12th European Quality Assurance Forum

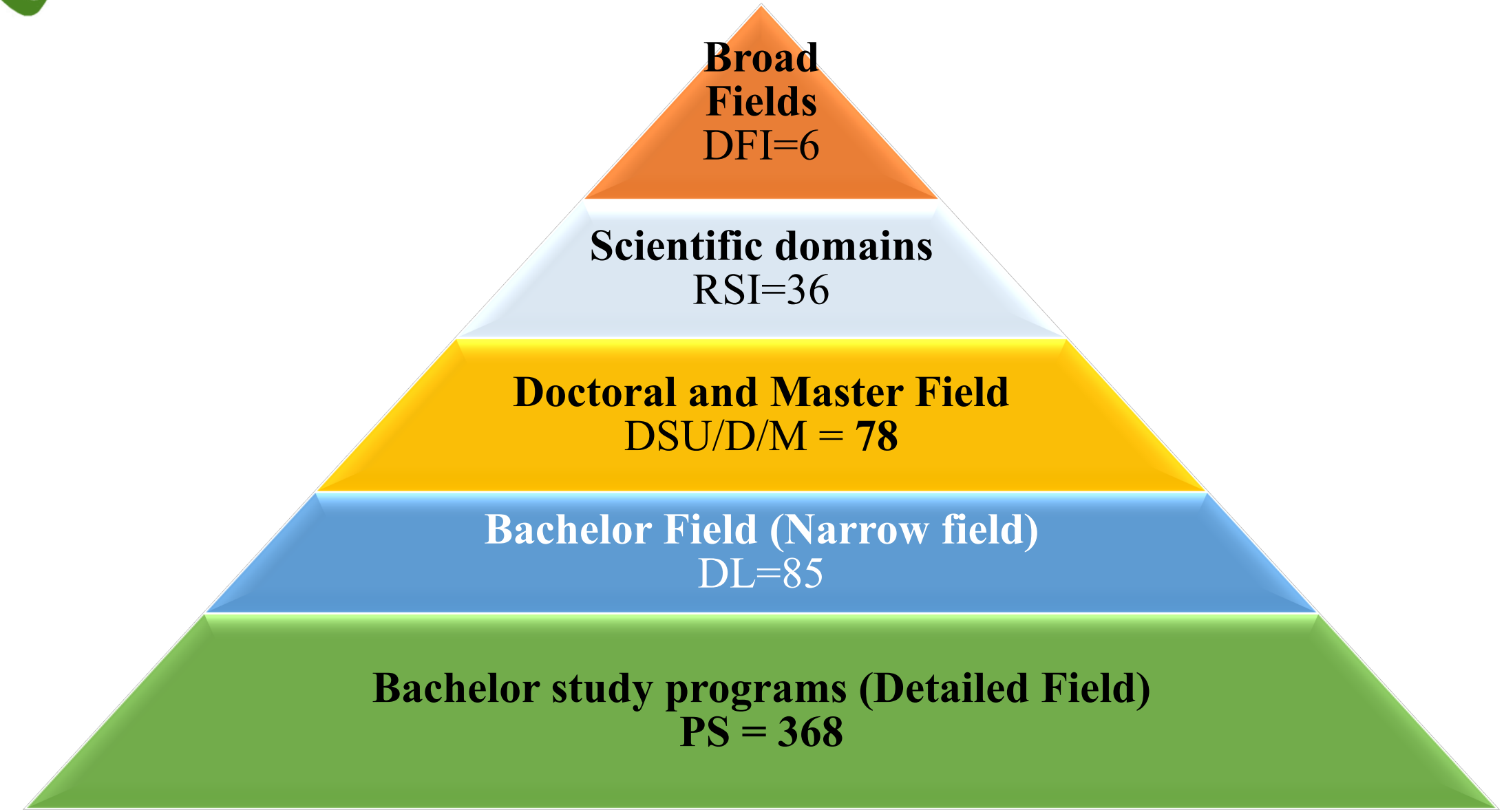
The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education - ARACIS

A study concerning the evaluation of the quality of ARACIS activity by the higher education managers

The University of Latvia Riga, Latvia

23-25 November 2017

Romanian National System of HE,
Structure of fields of education – academic year 2017/2018



Sursa: Prelucrare după: HG nr. 114/2017

Romanian National System of HE - the offer and the demand
academic year 2016/2017

ISCED 6
Bachelor studies

HEI = 97 accredited
- 55 state HEI
-42 IIS private HEI

No. of study fields =368
No. of study programs = 2640

Places offered/year = 210.588
(62.000 funded by the state)

No. of students enrolled – 1st year
=119.065

Total No. of students = 405.638

ISCED 7
Master studies

HEI = 87 accredited
-55 state HEI
-32 private HEI

No. of master fields =78
No. of master fields in HEI= 895
No. of study programs = 3156

Places offered/year=150.610
(35.600 funded by the state)

No. of students enrolled – 1st year
= 56.284

Total No. of students = 103.827

ISCED 8
Doctoral studies

IOSUD = 57
- 56 state HEI
+ Romanian Academy

No. of doctoratl fields =78
No. of doctoral schools = 210
No. of doctoral study domanis = 401

Placed offered/year = 5000
(3.000 funded by the sate)

No. of students enrolled – 1st year
= 4.774

Total No. of students = 19.143

The view and the objectives of present study:

The study view

The main goal of the research focuses on improving the evaluation of quality in higher education periodically performed by ARACIS and on strengthening the quality management in higher education institutions.

Objective a)

a) Identifying *the opinion of higher education institutions (universities)* regarding the quality of activities conducted within the process of external evaluation performed by ARACIS;

Objective b)

b) Surveying *the opinion of evaluators from the NRE of ARACIS* regarding the role the agency plays in the development of the higher education system in the following period of time**.**

The sampling:

Total 879 respondents

External survey

- **SAMPLE A – HEI managers**
- **55 state HEI 466 respondents**
- **30 private HEI 160 respondents**
- **Total valid questionnaires: 576 of 626**

Internal survey

- **SAMPLE B - ARACIS ' experts**
- **277 respondents ARACIS' experts - professors**
- **51 respondents ARACIS' experts students**
- **Total valid questionnaires: 303 of 328**

The structure of the questionnaire:

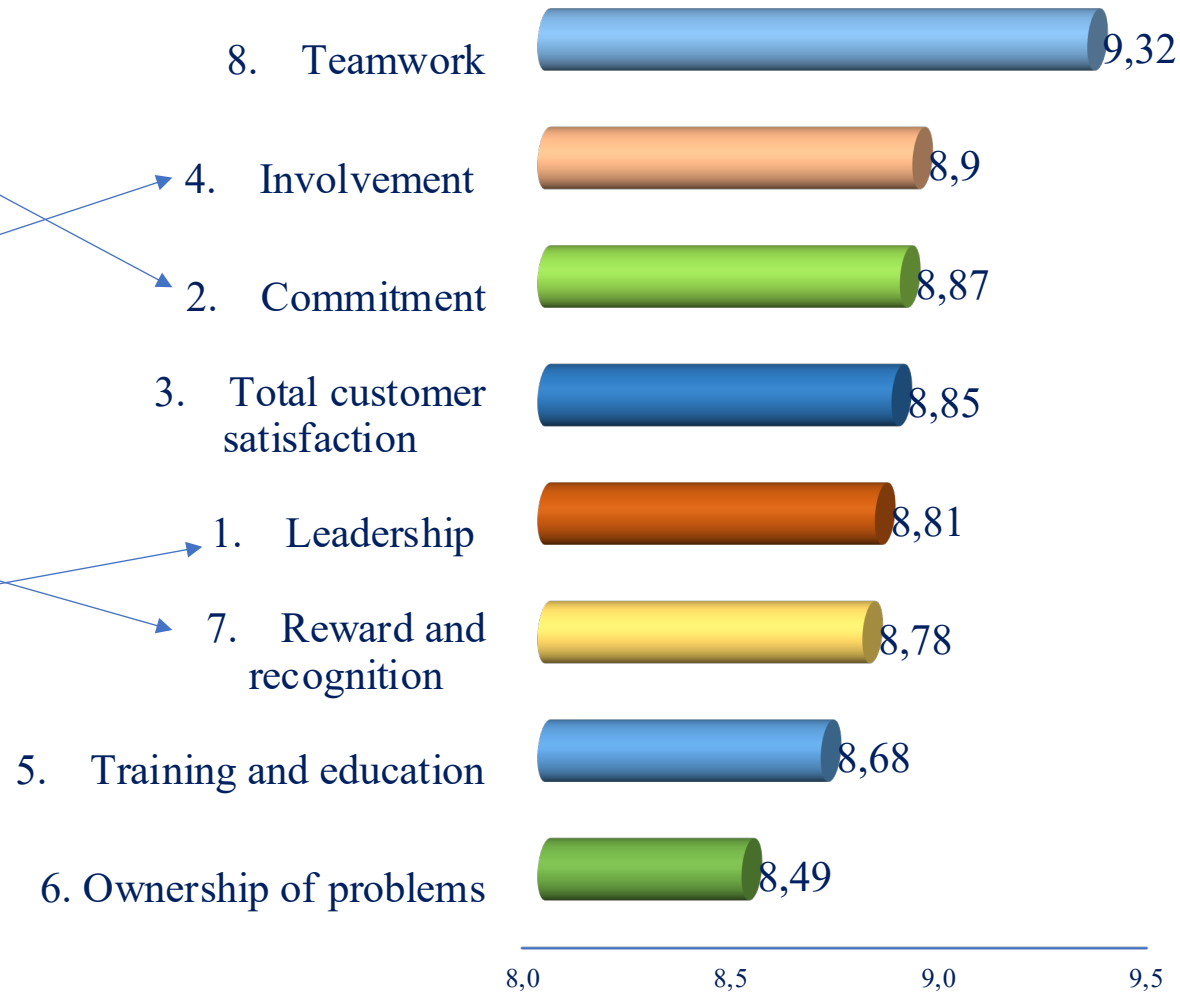
Section I. The assessment of the services' quality offered by ARACIS (Model used: HETQMEX, SERVQUAL)	**Sample A: 8 dimensions/30 items** **Sample B: 13 dimensions /48 itemis**
Section II. The assessment of ARACIS' role and mission	**2 questions/ 7 items**
Section III. The trends and risks of HE system	**18 trends 15 risks**
Section IV. Open questions	**2 questions**
Section V. Identification Data	**Sample A: 5 questions** **Sample B: 3 questions**

Ranking of the dimensions concerning the quality centred management in ARACIS

Sample A - HEI management

Average = 8,81

Sample B – ARACIS' experts



Average = 8,86

Scale from 1 to 10

The mean values of dimensions of Management focused on quality in ARACIS

Dimension	Mean dimension total HEI	Mean dimension		Difference HEI S - HEI P
		State HEI (S)	Private HEI (P)	
1. Leadership	**8,58**	8,63	8,39	0,24
2. Commitment	**9,15**	9,16	9,11	0,05
3. Total customer satisfaction	**8,81**	8,93	8,42	**0,51**
4. Total involvement	**9,14**	9,22	8,89	0,33
5. Training education	**8,51**	8,54	8,42	0,12
6. Ownership of problem	**8,41**	8,41	8,42	-0,01
7. Reward and recognition	**8,68**	8,75	8,43	0,32
8. Teamwork	**9,18**	9,32	8,72	0,6
General mean	**8,81**	**8,87**	**8,60**	**0,27**

The correlation matrix of the dimensions concerning *Quality Centred Management*

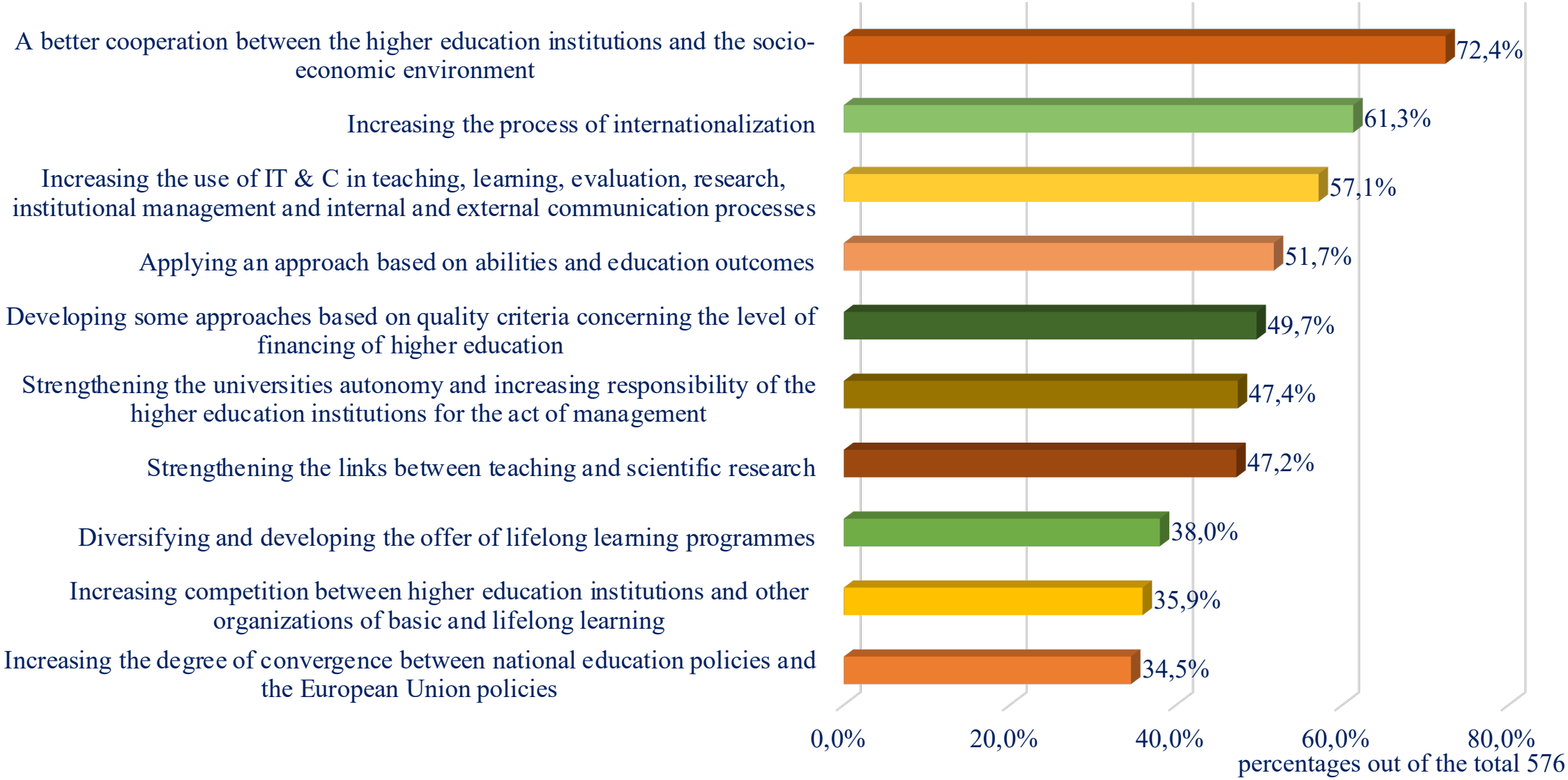
Sample A – HEI management

	Dimension	D.1	D.2	D.3	D.4	D.5	D.6	D.7
D.1	Total customer satisfaction (the resulting variable)	1						
D 2	Leadership	0,8054	1					
D 3	Commitment	0,6586	0,6752	1				
D.4	Total involvement	0,7675	0,7015	0,6952	1			
D.5	Training education	0,5580	0,6237	0,6124	0,6241	1		
D.6	Ownership of problem	0,7554	0,8287	0,6688	0,6988	0,6769	1	
D.7	Reward and recognition	0,7848	0,7833	0,6615	0,7353	0,6588	0,8303	1
D.8	Teamwork	0,7915	0,6831	0,6955	0,7836	0,6334	0,6852	0,779

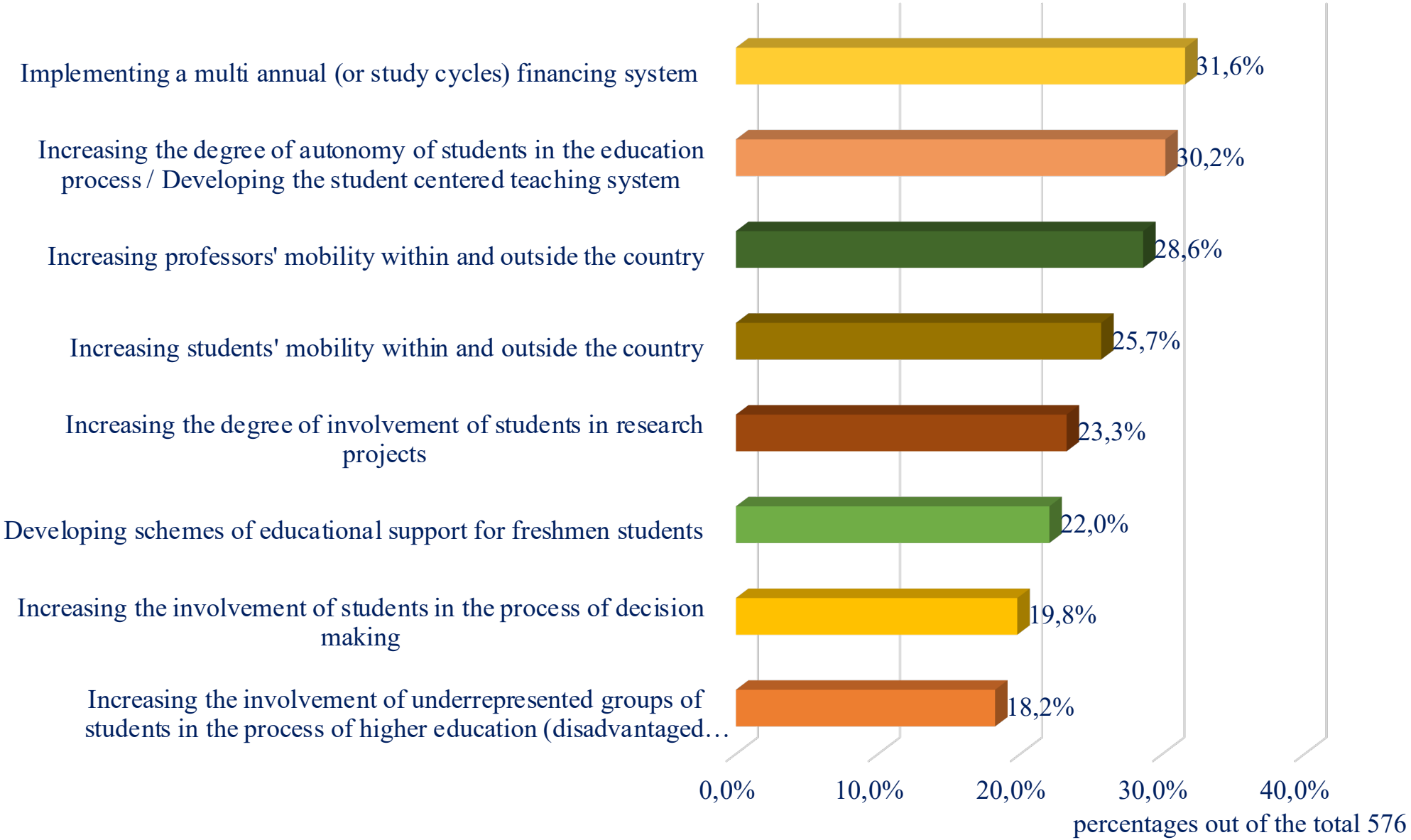
Mean levels of the dimensions regarding the evaluation of the mission and role of ARACIS

No.	Missions' components	Mean values		General mean
		State HEI	Private HEI	
1.	Testing, according to quality standards, the capacity of education providing organizations to fulfil the beneficiaries' expectations	8,95	8,71	**8,90**
2.	Contributing to the development of an institutional culture of higher education quality	8,97	8,82	**8,93**
3.	Assuring the protection of direct beneficiaries of study programmes at higher education level by producing and disseminating systematic, coherent and credible information, publicly accessible, about education quality	8,80	8,64	**8,77**
4.	Proposing to the Ministry of Education strategies and policies of permanently improving higher education quality, in close correlation with pre-university education	8,61	8,34	**8,54**

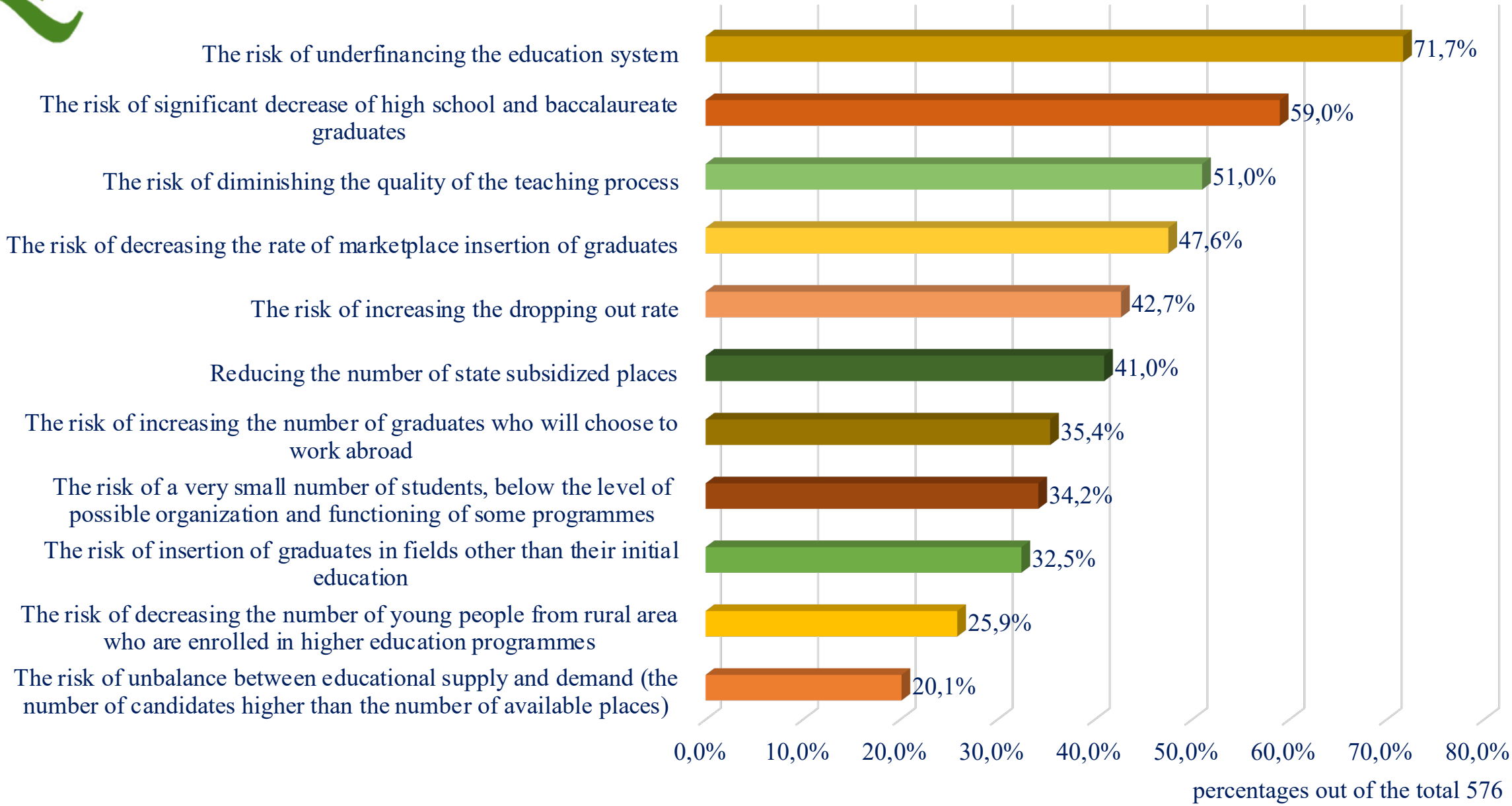
Ranking the top 10 trends that will influence HE in Romania in the next 5 years



Ranking of the next 11-17 trends that will influence HE in Romania in the next 5 years



Ranking the potential risks that will influence HEin Romania in the next 5 years



Section IV. Open-ended questions analysis

A summary of the opinions revels the following aspects:

- The quality indicators defined in the ARACIS standards are identified as important means which, better defined and chosen, could lead to a better quality of higher education in general;
- Respondents argue for reconsidering the weight (in the sense of maximizing) of the results of the teaching, pedagogic activity itself in the higher institutions evaluation;
- Increasing the responsibility of the internal quality assurance systems is frequently cited as one of the main goals of all activities in this area;
- The academic system should continue to rely on ARACIS as an already validated mean to increasing quality, even if some improvements should be accomplished as well at the agency level.

Synthesis of the positive and negative aspects revealed by the respondents of the university managers

Dimension	STRENGTHS Score above mean	WEAKNESSES Score below mean
ARACIS mission and role	✓ Contribution to the development of an institutional culture of quality in higher education ✓ Evaluation of the capacity of education providers and of the expectations of the beneficiaries	✓ Assurance of the direct beneficiaries' protection with regard to the supply of study programmes, through the production and dissemination of systematic, coherent, and accessible information ✓ Proposals of public policies and strategies for the constant improvement of quality in higher education (addressed to the Ministry of education), tightly correlated with the strategies and policies of secondary education
Evaluators activity	✓ ARACIS Evaluators' activity corresponds to the assumed mission	✓ Excessive bureaucratization ✓ Need for constant training of evaluators
Tendencies	✓ ARACIS is perceived as an important actor for the future, in the direction of improving the quality evaluation and the management in higher education (bachelor, master, and PhD levels), under the condition of a necessary improvement of its methods and practices	✓ Formalism and bureaucracy ✓ Financing of the Romanian higher education ✓ Decreasing level of instruction of youth, pupils and students ✓ Decreasing the importance of the teaching activities in the evaluation of the academic system ✓ Implementation of the quality system at the internal level ✓ Increasing the dropping out rate among students

Synthesis of the positive and negative aspects revealed by the respondents of the university managers

	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
ARACIS mission and role	✓ Proposal of strategies and policies meant to improve the quality of higher education	✓ Influence of the global context ✓ Substantial changes in the European standards, compared to the national ones ✓ Financing of the system of education and the national and European normative framework ✓ Difficulty of obtaining a clear and pertinent feed-back from employers ✓ Substantial changes in the educational needs of future generations of students
Evaluators activity	✓ Evaluation centered on the binomial teaching activity – research activity and less on the formal, bureaucratic, collateral aspects ✓ Increasing the degree of professionalism of evaluators ✓ Assurance of periodical training of evaluators	✓ Uneven approach from one evaluation to the next within the same area ✓ Teams of evaluators that are used to working together, under the risk of becoming subjective in their activity
Tendencies	✓ A higher weight given to the teaching process in the evaluations of the academic system ✓ Quality indicators defined by ARACIS in its standards are identified as an important mean to increasing quality in higher education, provided that they are constantly redefined and selected ✓ Financing based on past performance ✓ Internationally validated standards	✓ Maximizing the weight of a number of criteria related to the capitalization of the results of research through publication, in comparison to other criteria of capitalization, such as the teaching process ✓ Marginalization of the research component, in favour of scientific research ✓ Emphasizing the differences between the output of the Romanian education system and similar European and global results ✓ Massive devaluation of higher education degrees

12th European Quality Assurance Forum Responsible QA – committing to impact

The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education - ARACIS

Thank you for your attention

B-dul Mărăști nr. 59, Sector 1, Bucharest, Romania,
tel. 021.206.76.00, fax 021.312.71.35
Email: office@aracis.ro, www.aracis.ro

The University of Latvia Riga, Latvia
23-25 November 2017