

"Joint Degrees – A Hallmark of the European Higher Education Area ?"

Official Bologna Seminar, Berlin, 21 – 22 September 2006

Report of the Rapporteur General, Prof. Hans R. Friedrich, Bonn (Germany)

Under the auspices of the German Rectors Conference (HRK)¹ and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)² and co-financed by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture³, an official Bologna seminar⁴ on questions and strategies related to the awarding of “Joint Degrees” in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was held on September 21-22, 2006 in the Ludwig Erhard Haus⁵, Berlin.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The seminar agreed on the following conclusions and recommendations.

- (1) There is already evidence that joint (integrated) programmes are a step forward to a truly bottom-up process in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and thus largely contribute to the establishment of a European identity of a specific, higher-education-related kind. They combine international experience, enhanced linguistic, cultural and social competence. If these contributions to the coherence of a European Higher Education Area are in fact considered as valuable and appreciated, there must be some kind of specific funding for them, either on the national or on the European level or perhaps even as a combination of the two. This demand is justified because – at least in the initial phase – there are additional (overhead) costs that are specific to such programmes. On the other hand, there is an added value of these programmes and in the long run and with more experience gained, there could even result lower costs or greater capacity options by the (international) pooling of resources.
- (2) Since there are still comparatively few joint degree programmes with a small number of students and there seems to be a recruitment problem in terms of attracting the “right” students, additional funding is needed to ensure the desperately needed enhanced marketing and information campaigns on the added benefit of joint degree programmes which are still virtually unknown.
- (3) Competent authorities at the national and the European level should be asked to compile a survey and describe existing double, multiple and joint degree programmes to better illustrate the benefit of these programmes and their European value both in terms of globally competitive academic education and employment perspectives. Such studies could be initiated simultaneously at national and European level.

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² Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD), Kennedyallee 50, D-53175 Bonn, www.daad.de

³ European Commission, B-1049 Brussels, <http://europa.eu.int/comm/>

⁴ Official Bologna Seminars are an instrument of the Bologna Process towards a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by the year 2010. Bologna Seminars are used to discuss and further develop actual topics that arise in connection with the convergence of the European higher education systems (www.bologna-bergen2005.com, www.dfes.gov.uk and www.europeunit.ac.uk/bologna_process/)

⁵ Ludwig Erhard Haus, Fasanenstr. 85, D-10623 Berlin, www.ludwig-erhard-haus.de

- (4) There are different criteria proposed for the design and development of integrated European (joint) *programmes*. It is suggested to set up a final list of “good criteria” (or “golden rules”) that can be derived from the Stockholm, Mantova and Berlin seminars and other relevant documents in this connection. Such a list should then be published as a Bologna document of reference and relevance.
- (5) As regards the legal definition of a “true” joint degree there is no broad consensus and it may be difficult to achieve it with a formula that covers all aspects; it is probably not even necessary. All ministers whose countries have already ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention (currently amounting to 39) have at least in general agreed to the formulation chosen for the Lisbon Subsidiary Documents⁶ of UNESCO and the Council of Europe (which is broader in terms of the design and description of joint integrated programmes). Therefore, the ministers are asked to incorporate in their national legislation on higher education at least the written option for the awarding of joint degrees with a reference to the Lisbon Convention descriptions and make sure that they are quality-assured according to national standards and European principles and guidelines already agreed upon.
- In addition to legal provisions allowing for joint degrees it is also of utmost importance to make extensive use of a precise and informative Diploma Supplement. The single or multiple diploma document could also be combined with a joint diploma supplement in such a way that the different parts or sheets cannot be separated any more.
- In the meantime, the ministers should encourage institutions to continue and enhance their work for the preparation and design of integrated joint programmes.
- (6) Ministers should encourage institutions engaged in joint study programmes to make use of mutual tuition waivers for study periods spent at the foreign partner institution.
- (7) Ministers are asked to make sure that the procedures for obtaining visas and other necessary documents or permissions will not produce obstacles for the development of joint study programmes.⁷
- (8) In terms of quality assurance, the implementation of the ENQA Standards and Guidelines⁸ passed in Bergen and the further development of a European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies facilitating mutual recognition of QA decisions in the Bologna signatory countries remain essential in order to make quality assurance of joint degrees easier and more transparent within the Bologna context and to avoid multiple QA procedures. Furthermore, specific criteria aiming at the assessment of the added value of joint degrees as opposed to national degrees need to be developed.

⁶ Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region: “Recommendations on the Recognition of Joint Degrees”, adopted on 9 June 2004

⁷ See also: Maria KELO, Ulrich TEICHLER, Bernd WAECHTER (eds.): „EURODATA – Student mobility in European higher education“, Lemmens Publications, Bonn 2006 (ISBN: 3-932306-72-4)

⁸ European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA): “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area“, Report for the Ministerial Meeting in Bergen, Helsinki 2005 (www.enqa.net and www.enqa.net/bologna.lasso)

1. Summary

Background

The ministers responsible for higher education of the 45 Bologna member states gave the following mandate for this Bologna seminar in their Bergen Communiqué⁹ under chapter IV which is entitled “Taking stock on progress for 2007”. In this chapter they said:

“..In particular, we shall look for progress in:
..- the awarding and recognition of joint degrees, including at the doctorate level.”

There is already a “joint” history of endeavours to clarify what joint degrees are and how they could best be put into practice. This history has to be taken into account. This concerns primarily the Stockholm Conclusions of May 31, 2002¹⁰, the final report on the Mantova seminar of April 11-12, 2003¹¹ and the Stockholm seminar “Joint Degrees – Further Development” of May 6-7, 2004¹².

The Stockholm 2002 Conclusions make explicit reference to the Lisbon Recognition Convention of 1997¹³ on the recognition of degrees and study phases in higher education with a proposed amendment to include joint degrees dating from 2004¹⁴.

In the Bergen Communiqué under the chapter entitled “Recognition of degrees and study periods” the ministers state:

“...We express support for the subsidiary texts to the Lisbon Recognition Convention and call upon all national authorities and other stakeholders to recognise joint degrees awarded in two or more countries in the EHEA.”

The Stockholm 2002 Conclusions also contain a list of 9 criteria which could be useful as common denominators for the design of joint (or integrated) study programmes (this list is very much compatible with the criteria that TAUCH and RAUHVARGERS listed in their survey on master degrees and joint degrees¹⁵).

Three of these nine criteria should be mentioned here again, namely:

- the duration of study outside the home institution should be substantial, e.g. 1 year at bachelor level
- joint study programmes require to be settled on by cooperation, confirmed in a written agreement, between institutions
- full use should be made of the Diploma Supplement (DS).

⁹“The European Higher Education Area – Achieving the Goals“, Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, Bergen (Norway), 19-20 May 2005 (www.bologna-bergen2005.no)

¹⁰ Ministry of Education and Science, Stockholm, Sweden: “The Stockholm Conclusions – Conclusions and recommendations of the Seminar on Joint Degrees within the framework of the Bologna Process“, Regeringskansliet, Stockholm, 31 May 2002

¹¹ Ministero dell’Istruzione, dell’Università e della Ricerca: Seminar on “Integrated Curricula – Implications and Prospects“, Final Report, Mantova, 11-12 April 2003

¹² Ministry of Education and Science, Sweden: “Bologna Follow-up Seminar Joint Degrees – Further Development“, Stockholm, May 6-7, 2004

¹³ “Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region“, Lisbon, April 11, 1997

¹⁴ The Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region: “Recommendations on the Recognition of Joint Degrees“, adopted on 9 June 2004

¹⁵Tauch C. / Rauhvargers A. (2002): Survey on Master Degrees and Joint Degrees in Europe. Geneva: European University Association (http://www.unige.ch/eua/En/Publications/Survey_Master_Joint_degrees.pdf)

From the Mantova Final Report 2003, two statements might be worth being highlighted: “..Joint degree programmes based on integrated curricula are one of the major priorities for the building of a European identity” (including cultural, linguistic and social aspects) and “..Joint doctoral programmes educating for research professions in Europe are a cornerstone for greater cooperation between the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA). Synergy between the two areas is viewed as an essential prerequisite for the creation of a Europe of Knowledge.”¹⁶

The Stockholm 2004 Report and Conclusions¹⁷ stress the need to map the experience of higher education institutions and students and to anchor the possibility of awarding joint degrees in the national legislation on higher education.

Summary of the Berlin Seminar

The discussions and contributions at the Berlin seminar made clear that all over Europe there are various models of joint study programmes with different types of degrees in place (integrated programmes with double, multiple or joint degrees). Irrespective of the type of the final degree, in all models of joint programmes students have to spend a substantial part of their study programme at a host university abroad.

The seminar participants agreed that it might be useful to distinguish more precisely between joint or integrated study *programmes* as a procedural work on the one hand and the awarding of a joint *degree* that recognises and reflects the new contents and the added European value on the other hand.

There are already some definitions of what a joint degree is or within what framework it can be defined. We have definitions of this kind on the Bologna-Bergen homepage, provided by the Council of Europe (CoE) and UNESCO within the framework of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and by ESIB (these definitions are wider) and one by the ERASMUS-MUNDUS-Programme (which is narrower and closer to a “true” joint degree of the *one certificate or diploma type*).

These definitions are partly contradictory, even though all of them were officially agreed upon at different points in time. Since there are obviously concerns in some countries of too narrow definitions of joint degrees being integrated in their national legislation, it could be advisable to start with a wider and more liberal definition of the Lisbon/ UNESCO/ Council of Europe type.

The Lisbon/UNESCO/CoE-definition of a joint degree is:

“A joint degree should be understood as referring to a higher education qualification issued jointly by at least two or more higher education institutions or jointly by one or more higher education institutions and other awarding bodies, on the basis of a study programme developed and/or provided jointly by the higher education institutions, possibly also in cooperation with other institutions. A joint degree may be issued as

- a joint diploma in addition to one or more national diplomas,
- a joint diploma issued by the institutions offering the study programme in question without being accompanied by any national diploma,
- one or more national diplomas issued officially as the only attestation of joint qualification in question.”

¹⁶ See also: “Doctoral Programmes for the European Knowledge Society”, Report on the EUA doctoral programmes project 2004 – 2005, European University Association, Brussels (www.eua.be)

¹⁷ Pavel ZGAGA: “Bologna Follow-up Seminar Joint Degrees – Further Development. Report by the Rapporteur”, 7 pages, Stockholm/Ljubljana, May 2004 (www.bologna-bergen2005.no)

However, universities should be encouraged to implement “true” joint degrees (being understood as single certificates jointly awarded by more than one university) as recommended by the Mantova Bologna Seminar (2003) and implemented by many countries and universities in the framework of ERASMUS Mundus.

However, reality has proven e.g. in the ERASMUS Mundus programme that a real joint degree can be realised only as a single certificate jointly awarded by two or more universities.

In any case, it is important that ministers commit themselves to making the necessary legal steps to allow the awarding of joint degrees in their respective national legislation.

It might perhaps be helpful to compile the legal provisions for joint degrees of those countries which already have them and present them to all ministers, perhaps with a brief additional (legal) comment. This would be a task to be initiated by the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG).¹⁸

In the Berlin seminar five working groups discussed specific aspects of joint degrees:

1. Recognition
2. Quality assurance
3. Designing legal frameworks
4. Mobility
5. Financing and funding

Some of the working groups’ results are taken into consideration in the conclusions and recommendations.

2. The thematic area in a broader description and analysis

2.1 The Bologna Process: historical and political background

Forty-five European states [all of them members of the European Cultural Convention¹⁹ of the Council of Europe and – from January 2007 onwards – twenty-seven of them members of the European Union (EU)] are currently experiencing the process of convergence of their national higher education systems towards a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by the year 2010 with principally similar and compatible basic structures, great mobility chances and increased attractiveness for interested people from other parts of the world. This process is unique in terms of its (liberal) structure and the remarkable dynamics it has nevertheless developed. Starting with the Bologna Declaration of 30 (29) European states in June 1999 in Italy - using the preceding Sorbonne Declaration of only four European states (F, GB, I, D) as a catalyst -, the process

¹⁸ See also: UNESCO/CEPES: “New Generations of Policy Documents and Laws for Higher Education: Their Thrust in the Context of the Bologna Process”, Report of the International Conference on Nov 4 – 6, 2004 in Warsaw, Poland (www.cepes.ro and www.bologna-bergen2005.no/seminars)

¹⁹ Council of Europe, F-67075 Strasbourg, France: “European Cultural Convention“, <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/018>

rapidly grew to now 45 signatory states which presently form (after the United Nations and the WTO) one of the largest convention areas in the world.

One of the underlying motives for the creation of the European Higher Education Area was – besides the expectation of academic and structural “economies of scale” – the vision or the idea that this area is marked by cultural cohesion through “diversity in spite of proximity” and that it embeds certain human rights and civil values that have been developed and achieved in mutual cooperation over centuries.²⁰ It is probably this “family factor” that stands for the attractiveness of the Bologna Process as an idea for which the time had come. It is, however, not based on public international law or a supranational treaty – it is just a declaration of will by ministers responsible for higher education that is based on mutual trust in the interest of a common positive development.

It might be interesting in this respect to point out how the Bologna Process is perceived abroad rather than alluding to a disquisition by a Bologna member itself. The Australian Ministry for Education, Science and Training has fairly recently published a document entitled “The Bologna Process and Australia: Next Steps” and initiated a consultation process with Australian universities.²¹

In EU meetings with Latin America, the United States and Canada and with China the Bologna Process was also on the agenda.

2.2 Main objectives of the Bologna Process

In the Bologna Process, the “basic law” (the Bologna Declaration) and the subsequent amendments (the communiqués of the bi-annual ministerial meetings in Prague, Berlin and Bergen on the progress achieved and the necessary future steps) set up ten main objectives (10 Bologna Process action lines) to be met in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA):

- (1) Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees
- (2) *Adoption of a system essentially based on two cycles*
- (3) Establishment of a system of credits (ECTS)
- (4) *Promotion of mobility*²²
- (5) *Promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance (QA)*
- (6) Promotion of the European dimension in higher education
- (7) Focus on lifelong learning
- (8) Inclusion of higher education institutions and students (including the social dimension of the Bologna Process)
- (9) Promotion of the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)
- (10) Doctoral studies and the synergy between the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA) – [the third cycle of the Bologna science and study system].

²⁰ Nuria SANZ and Sjur BERGAN (eds.): “The Heritage of European Universities”, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, Sept. 2002 (ISBN: 92-871-4960-7);

²¹ The Australian Ministry for Education, Science and Training: “The Bologna Process and Australia: Next Steps”, Canberra 2006

www.dest.gov.au/sectors/higher_education/publications_resources/profiles/Bologna_Process_and_Australia.htm#publication

²² See also: Sjur BERGAN (ed.): “Recognition Issues in the Bologna Process”, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, June 2003 (ISBN: 92-871-5150-4)

The three action lines printed in *italics* have been identified by the Berlin (2003) and Bergen (2005) ministerial meetings as “priority areas” in which rapid progress is necessary to achieve the common goals in the European Higher Education Area and that can also be perceived and recognised by teachers, young scientists and students in the EHEA. Such a development is necessary to keep the momentum and the carrying force of the Bologna vision.

2.3 How can Joint Degrees contribute to the objectives of the Bologna Process ?

2.3.1 Create a “European identity” and “European added value” in higher education; pool European expertise and capacities

In bi-national or multi-national cooperation joint degree programmes can contribute in a favourable way to achieve all the goals that we expect to characterise the everyday reality of the European Higher Education Area by the year 2010:

- unhindered mobility through compatible structures and mutual recognition of study programmes and examinations
- mutual trust in the quality of the study programmes offered by partner institutions
- added value through bilingualism or multilingualism and access to the culture of the partners
- exchange of ideas as well as of students, teachers and young scientists
- easier access to a globalised labour market.²³

By doing so, they can also substantially contribute to create a “European identity” which will complement and enhance the national European identities.²⁴

On the basis of a growing experience in the design of integrated study programmes, such offers might eventually also help to save (or increase) study capacities by pooling the expertise available in different member states in one single (joint) project.

2.3.2 Keep a high level of mobility in a (shorter) two-(three-)cycle system

With the increasing introduction of a two-(resp. three-)cycle study system in the Bologna area, there have been concerns that this might lead to a reduction in student mobility. The argument was that in the shorter period of the first cycle (i.e. a three-years-bachelor), there was – for reasons of a sound academic education – not enough time left for an extended study period abroad. You would then perhaps have to choose between two effects: a prolongation of the average duration of studies (undesirable) or a reduction in the scope of student exchanges and mobility (also undesirable).

Joint degree courses with fully integrated study programmes are well suited to avoid this dilemma. Since they are integrated, there is almost no need for additional study time while at the same time the personal, linguistic, social and cultural experience of studying in a foreign country is maintained.

2.3.3 Strengthen European co-operation in quality assurance (QA)

One *conditio sine qua non* is the commitment of all partners involved to deliver education programmes of highest standards. Since there is indeed competition in a global

²³ These points are derived from the opening address by State Secretary Johann KOMUSIEWICS, Ministry of Science, Research and Culture of the Federal State of Brandenburg on Sept. 21, 2006

²⁴ Para. 1 of the “often forgotten” Article 151 (“Culture”) of the Consolidated Version of the Treaty Establishing the European Community (Treaty of Nice) reads as follows:

“..The Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the cultural heritage to the fore” (Treaty of Nice, Feb. 1, 2003; EU-Doc. C 325 of Dec. 24, 2002)

education market and there is high pressure on institutions to reach academic reputation as there is a paramount interest on the part of the graduates to know that they get “value for money” in terms of their entry into the labour market, there is a demand for an approved system of quality assurance.

In almost all countries it started with certain forms of evaluation, often followed by the accreditation of study programmes and/or institutional accreditation. In all cases it is important that independent external experts (peers) are deployed and that the students participate in the process, too.

For a joint integrated study programme taking place in several different countries but forming one project as a whole, it doesn't appear sensible or economical to maintain several different accreditation or quality assurance institutions in each country. The nature of integrated joint degree programmes requires a close cooperation or an integrated approach on the part of the quality assurance institutions in the countries concerned.

Joint degree programmes thus have an integrative effect on the emerging European quality assurance system and bring us yet one step closer to the realisation of the European Higher Education Area.

2.3.4 Enhance labour market perspectives for graduates

In many professions, experience in a position abroad is helpful or important for future career perspectives. In a globalised world the increasing internationalisation of the labour markets is a fact and a reality. The national and the European labour market only make part of this global labour market.

Many future European graduates will have to work – at different stages in their career – in different places in Europe and perhaps also in other parts of the world. An early study experience in a foreign country including the acquisition of enhanced linguistic and social competences will most probably make easier the access to these future labour markets. This applies not only for working places in the traditional economic sense, but also for international organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and all other places where the future development and sustainability of our societies will depend on mutual understanding, the will to cooperate, social competences and a sound academic education as a basis. Joint degree programmes can help to develop these qualifications.

2.4 UNESCO / Council of Europe definition of Joint Degrees in the context of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and its subsidiary documents and other definitions

There are – as almost always in complex contexts – different “definitions” of what a Joint Degree Programme in Europe could or should be.

In terms of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), the most desirable is probably this one:

“A Joint Degree course is an integrated study programme in which two or more academic partners from different countries combine their efforts and knowledge to design and produce a coherent academic programme leading to a (first or subsequent) degree. The programme will be based on reliable written contracts between the participating institutions taking into account existing national and international laws and other relevant regulations. It will be quality-assured by one or more accreditation agencies operating in an integrated approach (with external peers and the participation of students) and following the European “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance of the EHEA”. The resulting accreditation will be

recognised automatically in all participating countries and, perhaps later, in Europe and in other parts of the world.

The (joint) degree issued by the two or more participating universities is written on a single document and signed and sealed by all universities at which the graduate spent considerable parts of his or her studies. The “diploma” is set – by national law – equivalent to a (traditional) national diploma and offers the same rights and access opportunities.

It is accompanied by an enhanced diploma supplement (DS) which specifies in a major European language the specialities of this European study programme.”

So much for the lead idea.

In a couple of countries – not yet in all, neither in the EU nor in the other Bologna countries – there are already legal provisions allowing the awarding of joint degrees as one certificate which is authoritative for all participating countries and has the same status as a national diploma.

For (general) agreements on recognised procedures for the accreditation of transnational study programmes and/or several institutions in different countries, this is not yet the case. Specifications of what should be contained in an enhanced European diploma supplement still need to be developed.

Taking into account these different stages of legal and other developments, the UNESCO, the Council of Europe and some other organisations chose a somewhat wider definition of Joint Degree Programmes in order to not hinder the further development of integrated study programmes and make sure that the graduates have something reliable in hands when they finish their studies.

Therefore, these definitions also include the possibility of awarding a joint degree in the form of double or multiple degrees issued separately or combined as national diplomas.²⁵

These forms are, at present, – due to the legal situation prevailing in national higher education laws – still the most common way of awarding “joint degrees”.

There is, however, a fairly broad consensus that the further development of joint degrees in the EHEA should head towards the “one certificate or diploma type”.

2.5 Prerequisites and conditions for successful integrated study programmes leading to joint degrees

This section is meant to give– in addition to links and sources already presented in the footnotes – a brief survey of characteristics and criteria that should be met when starting to develop a European joint degree project.

To begin with, it could be helpful to recall the six points listed in the already mentioned “ENIC/NARIC Explanatory Memorandum”:

²⁵ Some of these definitions are contained in the “Relevant Documents“ prepared by DAAD for the Berlin Seminar on 21 – 22 September 2006 and included in this publication. Other helpful documents are:
The Coimbra Universities Group: “Glossary of Relevant Definitions About Joint Degrees”, March 10, 2003 Draft, Coimbra, (Portugal);
ENIC Network (Council of Europe/UNESCO), NARIC Network (European Commission): “Draft Explanatory Memorandum to the Draft Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees”, 10th Joint Meeting of the ENIC and NARIC Networks, Vaduz (Liechtenstein), 18 – 20 May 2003 (www.cepes.ro/);
Ulrich SCHUELE: “Joint and Double Degrees within the European Higher Education Area”, Consortium of International Double Degrees, CIDD-Papers No 1 (2006), Paris (www.CIDD.org)

- The programmes are developed and/or approved *jointly* by several institutions
- Students from each participating institution *physically* take part in the study programme at other institutions (but they do not necessarily have to study at *all* cooperating institutions)
- Student's stay at the participating institutions should constitute a *substantial* part of the programme
- Periods of study and examinations passed at the partner institutions are recognised fully and *automatically*
- The partner institutions work out the curriculum jointly and cooperate on admission and examinations. In addition, staff of participating institutions should be *encouraged* to teach at other institutions contributing to the joint degree
- After completing the full programme, students either obtain the national degree of each participating institution or a degree awarded jointly by the partner institutions.

To continue (and in order to try and avoid mistakes), it would be worth reminding the EUA's "10 Golden Rules" for developing programmes that will lead to joint degrees:²⁶

- (1) Be sure of your motivation
- (2) Select your partner carefully
- (3) Develop clear goals with your partner for the joint degree programme as well as learning goals to be achieved by the students
- (4) Make sure that the necessary institutional support for the programme is provided
- (5) Make sure that sufficient academic and administrative personnel capacity is provided for the programme
- (6) Make sure that sustainable financial planning exists for the programme
- (7) Make sure that information about the programme is easily accessible
- (8) Schedule an adequate number of meetings with the partners
- (9) Develop a common language strategy for the joint degree programme and encourage learning the local language(s)
- (10) Clearly define the responsibilities between the partners

In addition, the already mentioned CIDD-paper²⁷ contains a six-pages check list for joint and double degree programmes that provides a lot of helpful practice-oriented questions in its three main chapters "fundamental decisions", "curriculum development", and "quality assurance".

²⁶ According to recommendations from the final report of the EUA on their Joint Masters Project (www.eua.be/)

²⁷ Consortium of International Double Degrees (CIDD), Paris (www.cidd.org)

3. What needs to be done ?

3.1 Create reliable legal provisions for “true” joint degrees

To reach the desired plain and easy “one-certificate-form” of European joint degrees it appears to be necessary that also the national legal provisions for higher education “converge” a little bit to this end. Perhaps it would be worth the effort to invest in a “best practice project” and compile the legal provisions for the awarding of joint degrees of those member states which claim to have them already.²⁸

3.2 Map experience of successful integrated study programmes

Sound European joint degree programmes could perhaps be regarded as a kind of “flagship product” of the European Higher Education Area. In this respect, a survey could be helpful illustrating a number of good examples of operational joint degree programmes in all or in a majority of the Bologna member states. Such a survey could well be used for the increasing “External Dimension-Demands” of the Bologna Process, too.²⁹

3.3 Install a specific financial promotion programme for the preparatory and overhead costs of European integrated study programmes

As hopefully has become clear by what has been previously stated, the design and realisation of sound European joint degree programmes requires more efforts and input than just new national study programmes. Whilst the first generation of “Joint Degrees” had to be carried mainly by vision and European enthusiasm, with financial promotion for additional costs still being scarce, it should now be the time for a more systematic support for the second generation of integrated joint degree programmes as an EHEA brand in higher education.

3.4 Further develop the “Diploma Supplement” towards a really functional “European document” for academic and employment purposes

The Diploma Supplement (DS) is well on the way to be broadly introduced and develop as a valuable instrument that is informative and useful both for academic and labour market purposes. It is international from its basic idea and issued in a major world language.

There do not exist many regulations yet concerning diploma supplements in national laws on higher education (that is the advantage of a fairly new instrument). By its nature, it is an instrument that is subject to the autonomy of universities rather than that of the state, and the support of the autonomy of universities is one of the main obligations declared in several communiqués of the Bologna Process.

²⁸ A similar project of the “best-practice type” in legal affairs is currently under way in Germany and financed by the Donor’s Association (Stifterverband). It compares the existing laws on higher education of the 16 single states (Laender) of the Federal Republic of Germany under the question “which one has the best and most modern law on higher education” following a set of criteria (www.deregulierung.stifterverband.de)

²⁹ See also: Pavel ZGAGA: “Looking out! The Bologna Process in a Global Setting. On the “External Dimension” of the Bologna Process”, Report for the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, Draft, Oslo, October 2006

It would therefore be a good idea to further develop the diploma supplement and allow for it to take up elements of specific European developments in higher education in the EHEA (i.e. in all Bologna states). Being derived from the universities' autonomy sphere, this would be a matter of efficient coordination among European universities rather than of legal implementation.

Nevertheless, it combines both spheres by including a description of the relevant system(s) of higher education, a reference to the qualification framework(s) and it meets the increasing demands of employers in a more international labour market to know better what the qualifications of a graduate are. Therefore, all parties mentioned should have an interest in this further development of the DS.