



London, 8-9 February 2007

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**MAKING BOLOGNA A REALITY**  
*Mobility of staff and students*

# **General Report: Recommendations & Conclusions**

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## **We all agree:**

Mobility of Students and Staff\* is at the core of the Bologna Process,

since it was in the Bologna Declaration and also in *all* the Communiqués to follow.

But why then

- the feeling that much remains to be done, and
- our doubts about the real commitment?

\*including administrative staff



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## **We do not even know the extent of Mobility!**

The Work Group appointed by BFUG to collect data on Mobility of Staff & Students has not managed to present comparable and reliable data on mobility, just some on students, but not for *all* Bologna countries, and *none* on staff.

Why?

- Common definitions are missing
- National data collection are scarce



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## Possible reasons for the lack:

The rationale for mobility has mainly been described from an *individual perspective*:

- personal growth,
- widening academic experiences,
- new language competences,
- a capacity for cultural understanding, etc.

So, most Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have *not* seen it as their responsibility:

- to help individual staff & students to be mobile in a systematic and well designed way, or
- to even register the number and the nature of their outgoing or incoming staff & students.

But, they *should* see it as their responsibility, in accordance with guidelines from the national levels and from the Bologna Process, since mobile staff & students will enhance the quality of higher education (*cf* research).



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## **Regard mobility as an institutional responsibility instead of an individual one!**

But this does *not* imply that we can leave the individuals outside the process.

On the contrary,

Representatives of staff & students have to be involved at *all* levels of the process, at the European, national and institutional levels



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## **Recommendations:** *(not in priority order)*

### **Data Collection on Staff & Students:**

- Common definitions have to be developed
- Data – qualitative, quantitative and good practices – have to be collected on the institutional and national levels
- National data has to be compiled and analysed on the European level, as well as the national levels



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## **Recommendations (cont.)**

### **Staff & Student Visas and Work Permits:**

- Creating fast, efficient & free or cheap visas for staff & students
- Work Permits should go with the visas (*cf* the EU directive on Researchers from a third country)

### **Information:**

- Better, more systematic information available to all staff & students
- Cooperation between Mobility Offices in HEIs



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## **Recommendations (cont.)**

### **Improved Attractiveness of the Academic Profession:**

The predicted future need for academic staff calls for actions at both *national* and *institutional* levels

- to compete with other universities worldwide, and
- to attract young people into the academic career.

Actions to be taken regarding mobility for staff, e.g.

- Mobility periods abroad scheduled ahead at regular intervals, but at the same time providing a secure employment position upon return
- Development of a charter for mobile university teachers (*cf* the EU Code and Charter for Researchers)



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## Recommendations (cont.)

### Recognition of Study and Work Periods Abroad:

#### *Students:*

- Set up the overarching Qualifications Frameworks, use the ECTS and the Quality Assurance system - The dissemination of these tools shall be brought to the labor market by involving employers in the process. *Note* the need to reconcile the two Qualification Frameworks!
- Ratify and/or *proper* implement the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the Europass in all Bologna countries

#### *Staff:*

- Recognise work periods abroad, when recruiting and promoting academic staff



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## **Recommendations (cont.)**

### **Portability of Loans & Grants and Social Benefits:**

- National governments have to make social rights of individuals in the home country portable in order to facilitate mobility, e.g.
- Student loans and/or grants
- Pension schemes, sick leave, parental leave etc. for staff (and sometimes students)
- The Bologna process needs to ensure that countries move forward to a common agenda and similar entitlements.



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## **Recommendations (cont.)**

### **Equal Access to Mobility (the social dimension):**

To give equal opportunities for mobility for *all* staff & for *all* students

- Additional financial support is needed for students who are going to countries with higher living costs than in their home country – Fund financed jointly on a fair basis among the Bologna countries, *maybe* managed by the Council of Europe
- Special attention should be given to enhance mobility opportunities for staff & students with disabilities
- Staff & students with families, especially with children or other caring responsibilities, have special needs that have to be met



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## **Recommendations (cont.)**

### **Actions to Avoid Brain Drain:**

Existing regional and socio-economic inequalities and the threat of brain drain need to be acknowledged as problems at the European level, both *within* the Bologna area and *towards* the rest of the world.

Some suggested actions:

- Prejudices concerning quality and recognition still have to be met by better information
- Language proficiency in less frequently spoken languages needs to be enhanced
- Cooperation between Eastern and Western Europe should be fostered, e.g. by establishing joint degree programmes, funded mobility exchange programmes (*cf* Tempus)



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## **Recommendations (cont.)**

### **Intellectual Mobility:**

The mobility of thoughts, ideas, methods, etc. is as important as physical mobility of staff & students (although no alternative for it).

Therefore academic staff must be guaranteed

- academic freedom, including the freedom to publish ideas and results, and
- the right to engage in public debate, especially concerning issues in higher education and research.

(*cf* the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel, 1997)



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## **Recommendations (cont.)**

### **Non-Traditional Forms of Mobility:**

HEIs should be encouraged to explore non- traditional forms of mobility, e.g.

- Setting up joint degree programmes
- The potential of virtual mobility, including use of the internet, e-libraries, databases and virtual conferencing – safeguard *all* forms of free and open publication
- Flexible curricula – to promote mobility internationally (but in fact also nationally)

It also should be noted that visiting teachers & students provide internationalisation in their host institution.



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## **Recommendations (cont.)**

### **....and finally to speed up the Bologna Process**

- The *true* involvement of students and staff is necessary at European, national, and HEI levels
- Institutional responsibility for mobility needs to be enhanced, and every HEI should be required to develop and implement a mobility policy consistent with the requirements of the Bologna Process – incentives for HEIs have to be introduced



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## Suggestions for the Communiqué

- We are convinced that mobility will enhance the quality of higher education and that it is now high time to genuinely make mobility the key concern of the Bologna Process. A much greater effort is therefore needed to build coherent strategies, including action plans at all levels, to provide incentives for more balanced mobility and to remove obstacles. We ask the Bologna Follow-up Group to give high priority to work on mobility, and to report back to ministers by 2009
- We require the Bologna Follow-up Group to invite the EI Pan European Structure and ESIB, with the participation of other relevant partners, to develop a European strategy on mobility of staff and students for consideration at the next ministerial meeting in 2009. The definition of appropriate data in collaboration with international data providers must be seen as a priority task to underpin the rest of the work. Stocktaking in certain well defined areas may be a potential tool to support this work. Any such strategy will call for the greater involvement of all partners at all relevant levels, especially higher education institutions as well as relevant ministries that deal with issues other than education.
- We have also agreed that - as a matter of urgency - visa regulations, work permits and social and financial conditions for mobility need to be addressed by the national authorities, with a view to the removal of obstacles to staff and students' mobility well before the ministerial meeting in 2009.