

**FINAL EVALUATION REPORT OF THE  
EPOKA UNIVERSITY'S STRATEGIC PLAN  
2013-2017**

**By**  
**Permanent Commission on Quality Assurance**  
**Tirana, Albania, 29 March 2018**

## Preface

Dear Epoka University students, staff members and stakeholders,

It is with great pleasure that the Permanent Commission on Quality Assurance of the Epoka University presents this final evaluation of the Epoka University's Strategic Plan 2013-2017.

Five years ago, Epoka University presented an ambitious strategic plan for the University, called Strategic Plan "On Creating Public Value". Key accomplishments have been achieved in each of the strategic plan's four areas of concentration, or pillars: Scientific Objectives, Educational Objectives, Institutional Collaboration Objectives and Institutional Development Objectives. This is important, as it demonstrates the breadth and depth of the University's efforts for quality in teaching, learning and research for all members of the student and staff community.

On December 31, 2017 the Epoka University student body was around 1880 students, the number of graduated students of around 1600 and staff members of around 100. Indirectly, considering that the total population of Albania is estimated at around 3 million people, Epoka University by working on improving the education infrastructure in Albania has benefited the whole population of this country. The Epoka University is believed to have contributed to the improvement of the Albanian higher education quality perception in the region and internationally as assessed by the international external evaluations. The work of the Epoka University has been instrumental for the dissemination of a need for quality human resources and importance of quality human resources for economic and social development of Albania and of wider region of the Balkans.

This evaluation should provide to students and to staff of the Epoka University with an opportunity to learn and further enhance their efforts in the future. Thanks to the continued commitment of the members of the Epoka University, we're confident that the University will continue the traditions of success and achieve its ambitious goals of the new Strategic Plan 2018-2022. The past five years have been a great run; we look forward to what's ahead.

PQA Commission, Epoka University  
Tirana, Albania  
29 March 2018

## **1. Introduction**

Epoka University's Strategic Plan 2013-2017 was prepared in 2013 as a leading roadmap for the University's teaching, research, and administrative activities. The objectives were grouped in four categories: Scientific, Educational, Institutional Relations, and Institutional Development. All objectives were accompanied by performance indicators to measure their accomplishment.

The Permanent Commission on Quality Assurance (PQA Commission), in cooperation with the Internal Quality Assurance Office, carried out this evaluation, as well as with contributions of relevant units and departments at Epoka University.

The evaluation was conducted in the period of February 2 – February 9, 2018 as a result of the decision of the PQA Commission on February 2, 2018 to undertake an evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2013-2017.

## **1.2. Scope of this Final Evaluation**

The final evaluation assesses the Strategic Plan's progress, achievements and challenges, with measurement of the output level achievements. The evaluation focuses on the Strategic Plan's performance so far in terms of delivery of its commitments, targets and goals set. This report incorporates the findings, results from the data received from respective units of the University and further analysis of them. It also provides overall findings, lessons and conclusions. The evaluation covers the period from 2013-2017.

## **1.3. Evaluation Methodology**

The methodology followed for the evaluation was comparison of the actual results with the strategic goals and performance indicators planned under the Strategic Plan 2013-2017. Statistical data were collected from the relevant departments of the University.

## 2. Findings

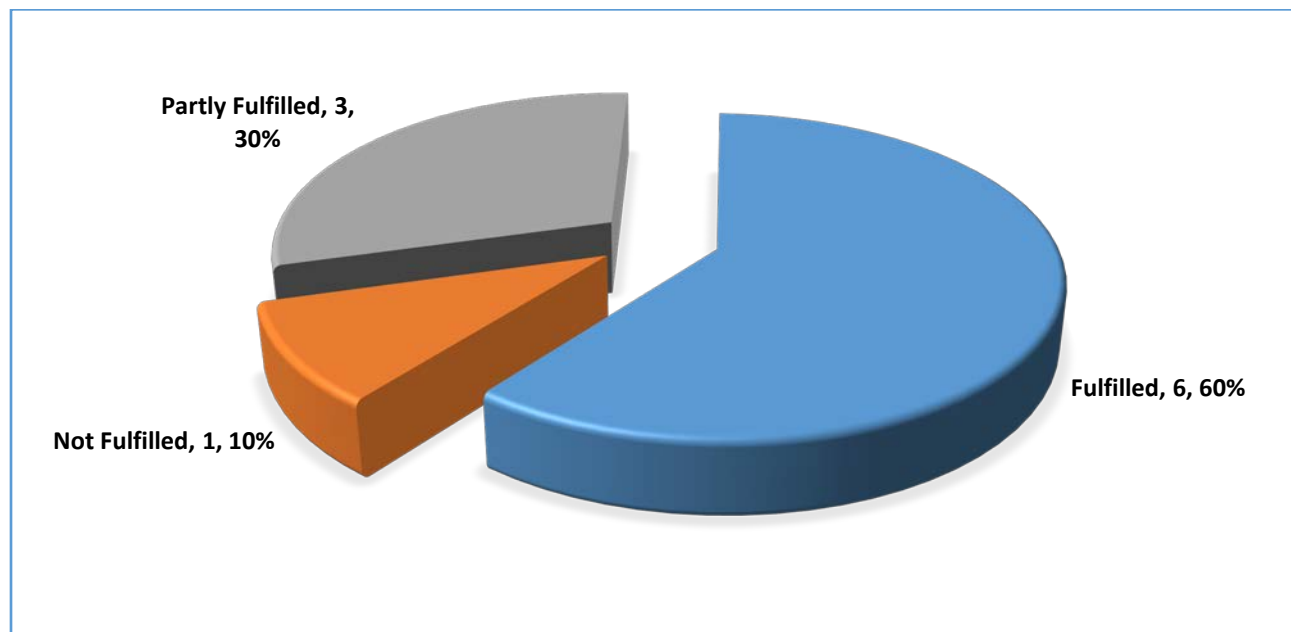
This evaluation finds that majority of the activities and indicators envisioned by the Strategic Plan 2013-2017 are fulfilled. Although in some places it was difficult to measure indicators envisioned by the Strategic Plan, overall the goals and outcomes have been realistically planned and they have provided practical guidance for the work of the University.

The details of the evaluation can be found below in the tables where assessment is based on the goals and indicators included in the Strategic Plan.

### 2.1. Scientific Objectives

Based on the analysis of the performance indicators and targets of each goal and from Chart No. 1 and Table No. 1 it is clear that the number of international projects, interdisciplinary cooperation and publications has increased. The table below shows that more progress needs to occur in order to meet the targets of goals on the Organization of Scientific Events and Participation and on increase of Projects Outcomes presented in scientific meetings and published in journals.

**Chart 1- Scientific Objectives -Number and Percentage of Fulfilled, Partly Fulfilled and Not Fulfilled Performance Indicators based on targets**



**Table 1 - Scientific Objectives**

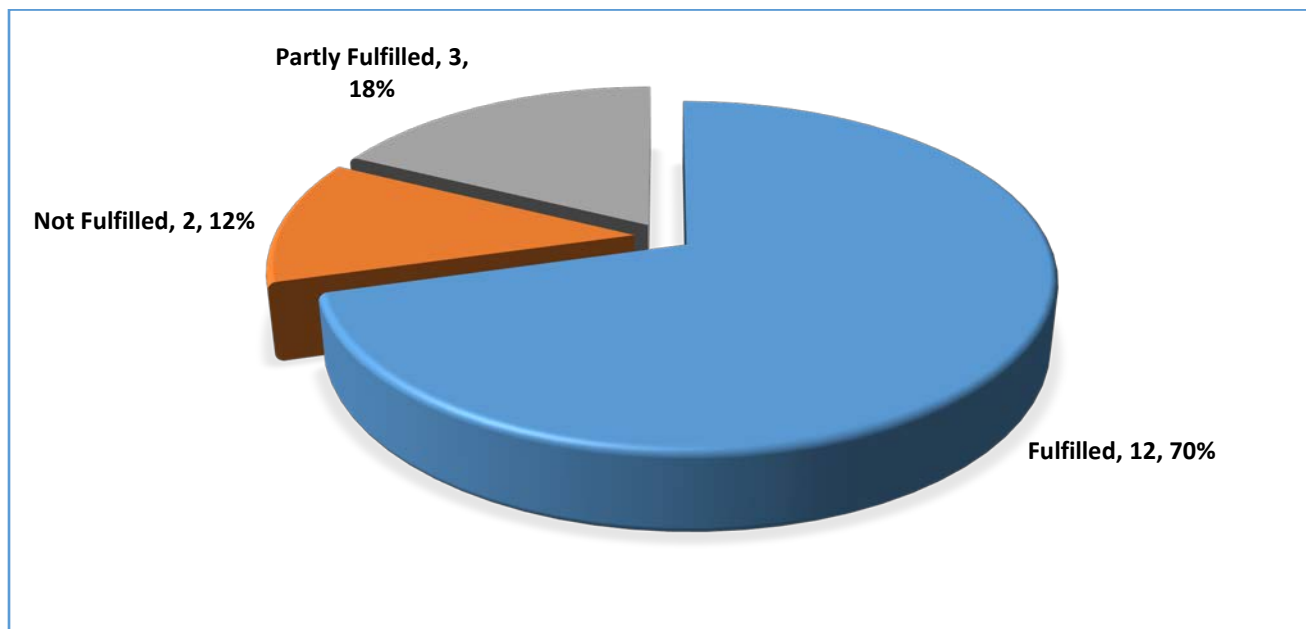
<b>Strategic Goals</b>		<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Until 2013</b>	<b>2013-2017</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>1.1 DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESEARCH ACTIVITIES</b>	1.1.1 Be integrated into the criteria of EU research projects within 2014 and within 2017 produce at least two research projects under the EU or other resources	Total number of EU projects	1	11	Fulfilled
	1.1.2 Within the 2017 increase the number of international research projects for which an application has been filed by 25%	Total number of referred projects	4	23	Fulfilled
	1.1.3 Within the 2017 increase the number of national research projects for which an application has been filed by 25%	Total number of national projects	-	63	Fulfilled
<b>1.2 INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PUBLICATIONS AND THEIR QUALITY</b>	1.2.1 Increase by 50% by the year 2017, the number of projects supported by national or international institutions and share the scientific results with the public in the country and abroad	Number of presented poster at scientific meetings with project results	-	-	Not Fulfilled
	1.2.2 Increase by 25% by the year 2017 the number of internationally recognized scientific publications.	Number of project outcomes and articles published in journals	-	- 217	Fulfilled

<b>1.3 ORGANIZATION OF SCIENTIFIC EVENTS AND PROMOTE PARTICIPATION</b>	1.3.1 Increase by 25% by the year 2017, the participation of our academic staff and research in scientific events	The number of academic staff members participating at scientific activities	280	98	Partly Fulfilled
	1.3.2 Increase by 25% by the year 2017, the number of organized national and international scientific events.	The number of scientific activities organized by international institutions	120	104	Partly Fulfilled
		The number of international scientific activities organized by the institution	12	13	Partly Fulfilled
<b>EG 1.4 INCREASE THE NUMBER OF INTERDISCIPLINARY PROJECTS</b>	1.4.1 Within 2017, in accordance with the technological and scientific developments, promotes the research into two new subjects or areas each year.	Number of interdisciplinary programs carried out	3	4	Fulfilled
	1.4.2 By the end of 2017, achieve a collaboration agreement with other Universities and institutions in the field of R & D	The number of interdisciplinary cooperation made by university with other institutions	-	8	Fulfilled

## 2.2. Educational Objectives

Based on the analysis of the performance indicators and targets of each goal and from Chart No. 2, the Strategic Plan 2013-2017 has achieved its objectives in the field of education through collaboration and exchange programs with other universities in Europe and beyond. The University participates in a number of Erasmus+ programs of the European Union; this has enabled the University to be part of several European exchange and mobility programs for its students and staff members. The goals on Increasing the Quality of Bachelor, Master and PhD study programs have been fulfilled through the increase of student and staff mobility with Erasmus+ programs, trainings given to staff members inside University and outside, an update of the curriculum tailored to meet the needs of current business world, the support given to the thesis of PhD students involved in projects and through the increase of the numbers of protocol signed with the aim of education. In 2011 and during 2012-2017 the Ministry of Education and Sports accredited all Bachelor programs, Master of Science (MSc) and Professional Master (PM) programs offered by Epoka University. In 2015-2016 Epoka received accreditation for all its third cycle programs (PhD). In 2017 the University was granted its second institutional accreditation. However, more progress needs to occur in order to meet the targets on increasing the number of professional master students and establishing Distance Education for professional postgraduate students.

**Chart 2- Educational Objectives - Number and Percentage of Fulfilled, Partly Fulfilled and Not Fulfilled Performance Indicators based on targets**



**Table 2 - Educational objectives**

<b>Strategic Goals</b>		<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Until 2013</b>	<b>2013-2017</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>2.1 INCREASE THE QUALITY OF THE BACHELOR PROGRAMS</b>	2.1.1 Giving importance in the direction of training done by protocols by the end of 2017	The number of protocol signed with the aim of education	5	3	Fulfilled
	2.1.2 By the end of 2014 all the courses contents should be updated in accordance with international and national trainings programs	Total number of courses	528	657	Fulfilled
	2.1.3 Increase by 25% the number of students to be sent in Turkish universities with Mevlana exchange program	Total number of students sent	-	29	Fulfilled
	2.1.4 Increase by 25% the number of students to be accepted from Turkish universities with Mevlana exchange program.	Total number of accepted students	3	15	Fulfilled
<b>2.2 INCREASE THE NUMBER AND QUALITY OF MASTER PROGRAMS</b>		Number of professional master	5	7	Fulfilled
	2.2.1 Increase by 25% by the end of 2017 the number of students of professional postgraduate/high degree scientific program.	Number of professional master students	121	81	Partly Fulfilled
		Number of scientific master programs	7	9	Fulfilled
		Number of scientific master students	123	231	Fulfilled



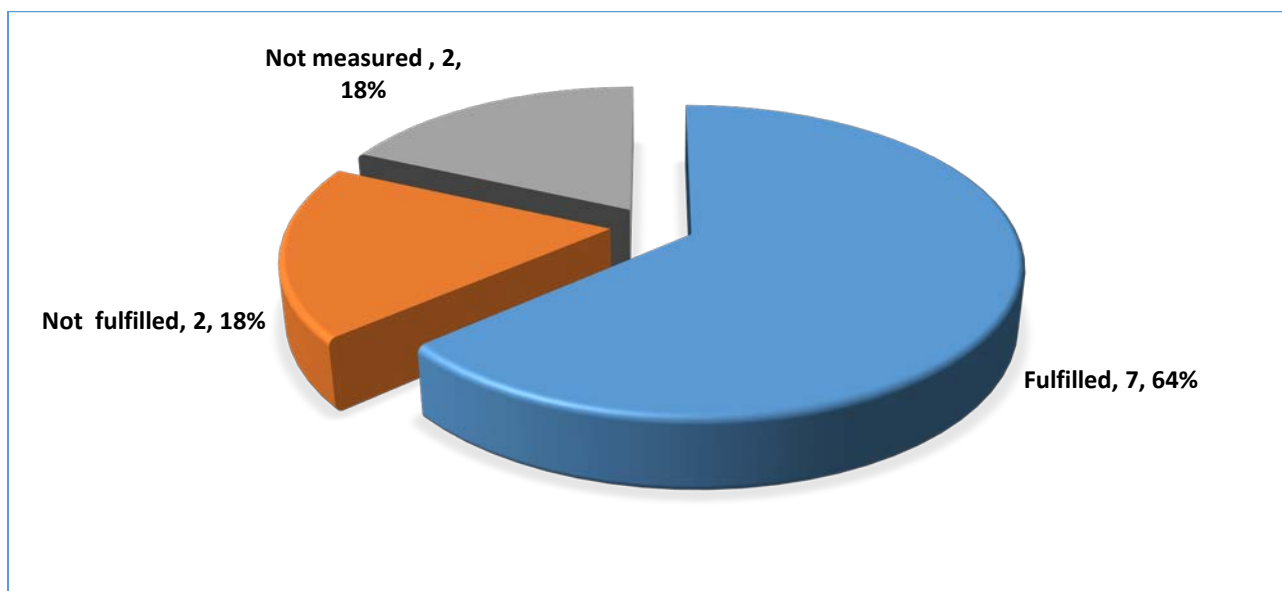
	2.2.2 By the end of 2017, establish and operate Distance Education for professional postgraduate students	Number of distanced professionals in master and students	-	-	Not Fulfilled
	2.2.3 Increase by 25 % by the end of 2017 the support given to the thesis of PhD students.	Number of theses supported by projects	-	5	Fulfilled
<b>2.3 PROMOTE FURTHER QUALIFICATION OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF</b>	2.3.1 Increase by 25 % by the end of 2017 the number of research topics, short run researches, courses, participation in congress and seminars and the number of instructors and lecturers send abroad.	The number of lecturers gone abroad for short-term duration	70	51	Partly Fulfilled
	2.3.2 Increase by 25% by the end of 2017 the numbers of instructors and lecturers sent abroad for PhD program	Total number of lecturers send for PhD	12	14	Partly Fulfilled
	2.3.3 Increase by 25% by the end of 2017 the number of lecturers employed	Total number of employees	14	56	Fulfilled
	2.3.4 Increase by 25% by the end of 2014 the number of lecturers going in Turkish universities with Mevlana Exchange program	Lecturers gone with Mevlana exchange program	-	-	Not Fulfilled

	2.3.5 Increase by 25% by the end of 2014 the number of lecturers coming from Turkish universities with Mevlana Exchange	Lecturers coming with Mevlana exchange program	-	35	Fulfilled
<b>2.4 INTEGRATE THE PROGRAMS WITH THE EU PROGRAMS</b>	2.4.1 By the end of 2017, increase student mobility of undergraduate and graduate education system with Socrates and Erasmus program	Number of students gone with Socrates and Erasmus program	-	28	Fulfilled
	2.4.2 By the end of 2017, make the necessary infrastructure in accordance with EU norms for external evaluation and accreditation	Number of received program accreditation	-	32	Fulfilled

### 2.3. Institutional Collaboration Objectives

Collaboration with other public institutions and organizations in the country is also a priority for Epoka University. Epoka University has deeply values its relationship with other foreign institutions in order to achieve its goal of becoming an international university and enhancing and enriching its research and education programs targets. In the light of the Strategic Plan 2013-2017, Epoka University has strengthened society-university relations, enhanced student-university relations after graduation, developed cooperation with industry, and has developed the relations with Universities in Albania and abroad through encouragement to its staff members for cooperation with other universities nationally and internationally and with businesses, civil society organizations, experts, researchers and professors. The University has managed to establish cooperative relationships with the relevant stakeholders in order to work together on key areas. However, more effort is needed to meet the targets of goal on development of relations with universities in Albania and abroad in terms of collaborative scientific activities and towards the goal of developing cooperation with industry in terms of increasing the number of analysis performed for industrial companies.

**Chart 3- Institutional Collaboration Objectives - Number and Percentage of Fulfilled, Partly Fulfilled and Not Fulfilled Performance Indicators based on targets**



**Table 3- Institutional Collaboration Objectives**

Strategic Goals		Performance Indicators	Until 2013	2013-2017	Status
<b>3.1 DEVELOP RELATIONS WITH UNIVERSITIES IN ALBANIA AND ABROAD</b>	3.1.1 Increase by 25% by the end of 2017 the relations with members' state of EU	Number of communications passed to science center	6	?	Not measured <b>Regarding the goal 3.1.1, the performance indicators was not very clear</b>
		Number of existing cooperation protocols	1	22 Bilateral Agreements/7 Erasmus Agreements/6 Erasmus Agreement in the context of the KFORCE project	Fulfilled

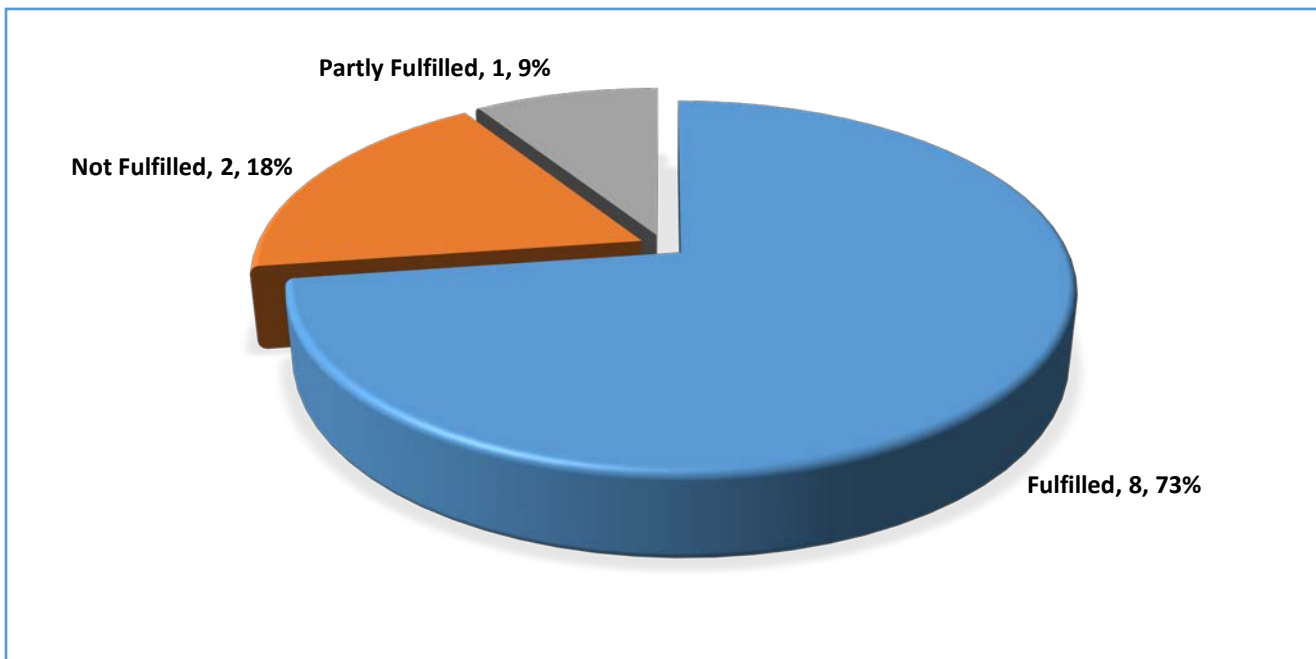
	3.1.2 Increase by 25% by the end of 2017 the activities with Albanian and international universities for collaborative effort to work, scientific meetings and workshops.	Total number of activities	120	?	Not measured <b>Regarding the goal 3.1.2, no full information has been received on the overall number of collaborative activities.</b>
<b>3.2 DEVELOP COOPERATION WITH INDUSTRY</b>	3.2.1 Increase by 25 % by the end of 2017 activities with industrial organizations in seminars, courses, meetings and workshops.	Total number of activities	20	37	Fulfilled
	3.2.2 By the end of 2017 apply with support of industries and companies for patent and useful models.	Number of patents and utility model applications	-	-	Not fulfilled
	3.2.3 By the end of 2017 order laboratory analysis of infrastructure needs of the industrial companies.	Number of analysis performed for industrial companies	-	-	Not fulfilled
<b>3.3 ENHANCE THE STUDENT-UNIVERSITY RELATIONS AFTER GRADUATION</b>	3.3.1 By the end of 2017 Reinforce after graduation the relations student-university by opening Alumni association.	Number of Graduated students	235	1600	Fulfilled
		Number of graduated students contacted	180	995	Fulfilled

	3.3.2 By the end of 2017 complete the information and establishment feedback mechanisms for the graduated students.	Number of graduated students transmitted to information system	200	995	Fulfilled
<b>3.4 STRENGTHEN THE SOCIETY – UNIVERSITY RELATIONS</b>	3.4.1 Increase by 25% by the end of 2017 the organized activities of physical and mental health of the community towards the development of formal partnership with private and voluntary.	Number of realized social projects	18	34	Fulfilled
	3.4.2 Increase by 25 % by the end of 2017 the support of the professional associations, civil society organization, and local governments for joint projects carried out.	Number of supported projects	-	28	Fulfilled

## 2. 4. Institutional Development Objectives

Epoka University, aware of its social responsibilities, is an institution that among its main responsibilities of the provision of education, research and publication, aims to contribute to society as well. Epoka University has been active in increasing social awareness inside university and outside. Based on the analysis of the performance indicators and targets of each goal and from the Chart No. 4 the Strategic Plan 2013-2017 has developed an institutional culture and identity by providing institutional support to various social sensibility and cultural events in Albania. It has also achieved the goal of establishing an effective administration by implementing staffing norms regarding academic and administrative rules.

**Chart 4-Institutional Development Objectives - Number and Percentage of Fulfilled, Partly Fulfilled and Not Fulfilled Performance Indicators based on targets**



**Table 4 - Institutional Development objectives**

Strategic Goals		Performance Indicators	Until 2013	2013-2017	Status
<b>4.1 DEVELOP EPOKA UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE AND IDENTITY</b>	4.1.1 To increase by 50% by the end of 2017 the participation of students in extra activities (seminars, concerts, and student clubs)	Number of cultural events organized	72	More than 160	Fulfilled
	4.1.2 To increase by 25% by the end of 2017 the contribution on activities like employee loyalty and satisfaction	Number of events organized for institutions to develop a culture	12	19	Fulfilled
	4.1.3 To increase by 25 % by the end of 2017 the impact of the corporate culture on social awareness activities	Number of social sensibility events	24	17	Partly Fulfilled
	4.1.4 By the end of 2017 to contribute every year in Albania-Turkey common culture heritage with the aim of contributing to the spread of the main events	Number of events organized	-	3	Fulfilled
	4.1.5 By the end of 2017 to contribute with "Days in university" program, aiming to participate in international fairs once in two years	Number of fairs organized for university presentation	6	5	Fulfilled

<b>4.2 PLACE IMPORTANCE TO EDUCATION ADVISING</b>	4.2.1 To increase by 25 % by the end of 2017 mental health services for students guidance	Number of students for guidance service	300	-	Not Fulfilled
	4.2.2 By the end of 2013 to create and develop career office and employment office	Number of students for career development and employment	70	More than 1000	Fulfilled
<b>4.3 ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION</b>	4.3.1 By the end of 2013 complete the improvement of the business determination processes and software processes	Number of processes in written form	-	-	Not Fulfilled
	4.3.2 By the end of 2013 ensure the strategic management of the university	Number of strategic plans for evaluation	-	1	Fulfilled
	4.3.3 By the end of 2013 implement staffing norms regarding academic and administrative rules.	Number of staffing norms determinants	-	Implementation of Directive on Teaching Workload	Fulfilled
	4.3.4 By the end of 2013 establish success and performance rewarding working mechanisms	Number of awards for created mechanism	-	Directive on the Promotion of Scientific Publications	Fulfilled

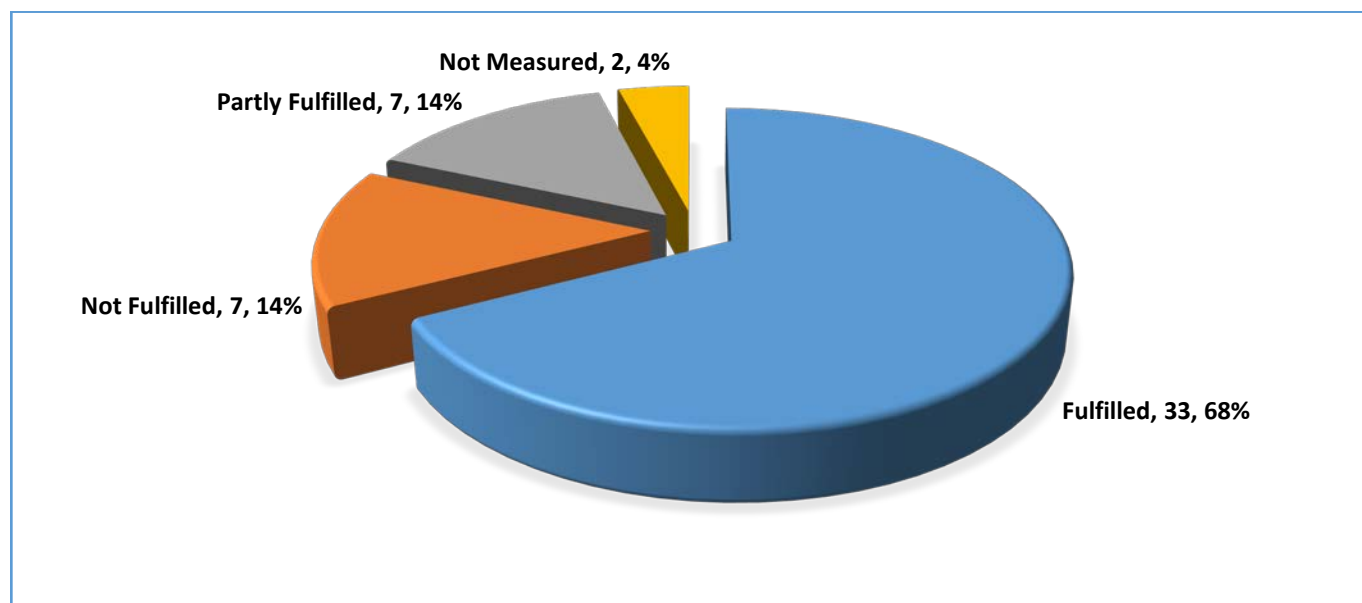


## Conclusion

To conclude, the evaluation finds that the Strategic Plan 2013-2017 delivered on its aims. The evidence provides that the outputs have been delivered as planned and that they have contributed to achievement of wider mission of Epoka University in providing quality education, research and contribution to the society, while reflecting both national priorities and international standards.

Please find below overall assessment of the results. Chart 5 gives a final picture of the number of fulfilled, unfulfilled performance indicators based on targets and Table 5 offers concluding remarks on the main strengths and weaknesses noted throughout the evaluation of the Strategic Plan.

**Chart 5- Number and Percentage of Fulfilled, Partly Fulfilled and Not Fulfilled Performance Indicators based on targets**



**Table 5 - Concluding remarks on the main strengths and weaknesses noted throughout the evaluation of the Strategic Plan**

<p>Strengths</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>√ Integration into EU Projects;</li> <li>√ A good number of applications into international and national research projects;</li> <li>√ A good number of articles published in international journals;</li> <li>√ Collaborative agreements with other universities and institutions in the field of R&amp;D;</li> <li>√ Updated curricula in accordance with national and international standards;</li> <li>√ Successful implementation of Mevlana Exchange Program in terms of students sent and received;</li> <li>√ Successful implementation of staff student mobility of undergraduate and graduate education system with Erasmus programs;</li> <li>√ Increase of number of students registered in scientific programs;</li> <li>√ Participation in International fairs that promote Epoka University;</li> <li>√ Performance rewarding working mechanisms for the academic staff;</li> <li>√ Developed Cooperation with Industry through industrial organizations in terms of career fairs;</li> <li>√ Establishment of Career Planning and Alumni Office that keeps updated information for graduate students and enables the functioning of feedback mechanisms;</li> <li>√ Implementation of staffing norms regarding academic and administrative rules.</li> </ul>
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<b>Weaknesses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>√ Decline of number of students registered in professional master programs;</li><li>√ Lack of a distance education programs for professional master students;</li><li>√ Low level of cooperation with the industry in terms of common projects and services that the university may offer to companies (ex. Trainings, seminars, laboratory analysis etc.)</li></ul>
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