

CONCLUSIONS OF THE SEMINAR ON METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS FOR EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION WITHIN THE EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF THE BOLOGNA DECLARATION

- **It was confirmed that the networks of agencies will have an important role to play in the establishment of common accreditation criteria and methodologies that may lead to the mutual recognition of their decisions, in particular by means of their efforts to push for more and better knowledge of good practices and exchange of information and experience.**
- **At the same time it was made clear that in defining these common criteria and methodologies it is necessary to take into account the diversity of the various systems and traditions that will go into the construction of a comparable framework. Harmonisation should be the result of the conjunct of these traditions and should under no circumstances mean their reduction to a common pattern.**
- **There is a clear need to establish a glossary of terms that will make it possible to interpret the main features of each institution in the light of common but flexible principles and points of reference agreed at European level.**
- **For the implantation of an effective culture of quality, it is essential that governments, higher education institutions, quality agencies, teachers and students all participate, in view of the expectation that this process will benefit not only all agents involved but also society at large. We would recall in this connection the mandate issued by ministers in Berlin regarding the commitment to have national quality assurance systems in place by 2005.**

- **It will only be possible to establish common criteria and methodologies if mutual trust among institutions and agencies is achieved on a basis of greater transparency in accreditation processes. To that end it is essential to promote a peer review process among agencies. That is a task that has to be undertaken by the community of institutions and agencies taking part in the Bologna process.**
- **Accreditation is viewed as an essential tool for the promotion of quality assurance in higher education systems.**
- **The accreditation process should be linked to the implementation of specific recommendations for the improvement of the evaluated qualifications and institutions.**
- **It is recommended that a concrete accreditation scheme be set up within the Bologna process; it should include a detailed calendar of activities for the achievement of specific objectives.**

Santander, 30 July 2004