

# **EUA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE BOLOGNA MINISTERIAL MEETING**

LONDON 2007

THE LISBON DECLARATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE TRENDS V REPORT

CONCLUSIONS OF THE EUA REPORT ON  
DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

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# FOREWORD

EUA is committed to the implementation of the European Higher Education Area and to ensuring maximum synergy between the European Higher Education and Research Areas. Over the last two years EUA has worked to achieve the goals of the Bologna Process at policy level, as a consultative member of the Bologna Follow Up Group and as a member of the Board, and on a day to day basis through working with members on project activities related to almost all of the ten Bologna action lines.

This publication summarises the main contributions of the EUA to the Bologna process 2005 – 2007 that will be presented to European Ministers of Education meeting in London on 17/18 May 2007 to discuss next steps in the Bologna Process:

- The 'Lisbon Declaration' adopted by the Council of the EUA on 13 April 2007 and based upon the discussions of over 700 universities and partners present at the 4th Convention of European Higher Education held in Lisbon from 29 – 31 March 2007 focused on the theme "Europe's Universities beyond 2010: Diversity with a Common Purpose".
- The summary of the TRENDS V survey to which over 900 European higher education institutions contributed and that shows the progress made by Europe's universities in implementing the Bologna reforms as well as the main challenges ahead; the full text of TRENDS V is available as a separate publication.
- The summary of EUA's Report on the Further Development of Doctoral Programmes in Europe, requested by Ministers at their last Bologna meeting in Bergen in 2006; also in this case a separate report is available that sets out the findings of a major project on doctoral programmes carried out over by EUA the last two years.

These documents together demonstrate the commitment of European universities to building the European Higher Education Area, and the considerable progress that has been made over the last two years. At the same time they also underline the considerable challenges ahead. EUA will continue to work with its members and partners in the future to make sure that our vision for the future of Europe's universities as a major force in creating the Europe of Knowledge is realised.



Professor Georg Winckler  
EUA President

# THE LISBON DECLARATION

## EUROPE'S UNIVERSITIES BEYOND 2010: DIVERSITY WITH A COMMON PURPOSE

### I. INTRODUCTION

- 1 **Strong Universities for Europe:** Europe's universities have, since their foundation over 800 years ago, championed enquiry, fostered a civilised and tolerant society and prepared young people for their role in society and the economy. Europe now expects its universities to perform an even wider role, enabling civil society to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. Climate change, energy issues, increasing longevity, the rapid pace of technological change, growing global interdependence and rising economic inequality both within Europe and between Europe and other continents: all these require investigation, fundamental research as well as technological and social innovation which will solve problems as they arise and ensure economic success combined with social stability in many different societies. The universities of Europe, themselves diverse, are together ready to meet these challenges.
- 2 **Universities and the Knowledge Society:** The central task is to equip Europe's populations – young and old – to play their part within the Knowledge Society, in which economic, social and cultural development depend primarily on the creation and dissemination of knowledge and skills. Modern societies, much more than the agricultural and manufacturing societies of past centuries, depend on the application of knowledge, high-level skills, entrepreneurial acumen and the exploitation of communications and information technology. It is these skills which Europe's universities are good at developing, through discipline-based education as well as more professional training, all based in the fundamental research which is the particular role of the university system. Universities therefore look forward to playing a pivotal role in meeting the innovation goals set by the Lisbon Agenda and in particular through their commitment to the European Higher Education and the European Research Areas.
- 3 **A diversified university system:** Universities recognize that moving from an elite to a mass system of higher education implies the existence of universities with different missions, and strengths. This requires a system of academic institutions with highly diversified profiles, based on equality of esteem for different missions. Institutions will increasingly offer different kinds of study programmes leading to a wide spectrum of graduate qualifications that allow progression routes from one institution to another and will develop research, innovation and knowledge transfer activities in line with their diverse missions.
- 4 **The fundamental importance of university autonomy:** For universities, the adaptability and flexibility required to respond to a changing society and to changing demands relies above all on increased autonomy and adequate funding, giving them the space in which to find their place. The common purpose of contributing to Europe's development is not opposed to diversity; instead, it requires that each university should define and pursue its mission, and thus collectively provide for the needs of individual countries and Europe as a whole. Autonomy implies control of major assets such as estates, and of staff; it also implies a readiness to be accountable both to the internal university community – both staff and students – and to society as a whole.

- 5 **Universities and an inclusive society:** Europe's universities accept their public responsibility for promoting social equity and an inclusive society. They are making great efforts to widen the socio-economic basis of their student populations; they are dedicated to ensuring access and giving opportunities to succeed to all those who are qualified and have the potential to benefit from higher education. Success in this task requires partnership with governments and other parts of the educational system.

## II. BUILDING THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

- 6 **Refocusing on key goals:** Universities are fully committed to building the EHEA, as the immense success of the rapid introduction of a three cycle higher education structure across Europe shows. At the same time Trends V also demonstrates that one of the paradoxes of the Bologna Process reforms is that while their goal is to respond to societal concerns, there has been until now insufficient dialogue with society. Thus universities and government, while continuing to improve understanding and better usage of the different tools, need to re-engage with the overall purposes of the reform in order to ensure that a stronger student focus, employability, mobility, attractiveness and social inclusion are firmly embedded as characteristics of the emerging EHEA.
- 7 **A stronger student focus:** Universities are aware that additional efforts are needed to meet the challenges of the shift towards student-centred learning. This involves encouraging use of learning outcomes and being explicit about what graduates are expected to know and be able to do, but also encouraging critical thinking and the active engagement of students. A particular effort needs to be made to motivate and train academic staff to work within such a student-centred paradigm. Students and their representatives must be involved in working through the consequences of these new approaches.
- 8 **ECTS:** Trends V shows the effective role of ECTS in structuring learning processes, when it is used properly on the basis of learning outcomes and student workload. It provides a basis for trust within and between institutions, cycles and disciplines, thus promoting the flexible and multi-faceted mobility that is a key objective of the Bologna Process. Universities strongly urge the European Commission to build on the achievements of ECTS in the further development of proposals for a credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET). Every effort should be made to avoid the existence of two separate credit systems within one lifelong learning strategy. Universities wish to take a leading role in the further development of ECTS. EUA will take up this challenge as part of its continued support to universities in implementing the Bologna Process reforms through the Bologna Handbook and the organisation of dedicated seminars and other events; as the Trends V results demonstrate, this process will take time.
- 9 **Creating a supportive learning environment:** Aware of the importance of adapting teaching and learning processes to the needs of increasingly diverse student populations, universities will, in partnership with governments, seek to ensure that high quality student support services, in particular guidance and counselling services, are accessible to all students. Reaching these objectives requires strategic commitment on the part of institutions at the highest level and financial incentives from governments in favour of wider access.
- 10 **Employability:** Universities recognise that additional efforts are needed to make employers aware of the enormous efforts which are being undertaken to reform curricula. They will seek to engage more consistently in dialogue with employers, provide better information on the competences and learning outcomes of their graduates and put in place systems to track graduate employment. In conjunction with state and/or private agencies, they will address the question of how to provide more systematic career guidance support and services to their students. Both institutions and governments should translate this broadly accepted policy commitment into action. Governments are urged to adapt their own public sector employment structures to take account of the new degree structures – an issue pointed out in Trends IV, but not yet resolved.

- 11 **Lifelong Learning:** Universities understand the urgent need to make lifelong learning a reality in the years to come, both with regard to continuing education and training for well-qualified graduates and to initial education for disadvantaged groups. Experience shows that engaging in lifelong learning provides particular opportunities for strengthening local partnerships, diversifying funding and responding to the challenges of regional development. The Bologna tools, in particular the overarching Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area adopted by Ministers in Bergen, provide opportunities to offer more diversified programmes as well as facilitating the development of systems to enable the recognition of prior informal and work-based learning. EUA urges the European Commission in its proposals for a Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning to avoid the development of two parallel qualifications frameworks that relate to higher education as to do so will cause problems in implementation at national level and confusion among actors on the ground. EUA also calls upon the European Commission actively to involve universities in policy development on lifelong learning. This is an issue of major concern both to the higher education and the vocational training sector and thus requires initiatives that are compatible and coherent.

### III. THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

- 12 **Internationalisation and the “Bologna Trademark”:** The Bologna process is one of the great successes of Europe. It is being watched with increasing interest throughout the world and becoming a ‘European trademark’. The Bologna reforms make European HE attractive because they have an underlying philosophy and methodology and use transparent tools such as ECTS. These principles translate well to the international environment as they communicate a general understanding of higher education as a public good and place a strong emphasis on the academic values that underpin higher education.
- 13 **Institutional strategies for internationalisation:** Universities are a major driving force in developing strategies and structures for international cooperation and exchange at institutional, national and European level. They are increasingly developing international strategies and profiles that encompass both teaching and research activities, seek to balance cooperation and competition and target specific geographic areas. Graduate education has a particular role to play in promoting internationalisation at institutional level.
- 14 **Further developing internationalisation:** Europe’s universities are committed to making Europe the destination of choice for students and scholars. EUA will continue its activities by: promoting and explaining the Bologna process to international partners; contributing to policy discussions at European level; and, together with National Rectors Conferences, developing a dialogue with higher education associations in different world regions, thus laying a strong basis for long lasting partnership and cooperation. Universities, through EUA, should develop a code of conduct for international cooperation and exchanges in the EHEA. The European Commission and national governments are urged to support this internationalization process through the development of flexible funding tools enabling institutions to implement long term international strategies, and to take action to facilitate the mobility of students and scholars. In particular national authorities are urged to adapt immigration laws and visa regulations to enable these strategies to succeed. The active participation of international partners in this dialogue will also be important in reaching the goals set.

### IV. PROMOTING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

- 15 **Linking higher education and research:** The provision of research based education at all levels is a particular strength of Europe and Europe’s universities. Institutions offering research based higher education should ensure that a research component is included and developed in all cycles thus allowing students to acquire research experience and encouraging an interest in research as a possible career. This also applies in relation to the acquisition of a broad range of transferable skills that should be included not only at doctoral level but in curricula at all levels, thus promoting a new generation of leaders able to integrate multiple perspectives and be responsive to the needs of rapidly changing labour markets.

- 16 **Embedding high quality doctoral programmes in universities:** EUA adopted 10 basic principles for doctoral programmes in Salzburg in February 2005. These have since constituted the framework for discussion on doctoral programmes in Europe and have been further developed in a report prepared for the forthcoming Bologna Ministerial meeting in London. This report underlines once more that original research has to remain the main component of all doctorates. Building upon the outcomes of this Report, EUA will establish a permanent framework for the further development, cooperation and exchange of good practices between doctoral programmes and schools across Europe's universities. Recognising that the attractiveness of a future career in research is determined largely at the doctoral stage, universities furthermore need to engage actively with national research councils and other funding agencies (including the European Commission) to improve the conditions of the financing of doctoral candidates and programmes, and the future career development of researchers in both academic and non-academic sectors.
  
- 17 **Developing institutional strategies for research:** Encouraged by the creation of the European Research Council, universities will work to strengthen further their institutional research strategies with a view to introducing strategic management approaches. These will reinforce the pooling of research expertise within the university and create working processes that maximise the opportunities offered by European and national research funding instruments (as the main element of university external research resources). While individual talent remains at the heart of the research process, team-building of critical mass in areas of university strengths and the optimisation of the creation and use of research infrastructures will remain crucial to success. The increased costs of research (including scientific infrastructure) will intensify the need to identify priorities.
  
- 18 **Promoting innovation capacity:** Universities will seek increasingly to enhance their research and improve their innovation capacities by further developing partnerships with external partners, by professionalising their processes of knowledge transfer and by looking for synergy between regional, national and European research policy initiatives. Consortia-building and clustering in specific research domains between universities and other partners will continue to develop as a major feature of innovation, including regional innovation. For its part, EUA will promote the need for greater linkage between FP7 and national research funding and the European Structural Funds in support of research and innovation, and necessary infrastructure. Working with its National Rectors Conference members, EUA will seek to engage with regional partners to work towards this goal of securing more funds for research and innovation activities from the EU Structural Funds.
  
- 19 **University-enterprise collaboration:** For many years, universities have fostered extensive and successful collaborations with business enterprises – such good practices have formed the basis of the widely-recognised "Responsible Partnering Guidelines". University-business collaboration is a process of "Co-Innovation" with knowledge transfer seen as a core mission of universities. EUA will continue to work to improve the university-business dialogue including, for example, in relation to doctoral programmes and in helping to develop the EU-proposed European Institute of Technology (EIT).
  
- 20 **Cost accounting of research activities:** Universities are moving steadily towards the full cost accounting of their research activities and therefore expect European and national research funding agencies and programmes to provide full cost support to research contracts and grants. As a follow-through to its successful efforts in achieving improved indirect research costs support in the new FP7 eligible research costs model, EUA, in cooperation with its members, will monitor the progress of the implementation of this model up to the mid-term review in 2010.

- 21 **More flexible legal and regulatory conditions:** EUA will work with its National Rectors Conference members to discuss with national governments the need for more flexible and favourable legal and regulatory conditions (concerning remuneration, portability of pensions etc) for university-based researchers. This is necessary if Europe is to gain the potential full benefits from the new opportunities offered, for example by the funding schemes of the European Research Council.
- 22 **Open Access:** Universities and the EUA, through its Working Group on Open Access, will continue to work towards realising “open access” principles in relation to the dissemination of research results. Universities wish to preserve their public role and responsibility as “guardians” of research knowledge as a public good – and hence strengthen the University-Society dialogue through optimum use of the benefits of digital technology.

## V. QUALITY

- 23 **Quality processes and institutional mission:** Quality processes should encourage a culture of risk-taking which attaches greater importance to success than to failure, in order to produce an institutional milieu favourable to creativity, knowledge creation and innovation. Universities reconfirm their commitment to continuous quality development and improvement in all aspects of their institutional mission. Institutional quality processes should be based on and adequately reflect institutional values and mission. External and internal quality systems should take into account these aspects as starting points of any evaluation.
- 24 **The link to external accountability:** Universities fully embrace the responsibilities derived from their commitment to quality; they recognise the importance of complementing an internal quality culture with external accountability processes. External quality mechanisms should be linked to but not duplicate internal processes, so as to ensure their wide-spread acceptance within the university, benefit from synergies and keep bureaucracy at a minimum. To this end, institutions should play an active role – through their rectors’ conferences and in a dialogue with their governments and QA agencies – in designing their external accountability systems in line with institutional quality processes.
- 25 **The European dimension of quality:** Similarly, the European QA dimension should be developed in a partnership with higher education institutions, students, QA agencies and governments. The proposed governance of the European Register of QA agencies – based on a partnership of stakeholders that ensures a system of checks and balances – will provide the basis for trust and transparency and thus increase the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area. Ministers are urged to adopt the proposals elaborated by the E4 group – ENQA, ESIB, EUA and EURASHE – over the last two years, thus demonstrating trust in the responsible stakeholder partnership underlying these proposals.

## VI. AUTONOMY AND FUNDING

- 26 **Autonomy:** Governments are urged to endorse the principle of institutional autonomy so as to accommodate diverse institutional missions and to include academic autonomy (curricula, programmes and research) financial autonomy (lump sum budgeting), organisational autonomy (the structure of the university) and staffing autonomy (responsibility for recruitment, salaries and promotion). Autonomy should be founded on adequate public funding and should also facilitate the strategic management of public and private income and endowments (from philanthropists, companies, alumni and students) by the universities themselves. Governments are urged to benchmark progress against target levels set in relation to both autonomy and funding of universities. Universities will strive to reinforce further leadership and strengthen professional management.
- 27 **Increasing and diversifying funding streams:** EUA continues to be committed to identifying supplementary revenue streams for universities and to promoting modes of governance that support optimal transparency in financial management. The data collected by the EUA funding working group demonstrate the huge diversity of public funding mechanisms to be found across Europe. They vary enormously in volume, legal base, methodology, policy thrust, and in the degree to which central authorities control institutional budgets. EUA will continue its investigations to the point at which it can reliably profile European universities on the basis of an agreed template and elaborate a general costing methodology. This requires more comprehensive mapping of current public funding models, of their legal and financial environments, and of the supplementary income streams available; it therefore touches directly on key features of both the Bologna Process, such as the social dimension (access, equity in student support, and affordability), the international dimension (attractiveness and competitiveness) and mobility (the portability of student support) and the Lisbon Strategy. The EUA supports the European Commission's goal of increasing investment in higher education to at least 2% of GDP within a decade and urges all partners to work together to ensure that this target is met.
- 28 **Private contributions to higher education:** EUA calls on governments to reaffirm that higher education is predominantly a public good. However, in the context of university funding and in response to the growth in student numbers and the high cost of maintaining excellence in a global context, EUA will continue to engage in the debate on the public-private partnership in funding higher education and will specifically address the issue of tuition fees. For example, lifelong learning requires funding models to be far more flexible than the older systems designed to address the needs of traditional full-time students. EUA will therefore work together with its members to study policy alternatives on the private (student or graduate) contribution to the cost of higher education taking into consideration the various national contexts.

## VII. CONCLUSION

- 29 **Strong Universities for Europe:** Europe's universities are a major force in shaping the Europe of Knowledge. They accept the responsibilities which this brings and, in return, ask that governments, and civil society in general, should recognize their responsibility to enable universities to secure the resources which will permit them to fulfil their mission not just well, but with excellence and in a way which allows them to compete with the higher education systems of other continents. Not just Europe, but the whole world, is becoming a "Knowledge Society" and the Lisbon Strategy, the creation of the European Higher Education and Research Areas, together with the efforts of national governments, will require constant reconsideration in order to meet the challenge which this presents. These are exciting times for universities as they contribute to innovation through teaching and learning, research and knowledge transfer. Europe's universities welcome the opportunity which this gives them to help to shape Europe's future.

Brussels, 13 April 2007

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE TRENDS V REPORT

## UNIVERSITIES SHAPING THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

### I. TRENDS V

For the first time in the series, this Trends report is based on both quantitative and qualitative research, while previous Trends reports relied on one or other of these two methodologies. Trends V analyses the nature and extent of implementation of the Bologna reforms, and attempts to assess the impact that changes are having on a wider range of institutional development processes. Through comparison with the outcomes of earlier Trends projects, and in particular the Trends III results (2003) that to a large degree addressed the same questions, the report is able to measure the progress that has taken place in implementing higher education reforms. It also points to the challenges that institutions face at a time when they are being asked to respond to multiple societal demands. Bologna can increasingly be seen as a reform of structures that allows a wide range of other institutional development challenges to be addressed.

### II. THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA – A SHARED OBJECTIVE FOR UNIVERSITIES

Trends V confirms that higher education institutions (universities in the broad sense of the term) are increasingly taking responsibility for the emerging European Higher Education Area. The focus has shifted from governmental actions, including legislation, to implementation of reforms within institutions, with broad support for the underlying idea of more student-centred and problem based learning. This confirms initial findings from Trends IV. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, Trends V shows that the general attitude displayed by institutions has also changed considerably in the past four years, with the vast majority of the 908 institutions involved stating that they consider it vital to move rapidly towards a European Higher Education Area.

### III. DEGREE STRUCTURES

Trends V gives clear evidence of dramatic progress in relation to the implementation of structural reform, with 82% of institutions answering that they have the three cycles in place compared to 53% in 2003. Across Europe, there is no longer any question of whether or not reform of degree structures will take place, but rather a shift to considering whether the conditions and support are adequate to enable the process to be successful. In this respect the national understanding of reforms becomes crucial, and important questions remain with regard to different national interpretations of the nature and purposes of the three cycles, and whether these different national interpretations will prove to be compatible. Trends V identifies, among other substantial issues to be addressed, the articulation between the cycles, admission to the first cycle, the different types of bachelors and masters being developed (for example, academic versus professional qualifications), while also pointing out the particular problems posed by the continued co-existence in some countries of old and new structures.

#### IV. EMPLOYABILITY

Trends V suggests that employability is a high priority in the reform of curricula in all cycles. This concern transcends national boundaries and implementation priorities. However, the results also reveal that there is still much to be done to translate this priority into institutional practice. This is a paradox for a reform process inspired, at least in part, by a concern that higher education should be more responsive to the needs of a changing society and labour market. It indicates that one of the main challenges for the future is to strengthen dialogue with employers and other external stakeholders. For many institutions this requires a change in culture that will take time. It is essential that both governments and higher education institutions increase their efforts to communicate to the rest of society the reasons why the reforms are taking place, as a shared responsibility. It is also important for all governments to ensure that their own public sector employment structures adapt to take account of the new degree structures – an issue pointed out in Trends IV, but not yet entirely resolved.

#### V. STUDENT CENTRED LEARNING

Although new degree structures are still commonly perceived as the main Bologna goal, there is increasing awareness that the most significant legacy of the process will be a change of educational paradigm across the continent. Institutions are slowly moving away from a system of teacher-driven provision, and towards a student-centred concept of higher education. Thus the reforms are laying the foundations for a system adapted to respond to a growing variety of student needs. Institutions and their staff are still at the early stages of realising the potential of reforms for these purposes. Understanding and integrating the use of a learning outcomes based approach remains a key medium-term challenge. When achieved, it will enable students to become the engaged subjects of their own learning process, and also contribute to improving many issues of progression between cycles, institutions, sectors, the labour market and countries.

#### VI. BOLOGNA TOOLS: ECTS, DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS

The use of *ECTS as both a credit accumulation and credit transfer system* continues to become more widespread across Europe, with almost 75% of institutions reporting use of ECTS as a transfer system and over 66% as an accumulation system. Yet while a vast majority of institutions are now using ECTS, there remains much work to be done to ensure that they use it correctly. Incorrect or superficial use of ECTS is currently still widespread. Such usage hinders the re-structuring of curricula, and the development of flexible learning paths for students, while also making both mobility and recognition more difficult. Institutions have to take responsibility for driving the development of ECTS in a way which enables them to respond effectively to the challenges of an open and truly European Higher Education Area.

Slightly less than half of Trends V respondents confirmed that they issue a *Diploma Supplement* to all graduating students. This is disappointing - even if a further 38% say that they have plans to use the DS - given the 2003 Berlin Communiqué commitment that all students would be issued a Diploma Supplement free of charge by 2005, and suggests that some national systems are lagging behind. Efforts to promote and publicise the Diploma Supplement also need to be renewed in order to enhance its usefulness to students and employers.

Although following the adoption in Bergen of the *Qualifications Framework* for the European Higher Education Area, qualifications frameworks are a topic of considerable policy debate, Trends V shows that there is much work to be done in informing higher education institutions and involving them in development at national level. Currently institutions - with the exception of those in Ireland - are generally confused as to whether or not their national system has such a qualifications framework, as well as to the purposes that it serves. There is a danger that without proper understanding of the reasons for the development of qualifications frameworks, the result may be that they remain little known in institutions, thus seriously limiting their impact.

## VII. STUDENT SERVICES

Trends V shows a growth in the provision of student services over the last four years. However, the results of the qualitative research undertaken indicate that while it appears that many institutions and systems offer a wide range of services, these may not be sufficiently developed or adapted to the growing needs of a diverse student body. Guidance and counselling services in particular merit greater attention, on the part of both institutions and governments. Professional staffing and adequate resourcing are key challenges, as is the monitoring of the quality of provision. Involving students - as users and beneficiaries - is sound practice and should be seen as a principle for further development.

## VIII. QUALITY

The focus on quality in the Bologna process has certainly raised awareness within higher education institutions of the potential benefits and challenges of effective quality assurance and enhancement activities. More constructive discussion between institutions, quality assurance agencies, stakeholders and public authorities appears to be taking place, and the involvement of students in quality assurance activities also seems to be gaining ground. Indeed in some parts of Europe, quality assurance seems to be replacing degree structure reform as the main topic of interest in the Bologna process.

The results of the questionnaire (based on the criteria set out in the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) adopted by Ministers in Bergen) demonstrate that much work has been done to develop internal quality processes in institutions; student services, nonetheless, being one area that is still not widely evaluated. However, relatively few institutions seem to take a holistic approach to quality improvement. In this respect Trends V confirms the findings of Trends IV and the EUA quality culture project, that extensive internal quality processes are correlated with a higher degree of institutional autonomy.

External quality assurance systems also need to demonstrate that they actually produce an improvement in quality. Considerable concern still remains about the increasing bureaucratic burden on institutions. Meanwhile institutions need to continue to embed a responsible and responsive quality culture as a means of enhancing creativity and innovation in fulfilling their missions.

## IX. MOBILITY

The Trends V questionnaire data indicates that, although there are still major deficits in capturing reliable information on mobility, many institutions have a general perception that student mobility is increasing. It is important, however, to distinguish between different forms of mobility – within countries and between countries, within degree cycles and between degree cycles, and within organised mobility programmes or as “free movers”.

With regard to mobility between countries it seems that “free mover” mobility could be on the increase in some parts of Europe. However, another explanation of institutions’ perception of increased mobility is that greater attention is being given to international student mobility, largely as a result of the additional revenue streams that can be provided through international education. In terms of mobility flows, there is evidence that, as in the past, many central and eastern European institutions are exporting more students and staff than they are importing, while certain western European countries are clearly strong importers.

Mobility flows seem to be closely related to funding policy and socio-economic issues, while the changes in degree structures so far seem to have had only a marginal impact. Indeed, the potential for greater mobility between cycles is not greatly exploited at this stage, and is rarely an element of national or institutional policy. Indeed many national funding systems currently act as a disincentive to mobility, rewarding institutions that retain students, but not providing incentives to mobility.

Recognition of student learning also remains an important challenge, with considerable difficulties still existing in relation to the recognition of learning that has taken place outside a national environment. Because of the importance attached to mobility as an essential characteristic of the European Higher Education Area, an increased effort needs to be made to encourage academics to accept the long established principle of “mutual trust and confidence” in the recognition of learning and qualifications offered by others. Fine tuning in the use of learning agreements is also essential.

## X. LIFELONG LEARNING

“Lifelong learning” is a term used, confusingly, to cover both continuing education and training for well-qualified graduates and initial education for disadvantaged groups, possibly through part-time higher education. While many institutions perceive lifelong learning as an emerging priority, Trends V provides little evidence that they have taken strategic action to consider their missions in one or other of these endeavours or to anticipate the challenges ahead. Thus no coherent picture of the understanding and implementation of lifelong learning emerges from the report, although there are indications that this is an area where diversified funding sources exist and where there is considerable scope for cooperation with local partners. Once again, questions arise regarding the recognition of prior learning which need to be addressed. Some institutions suggested that the implementation of Bologna reforms has taken priority over developing lifelong learning strategies, but now consider that the conditions have been created for a more adequate response to be developed.

In relation to access in particular, while almost all institutions consider widening participation to be important, their expectations of being able to contribute to this development are rather low. This demonstrates the importance of government policy in this area and the need for incentives, all the more so given the obligation felt by many institutions to improve competitiveness by attracting the best students; they sometimes falsely believe that this precludes improving the diversity of the student base.

## **XI. NEW MEMBER COUNTRIES**

The Trends V report has looked at the situation of some of the new member Bologna countries separately, discovering as much diversity within and between these countries as across the rest of Europe. The addition of Russia to the Bologna process in 2003 added a vast new territory and enormous number of institutions to the potential European Higher Education Area. While there is a significant vanguard of institutions pushing forward reforms, the Bologna process nevertheless encapsulates both ideological and geographical issues, and it is not yet clear if a unified national strategy to implement reforms will emerge. There remains much to be done to support the work of the reform-minded academic community.

Institutions in South East Europe clearly perceive the Bologna process as providing a direction that is essential for societal development. Among the many challenges being faced, the step to move away from a culture of self-managed faculty independence is still the key issue if reforms are to prove sustainable and effective.

Georgia offers a case study of how the Bologna process can be used effectively to support a profound reform of higher education, with extraordinary change taking place in very little time. A key element to success has been the effort made to provide basic information on European texts in the national language.

## **XII. INTERNATIONAL ATTRACTIVENESS**

The reforms across Europe are also taking place in a context of increasing global interaction. The Trends survey shows that institutions are receptive to developments outside as well as inside Europe, and there is also increasing evidence of institutions in other world regions responding strategically to European developments. The responses of higher education institutions show interestingly and very clearly that as in 2003 inter-European cooperation remains the highest priority. However, relationships with higher education institutions and systems in Asia have become vastly more important in the past four years. There is also some evidence that attention is also focusing more than in the past on cooperation with the Arab world and Africa. It is, however, difficult to evaluate whether these institutional perceptions will prove to be ephemeral or part of a sustained trend. Nevertheless, higher education reforms in Europe are no longer a matter of interest only to Europeans, but also have an impact in the global arena.

### XIII. FUTURE CHALLENGES

All of the issues addressed in Trends V have implications for the development of the European Higher Education Area, but three key challenges for the future can be highlighted:

- 1 **Strengthening the relationship between governments, higher education institutions and other societal stakeholders** is essential to anchor and sustain the goals of the Bologna process. One major priority must be to broaden debate with employers, students, parents and other stakeholders, and thus enhance trust and confidence in the quality and relevance of institutional engagement. In addition, institutions and governments need to join forces not only in implementing reforms, but in communicating widely the results and implications of the structural and curricular reforms which are taking place.
- 2 **Institutions need to develop their capacity to respond strategically to the lifelong learning agenda**, taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the structural changes and tools that have been developed through the Bologna process. This means that institutions must use these tools correctly, and develop them further to enhance student-centred and flexible learning, as well as greater mobility. Increasing dialogue with employers is again required if university courses, at all levels, are to meet the needs of a society and economy in which knowledge becomes rapidly out-of-date and in which, therefore, constant training and retraining is required. Through addressing these lifelong learning challenges, institutions can also tackle the social objective of ensuring equality of access to higher education for all those qualified and able to benefit from it.
- 3 **Finally, institutions must begin to think through the implications of the existence of the European Higher Education Area after 2010.** Some aspects of Bologna are likely still to require implementation or reconsideration, and it will be particularly important to do this with greater European vision to overcome some of the local and national obstacles that currently prevail. The European Higher Education Area is also being developed in an increasingly inter-connected global context, and its international reception is therefore of the utmost importance. Once again the responsibility lies with governments and institutions to explain reforms, and to support these major cultural processes that have now been set in motion.

# CONCLUSIONS OF THE EUA REPORT ON DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

**The Bergen Ministerial Communiqué (May 2005) gave a mandate to the European University Association to prepare a report on the further development of doctoral programmes to be presented to Ministers in 2007.**

- 1 EUA's 10 Salzburg Principles on Doctoral Programmes (February 2005) that provided the basis for the Bergen Communiqué text have proved invaluable in setting the scene for the discussions of the last two years and should continue to provide the broad framework for discussion of doctoral programmes in Europe.
- 2 The provision of high quality doctoral programmes and better career opportunities for young researchers is an essential precondition in meeting Europe's objectives in terms of strengthening research capacity and improving the quality and competitiveness of European higher education internationally. It is therefore crucial for governments and universities to support the further development of structured doctoral programmes and to seek to improve the status, career prospects and funding of early stage researchers. As doctoral programmes constitute the key link between the European Higher Education and Research Areas this requires the attention of both Ministers of Higher Education working together in the Bologna Process and the necessary coordination with other responsible Ministries and government agencies at national and European level.
- 3 The unique character of the third cycle driven by its core component, the advancement of knowledge through research, needs to be recognized within the Bologna process; at the same time the implementation of the three Bologna cycles should be seen as a whole, and the inclusion of a research component as well as of transferable skills development ensured also in the first and second cycles.
- 4 Universities accept their responsibility for embedding doctoral programmes in institutional strategies and policies. This involves establishing the appropriate organisational structures in the form of doctoral, research or graduate schools with effective administration, leadership, and specific funding that will promote high quality, internationally oriented and networked doctoral programmes.

- 5 A range of innovative doctoral programmes are emerging across Europe in response to the demands of a rapidly evolving labour market. These include programmes known as “professional doctorates”, or practice related doctorates, that focus on embedding research in a reflective manner into another professional practice, increased university-industry cooperation and more European and international cooperation. These are new developments for most countries and universities across Europe. Further discussion of these developments is needed, as well as continued exchange of experience among universities on questions such as supervision and assessment procedures and the development of transferable skills.
- 6 Together with public authorities and other partners at national and European level universities share a responsibility for creating the appropriate career paths and opportunities for doctoral candidates and early stage researchers. This involves providing the appropriate working conditions, rights and career prospects for young researchers, both in academia and in a range of other sectors.
- 7 Based upon an EUA survey of doctoral programmes to which 36 BFUG governments responded attention is drawn to the role of governments and other competent authorities in ensuring that:
  - funding for doctoral candidates is stable, covers the full period of the doctoral programme, and provides sufficient means to live and work in decent conditions;
  - funding is sufficiently attractive to encourage suitably-qualified candidates from lower income groups, as well as sufficiently flexible to support the needs of part time students over a longer period of study.
- 8 The EUA survey of national situations with BFUG countries also demonstrates a great diversity in existing funding channels, mechanisms and modes. As with organizational types, it is to be expected that diversity in funding sources, channels, mechanisms and modes will become an irreversible trend. Thus, in order to create a shared vision of doctoral education within the European Higher Education Area that is attractive and competitive on a global scale:
  - more information on funding mechanisms and funding levels of doctoral candidates and doctoral programmes/schools must be made available;
  - increased consultation and co-ordination among the diverse modes and funding bodies (government ministries, funding councils and other funding bodies) at regional, national and European level will be increasingly important to ensure optimum funding for the candidate, and overall quality in doctoral education and training.
- 9 The European University Association is committed to continuing this debate with its member universities and other partners, and to providing the necessary support to its members, in particular through the establishment of a permanent framework for the further development, cooperation and exchange of good practice between doctoral programmes and doctoral schools across Europe’s universities.

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*The European University Association (EUA) is the representative organisation of universities and national rectors' conferences in 46 European countries. EUA plays a crucial role in the Bologna process and in influencing EU policies on higher education, research and innovation. Thanks to its interaction with a range of other European and international organisations EUA ensures that the independent voice of European universities is heard wherever decisions are being taken that will impact on their activities.*

*The Association provides a unique expertise in higher education and research as well as a forum for exchange of ideas and good practice among universities. The results of EUA's work are made available to members and stakeholders through conferences, seminars, website and publications.*

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