

FROM PRAGUE TO BERLIN

The EU Contribution

1. INTRODUCTION

The Bologna process is an intergovernmental process involving the public authorities of 32 European countries. The process is, however, not exclusively intergovernmental. The participating states have decided to involve, as observers, university associations (EUA, EURASHE), student associations (ESIB) and the Council of Europe. The European Commission was granted a special status as a full member of the Follow-Up Group (all countries) and the smaller Preparatory Group for the Berlin 2003 conference.

The Bologna declaration contained six **action lines** and the Prague communiqué added three more. Most action lines coincide with Commission policies, supported through the Socrates programme over the years.

This note presents a short description of **ten concrete measures** with which the Commission may give a new support to the objectives of the Bologna process and realise its own policies as defined in the “Objectives” papers.

2. TEN CONCRETE MEASURES

In short, the following measures could be implemented as from the academic year 2003-2004. Preparations and some piloting in 2002-2003.

Action line 1. Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees

1) A wide-scale introduction of the **Diploma Supplement**, increasing substantially the understanding and recognition of degrees at all levels. Synergies with similar documents in vocational training will be sought.

Action line 3. Establishment of a system of credits

2) A broad pilot scheme to test, building on the ECTS experience, a **European Credit Accumulation System for Lifelong learning**, enabling citizens to accumulate credits gained through formal, non-formal and in-formal learning (a new Joint Action as a follow-up to the exploratory projects starting this autumn).

Action line 4. Promotion of mobility

3) The **Socrates-Erasmus Student Charter**. A one page leaflet or card stating clearly the rights and obligations of mobile students (no tuition fees, full academic recognition etc.). To be launched by the Commissioner at the occasion of the celebration of the one-millionth Erasmus student in the course of the academic year 2002-2003.

4) The creation of models of **European Virtual Universities**, in order to offer citizens access to a Europe-wide course offer and provide incentives to combine physical and virtual mobility.

Action line 5. Promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance

5) A special action to promote a "**quality culture**" within universities, "bottom-up", in cooperation with the European University Association. This pilot scheme would help universities to introduce internal quality assurance mechanisms, improve their quality levels and being better prepared for external evaluations.

6) A **Pilot Scheme on European Higher Education Quality Evaluation** in order to experience what European transnational evaluation would mean on a voluntary basis, covering regulated professions (such as medical doctors) and non-regulated professions

(such as business managers).

Action line 6. Promotion of the European dimension in higher education

7) Define and support **European Masters and Doctoral courses**. Well defined European degrees can contribute to the quality and visibility of European Higher Education. The Commission would support the development and launch of a series of new European Masters and joint Doctoral courses, the latter together with DG RTD support. A pilot project will test the running of "European Masters" and Doctoral courses in the academic year 2002-2003.

Action line 9. Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area

8) A **data-base on job and learning opportunities** set up together with DG EMPL, would help citizens find their way in the European education offer.

9) Other measures will be identified in the **Action Plan** following the "**Communication** to the European parliament and the Council on strengthening cooperation with third countries in the field of higher education countries". Also DG EAC and DG RTD will join efforts to create **synergies** between the "**European Area for Higher Education**" and the "**European Research Area**".

Monitoring / Reports / Seminars

10) Apart from the specific measures above, the Commission gives an overall support to the Bologna process through **Monitoring / Reports / Seminars**. In 2002 this means support for a Trends III report, an official Prague/Berlin Rapporteur and support for a limited number of official Bologna seminars that would fit the policies of the programme.