Decision No. El-2024-21 on the accreditation of the French University in Armenia, Yerevan, Armenia

The President of the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education,

Considering the Research Code, in particular Articles L. 114-3-1 to L. 114-3-6;

Considering the Board’s deliberation of 29th September 2022 on the accreditation criteria for international study programmes (except doctorates/PhDs);

Considering the Decision No. 2023-9 of 16th March 2023 on the international accreditation procedure of the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education;

Considering the agreement No. 2023-10 of 5th June 2023 - for the evaluation/accreditation of the French University in Armenia with the National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance;

Considering the opinion issued by the Accreditation Commission on 25th April 2024;

Decides:

Article 1

Noting that the French University in Armenia (UFAR) meets the six accreditation criteria, voted by the Board of the High Council on 29th September 2022, as follows:

FIELD 1: STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

ACCREDITATION CRITERION 1 - DEFINING THE INSTITUTION’S STRATEGY

UFAR operates in a highly competitive national environment where it stands out for its unique offer of foreign double degrees. The university enjoys a good reputation in the Armenian labour market and has good relations with the public and business sectors. UFAR’s integration into national and international academic networks has increased over the years. Although UFAR has developed a strategic plan, governance issues undermine its implementation and institutional development. The university has also adopted a growth strategy based on increasing the number of students, which is inadequate with the resources available. This is expected to affect the quality of the educational offer and to weaken the university’s reputation.

ACCREDITATION CRITERION 2 - GOVERNANCE AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

The university operates under an international agreement, which results in a weak governance structure with a lack of commitment from key stakeholders, such as the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. The high turnover of rectors, who are appointed by the aforementioned Ministry, does not allow for a long-term vision at the top of the university. In addition, the Board of Trustees does not address the main problems of UFAR (lack of permanent academic staff, fragile business model, limited real estate policy, etc.). Although UFAR has a highly committed staff and is able to successfully address short-term issues, medium- and long-term problems are neglected by its key stakeholders.

FIELD 2: POLICY ON RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND THE INCLUSION OF SCIENCE IN SOCIETY

ACCREDITATION CRITERION 3 - RESEARCH POLICY

The development of research at UFAR is a relatively recent endeavour, with more significant progress since 2018. This situation is mainly due to the limited number of permanent academic staff since its inception. At that time, UFAR was meant to be business-oriented. Since then, although research is still in its infancy stage, UFAR has introduced a comprehensive policy for resources and a support system that is promising: the creation of a joint doctoral school in computer science with the IIAF, agreements with partner universities to enrol PhD students, the diversification of funding sources, the introduction of a « research incentive scheme » for its doctoral students and academic staff...
Adopt a risk-based approach and seek to diversify the partnerships with French universities so as not to become dependent on the relationships with Jean Moulin Lyon 3 and Toulouse Ill Paul Sabatier universities.

Article 4

This decision will be published on the Hcéres website.

Paris, 17 May 2024.

The acting President signed Stéphane Le Bouler.