The Added Value of the Social Dimension Working Group

Rafael Bonete Perales

BOLOGNA CONFERENCE
Development of the Social Dimension – Stocktaking and Future Perspectives of Student Services/Student Affairs in the European Higher Education Area.
Berlin, 11-7-2011
Outline

1) Why a Social Dimension WG?
2) Specific tasks
3) SWOT analysis
4) Conclusions
1) Why a Social Dimension WG?

- In the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué: *The Bologna Process 2020 - The European Higher Education Area in the new decade*, the Social Dimension has been singled out (paragraphs 9, 21, 26) as an important component of the EHEA.

- The Bologna Follow Up Group decided, after some discussions, to have a WG jointly with some other WGs ([www.ehea.info](http://www.ehea.info)).
2) Specific tasks

- To collect good practices on Social Dimension implementation in Higher Education at national and regional levels.

- To collect measures taken in other sectors of the educational system within the EHEA in order to increase the level of equity in Higher Education.

- To collect good practices and national experiences in defining core indicators used for measuring and monitoring the relevant aspects of the Social Dimension in Higher Education.
• To collect information about success stories on improving employability due to good practice in HEIs.

• To explore the possibility of creating a European Observatory on the Social Dimension of Higher Education (EOSDHE).

All these tasks are related with students’ affairs and services.
3) SWOT analysis

A) Strengths

- *The composition of the WG*: Andorra, Austria, Belgium/Flemish Community, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, UK/EWNI, UK/Scotland, the European Commission, BUSINESSEUROPE, ESU, EUA, EURASHE, Eurostat, Eurostudent.

- *The influence on the Reporting WG and on the BFUG.*
B) Weaknesses
- The effects of Fiscal consolidation on Higher Education.
- The specific nature of the BFUG and the Ministerial Conferences.

C) Opportunities
- The Social Dimension WG can try to influence the content of the next Communiqué (Bucharest, April 2012).
- We can open a debate about the necessity of establishing a European Observatory on the Social Dimension of Higher Education (EOSDHE).
- Learning from each other.
D) Threats

- *The Bologna Process may be losing momentum.*

- *Market forces and Higher Education (market economy-market society-market democracy).*

- *The different meanings of the Social Dimension and what is considered students’ affairs and services.*
4) Conclusions

- *Work in progress.*
- *We need to make an effort to keep the Social Dimension high on the agenda:*
  - *We need to convince our politicians that the Social Dimension will increase the human capital available and more talent will ensure a sustainable knowledge society.*
  - *The Social Dimension in Higher Education will also increase Social Cohesion in Europe.*
- *We still need more data to compare our different levels of support to our students.*
- *We need to share more good practice in order to improve student affairs and services.*
Thanks for your attention

rafael.bonete@educacion.es