of student satisfaction at HU.

Faculty	Drop-outs (1)	Number of students (2)	% losses = % (1/2)
Dentistry	8	586	1,4%
Pharmacy	4	460	0,8%
Letters	237	4 519	5,2%
Education	109	3 862	2,8%
Sciences	83	2 194	3,8%
Fine Arts	32	489	6,5%
Engineering	142	3 109	4,6%
Economics	227	3 448	6,6%
Medicine	14	2 046	0,7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>20 712</b>	<b>4,1%</b>

The pedagogic efficiency of the HU is good as shown in the table by the percentage of drop-outs relative to the total population, which on average equals 4.1% with a minimum of 0.7% for Medicine and a maximum of 6.6% for Economics.

## 9. Strategic Planning and Quality

At the top leadership level of HU the review team noted an acute awareness for the necessity for change, a strong will to go for it and good management and leadership capacity. Rector Özgen drives the process of formulating strategies for quality management, internationalisation, and links to industry: HU is becoming more accountable to stakeholders. In a period of political uncertainty there is a challenge also for its strong political position and influence. The HU is entering a period of increased competition, including that from an emerging private sector in fast expansion. Competition will be about public and private resources, good academic staff, good students, good partners, etc.

At central level, there are different heavy constraints, which make the development and the implementation of coherent institutional strategy very difficult. All these constraints are not specific for HU, but typical for Turkish

universities. The HU has used the opportunity to participate in a pilot project of strategic planning and the legal enforcement of quality structures as a lever to promote change and to introduce a quality assurance system and develop a quality culture.

As part of these initiatives the leadership of HU decided to develop a strategy to promote debate, internal communication and dialogue in a constructive way, by disseminating its own vision throughout the institution through the establishment of Quality offices at unit level and embarking in experimental exercises of performance based funding. This is an important step to develop an institutional culture and sense of belonging to the same institution beyond specific departments or faculties.

As all these processes are still in their implementation stages. The definition of a clear strategy for quality assurance at the HU, of transparent responsibilities and objectives for quality management have been comprehensively formulated on paper, but are only in their first development stages, at different levels and speed depending on areas. Tools and processes are being introduced but not always quite understood yet.

A quality assurance policy must be based on a vision and strategic plan of the university. The next steps of the leadership must be to assess achievements and develop measurements and rewards.

However, the review team got the impression that the quality units are working with dedication to push acceptance and implementation of tools and processes outlined. The change agents know that this needs a shift of mentality towards quality culture as a tool for improvement and strengthening of the own institution.

The very recent implementation of strategic planning does not yet allow to see concrete consequences in the relationship with the government and the YÖK. Still, the HU has already made some advance in the strategic process. The next step is to develop a wide internal discussion process, involving as many actors of the university as possible, in order to reach a common agreement for a wide-accepted sedimentation of the present change process.

The ability of the different parts of the university to develop self-evaluation activities should be reinforced, as well as the integration of evaluation results into the activities. Quality assurance is a dynamic process aimed at permanent improvement of all aspects of the activities. That is why it should be linked to concrete measures e.g. to improve the didactic ability of teachers or the managerial capacity of academic staff.

The review team has arrived at a time when the results of change are not yet solidified and some uncertainty about the process still exists in some quarters. Several actors do not have a clear idea yet about the direction of change or the meaning and possible consequences of mechanisms such as performance based funding. The review team believes that it is time for the university to spend some time at discussing the changes achieved so far, correcting its implementation where necessary and allowing for solidification of the process.

## **10. Strong and weak points**

### **10.1. Strong points**

- The very high reputation of the institution;
- Strong leadership;
- A privileged situation in terms of stable student numbers,
- Large revolving fund;
- Good political connections where it matters;
- A pro-active attitude towards innovative experiences in higher education, and acting as a role model;
- Internal institutional team spirit;
- Geographical position and ownership of large campus;
- Strong will to adapt new trends in higher education, including the Bologna process;
- Rather stable financial conditions;
- Substantial teaching in foreign languages;
- Good quality incoming students;
- Very qualified academic staff in teaching and research at international level;
- A broad range of degrees and study programmes offered.

### **10.1. Weak points**

On a general level:

- Very centralised higher education system and reduced institutional autonomy in matters such as finances, personnel management, selection of students, definition of student numbers and of institutional structures;
- Strong tendency towards inbreeding;

HU specific:

- Unbalanced position of different faculties, resulting in unbalanced distribution of human and financial resources;
- Lack of clear resource allocation mechanisms and unclear relation between planning and funding;
- Students not sufficiently represented in decision making bodies;
- Insufficient attention paid to the students' learning processes, including difficulties in getting credit transfer and accumulation and inadequate student-staff ratios in some areas;
- Slow adaptation to learning oriented education (less class hours, more time to learn);
- Weak support for raising research funds abroad;
- Insufficient institutional flow of information and lack of a central data collection system;
- Low cooperation with external stakeholders and *alumni*.

## 11. Recommendations

- On a general level the HU, like other Turkish universities, is under a number of external constraints that need to be removed to allow for increased global efficiency of the system and for the institutional flexibility necessary to adapt to a fast changing and competitive environment. This includes:
  - Substantially increasing institutional autonomy, changing the traditional state attitude from *a priori* authorisation to *a posteriori* evaluation:
  - Creating incentives to the diversification of institutional funding, which implies creating matching funds instead of taxation of revenues.
  - Increasing the student participation in institutional governance, including the right to vote.
- If HU wants to become a well-recognised international institution it needs to reinforce its profile beyond the traditional health area, which also implies the further strengthening of a clear research policy that will reinforce the research sectors with more international visibility.
- HU needs to improve the balance between the different faculties and schools by means of appropriate human and financial resources.
- For the persecution of these innovative policies HU should raise an overhead on the revolving fund and ensure that there is a consistent

university policy on raising external revenues, such as avoiding internal unfair competition mechanisms or separate revolving funds.

- HU needs to further pursue the innovation of its management system, which includes the precise definition of relevant performance indicators, a motivating and clear reward system, transparent allocation mechanisms and contractualisation of performance based funding.
- HU needs to continue their efforts towards the change of education paradigm from teaching to learning.
- HU should seriously consider the implementation of an alumni association in order to improve relevant stakeholder participation.
- HU needs to analyse the outcomes of the quality assurance mechanisms already in place (satisfaction surveys and student evaluations) and take the necessary action to enhance the credibility of the quality campaign and improve institutional quality. Implementation needs to be monitored in order to ensure effectiveness.



## **12. Envoi**

HU has initiated a process of change that will determine its capacity for survival as a top university in Turkey. The success of HU will be determined in the very end by the enthusiasm and dedication of its leadership, by the quality of its staff and students and by its capacity of free and open discussion of emerging challenges and alternative solutions. HU is now aware that it is living in a world of permanent change and increasing competition with public and private operators.

HU has started but not yet fully developed its quality system, neither this was to be expected taking into consideration how recently the change process has been initiated. Despite some difficult outside constraints, the quality of its top management and the excellence of many of its actors with whom we met, and a perceptive atmosphere favouring change are good guarantee of the final success of the process of transformation of HU.

HU lives through an internal very crucial process of change. The institution is devoting much attention to deciding new rules and processes and to get them implemented. It is only natural that everything is not yet smooth nor perfect, nor that members of the institution still feel at a loss to understand the full details of the process or its consequences. It is also natural that in this process the multitude of new activities limits the time to pay the same attention to every detail, leaving the external observer sometimes with some sensation of uncoordinated progress.

With this in mind and with the leadership and vision of the Rector and his team, we are sure that HU is indeed prepared to meet the challenge.