

# **The Politics of Higher Education: Governmental Policy Choices and Private Higher Education in Post-communist Countries**

## **A Comparative Study of Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary and Georgia**

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### Abstract

The main focus of the research project is to understand the emergence and growth of private higher education institutions in countries of Central Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Former Soviet Union (FSU). Significant transformation of the higher education field related to the diminished state involvement in funding, provision and governance of higher education has been taking place since the collapse of the communist regime. The creation and growth of private higher education institutions is one such development greatly contributing to the changing higher education landscape. However, both the private growth patterns and policies through which governments accommodate newly emerged institutions have varied across the region. The aim of the research project is two-fold. The first is to identify salient tendencies in governmental policies towards higher education and examine their impact on the size and nature of privately provided education. To understand what leads to such variety in governmental policy outputs constitutes another central objective of the study. In other words, the focus of the study lies in recognizing what determines differences in governmental approach towards private higher education and how these differences, in turn, shape private growth patterns. The current paper presents the design of the research project.