



FROM BERLIN TO BERGEN

GENERAL REPORT OF THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP
TO THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION,
BERGEN, 19-20 MAY 2005

REPORT

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“FROM BERLIN TO BERGEN”

Executive Summary of the General Report of the Bologna Follow-up Group to the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, Bergen, 19-20 May 2005

Halfway towards 2010

Halfway in the Bologna Process towards 2010, we start to see the contours of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). It is not a single, unified higher education system, but a group of more than forty national systems developing according to jointly agreed principles.

For many countries, “Bologna” is an inspiration and a recipe for highly needed reforms in their higher education systems. At the same time we are jointly building a common framework to turn into reality the idea that students and staff shall be able to move freely within the EHEA, having full recognition of their qualifications. Priority has been given to developing

- a three-cycle degree system in each participating country,
- national quality assurance systems cooperating in a Europe-wide network,
- mutual recognition between participating countries of degrees and study periods.

Each of these elements has a national dimension and a European Dimension. So has the concept of qualifications frameworks now introduced in the Bologna Process, with national frameworks fitting into an overarching framework for the EHEA. Agreed standards and guidelines introduce a European dimension also in quality assurance.

Developments

As the Bologna Process has been developing, its ten action lines have tended to overlap or merge and new concepts have been introduced. The action lines have been imperative for the dynamics of the Bologna Process, but they do not explicitly define the final goal.

Recommendations from the fourteen *Bologna Follow-up Seminars* included in the BFUG Work Programme have fed into the stocktaking project, into the development of the overarching framework for qualifications and into the joint efforts in quality assurance, and have also directly influenced the drafting of the Bergen Communiqué.

All participating countries have produced National Reports. These reports have given information on planned reforms as well as on what has already been accomplished.

An overarching framework of qualifications for the EHEA

The report from the Working Group established by the BFUG provides a series of recommendations, among them the following:

- the framework for qualifications in the EHEA should be an overarching framework with a high level of generality, consisting of three main cycles, with additional provision for a short cycle within the first cycle;
- the framework should include cycle descriptors in the form of generic qualification descriptors that can be used as reference points. It is proposed that the Dublin Descriptors are adopted as the cycle descriptors for the framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area;
- *guidelines* for the credit range typically associated with the completion of each cycle:
 - Short cycle (within the first cycle) qualifications: 120 ECTS credits;
 - First cycle qualifications: 180-240 ECTS credits;

- Second cycle qualifications: 90-120 ECTS credits, with a minimum of 60 credits at the level of the 2nd cycle;
- Third cycle qualifications do not necessarily have credits associated with them.

Considerations by the Bologna Follow-up Group

The Bologna Follow-up Group has advised Ministers that they may adopt the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA, comprising three cycles (including the possibility of shorter higher education linked to the first cycle), generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences, and credit ranges for the first and second cycles.

The BFUG has also advised Ministers to commit themselves to elaborating national frameworks for qualifications compatible with the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA by 2010, and to having started work on this by 2007.

The BFUG has further advised Ministers to underline the importance of complementarity between the overarching framework for the EHEA and the broader European framework of qualifications for lifelong learning now being developed within the European Union.

European cooperation in quality assurance

In Berlin, Ministers called upon ENQA, in cooperation with the EUA, EURASHE and ESIB, to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance and a peer review system for quality assurance bodies. The main results and recommendations are:

- There will be European standards for internal and external quality assurance, and for external quality assurance agencies.
- European quality assurance agencies will be expected to submit themselves to a cyclical review within five years.
- A European register of quality assurance agencies will be established.
- A European Register Committee will act as a gatekeeper for the register.

Considerations by the Bologna Follow-up Group

The BFUG has advised Ministers that the proposed standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the EHEA and the proposed model for peer review of quality assurance agencies may be introduced and tried out on a national basis in the participating countries.

The BFUG has welcomed the establishment of a European Register of quality assurance agencies and asked ENQA to develop rules and regulations for such a register. The BFUG has advised Ministers that the practicalities of implementation of the Register and the Register Committee may be further developed by ENQA in cooperation with EUA, EURASHE and ESIB.

Recognition of degrees and study periods

In June 2004, a Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees was adopted as a subsidiary text to the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Governments should review their legislation and introduce legal provisions that would facilitate recognition of joint degrees.

By April 2005, 31 of the 40 participating countries in the Bologna Process and all five applicant countries had ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Considerations by the Bologna Follow-up Group

The BFUG has advised Ministers to urge participating countries that have not already done so to ratify the Convention without delay. They should ensure the full implementation of its principles,

and incorporate them in national legislation. Ministers may call on all participating countries to address recognition problems identified by the ENIC/NARIC networks. Ministers should 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.

Higher education institutions and others should improve recognition of prior learning including non-formal and informal learning for access to and as elements in higher education programmes. The development of national and European frameworks for qualifications may be an opportunity to further embed lifelong learning in higher education.

Stocktaking

To conduct the stocktaking exercise asked for by Ministers in Berlin, a Working Group was established by the BFUG. At the request of the Working Group, the EURYDICE report "*Focus on the Structure of Higher Education in Europe*" extended its review beyond the 31 countries normally covered by its network in order to provide a uniform analysis of the 40 "Bologna" countries. Along with the material prepared by EURYDICE, the National Reports represented the main source of information.

Scorecards have been developed for each participating country as well as average scores for the forty countries. The analysis indicates that overall, participating countries have made good progress in the three priority action lines. However, the strength of the Bologna Process has been its voluntary and collaborative nature. The increased membership underlines the need to ensure consistency of progress, and participating countries should be prepared to take responsibility to assist each other as we all move towards 2010.

Considerations by the Bologna Follow-up Group

The BFUG has noted that substantial progress has been made in the three priority areas. It is important to ensure that progress is consistent across all participating countries, and the BFUG will advise Ministers that there is a need for greater sharing of expertise to build capacity at both institutional and government level.

The BFUG has noted that the two-cycle degree system is being implemented on a large scale, with more than half of the students being enrolled in it in most countries. However, there are still some obstacles to access between cycles. Ministers may see the need for greater dialogue, involving governments, institutions and social partners, to increase the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications, including posts within the public service.

The BFUG has noted that almost all countries have made provision for a quality assurance system based on the criteria set out in the Berlin Communiqué and with a high degree of cooperation and networking. However, there is still progress to be made, in particular as regards student involvement and international cooperation.

With reference also to the follow-up of the Lisbon Recognition Convention mentioned above, Ministers are advised to draw up national action plans to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications.

Five new participating countries

The criteria for admission of new participating countries (members) to the Bologna Process were set by the Berlin Communiqué, saying that

“countries party to the European Cultural Convention shall be eligible for membership of the European Higher Education Area provided that they at the same time declare their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the Bologna Process in their own systems of higher education.

A document consolidating principles and action lines of the Bologna Process made it clear to potential newcomers that the EHEA can only be achieved by incorporating the “Bologna” principles in the higher education system of each country. Just as all participating countries were asked to produce a National Report, newcomers were asked to produce a report in a similar format, with a special focus on the three intermediate priorities.

By the deadline applications had been received from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Ukraine. Later, Kosovo also applied. All applications were in accordance with the prescribed procedure; however, Kazakhstan and Kosovo are not signatories to the European Cultural Convention.

Considerations by the Bologna Follow-up Group

Based on the applications and reports received, the BFUG has advised Ministers to welcome Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine as participating countries (members) in the Bologna Process at the Bergen conference.

2010 and beyond

The Bologna Process is a process of voluntary cooperation between different national systems overseen by the BFUG and associating the various partners. There are no legally binding provisions except for the Lisbon Recognition Convention; the cooperation is based on mutual trust. Participating countries have adapted their legislation to the principles and objectives of the Bologna Process, and higher education institutions are committed to implementing them.

The Follow-up Group has had preliminary discussions concerning 2010 and beyond, as the vision of the European Higher Education Area is gradually being translated into reality. Within the overarching framework for the EHEA, all participating countries should have developed by 2010 a national framework of qualifications based on three cycles in higher education, and national quality assurance arrangements implementing an agreed set of standards and guidelines. All higher education institutions in participating countries will recognise degrees and periods of studies according to the Lisbon Recognition Convention. The social dimension of the Bologna Process will be a constituent part of the EHEA: Higher education should be equally accessible to all and students should be able to complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background. The EHEA will encompass the principles of public responsibility for higher education, institutional autonomy, and the participation of students in higher education governance.

1 HALFWAY TOWARDS 2010

Halfway in the Bologna Process towards 2010, we start to see the contours of the European Higher Education Area. It is not a single, unified higher education system, but a group of more than forty national systems developing according to jointly agreed principles. As additional countries will join when Ministers meet in Bergen in May 2005, the Bologna Process can be seen as a truly pan-European Process.

For many countries, “Bologna” is an inspiration and a recipe for highly needed reforms in their higher education systems. At the same time we are jointly building a common framework to turn into reality the idea that students and staff should be able to move freely within the EHEA, having full recognition of their qualifications. There are limitations to free movement in the form of legal and financial restrictions outside the competence of Ministers of Education, but building a Europe of Knowledge, we must strive to overcome these problems.

At the previous Ministerial Conference in Berlin in September 2003, priority was given to the further development of three central elements in the Bologna Process,

- a three-cycle degree system in each participating country with degrees at bachelor, master and doctoral level,
- national quality assurance systems cooperating in a Europe-wide network,
- mutual recognition between participating countries of degrees and study periods.

Each of these elements has a national dimension and a European Dimension. So has the concept of qualifications frameworks, with national frameworks fitting into an overarching framework for the European Higher Education Area. The Follow-up Group will report on the development of an overarching framework for higher education that may be a first element in a European educational framework also spanning vocational education and training.

Ministers have also asked for the development of an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines for quality assurance to be used in national quality assurance systems. The Follow-up Group can report that agreement on key points has been reached, thus introducing a European dimension in quality assurance.

There already exists an international legal instrument for mutual recognition of degrees and study periods: the Lisbon Recognition Convention. By April 2005 the Lisbon Recognition Convention has been ratified by 31 of the 40 countries participating in the Bologna Process and by all the five applicant countries. Formal difficulties related to the ratification procedure should not keep participating countries from practising the principles of the Lisbon Convention, thus recognising degrees and study periods from the other countries as equivalent to degrees and study periods in their own educational system. Correspondingly, higher education institutions in all participating countries should recognise courses from partner institutions in the other countries as equivalent to their own courses.

The stocktaking exercise shows that substantial progress has been made in the three priority areas. However, to ensure that progress is consistent across all participating countries, there is a need for greater sharing of expertise to build capacity at both institutional and government level.

3 May 2005

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Chair, Bologna Follow-up Group*

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2 THE BFUG WORK PROGRAMME 2004-2005

In the Berlin Communiqué, Ministers asked the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) to co-ordinate activities in the Bologna Process as indicated in the themes and actions covered by the communiqué and to report on them in time for the next Ministerial Conference in 2005.

The recommendations of the Berlin Communiqué were directed at national authorities, institutions and organisations. Countries and organisations have launched relevant follow-up activities in accordance with the Communiqué. This active participation of all partners is of great importance to the long-term success of the Bologna Process.

To co-ordinate activities, the BFUG developed a Work Programme for the period from Berlin to Bergen, decided in its final form in March 2004. Members and consultative members of the BFUG have initiated most of the actions included in the Work Programme, and as such, it is basically a bottom-up process. However, the Follow-up Group has ensured that the Work Programme related in the best possible way to the Berlin Communiqué as a whole and that it had a reasonable balance between the various action lines of the Bologna Process.

Seminars were the main vehicle for the follow-up of the Prague Communiqué, and have also been important in the follow-up after Berlin. The European Commission has supported a number of Bologna Follow-up Seminars in priority areas under the Socrates and Tempus programmes. Fourteen Bologna Follow-up Seminars were included in the BFUG Work Programme. Responsibility for organising these seminars was widely spread among participating countries and organisations. Condensed reports from the seminars have been included in this report.

The intermediate priorities defined in the Berlin Communiqué have been central in the Work Programme.

It was clear from the Berlin Communiqué that the Ministers wished for the BFUG to take responsibility for actions in the following areas:

- monitoring the ENQA project on quality assurance;
- developing an overarching framework of qualifications;
- carrying out the stocktaking exercise.

As may be seen from separate chapters in this general report, these projects have received special attention from the BFUG. For each project a Working Group was established: For the quality assurance project ENQA, EUA, EURASHE and ESIB worked together in the “E4” group. For the qualifications framework project and for the stocktaking project the BFUG appointed separate Working Groups. The work of these groups has been essential to the success of the projects.

This report contains an overview of the activities carried out and decisions taken under the responsibility of the BFUG up to the Ministerial Conference in Bergen in May 2005. The report has been written by the Secretariat of the Bologna Process set up by Norway as the host country of the upcoming conference, and has been discussed by the BFUG in the process of writing. Under the mandate given by the BFUG, the final version has been authorised by the BFUG Board.

All documents and reports referred to in this general report are available at <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no>.

3 THE BOLOGNA ACTION LINES

Six action lines were introduced in the Bologna Declaration:

- 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;
- 4 Promotion of mobility;
- 5 Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance;
- 6 Promotion of the European dimension in higher education.

Three more were introduced in the Prague Communiqué:

- 7 Lifelong learning;
- 8 Higher education institutions and students;
- 9 Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area.

A tenth action line was introduced in the Berlin Communiqué:

- 10 Doctoral studies and the synergy between the EHEA and the ERA.

In the follow-up after Prague and Berlin, *the social dimension of higher education* has been seen as an overarching or transversal action line.

When the Follow-up Group made a selection of seminars for inclusion in the BFUG Work Programme 2004-2005, a reasonable coverage of the various action lines was sought. This supplemented the selection according to the explicit priorities of the Berlin Communiqué.

As the Process has been developing, action lines have tended to overlap or merge and new concepts have been introduced. The system of two degree cycles from Bologna (action line 2) was supplemented by a third cycle (action line 10) in Berlin. Action lines 1, 2, 3 and an important part of 10 may now be described within *a framework of qualifications for higher education*, and the ambition is that action line 7 may also be included in *a general framework of qualifications* that may span both higher education and vocational education and training, and also possibly other parts of the educational system. Establishing an *overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area* will be essential also for action line 6, the European dimension.

A concept implicit in action lines 1 and 4 has turned out to be central to the Bologna Process: *recognition of degrees and study periods*. The legal instrument has been with us from the start, in the form of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, saying that all States party to the Convention shall recognise degrees and study periods from other parties as equivalent to degrees and study periods in their own system, provided there are no substantial differences. Hence the appeal from Ministers in Berlin that all participating countries should ratify the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Action line 5 *Promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance* has been central in the follow-up after Berlin. With the development of an agreed set of standards and guidelines for quality assurance, a common basis for recognition is introduced. The cooperation and trust developing in the quality assurance sector may also be seen as yet another element of the European dimension of higher education (action line 6).

Action line 8 keeps reminding us of the importance of higher education institutions and student organisations as partners in the Process. The active participation of institutions and their staff and of students in the *implementation* of the European Higher Education Area will be vital to the

success of the Bologna Process. This implies that the basic principles for this partnership between national authorities and the higher education sector must be clearly visible also in the description of the EHEA, first of all the principle of autonomous institutions and the principle of student participation in the governance of higher education institutions.

Action line 8 also initiated after Prague the discussion of higher education as a public good and a public responsibility. The public responsibility for higher education encompasses the structural elements of the Bologna Process such as a national framework, degree structure, quality assurance and recognition. The public responsibility for the structure of higher education is defined in all countries by national legislation. A seminar was organised by the Council of Europe in September 2004 to look more closely into the public responsibility for higher education and research, and another seminar organised by UNESCO/CEPES in November 2004 studied the legislation for higher education in a large group of participating countries in the Bologna Process (see chapter 4 on seminars).

Student and staff mobility is at the heart of the Bologna Process, and *mobility* has been defined as a separate Bologna action line (action line 4). However, several seminars and also discussions in the Follow-up Group have shown that mobility is indeed a transversal subject. Many challenges must be met to further increase mobility between different groups of participating countries, and further studies and endeavours will be necessary relating to its various elements, including the recognition issue, social and linguistic issues, financial issues, immigration and social security issues and the legislative framework.

A tentative conclusion regarding action lines may be that they have been imperative for the dynamics of the Bologna Process. However, this does not necessarily imply that they should also be parameters for the description of the European Higher Education Area which will be the *outcome* of the Process: The action lines have shown the way to go, but they do not explicitly define the final goal.

4 BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP SEMINARS

Seminars were the main vehicle for the follow-up of the Prague Communiqué, and they have also been important elements in the follow-up after Berlin. *Bologna Follow-up Seminars* have been organised by BFUG members and consultative members in accordance with their own priorities and objectives, taking account of criteria approved by the Follow-up Group. Fourteen Bologna Follow-up Seminars were included in the BFUG Work Programme 2004-2005, reflecting the priorities set by the Ministers in Berlin and having the potential of contributing to making the European Higher Education Area a reality.

The seminars have been open to participants from all the participating countries as well as the applicant countries, to representatives of the European Commission, the Council of Europe, UNESCO-CEPES, EUA, EURASHE and ESIB and to other interested parties. All seminars have consisted of plenary sessions and workshops, giving the opportunity for active participation and for elaboration of various aspects of the seminar themes. In a number of cases surveys and background documents were prepared by the organisers. This material is available on the Bologna-Bergen web site at <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no> together with complete reports and recommendations from each seminar.

The seminars have been important in increasing the awareness of the Bologna Process in the participating countries and also in other countries. The Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES have both been very active in their support of new and prospective participating countries. EUA and ESIB have been co-organisers of a number of seminars, also reaching out to national rectors' conferences and national student unions in participating countries and stimulating the dialogue between Bologna Partners at the national level.

Recommendations from Bologna Follow-up Seminars have fed into the stocktaking project, into the development of the overarching framework for qualifications and into the joint efforts in quality assurance. Recommendations from seminars have also directly influenced the drafting of the Bergen Communiqué.

4.1 “Joint Degrees – Further Development”, Stockholm, 6-7 May 2004

50 participants from 18 countries and a number of organisations attended this seminar organised by the Swedish Ministry of Education and Research. General Rapporteur was professor Pavel Zgaga. The seminar built on previous activity in the field. Two seminars were held in the preceding period related to joint degrees: in May 2002, also in Stockholm, and in Mantova in April 2003, focussing on integrated curricula. In addition, a survey in 2002 and a project on joint master's degree programmes, both conducted by the EUA, had pointed to a number of problems. In the Berlin Communiqué, Ministers undertook to remove legal obstacles to the establishment and recognition of joint degrees and actively support the development and adequate quality assurance of integrated curricula leading to such degrees.

The seminar considered the situation against this background. In most Bologna countries, degrees are regulated in national legislation. Many higher education institutions co-operate in developing and delivering joint study programmes and joint degrees, but few joint diplomas are awarded. Most countries do not make explicit legal provision for the awarding of joint degrees and joint diplomas. The seminar reiterated the importance of joint degrees for achieving the Bologna objectives, underlining that the process of developing and offering joint study programmes is the core activity, and discussed aspects such as the use of the Diploma Supplement and ECTS and quality assurance. In a lifelong learning perspective it was pointed out that the possibilities for all

types of students to participate should be taken into account when developing joint study programmes and joint degrees.

It was recommended that the Bologna Follow-up Group should map the experience of higher education institutions and students with joint study programmes and joint degrees and if possible report conclusions and recommendations to the Bergen ministerial meeting. Further, each country should report on the progress made in removing legal obstacles to joint degrees as agreed in the Berlin Communiqué. As a result of the latter recommendation a question about this was included in the template for the national reports.

The seminar made the following recommendations to the Bergen Ministerial Meeting:

- The possibility of awarding joint degrees with national and foreign higher education institutions should be clearly referred to in national legislation. Every country should report on the progress of their work in time for the ministerial meeting in 2007.
- The format of the Diploma Supplement should be adapted to facilitate the description of joint degrees. The Diploma Supplement should include a cross-reference when double degrees are issued.
- Ministers should encourage the development of incentives for higher education institutions to participate in joint study programmes leading to joint degrees. Higher education institutions should give proper recognition to students and staff who participate in joint degree programmes.

4.2 “Bologna and the challenges of e-learning and distance education”, Ghent, 4-5 June 2004

The main focus of the seminar, organised by the Ministry of the Flemish Community (Belgium) and the University of Ghent in cooperation with several academic partners, was on the integration of the lifelong learning perspective in higher education. In particular the seminar explored the issue of widening access to higher education, e.g. for a more mature student public that combines studies with other responsibilities. General Rapporteur was professor Jef Van den Branden.

The seminar was attended by 100 policy makers, representatives of the academic world and specialists both in international relations and in e-learning from a large variety of countries and organisations participating in the Bologna Process.

The seminar discussed how non-classical teaching and learning forms can be of use in an emerging European Higher Education Area the cornerstones of which are quality assurance and recognition as well as mobility and social issues. The challenges which distance education at the higher education level poses in this perspective were explored accordingly.

The following recommendations were made for the further development of the Bologna Process:

- To make the EHEA an *Open* Higher Education Area by fully integrating the dimension of flexible learning paths supported by e-learning and other non-classical learning and teaching forms.
- To extend quality assurance, accreditation and qualifications frameworks to e-learning and other non-classical modes of delivery in an integrated approach encompassing the full range of higher education.
- In the context of widening access, to develop leadership in higher education institutions in order to integrate a lifelong learning-for-all strategy in joint responsibility with staff, students and the local and international community.
- To explore how the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention may be used to establish a common understanding and shared standards on the validation of prior learning experiences

in both formal and non-formal settings as a concrete step to the integration of the lifelong learning perspective in higher education.

- To acknowledge the contribution of so-called “virtual mobility” to international academic exchange and joint curriculum development and to take it on board in the design of international mobility schemes.
- To promote a broad approach to all “Bologna tools” (as for instance ECTS and the Diploma Supplement) to include e-learning and non-classical teaching and learning.

4.3 “Using Learning Outcomes”, Edinburgh, 1-2 July 2004

The seminar, organised by the Scottish Ministry responsible for Higher Education together with national partners, brought together some 160 participants from 28 countries and from partner organisations. A background report had been commissioned from Professor Stephen Adam, examining the concept of learning outcomes both from a theoretical point of view and in relation to current practice.

Considerable activity was found to be taking place across Europe, but relatively few countries or higher education institutions had implemented learning outcomes in a systematic way. One conclusion in the report was that learning outcomes may enhance all the Bologna action lines. They were seen as part of a shift in emphasis from the teacher to the learner, and in this connection students pointed out that for learning to be genuinely student-centred, the students must also be included in the process of formulating the learning outcomes.

There was general agreement on the usefulness of moving towards an outcomes-based approach in the description of modules/units, study programmes and qualifications. Such an approach lies at the centre of the development of an overarching framework of qualifications for the EHEA, and the seminar provided important input to this work. Descriptions in terms of learning outcomes also facilitate comparison of knowledge, understanding and skills acquired in informal or non-formal learning with formal qualifications, and hence contribute to flexible learning paths in a lifelong learning perspective. In the same way they may facilitate mobility between vocational education and training and higher education.

The seminar discussed the role of learning outcomes in relation to issues such as transparency, mobility, recognition and quality assurance, underlining that they are not the solution to all problems, but a useful tool at both the conceptual and practical levels. Unresolved issues e.g. in relation to credits were pointed out. Also, the concept is used in different ways in different contexts, sometimes in a very technical way, and a common understanding therefore needs to be developed, taking into account the importance of diversity and flexibility.

The seminar recommended that the BFUG should take a leading role in ensuring coherence across the different strands of development of the Bologna Process affected by learning outcomes, and more broadly between the Bologna and Copenhagen processes.

The seminar further recommended that the following themes should be considered for inclusion in the Bergen Communiqué:

- The importance of learning outcomes for the future development of Diploma Supplements, ECTS and qualifications frameworks, as a tool to promote transparency and mobility, while supporting flexibility and diversity across the European Higher Education Area.
- The need to accept that the pace and nature of change will not be uniform across all countries or all disciplines. Such flexibility will protect the diversity inherent in the European Higher Education Area and lead to greater ownership of the final outcome.
- The need for continuing dialogue to achieve a common language and a shared understanding of that language.

4.4 “Assessment and accreditation in the European framework”, Santander, 28-30 July 2004

The seminar organised by the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports and the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation was attended by approximately 125 policy makers, representatives of the academic world and specialists both in international relations and in assessment and accreditation.

The main objective was to move forward in the development of common methodological tools for quality evaluation and accreditation of higher education within the European framework of the Bologna Declaration, with a view to identifying tools that are generally accepted as suitable and effective. Additional objectives were to compare processes and to analyse the networking of evaluation agencies and bodies with a view to the mutual recognition of their decisions. General Rapporteur was director Leonardo M. González.

It was confirmed that the networks of agencies will have an important role to play in the establishment of common accreditation criteria and methodologies that may lead to the mutual recognition of their decisions, in particular by means of their efforts to push for more and better knowledge of good practices and exchange of information and experience.

At the same time it was made clear that in defining these common criteria and methodologies it is necessary to take into account the diversity of the various systems and traditions that will go into the construction of a comparable framework.

There is a clear need to establish a glossary of terms that will make it possible to interpret the main features of each institution in the light of common but flexible principles and points of reference agreed at the European level.

For the implantation of an effective culture of quality, it is essential that governments, higher education institutions, quality agencies, teachers and students all participate, in view of the expectation that this process will benefit not only the involved agents but also society at large.

It will only be possible to establish common criteria and methodologies if mutual trust among institutions and agencies is achieved on a basis of greater transparency in accreditation processes. To that end it is essential to promote a peer review process among agencies.

Accreditation is viewed as an essential tool for the promotion of quality assurance in higher education systems. The accreditation process should be linked to the implementation of specific recommendations for the improvement of the evaluated qualifications and institutions. It was recommended that a concrete accreditation scheme be set up within the Bologna Process.

4.5 “Public Responsibility for Higher Education and Research”, Strasbourg, 21-22 September 2004

Approximately 80 participants from 36 countries and a number of organisations participated in this seminar organised by the Council of Europe. General Rapporteur was IAU Secretary General Eva Egron Polak. Recommendations were addressed to public authorities in States Party to the European Cultural Convention and some directly to Ministers in Bergen:

Public responsibility for higher education and research should be understood as a multidimensional concept that includes the establishment and maintenance of the required legal

infrastructure, elaboration of policy, provision of funds and the further development of the social dimension, to meet current and future needs of the Knowledge Society.

Public responsibilities should be exercised throughout the European Higher Education Area with due regard for the need of higher education and research institutions and systems to act freely and efficiently in the pursuit of their mission.

For universities to meet society's requirements for research and respond to public interests, public authorities must provide adequate funds and, together with the research community, design policies to regulate conditions under which private resources can best be used.

To respond to increased pressure for cost-sharing in higher education, public authorities should stimulate further research and debate on the impact of different instruments such as tuition fees, student grants, bursaries and loans etc. on aspects such as equality of opportunity, system efficiency, social cohesion and public funding as a basis for future action.

Public authorities should ensure that appropriate bridges exist between higher education and the world of work. Such bridging includes a coherent qualifications framework at national and European levels, transparent mechanisms for recognition of qualifications and quality assurance, and two-way information flows between the labour market and higher education.

Public authorities should establish cost-effective quality assessment mechanisms that are built on trust, give due regard to internal quality development processes, have the right to independent decision-making and abide by agreed-upon principles.

Recommendations to the Bergen Ministerial Conference:

- Ministers were asked to affirm their commitment to making equal opportunity in higher education a fundamental building block of the European Higher Education Area. They were asked to undertake actions that will allow the development of systemic and institutional responses to enable all individuals to realise their full potential.
- Ministers were also asked to acknowledge that funding, motivating and stimulating the development of higher education and research is as important a part of public responsibility. Ministers were asked to stimulate a comprehensive analysis of various approaches that would lead to increased funds for higher education and research, meeting equity, effectiveness and efficiency objectives as well as those of quality and autonomy.

Building a Knowledge Society that is democratic, inclusive, equitable and competitive is a shared responsibility in which an examination of the responsibilities of public authorities must be completed by an analysis of the public responsibility of all other stakeholders. Participants urged that such corresponding analyses be undertaken as well.

4.6 “Designing policies for mobile students”, Noordwijk, 10-12 October 2004

Approximately 130 participants from 30 countries and a number of organisations participated in this seminar organised by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. General Rapporteur was professor Pavel Zgaga.

The participants in the seminar concluded that structural cross-border cooperation between institutions and high-quality mobility of students and staff make an indispensable contribution to creating a well-educated and internationally oriented work-force and strengthen the intellectual, cultural, social, scientific and technological dimensions of the European knowledge-based society. When designing policies to facilitate and further mobility, this is to be taken into account. A

sustained and continued attention to the implementation of already agreed policies and principles in the field of student mobility is required.

Regarding external quality assurance and requirements by national governments the seminar appealed to national authorities to standardise criteria or mutually recognise each other's accreditation decisions and organise trust.

To increase the transparency of Europe's more than 3000 institutions of higher education, a pilot for a *European typology of institutions* had been started with the purpose of trying out a draft typology. The seminar asked that the pilot should take into consideration related work carried out by the UNESCO-OECD activity on Guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education. The results of this pilot study could be reported to the Bologna Process.

The *portability of students' loans and grants* is an important instrument in the promotion of mobility. The various systems of student support are basically designed for the students that study in their country of origin. Portability of student grants ought to be studied more closely within an EU context. This should be done in relation to, among other things, fees and maintenance costs.

The participants in the seminar concluded that a European fund for student support could reduce some obstacles to mobility, and that a network of student support experts from the countries participating in the Bologna Process should be founded.

Participants affirmed that issues relating to the portability of student support are a complex area, where education policy as well as income politics and social welfare are intertwined, and with national and supra-national interests at stake. In the light of the wish to increase mobility, student support is an important subject to be taken up in the context of the European Union, because of the tension between national policies and EU jurisprudence. These legal issues are linked with political, social and administrative issues. The participants called on all parties involved to take the necessary steps to reach a satisfactory solution for the problems identified.

4.7 “The employability and its links to the objectives of the Bologna Process”, Bled, 22-23 October 2004

Approximately 115 participants from 24 countries and a number of organisations attended the seminar. General Rapporteur was Martina Vukasović.

This was the first Bologna Seminar to discuss employability. One major step forward was that the participants agreed on a definition on the term “employability”:

A set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.

The participants concluded that there are problems in many countries getting acceptance for the first degree in the labour market. This implies that there are challenges in fulfilling the Bologna action line *Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate*. It is a goal in the Bologna Process that the degree awarded on completion of the first cycle shall be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification.

To achieve the goal of strengthening employability, several measures must be taken. Employers, trade unions and professional associations must be involved in the development and creation of

new types of qualifications and new curricula. The BFUG must strengthen the participation of these stakeholders.

The seminar participants also recommended that the notion of employability is included as a reference point in further Bologna Seminars and other activities, in particular those dealing with learning outcomes and an overarching framework of qualifications for the EHEA.

4.8 “New Generations of Policy Documents and Laws for Higher Education: Their Thrust in the Context of the Bologna Process”, Warsaw, 4-6 November 2004

The conference was attended by 40 international participants from 22 different countries and from partner organisations, 20 participants from Poland, and two observers from the USA. The main objective was to analyse how laws on higher education are reflecting progress towards the objectives of the Bologna Process. Professor Hans de Wit served as General Rapporteur.

Presentations were made on the theme of the conference from 11 different national perspectives, followed by a session featuring comparative perspectives on policy and legislative initiatives for higher education. A comparative analysis was also presented. The presentations and analysis provided relevant information on legal reforms in Europe in the context of the Bologna Process.

Notwithstanding the fact that different countries are at different stages of implementation, there was agreement that most countries have adopted, or are in the process of adopting, legislation enabling achievement of the Bologna goals in the agreed timeframe. At the same time it was recognised that national agendas play a key role in the implementation of the Bologna objectives and in the elaboration of new higher education legislation. Current reforms in national higher education legislation cannot be attributed solely to the Bologna Process. Some were already initiated prior to 1999; in other cases the Bologna Declaration is used as a ‘lever’ for national policy and to solve national problems.

Following the presentations and discussions, one could observe on the one hand a *growing convergence* in line with the Bologna goals (regarding degree systems, credits and accreditation), and on the other hand a *continuation of diversity* that will remain. The latter might even be reinforced, in that higher education is still a national responsibility and is defined foremost by national contexts, constraints and priorities.

Participants agreed that the approach to higher education legislation reform by general framework laws is most appropriate. Regulating in detail not only results in inflexibility, it is also in contradiction with the trend to deregulate and provide more autonomy. While legislation is an important aspect of implementation, it cannot take the place of commitment, interaction and trust among the different stakeholders.

It was recommended to the participating countries in the Bologna Process that they implement general framework legislation for higher education instead of detailed regulatory legislation. It was also recommended that they translate their national policy documents and higher education legislation into English or another major language of the EHEA.

It was recommended to the Bologna Follow-Up Group that it supplements the present stock-taking exercise with one on higher education legislation. This will help to better understand the legal implications of the Bologna Process in different countries, to get a better picture of convergence and diversity in European higher education, to exchange experiences and expertise, and to assist those countries still in the preparatory stage of legislative reforms.

4.9 “Bachelor’s Degree: What Is It?” St. Petersburg, 25-26 November 2004

The seminar was jointly organised by the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, the Committee for Education and Science of the State Duma, St. Petersburg State University and the Council of Europe. It was attended by around 150 participants from Russia and 30 participants from 13 other countries. The working languages were English and Russian. General Rapporteur was Sverre Rustad from the BFUG Secretariat.

The seminar had a double focus, in that part of the discussion was concerned with general characteristics of the bachelor’s degree and the benefits and possible disadvantages of a two- (three-) cycle structure, whereas another part was concerned more particularly with the situation in Russia. In the general part, employability and the relation to the labour market was a special theme. There was consensus that bachelor programmes should have a balance between generic and specialist skills, with an emphasis on learning to learn, and that the relations between higher education institutions and employers need to be strengthened. Not least is this the case in Russia, where the bachelor’s degree is not well known or accepted and where employers tend to favour traditional integrated programmes. In general more emphasis should be placed on stimulating the creative development of the student, and all bachelor programmes should therefore be research-based.

With regard to the situation in Russia, focus was on the extent and pace of change. It was argued that moving too quickly would risk throwing over board valuable elements of the existing system and thus reducing standards. At present the two-cycle degree structure is voluntary for the institutions, and there were different views on whether it should be made obligatory. On the other hand there seemed to be a general consensus that the bachelor’s degree in Russia should have a duration of 4 years due to the low entry level (11 years of school) compared with many other countries.

The following conclusions and recommendations were submitted to the BFUG:

- Taking into account the significant role played by the humanities and social sciences in curricula in terms of ensuring generic competences, and at the same time widely divergent views and practices concerning the number of credits allocated to the humanities in different study programmes, the seminar recommended to set up a special working group for the study of the role to be played by the humanities in higher education.
- Proceeding from the general agreement that bachelor-level programmes are meant to ensure sufficiently broad competences, programme designers are recommended to pay special attention to interdisciplinary and field-specific modules. Based on existing descriptors the structure of competences would then be as follows: generic competences, interdisciplinary competences, field-specific competences and subject-specific competences.
- In designing bachelor-level study programmes for higher education, the designers should pay more attention to labour-market requirements and challenges.
- It was recommended to amend the position taken by the Bologna Declaration to make it clear that access to doctoral studies shall require a completed master’s degree.

4.10 “Improving the recognition system of degrees and study credit points in the European Higher Education Area”, Riga, 3-4 December 2004

This seminar, organised by the Latvian authorities in co-operation with the Council of Europe, was attended by approximately 160 participants from 30 different countries and from partner organisations. Professor Stephen Adam served as General Rapporteur.

Many Bologna action lines have direct links to recognition. Without effective processes for recognition, important Bologna objectives will not be achieved. However, the Riga seminar indicated what can be achieved and generated a strong agreement about the way forward.

Ministers in Bergen were urged to:

- Amend national legislation to incorporate the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and adopt effective measures to ensure their practical implementation at all appropriate levels;
- Recognise that reaching the goals of the Bologna Process requires defining ‘recognition’ as positioning a holder of a foreign qualification in the host country’s education or employment system, and therefore to:
 - emphasise the benefits of national qualifications frameworks and endorse the creation of the overarching framework of qualifications for the EHEA on the grounds of their contribution to recognition, mobility and transparency;
 - promote an intensive national and international dialogue, informed by ENICs and NARICS, to exchange good practice.
- As a matter of urgency, launch a campaign to convey accurate and pertinent information on the Bologna Process to other parts of the world.

At the level of ENIC and NARIC networks it was recommended that:

- The existing cooperation between recognition and quality assurance networks should be further strengthened. It needs to be acknowledged that recognition and quality assurance are intimately related;
- It is explored how the emerging qualifications frameworks and usage of learning outcomes can be applied for improving recognition practices, including the recognition of lifelong learning and other non-traditional qualifications, and how they relate to the legal framework of the Lisbon Recognition Convention;
- The networks take an active part in informing on the Bologna Process in the wider world, using their long-standing contacts and information exchange channels.

At national level it was recommended that:

- Effective measures are taken in respect of non-traditional providers to offer them access to state recognition procedures and ongoing quality assurance monitoring.
- The contribution of learning outcomes to recognition in higher education and lifelong learning is acknowledged and a strategy for their implementation developed.
- Steps are taken to monitor the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, with a view to encouraging fair and equal treatment of applicants within countries.

In *higher education institutions* steps should be taken to develop institutional recognition policies and practices and to disseminate information on the legal framework for recognition and best practice at the level of faculties and study programmes.

4.11 “The Framework of Qualifications of the EHEA”, Copenhagen, 13-14 January 2005

Approximately 120 representatives from 28 countries participated in this seminar, organised by the Danish authorities. General Rapporteur was Sjur Bergan, Council of Europe. The purpose of the seminar was to discuss the report of a Working Group appointed by the BFUG to develop an overarching qualifications framework for the EHEA as a central element in the follow-up of the Berlin Ministerial Conference, see Ch. 6 of this report. The participants recommended:

That Ministers, meeting in Bergen in May 2005

- adopt the overarching framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area as proposed by the BFUG Working Group;
- mandate the BFUG to elaborate criteria and procedures for a self-certification system for national frameworks of qualifications where quality assurance is included and to submit it for final adoption to the Ministerial meeting in 2007;
- delegate responsibility for the maintenance and development of the overarching framework to the BFUG and any successor executive structure;
- commit to elaborating national frameworks of qualifications compatible with the overarching framework for qualifications of the EHEA by 2010;
- commit to taking adequate account of the overarching framework for qualifications of the EHEA, as well as to consulting all parties to the Bologna Process, in any future development of frameworks for other parts of the education system.

That public authorities responsible for national education systems

- in elaborating and maintaining their national qualifications be guided by and ensure compatibility with the overarching framework for qualifications of the EHEA;
- involve all relevant stakeholders both within and outside of higher education;
- identify a nationally agreed set of purposes for their national qualifications framework;
- ensure that their national framework link academic standards, quality assurance systems and public understanding of recognised qualifications;
- ensure that the description of each qualification within their national framework of qualifications explicitly states:
 - to which further qualification(s) that particular qualification gives access;
 - the relationship of the qualification in question to the three generic cycles of the overarching framework;
- ensure that their national framework associate the relevant transparency instruments, such as the Diploma Supplement, ECTS and Europass;
- ensure that their national framework facilitate learning paths that integrate non-formal and informal learning as well as various entry and exit points.

That higher education institutions as well as students and their organisations continue to contribute as active stakeholders to the development and maintenance of national frameworks of qualifications as well as the overarching framework for qualifications of the EHEA.

That ENIC and NARIC Networks and individual recognition centres provide clear and adequate information on the overarching framework for qualifications of the EHEA as well as on national frameworks to recognition networks and centres and higher education institutions in other parts of the world.

That appropriate international bodies review current transparency instruments, such as ECTS and the Diploma Supplement, in the light of the development of qualifications frameworks.

4.12 “The social dimension of the European Higher Education Area and world-wide competition”, Paris 27-28 January 2005

The seminar was organised by the French Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research in co-operation with ESIB – The National Unions of Students in Europe. General Rapporteur was Vera Stastna, Chair of the Council of Europe’s Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research. There were more than 180 participants from 33 European countries and 2 countries outside Europe (Australia and Argentina).

The General Rapporteur observed that the social dimension will be one of the values which would make the EHEA truly European. The social dimension includes all provisions needed for having equal access, progress and completion of higher education. Enlarging the existing gap between different parts of Europe should be avoided, and at the national level the gap between those who benefit from higher education and come back later in life and those who never make use of this possibility should be closed.

Participants agreed that:

- strengthening the social dimension of higher education is one of the conditions for making real a knowledge society, which implies increasing the number of graduates from higher education through lifelong learning;
- social and economic background should not be a barrier to access to higher education, successful completion of studies and meaningful employment after graduation;
- taking into account the social dimension of the EHEA both at the national level and the European level contributes to the creation of a coherent, balanced and competitive European Higher Education Area.

Participants recommended that:

- the process of building the European Higher Education Area prove its social dimension and set it as a priority;
- in that perspective, a specific analytical survey, built on existing initiatives and under the authority of the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG), focused on the social and economic situation of students, including obstacles to access and mobility and taking into account the lifelong learning objectives, should be carried out by 2007 in all the participating countries in the Bologna Process;
- decisions on financing in the European Higher Education Area take into account social cohesion objectives regarding access to higher education, living and studying conditions, financial and material support, services for students such as information, guidance and advice, and also mobility support at the European level and the national level alike;
- quality assurance mechanisms which are developing both internally and externally integrate as a must the social dimension in all aspects dealing with living and studying conditions and relate it to the multiple purposes of higher education and long-term results;
- beyond Bergen, in order to make the social dimension of the EHEA a reality, it is vital to secure the full involvement and the working together of national authorities, higher education institutions and students, which is the only guarantee for effectiveness.

4.13 “Doctoral Programmes for the European Knowledge Society” Salzburg, 3-5 February 2005

270 participants from 35 countries and from partner organisations participated in this seminar, organised by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, and the European University Association.

From the discussions in Salzburg a consensus emerged on a set of ten basic principles:

- 1 The core component of doctoral training is the advancement of knowledge through original research. At the same time it is recognised that doctoral training must increasingly meet the needs of an employment market that is wider than academia.
- 2 Embedding in institutional strategies and policies: universities as institutions need to assume responsibility for ensuring that the doctoral programmes and research training they offer are designed to meet new challenges and include appropriate professional career development opportunities.

- 3 The importance of diversity: the rich diversity of doctoral programmes in Europe, including joint doctorates, is a strength which has to be underpinned by quality and sound practice.
- 4 Doctoral candidates as early stage researchers: should be recognised as professionals – with commensurate rights - who make a key contribution to the creation of new knowledge.
- 5 The crucial role of supervision and assessment: in respect of individual doctoral candidates, arrangements for supervision and assessment should be based on a transparent contractual framework of shared responsibilities between doctoral candidates, supervisors and the institution (and where appropriate including other partners).
- 6 Achieving critical mass: doctoral programmes should seek to achieve critical mass and should draw on different types of innovative practice being introduced in universities across Europe, bearing in mind that different solutions may be appropriate to different contexts.
- 7 Duration: doctoral programmes should operate within an appropriate duration in time (three to four years full-time as a rule).
- 8 The promotion of innovative structures: to meet the challenge of interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills.
- 9 Increasing mobility: doctoral programmes should seek to offer geographical as well as interdisciplinary and intersectoral mobility and international collaboration within an integrated framework of cooperation between universities and other partners.
- 10 Ensuring appropriate funding: the development of quality doctoral programmes and the successful completion by doctoral candidates require appropriate and sustainable funding.

Participants recommended to the BFUG that the ten principles outlined above should provide the basis for the further work of the BFUG and thus feed into the drafting of the Bergen Communiqué, and that the Ministers in Bergen should then call on the EUA through its members to prepare a report to be presented to Ministers in 2007, under the responsibility of the BFUG, on the further development of these principles.

4.14 “Cooperation between accreditation committees/agencies”, Warsaw, 14-16 February 2005

58 participants from 23 countries participated in this seminar, organised by the Polish State Accreditation Committee in collaboration with the Polish Ministry of National Education and Sports. The majority of the participants were representatives from quality assurance/ accreditation agencies. Ministries, partner organisations and higher education institutions were also represented.

General Rapporteur was professor Włodzimierz Siwiński and Mieczysław W. Socha from the Polish State Accreditation Committee.

The Seminar focused on experiences in quality assurance in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, and Spain.

The discussions showed that there has been a major development in quality assurance and accreditation since the beginning of the Bologna Process. They also showed that the speed and direction of the development were somewhat different from country to country. There are major challenges in mutual recognition of degrees and study programs.

Participation of major stakeholders was also discussed. The discussions showed, for instance, that there were major differences concerning what would be seen as adequate student involvement. The seminar did not manage to bring the discussion on this item to any conclusion.

Although not unanimously, the seminar participants recommended that:

- 1 Mutual recognition of education and diplomas can be supported by mutual acquaintance of quality assurance systems. Mutual recognition of accreditation decisions should be encouraged.
- 2 As a necessary condition of building an agreement between participating countries of the Bologna Process, it should ensure and provide for:
 - o regular, mutual sharing of information about education and accreditation systems,
 - o mutual visits, joint training of experts,
 - o promotion of mutual mechanisms of recognition,
 - o promotion of similarities in higher education systems.
- 3 The national system of accreditation should apply for all higher education institutions established within each country. Preference should be given to accreditation committees or agencies established or recognised under the laws of the state. A higher education institution might apply for accreditation from an accreditation body from outside the country. This external quality assurance can be accepted and recognised if the external accreditation body is recognised by national authorities.

The EU Commission had reservations concerning the third recommendation, advocating that higher education institutions should have the freedom of choice of accreditation agency as long as the agency chosen is listed in the European Register of Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agencies.

5 NATIONAL REPORTS 2004-2005

Leading up to the Berlin Conference in September 2003, the participating countries were asked to present country reports. It was suggested that the reports should be organised along the six action lines of the Process from the Bologna Declaration and the three from the Prague Communiqué. The reports are available at <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no>. They are different in length and contents, ranging from 1 to 33 pages. The level of detail varies, with some pitched at the level of individual institutions, while others focus on the national picture.

5.1 A common outline

The BFUG decided that National Reports should also be produced before Bergen. The National Reports offer the opportunity for the participating countries to present information which complements other data sources. The respondents were asked to give information on planned reforms as well as on what had already been accomplished. The reports should have a special focus on the challenges of the Process.

To ensure that the National Reports would have the same basic structure, it was recommended that they should be organised under a standard set of headlines. As Ministers in Berlin stressed items of special concern, transversal to the action lines, and given the need to coordinate with other tasks assigned by them, especially the stocktaking exercise, the proposed headlines for the 2005 National Reports derived mostly from the Berlin Communiqué. In order to avoid duplicated efforts, the Working Group on Stocktaking included a number of questions in the template for the National Reports.

5.2 National Reports from all participating countries

All participating countries have produced National Reports based on the prescribed common structure. As requested they contain information on planned reforms as well as on what has already been accomplished. Information relating directly to the stocktaking has been fed into the stocktaking process. The Stocktaking Report (see chapter 9) gives an overview of results in the participating countries for the three priority action lines. The National Reports give more information and can be read as complementary to the Stocktaking Report.

All National Reports are available at <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no>.

6 AN OVERARCHING FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE EHEA

In Berlin, Ministers encouraged participating countries to elaborate a framework of comparable and compatible qualifications for their higher education systems, describing qualifications in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile. They also undertook to elaborate an overarching framework of qualifications for the EHEA.

Meeting in March 2004, the BFUG approved the establishment of a Working Group to coordinate the work on the development of an overarching framework of qualifications for the EHEA. The Working Group was joined by a number of experts.

The report from the Working Group was presented in December 2004 for discussion at the Bologna Follow-up Seminar in Copenhagen in January 2005, cf. chapter 4, section 4.11. The Working Group has since revised the report and presented it to the BFUG in March 2005 for advice to the Ministerial Conference in Bergen.

The Working Group has drawn upon work done by others, especially that of the Joint Quality Initiative who formulated and further developed the “Dublin Descriptors”. It has drawn on experiences from countries that have already established qualifications frameworks for their national higher education systems, and conducted a comparative study of existing national frameworks. It has also consulted other organisations and taken into account other policy areas, including those within the Copenhagen Process and the wider Lisbon Agenda.

6.1 Conclusions

The report builds on the assumption that qualifications are primarily a matter of national concern and articulated in national qualifications frameworks, and that such national frameworks can be inter-connected through linkage to the overarching framework of the EHEA. The Working Group and its experts provide a series of recommendations and proposals regarding the framework for qualifications of the EHEA, and advice on good practice in developing national (or equivalent) frameworks.

It is recommended that:

- the framework for qualifications in the EHEA should be an overarching framework with a high level of generality, consisting of three main cycles, with additional provision for a short cycle within the first cycle.
- the framework should include cycle descriptors in the form of generic qualification descriptors that can be used as reference points. *It is proposed that:*
 - the Dublin Descriptors are adopted as the cycle descriptors for the framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. They offer generic statements of typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with awards that represent the end of each Bologna cycle.
- responsibility for the maintenance and development of the framework rests with the Bologna Follow-up Group and any successor executive structures established by the Ministers for the furtherance of the EHEA.
- all signatories will complete the self-certification process by 2010.

It is proposed that:

- *guidelines* for the range of ECTS typically associated with the completion of each cycle include:
 - Short cycle (within the first cycle) qualifications may typically include / be represented by approximately 120 ECTS credits;
 - First cycle qualifications may typically include / be represented by 180-240 ECTS credits;
 - Second cycle qualifications may typically include / be represented by 90-120 ECTS credits, with a minimum of 60 credits at the level of the 2nd cycle;
 - Third cycle qualifications do not necessarily have credits associated with them.

- *criteria* for the verification that national frameworks are compatible with the EHEA framework include:
 - The national framework for higher education qualifications and the body or bodies responsible for its development are designated by the national ministry with responsibility for higher education
 - There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications in the national framework and the cycle qualification descriptors of the European framework
 - The national framework and its qualifications are demonstrably based on learning outcomes and the qualifications are linked to ECTS credits
 - The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national framework are transparent
 - The national QA system refers to the national framework of qualifications and is consistent with the Berlin Communiqué and any subsequent communiqués agreed by Ministers in the Bologna Process
 - The national framework, and any alignment with the European framework, is referenced in all Diploma Supplements
 - The responsibilities of the domestic parties to the national framework are clearly determined and published

- each country should certify the compatibility of its own framework with the overarching framework, and that details of this self-certification be published, with the following *procedures* used for self-certification of compatibility:
 - The competent national body/bodies shall self-certify the compatibility of the national framework with the European framework
 - The self-certification process shall include the stated agreement of the QA bodies in the country in question recognised through the Bologna Process
 - The self-certification shall involve international experts
 - The self-certification and the evidence supporting it shall be published and shall address separately each of the criteria set out
 - The ENIC/NARIC network shall maintain a public listing of States that have completed the self-certification process
 - The completion of the self-certification process shall be noted on Diploma Supplements issued subsequently

- National frameworks shall include awards that integrate recognition of non-formal and informal learning experiences.

Advice on good practice to facilitate the creation of successful new national frameworks of qualifications includes:

- the development and review process for producing good national frameworks are most effective when they involve all relevant stakeholders both within and outside higher education. Higher education frameworks naturally link to vocational education and training and secondary education and as such are best viewed and treated as a national initiative. This

also makes possible the inclusion of, or links to, other areas of education and training outside higher education.

- a framework for higher education qualifications should identify a clear and nationally agreed set of purposes. Frameworks for higher education qualifications benefit from the inclusion of cycles and /or levels, and articulation with outcome-focused indicators and/or descriptors of qualifications. Higher education frameworks of qualifications can also benefit from being directly linked to credit accumulation and transfer systems.
- frameworks for higher education qualifications should explicitly link academic standards, national and institutional quality assurance systems, and public understanding of the place and level of nationally recognised qualifications. Public confidence in academic standards requires public understanding of the achievements represented by different higher education qualifications and titles.

The report stresses the importance of national authority in the development of national frameworks, and the importance of considering the EHEA framework, the Dublin descriptors, and the guideline ranges on ECTS credits as ‘reference points’.

6.2 The framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area

	Outcomes	ECTS Credits
Short cycle (within the first cycle) qualification	<p>Qualifications that signify completion of the higher education short cycle (within the first cycle) are awarded to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon general secondary education and is typically at a level supported by advanced textbooks; such knowledge provides an underpinning for a field of work or vocation, personal development, and further studies to complete the first cycle; • can apply their knowledge and understanding in occupational contexts; • have the ability to identify and use data to formulate responses to well-defined concrete and abstract problems; • can communicate about their understanding, skills and activities, with peers, supervisors and clients; • have the learning skills to undertake further studies with some autonomy. 	Approximately 120 ECTS credits
First cycle qualification	<p>Qualifications that signify completion of the first cycle are awarded to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education, and is typically at a level that, whilst supported by advanced textbooks, includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront of their field of study; • can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and have competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study; • have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgments that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues; • can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences; • have developed those learning skills that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy. 	Typically include 180-240 ECTS credits

Second cycle qualification	<p>Qualifications that signify completion of the second cycle are awarded to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with the first cycle, and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context; • can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study; • have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgments with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgments; • can communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously; • have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous. 	Typically include 90-120 ECTS credits, with a minimum of 60 credits at the level of the 2 nd cycle
Third cycle qualification	<p>Qualifications that signify completion of the third cycle are awarded to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field; • have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity; • have made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, some of which merits national or international refereed publication; • are capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas; • can communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise; • can be expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement in a knowledge based society. 	Not specified

6.3 Considerations by the Bologna Follow-up Group

The Bologna Follow-up Group discussed the revised report from the Working Group in its meeting in March 2005 and after further discussions in April decided to advise Ministers that they may adopt the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA, comprising three cycles (including the possibility of shorter higher education linked to the first cycle), generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences, and credit ranges in the first and second cycles.

The BFUG also advised Ministers to commit themselves to elaborating national frameworks for qualifications compatible with the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA by 2010, and to have started work on this by 2007.

Furthermore, the BFUG advised Ministers to underline the importance of complementarity between the overarching framework for the EHEA and the broader European framework of qualifications for lifelong learning encompassing general education as well as vocational education and training as it is now being developed within the European Union. Ministers may ask the European Commission to consult all parties to the Bologna Process as work progresses.

7 EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN QUALITY ASSURANCE

In the Berlin Communiqué, Ministers committed themselves to supporting further development of quality assurance at institutional, national and European level. They stressed the need to develop mutually shared criteria and methodologies for quality assurance. They also stressed that the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself and that this provides the basis for real accountability of the academic system within the national quality framework.

Ministers agreed that by 2005 national quality assurance systems should include:

- A definition of the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved.
- Evaluation of programmes or institutions, including internal assessment, external review, participation of students and the publication of results.
- A system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures.
- International participation, co-operation and networking.

At the European level, Ministers called upon ENQA through its members, in cooperation with the EUA, EURASHE and ESIB, to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance, to explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance and/or accreditation agencies or bodies, and to report back through the Follow-up Group to Ministers in 2005. Due account should be taken of the expertise of other quality assurance associations and networks.

7.1 The ENQA Report

The report from ENQA - the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education - was sent to the BFUG on 21 February 2005. *The main results and recommendations of the report are:*

- There will be European standards for internal and external quality assurance, and for external quality assurance agencies.
- European quality assurance agencies will be expected to submit themselves to a cyclical review within five years.
- There will be an emphasis on subsidiarity, with reviews being undertaken nationally where possible.
- A European register of quality assurance agencies will be established.
- A European Register Committee will act as a gatekeeper for the inclusion of agencies in the register.
- A European Consultative Forum for Quality Assurance in Higher Education will also be established.

When the recommendations are implemented:

- The consistency of quality assurance across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) will be improved by the use of agreed standards and guidelines.
- Higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies across the EHEA will be able to use common reference points for quality assurance.
- The register will make it easier to identify professional and credible agencies.
- Procedures for the recognition of qualifications will be strengthened.
- The credibility of the work of quality assurance agencies will be enhanced.
- The exchange of viewpoints and experiences among agencies and other key stakeholders (including higher education institutions, students and labour market representatives) will be enhanced through the work of the European Consultative Forum for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.
- The mutual trust among institutions and agencies will grow.
- The move toward mutual recognition will be assisted.

7.2 European standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions

1 Policy and procedures for quality assurance:

Institutions should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards. They should also commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work. To achieve this, institutions should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available. They should also include a role for students and other stakeholders.

2 Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards:

Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards.

3 Assessment of students:

Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.

4 Quality assurance of teaching staff:

Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved in the teaching of students are qualified and competent with regard to teaching. The methods and procedures for ensuring that this is the case should be available to those undertaking external reviews, and commented upon in reports.

5 Learning resources and student support:

Institutions should ensure that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered.

6 Information systems:

Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities.

7 Public information:

Institutions should regularly publish up-to-date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards they are offering.

7.3 European standards for the external quality assurance of higher education

1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures:

External quality assurance procedures should take into account the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

2 Development of external quality assurance processes:

The aims and objectives of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed, by all those responsible (including higher education institutions) and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used.

3 Criteria for decisions:

Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently.

4 Processes fit for purpose:

All external quality assurance processes should be designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them.

5 Reporting:

Reports should be published and should be written in a style which is clear and readily accessible to their intended readership. Any decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports should be easy for a reader to find.

- 6 *Follow-up procedures:*
Quality assurance processes which contain recommendations for action or which require a subsequent action plan, should have a predetermined follow-up procedure which is implemented consistently.
- 7 *Periodic reviews:*
External quality assurance of institutions and/or programmes should be undertaken on a cyclical basis. The length of the cycle and the review procedures to be used should be clearly defined and published in advance.
- 8 *System-wide analyses:*
Quality assurance agencies should produce from time to time summary reports describing and analysing the general findings of their reviews, evaluations, assessments etc.

7.4 European standards for external quality assurance agencies

- 1 *Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education:*
The external quality assurance of agencies should take into account the presence and effectiveness of the external quality assurance processes described in Part 2 of the European Standards and Guidelines.
- 2 *Official status:*
Agencies should be formally recognised by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis. They should comply with any requirements of the legislative jurisdictions within which they operate.
- 3 *Activities:*
Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or programme level) on a regular basis.
- 4 *Resources:*
Agencies should have adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organise and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes and procedures.
- 5 *Mission statement:*
Agencies should have clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement.
- 6 *Independence:*
Agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations and that the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders.
- 7 *External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies:*
The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available. These processes will normally be expected to include:
 - a self-assessment or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process;
 - an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and site visits as decided by the agency;
 - publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;
 - a follow-up procedure to review actions taken by the subject of the quality assurance process in the light of any recommendations contained in the report.
- 8 *Accountability procedures:*
Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

7.5 A European Register and a European Register Committee

The report proposes that a European register of quality assurance agencies should be established and that a European Register Committee should act as a gatekeeper for the inclusion of agencies in the register. The register will make it easier to identify professional and credible agencies, thus providing useful information to national quality assurance agencies and to institutions.

The report assumes that the European Register Committee will decide on admissions to the European Register. The proposal is to establish a light, non-bureaucratic construction with nine members nominated by ENQA, EUA, EURASHE, ESIB and other organisations representing employers, unions and professional organisations plus government representatives. The members are assumed to act in an individual capacity and not as mandated representatives of the nominating organisations. It is proposed that ENQA will perform secretarial duties for the committee. The European Register Committee should as one of its first implementation tasks formalise the ownership of the register. It is further suggested that the Committee will establish an independent appeals system. Legal advice should be sought by the organisations proposing to establish the European Register Committee *before* the Committee is established.

7.6 Considerations by the Bologna Follow-up Group

In its March 2005 meeting the BFUG decided to advise Ministers that the proposed standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the EHEA and the proposed model for peer review of quality assurance agencies may be introduced and tried out on a national basis in the participating countries.

The BFUG also welcomed the establishment of a European Register of quality assurance agencies based on national review and asked ENQA to develop rules and regulations for such a register. The BFUG advised Ministers that the practicalities of implementation of the Register and the Register Committee may be further developed by ENQA in cooperation with EUA, EURASHE and ESIB. Ministers may underline the importance of cooperation between nationally recognised agencies with a view to enhancing the mutual recognition of accreditation or quality assurance decisions.

8 RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND STUDY PERIODS

8.1 The Lisbon Recognition Convention

In the Berlin Communiqué, Ministers underlined the importance of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, which should be ratified by all countries participating in the Bologna Process, and called on the ENIC and NARIC networks along with the competent national authorities to further the implementation of the Convention. They also made recognition an element of the stocktaking exercise, see chapter 9 of this report.

Main points of the Lisbon Convention are:

- Holders of qualifications issued in one country shall have adequate access to assessment of these qualifications in another country.
- No discrimination shall be made on any ground such as the applicant's gender, race, colour, disability, language, religion, political opinion or national, ethnic or social origin.
- Each country shall recognise qualifications from other countries as similar to the corresponding qualifications in its own system unless there are substantial differences.
- All countries shall provide information on the institutions and programmes belonging to their higher education systems.
- All countries shall appoint a national information centre, one important task of which is to offer advice on the recognition of foreign qualifications.
- All countries shall encourage their higher education institutions to issue the Diploma Supplement to their students to facilitate recognition.

The national information centres co-operate through the ENIC Network (for the relation between ENIC and NARIC, see section 12.2.1).

In most participating countries, it is the responsibility of the higher education institutions to consider the inclusion of study periods from foreign institutions as elements in their own study programmes. It follows from the Lisbon Recognition Convention that the higher education institutions should recognise courses at Bologna partner institutions on equal terms with their own. Recognition decisions should be fair, fast and transparent, as a direct result of the comparability and transparency introduced by Bologna-related reforms.

The Riga seminar on recognition in December 2004 (see chapter 4, section 4.10) recommended that at the Bergen Conference the Ministers should be urged to amend national legislation to incorporate the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and adopt effective measures to ensure their practical implementation at all appropriate levels.

By April 2005, 31 of the 40 participating countries in the Bologna Process and all five applicant countries had ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention also implies acceptance of the subsidiary texts to the Convention, such as the *Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications* and the *Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education*.

8.2 Recognition of joint degrees

In Berlin, Ministers agreed to engage at the national level to remove legal obstacles to the establishment and recognition of joint degrees and to actively support the development and adequate quality assurance of integrated curricula leading to such degrees.

The Stockholm seminar on joint degrees in May 2004 (see chapter 4, section 4.1) was a follow-up of two previous seminars related to joint degrees. It was reported in Stockholm that many higher education institutions cooperate in developing and delivering joint study programmes and joint degrees, but that few joint diplomas were awarded, as most countries had not yet made explicit legal provision for the awarding of joint degrees and joint diplomas.

In June 2004, the Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region adopted a *Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees* as a subsidiary text to the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

The recommendation states that governments should review their legislation with a view to removing any legal obstacles to the recognition of joint degrees and introduce legal provisions that would facilitate such recognition. A joint degree is understood as referring to a higher education qualification issued jointly by at least two or more higher education institutions on the basis of a study programme developed and/or provided jointly by the 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 the joint qualification in question.

Competent recognition authorities should recognise foreign joint degrees unless they can demonstrate that there is a substantial difference between the joint degree for which recognition is sought and the comparable qualification within their own national higher education system. They should recognise these degrees with the greatest flexibility possible.

They may make recognition conditional on all parts of the study programme and/or the institutions providing the programme being subject to transparent quality assessment or being considered as belonging to the education system of one or more participating country.

In order to facilitate recognition, candidates earning joint degrees should be provided with a Diploma Supplement, and study programmes leading to joint degrees should make use of the ECTS system. The Diploma Supplement issued with a joint degree should clearly describe all parts of the degree, and it should clearly indicate the institutions and/or study programmes at which the different parts of the degree have been earned.

8.3 Considerations by the Bologna Follow-up Group

The BFUG has advised Ministers to urge participating countries that have not already done so to ratify the Lisbon Recognition Convention without delay. Ministers may commit themselves to ensuring the full implementation of its principles, and to incorporating them in national legislation as appropriate. Ministers may call on all participating countries to address recognition problems identified by the ENIC/NARIC networks. Ministers may 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.

Higher education institutions and others should improve recognition of prior learning including non-formal and informal learning for access to and as elements in higher education programmes. The development of national and European frameworks for qualifications may be an opportunity to further embed lifelong learning in higher education.

9 THE STOCKTAKING PROJECT

9.1 Introduction

At the Berlin meeting in September 2003, Ministers with responsibility for Higher Education agreed to the conduct of a stocktaking exercise, in order to establish the level of progress being made in the implementation of certain reforms within the European Higher Education Area. Specifically, the Berlin Communiqué stated:

With a view to the goals set for 2010, it is expected that measures will be introduced to take stock of progress achieved in the Bologna Process. A mid-term stocktaking exercise would provide reliable information on how the Process is actually advancing and would offer the possibility to take corrective measures, if appropriate.

Ministers charge the Follow-up Group with organising a stocktaking process in time for their summit in 2005 and undertaking to prepare detailed reports on the progress and implementation of the intermediate priorities set for the next two years:

- *quality assurance*
- *two-cycle system*
- *recognition of degrees and periods of studies*

In March 2004, the Follow-Up Group agreed to the establishment of a Working Group which would undertake this task. At the outset, the Working Group was anxious to build on many existing data resources; it consulted with partners such as the EUA, ESIB and EURYDICE in order to ensure that

- 1 the benchmarks did not repeat questions they intended to raise as part of their own surveys;
- 2 they (the partners) were willing to raise the questions with their constituents as part of their surveys;
- 3 in the event of similar questions being raised, it was agreed to share the results in order to build a complete picture of the benchmark.

As part of the preparations for the Berlin ministerial meeting in 2003, EURYDICE prepared a report called “*Focus on the Structure of Higher Education in Europe*”. Building on the success of the 2003 report, EURYDICE had planned a similar report for the 2005 Bergen meeting. The Working Group requested EURYDICE to extend their review beyond the 31 countries normally covered by the EURYDICE network in order to provide a uniform analysis of the European Higher Education Area. All 40 participating countries in the Bologna Process completed EURYDICE questionnaires in the required format.

Along with the material prepared by EURYDICE, the National Reports (cf. Chapter 5) represented the main source of information for the stocktaking exercise. The National Reports offered the opportunity for members to give more discursive or qualitative commentary on progress on the priority action lines. A series of benchmarks were developed which sought to measure progress on each of the three priority action lines. Based on an interpretation of the National Reports and EURYDICE questionnaires, scores were assigned to each country.

ESIB also pursued a number of issues on behalf of the Working Group. However, the scope to use the results of their survey was limited on the basis that it only covered some 32 countries. The Council of Europe provided the source for material on the Lisbon Recognition Convention. While the EUA did not directly contribute to the stocktaking, there are many issues in the *Trends IV* report which also surface in the stocktaking report.

It is important to note that with the diverse range of material presented to the Ministers at the Bergen meeting, it is quite possible that differences in outcomes may arise. Where this arises, it should be noted that the stocktaking exercise drew on a variety of data sources, representative of a broad stakeholder community.

9.2 Considerations by the Stocktaking Working Group

The analysis indicates that overall, participating countries have made good progress in the three priority action lines, and as such, real progress is being made in the work to establish the European Higher Education Area.

9.2.1 Good progress on Quality Assurance

In Berlin, Ministers acknowledged the importance of quality assurance in the establishment of the EHEA. More than half of the participating countries have quality assurance structures in place. Critically, almost half have systems built on the criteria of the Berlin Communiqué. International participation and networking feature in many of the systems. This evidence, combined with the consensus which underpinned the work of ENQA, augurs well for continued progress in this area.

However, this progress should not mask a deficit on quality assurance, and in particular the absence of student participation in quality assurance procedures. Four levels of participation were identified – governance structures, external review teams, consultation/ involvement during external reviews and involvement in internal evaluations – and less than 14% of participating countries have involvement at all four levels. This is also borne out by the EURYDICE analysis. In material provided by ESIB to the Working Group, ESIB noted that the majority of good practices on student participation are based on the individual and voluntary effort of higher education institutions.

The *EUA Trends IV* report identified as a challenge for the future the risk that excessive emphasis on the process could actually displace the end objectives of quality assurance, being the enhancement of quality. It is important, therefore, to view progress in this area as evidence of establishment of a system – it is not evidence that the culture of quality assurance has filtered through all strands of the higher education life. The ultimate success of this objective relies on the willingness of institutions, their staff and their students to embrace systematic quality assurance as central to their respective roles in the delivery of higher education.

9.2.2 Good progress on the Two-Cycle Degree System

The adoption of the two-cycle degree system is seen as critical to the future of the EHEA, and its implementation throughout the area is well underway. Already by 2005, at least 54% of the participating countries have the system in place on a wide scale, with a further 19% having it in place in a more limited capacity. More importantly, the percentage of students covered by the two-cycle degree system is also increasing. It is safe to predict that the objectives of this action line will be achieved by 2010. Access between cycles is available for all students in 42% of the participating countries; while some minor ‘structural’ or procedural problems exist in a further 28%.

It is on the issue of access, perhaps, that some controversy exists. In line with the terminology used in the Berlin Communiqué, access was defined in terms of the ‘right to apply for admission’ – the so-called Lisbon Recognition Convention meaning. However, ESIB in their submission to the Working Group looked at access in the meaning of “admission”. Transitional difficulties, and consequently, options for students looking to escalate between cycles, were subject to factors such as the need to undertake ‘bridging courses’ when moving between the university and the ‘non-university’ sector, as well as restrictions being placed on opportunities to progress to the next

cycle, including limits on numbers, enrolment exams and selection procedures. ESIB also cite restrictions on movement between different fields of study in different cycles and finally, tuition fees. Clearly, such analysis extends the definition of access into areas which could potentially create difficulty for stakeholders in many participating countries. It also extends the impacts of the Bologna Process into other public policy domains, many of which lie outside the remit of Ministers with responsibility for higher education. Equally, it is clear that any extension of the definition of access must be done with a clear vision of the issue to be addressed. Moreover, it should be done in a manner which can be agreed within the BFUG.

The *Trends IV* report (see chapter 12, section 12.5) highlights a key objective of the emerging two-cycle degree system. On completion of the first cycle, it is acknowledged that this should have different orientations, in order to accommodate a diversity of needs including academic, individual and labour market needs. It is a matter of concern that qualifications issued by authorities that have carried out a qualifications reform in accordance with the Bologna principles have failed to secure support and suffer from a '*lack of credibility among students and employers*'.

A process of engagement must be opened with social partners, and specifically employer representative organisations, to explain the developments within the EHEA and to make them receptive to the employability of bachelor graduates. This may also serve to illustrate the need for representatives other than from academia to participate within the governance and decision-making structures of the higher education system.

9.2.3 Good progress on Recognition of Degrees and Periods of Study

The ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention by 31 of the participating countries signals a genuine will to recognise foreign qualifications unless there is a substantial difference. Many of the graduates of 2005 will have the Diploma Supplement issued automatically and free of charge, and to the extent that it assists mobility, this is a welcome development. The continued development of ECTS as the 'common currency' will also facilitate mobility. This progress will undoubtedly assist the implementation of other complementary policy initiatives such as EUROPASS.

However, the analysis of the Working Group did not review certain issues such as the quality of the Diploma Supplement. Again, in its contribution, ESIB noted that not all countries followed the format as recommended by the UNESCO/ Council of Europe guidelines, and thus, this detracted from the usefulness of the document issued by the higher education institutions. Similarly, *Trends IV* illustrates a number of difficulties associated with the Diploma Supplement, including demands on students' records systems, costs of translation and the substantial effort to put the technology in place.

While many of the above may be classified as 'implementation difficulties', *Trends IV* also highlights some difficulties associated with recognition, which is the purpose of tools such as the Diploma Supplement and ECTS. For example, it highlights difficulties associated with foreign degrees, including the existence of a variety of validation procedures. It was also interesting to note that despite the existence of inter-institutional learning agreements, individual professors continued to question the acceptability of qualifications. While the level of awareness is increasing, ENIC/ NARICs remain underutilised in terms of co-operation with higher education institutions. All of these issues serve to illustrate that notwithstanding progress with regard to the structural dimension of recognition, a substantial body of work remains to be undertaken to convince all stakeholders to take the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention into the higher education institutions – it would seem that a disconnection exists between the aspirations

of Ministries to promote mobility and associated recognition and the exercise of academic autonomy by individual staff members.

Some of the issues identified by the Working Group, along with ESIB and the EUA, emphasise the need for progress on the emerging framework for European qualifications. The report of the Working Group for the European Qualification Framework highlights the contribution that it will play in assisting and facilitating recognition.

9.2.4 Some general considerations

Given the benchmarks developed, Ministers in Bergen can take satisfaction on three particular action lines. It is also important to note that it was not possible for this analysis to measure the scale or rate of progress, which has been dramatic, particularly in the case of late entrants to the Bologna Process. But the strength of the Bologna Process has been its voluntary and collaborative nature. Since the original declaration, an additional 11 countries have joined the Process, and it is likely that this will increase further. However, while increased membership brings richness in diversity to the Process, it emphasises the need to ensure consistency of progress – a chain is as strong as its weakest link. It would do a disservice to the vision of the Bologna Process to develop on the basis of a two- or three-tier speed model, and therefore, participating countries should be prepared to take responsibility to assist each other as we all move towards 2010. Some examples already exist, and the Council of Europe has played a strong role in assisting applicant countries. However, once in the Process, participating countries must be prepared to continue with this support through study visits, receipt of delegations etc. It is also important that a repository of information is built which would promote sharing of experiences and networking. Membership of the Bologna Process must mean more than the opportunity to visit other countries or institutions – it must serve as a catalyst of change, not only for the higher education institutions or the student, but for society in its widest context.

In the mandate given to the BFUG, Ministers requested the identification of possible corrective action where deficiencies were identified. The picture is a positive one, and while the Working Group identifies a series of recommendations, there is nothing new in them. For many countries, they formalise the acknowledged concerns which exist with any major reform process. Based on the report from the Working Group, the BFUG has recommended that action should be taken on a number of issues (see below).

9.3 Considerations by the Bologna Follow-up Group

The BFUG discussed the preliminary report of the Stocktaking Working Group in its April 2005 meeting. The BFUG noted that substantial progress has been made in the three priority areas. It is important to ensure that progress is consistent across all participating countries, and the BFUG will advise Ministers that there is a need for greater sharing of expertise to build capacity at both institutional and government level.

The BFUG noted that the two-cycle degree system is being implemented on a large scale, with more than half of the students being enrolled in it in most countries. However, there are still some obstacles to access between cycles. Ministers may see the need for greater dialogue, involving governments, institutions and social partners, to increase the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications, including posts within the public service.

The BFUG noted that almost all countries have made provision for a quality assurance system based on the criteria set out in the Berlin Communiqué and with a high degree of cooperation and networking. However, there is still progress to be made, in particular as regards student involvement and international cooperation. Higher education institutions may enhance the quality

of their activities through the systematic introduction of internal quality assurance mechanisms and a direct correlation of these to external quality assurance.

With reference also to the recommendations regarding the follow-up of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (see chapter 8, section 8.3), Ministers are recommended to draw up national action plans to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications.

Some doubts were raised at the BFUG meeting concerning elements in national scorecards, and the stocktaking Working Group was asked to look into these matters. The final decisions relating to the stocktaking report were delegated to the BFUG Board. The Board underlined that the methodology of the stocktaking project can be further developed and that national scorecards should be seen as progress charts and not as absolute measures. Comparison between participating countries would have limited value. The Board also made some further recommendations based on the report from the Working Group:

- Having regard to national competences, a process of formal engagement should be initiated with employer organisations at the national level. The objective of such engagement should be to communicate the process of reform, combined with ensuring the employability of bachelor graduates. This process of engagement should also take place at the European level;
- A Working Group may be established to prepare a report on the issues associated with equitable access, and its conclusion should, if possible, recommend a series of benchmarks to measure action in this area;
- The BFUG should encourage bilateral and multilateral support mechanisms to assist participating countries in the implementation of the various action lines of the Bologna Process;
- The stocktaking process should continue to report on progress for each Ministerial Conference. The process should be resourced appropriately, and mandated to address the actions lines as approved by the BFUG.

10 FIVE NEW PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

The criteria for admission of new participating countries (members) to the Bologna Process were set by the Berlin Communiqué:

Countries party to the European Cultural Convention shall be eligible for membership of the European Higher Education Area provided that they at the same time declare their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the Bologna Process in their own systems of higher education. Their applications should contain information on how they will implement the principles and objectives of the declaration.

10.1 Procedures and requirements

As applicant countries sought guidance on the procedures and requirements for joining the Bologna Process, a document explaining the requirements and procedures was developed by the BFUG Secretariat and approved by the BFUG Board in June 2004. The document was made available to interested parties at the Bologna-Bergen web site.

The purpose of this document was to meet the objective of providing guidance in a fair and transparent manner. It also consolidated the principles and action lines of the Bologna Process into a single document. The document made it clear that although the ten action lines are the main focus of participating countries, it is equally important to observe the underlying principles of the Bologna Process. The establishment of the European Higher Education Area can only be achieved by incorporating these principles in the higher education system of each country:

- International mobility of students and staff;
- Autonomous universities;
- Student participation in the governance of higher education;
- Public responsibility for higher education;
- The social dimension of the Bologna Process (also described as a transversal action line).

Applicant states were requested to confirm their respect for these principles in their applications. Regarding the ten action lines, interested parties were referred to the BFUG Work Programme 2004-2005. The deadline for applications was set to 31 December 2004.

As all participating countries were asked to produce a national report before the Bergen Ministerial Conference, applicant countries were asked to produce a report in a similar format, with a special focus on the three intermediate priorities. Regarding procedures for application, it was made known that the decision to accept new participating countries to the Bologna Process would be taken by the next Ministerial Conference. The role of the BFUG would be to make a recommendation, having satisfied itself of the credentials and commitment of the applicants.

Interested countries were asked to send an application to the Minister responsible for higher education in the host country of the next Ministerial Conference, with a copy to the BFUG Chair. The application, signed by the (national) Minister responsible for higher education, should declare the country's commitment to pursue and implement the principles and objectives of the Bologna Process in its own system of higher education.

10.2 Applications

By the 31 December 2004 deadline, the following states had applied for participation (membership) in the Bologna Process: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova and

Ukraine. All applications were in accordance with the prescribed procedure. After the deadline, Kosovo also applied.

10.2.1 Applicants party to the European Cultural Convention

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine are all party to the European Cultural Convention. All five countries have ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Ukraine started its preparations for joining the Bologna Process before Berlin. Considerable changes have since been made in legislation to adapt to the Bologna goals, and a number of seminars relating to the Process have been organised in cooperation with international partners, notably the Council of Europe, UNESCO-CEPES and the EUA. An international seminar in May 2004 gave strong support to the Ukrainian efforts.

Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia made known their intentions to join the Bologna Process at a Council of Europe Ministerial Conference for the countries of the South Caucasus in May 2004. Since then they have been working actively to adjust their legislation to the Bologna goals, and further seminars have been/will be organised in each country in cooperation with the Council of Europe.

Moldova announced its intention to join the Bologna Process in June 2004 and has since worked actively to prepare for participation, adjusting legislation in active dialogue with the national rectors' conference and organising seminars in cooperation with the Council of Europe.

For all five countries, Bologna has served as a model for reforms in their higher education systems. For all of them the Bologna Process also means a bridge to Europe. All the countries have sent reports giving the information asked for in a satisfactory manner. The necessary national framework for Bologna participation is in place.

Weak points can be found in all the applicant countries, notably old-fashioned teaching methods and possibly uneven standards due to weak national economies. Weak economies also have implications for the social dimension. Quality and quality assurance must be further developed. However, this does not differ from the situation before Berlin, where countries facing similar challenges were welcomed to the Bologna Process.

10.2.2 Applicants not party to the European Cultural Convention

Kazakhstan is not within the group of states that have ratified the European Cultural Convention. According to the criteria laid down in the Berlin Communiqué, the country is therefore not eligible for membership of the EHEA. However, as Kazakhstan is reforming its higher education system along the general lines of the Bologna Process, its interest in the Process is understandable. Organisers of Bologna Seminars may decide at their own discretion to invite representatives from Kazakhstani authorities and institutions.

International negotiations on the future status of *Kosovo* may start in 2005. In the present situation, Kosovo is not eligible for direct membership of the Bologna Process as it is not a state that has ratified the European Cultural Convention. With assistance from the Council of Europe, the EUA and other organisations, the higher education system in Kosovo has been reformed along the lines of the Bologna Process. For higher education in Kosovo, cooperation with European partners is very much needed for further development.

10.3 Considerations by the Bologna Follow-up Group

Based on the applications and reports received, the BFUG decided to advise Ministers in Bergen to welcome Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine as participating countries (members) in the Bologna Process.

11 2010 AND BEYOND

Under the Luxembourg Chair, the Follow-up Group has had preliminary discussions concerning 2010 and beyond, as the vision of the European Higher Education Area is gradually becoming a reality. It can now be seen that the EHEA will be built on the following structural elements:

- Within the overarching framework for the EHEA, all participating countries will have a national framework of qualifications based on three cycles in higher education, where the levels have a double function: to prepare the student for the labour market and for further competence building. Each level builds on the preceding level, and the qualification obtained will give access to higher levels.
- All participating countries will have national quality assurance arrangements implementing an agreed set of standards and guidelines for the EHEA.
- All higher education institutions in participating countries will recognise degrees and periods of studies according to the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

As first laid down in the Bologna Declaration, the rationale behind the Bologna Process has been to promote lasting employability for European citizens and the international competitiveness of the European higher education system. The Prague Summit has added a further dimension by supporting the idea that higher education should be considered a public good and that it will remain a public responsibility.

The social dimension of the Bologna Process is a constituent part of the EHEA and a necessary condition for its attractiveness and competitiveness. Higher education should be equally accessible to all, and students should be able to complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background.

Built on these fundamental objectives the European Higher Education Area will encompass the following principles:

- Public responsibility for higher education;
- Institutional autonomy;
- Participation of students in higher education governance;
- Cooperation and trust between the participating countries and organisations.

From an EU perspective, the Bologna Process fits into the broader Lisbon agenda, including the goal that the European education and training systems should become a “world quality reference” as stated by the Barcelona summit. In areas like quality assurance, recognition of degrees and study periods and the establishment of a European Qualifications Framework the European Commission plays both a supportive and a complementary role. In other policy areas the two directives on the mobility of students and researchers promote mobility across European higher education.

However, the Bologna Process has its own identity, as can be seen from the perception of the Process outside Europe. This also means that it should be able and willing to share its discoveries and experiences with those countries in its geographical proximity that are willing to engage in quality assurance, qualifications frameworks and descriptors, or curricula for a changed degree structure. In line with the organising principle of the Bologna Process, providing this type of assistance and, in a more general way, giving information is a communal effort made by all participants. In order to make European higher education attractive in other regions of the world, it is furthermore important to support universities that encourage quality in Europe and the perception of that quality outside Europe.

11.1 The governance of the Bologna Process

The Bologna Process started off as a process of inter-governmental cooperation, the Bologna Declaration having been signed by 29 ministers of education. However, from its inception the Process has relied heavily on the participation of the academic community and student representatives. It is thus based on cooperation and trust between the partners.

Moreover, the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO have taken part in the shaping and implementation of the Process. The European Commission has increasingly contributed to organising and supporting various activities and seminars through its programmes.

The Bologna Process is thus based on voluntary cooperation between different national systems overseen by the Bologna Follow-up Group, and involving a number of partners. There is no legally binding provision except for the Lisbon Recognition Convention, the arrangement being based on mutual trust. Participating countries have adapted their legislation to the principles and objectives of the Process, and higher education institutions are committed to implementing them. The European Higher Education Area consists of 40/45 individual systems.

However, developments in higher education will not stop in 2010. As the EHEA should be seen as a common framework for the time after 2010, Ministers may ask the Follow-up Group to explore appropriate arrangements needed to support the continuing development of the European Higher Education Area.

12 PARTICIPATING INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS

12.1 The European Commission

The Bologna process coincides with Commission policy in higher education supported through European programmes and notably Socrates-Erasmus. From an EU perspective, the Bologna process fits into the broader *Lisbon Strategy*, launched in March 2000. In March 2002 the European Council concluded that the European education and training systems should become a “*world quality reference*”. In March 2005, the Council confirmed that knowledge is at the heart of the Lisbon Strategy. A new Commission Communication “Mobilising the brainpower of Europe: enabling universities to make their full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy” of April 2005¹ will stimulate debate on how to enable universities to make their full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy.

From an EU perspective, there is an obvious link between the Bologna Process and the *Copenhagen process* on enhanced European co-operation in Vocational Education and Training, launched in December 2002. The Commission has taken several initiatives to establish synergies between the two processes in important fields such as transparency of qualifications (EUROPASS), credit transfer, quality assurance and the European Qualifications Framework.

12.1.1 Quality Assurance

The Commission has actively supported the realisation of the ENQA Mandate (cf Chapter 7) and the networking activities of ENQA.

The Commission adopted in October 2004 a proposal for a Parliament and Council *Recommendation* on further European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education². In this proposal, the Commission suggests giving universities the freedom to choose registered agencies according to their profile and calls upon Governments to accept assessments made by such agencies as a basis for funding and licensing decisions.

The Commission supports higher education institutions building up their own internal quality assurance capacity through pilot schemes, organised by the EUA. The Commission helps setting up *quality labels* in special highly internationalised fields, such as Engineering and Chemistry. The Commission also supports pilot projects on the evaluation of *Joint Masters*, both internally (EUA) and externally (ENQA). The pilot helps institutions to introduce internal quality assurance mechanisms, improve their quality levels and being better prepared for external evaluations. It has also demonstrated the need for strong university leadership and university autonomy in developing a quality culture.

12.1.2 Towards a European Qualifications Framework

The Commission supports initiatives enhancing the comparability and compatibility of qualifications and notably the university project “Tuning Educational Structures in Europe” in which professors from 135 universities seek to describe the content of qualifications in up to 25 different subject areas in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile. Templates with short descriptions of bachelor and master level competences in a first series of disciplines will be made public in springtime 2005 and will be made subject to an external validation process.

¹ COM (2005) 152 final, 20.04.2005

² COM(2004) 642 final Brussels, 12.10.2004

The Commission has supported the design of the overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area against which national frameworks would articulate cf. chapter 6.

As part of its Lisbon mandate, the Commission has started work on the design of a European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for Lifelong Learning, taking into account of the work done in the Bologna and Copenhagen context. A Commission Consultation Document on EQF will be published in June 2005.

12.1.3 Recognition of Degrees and Periods of Study

The Commissions has taken several initiatives to promote ECTS, including an ECTS Label for institutions which use ECTS in all first and cycle degree programmes.

In parallel, the institutions may apply for a Diploma Supplement label. EUROPASS integrates different transparency instruments developed for vocational training and brings them together into a single European Framework for Transparency of Qualifications and Competences, which includes the Diploma Supplement, used in higher education.

The Commission continues to support the NARIC Recognition Information network of credential evaluators, cooperating closely with the parallel network of ENIC centres coordinated by the Council of Europe and UNESCO-CEPES. The two networks have adopted an *ENIC/NARIC Charter*, outlining the Terms of Reference of a fully operational Recognition Information Centre. They have also established a list of *persistent recognition problems* to be addressed by the competent authorities.

12.1.4 Promotion of Mobility

The Commission will seek to increase mobility figures even further, based on the use of both public and private funding. The Commission supports activities aiming at mapping student and teacher mobility, eliminating obstacles to mobility and enabling the portability of national loans and grants. The proposal for a new Integrated Program for Lifelong Learning 2007-2013 (succeeding Socrates and Leonardo) aims at tripling the European mobility figures.

12.1.5 European Higher Education Area and European Research

In July 2003, the Commission adopted a Communication "Researchers in the European Research Area, One Profession, Multiple Careers"³, which recommends that doctoral programmes take into account broader needs of the labour market and integrate structured mentoring as an integral part. In March 2005, the Commission adopted the European Charter for Researchers⁴ which defines roles and responsibilities of researchers, including of doctoral candidates.

As a concrete step, the Commission has supported in 2004-2005 a pilot project examining the status of doctoral candidates, the functioning of doctoral programmes in Europe, ways to improve them and to promote pooling of resources in cross-border activities and programmes.

12.1.6 Promotion of the European Dimension in Higher Education

The Commission helps universities develop integrated study programmes through Socrates-Erasmus Curriculum Development Projects. The implementation of integrated programmes is supported through Socrates-Erasmus student and staff mobility and Intensive Programmes (like summer courses). Special support for the implementation of Joint Masters is provided as from 2004 through the programme Erasmus Mundus, with 36 joint master courses, involving 140 universities and more to come.

³ COM(2003) 436 final of 18.07.2003

⁴ COM (2005)576 final of 11.03.2005

12.1.7 Promoting the Attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area

The Commission will award up to 8000 scholarships to students and scholars from other continents and from Europe in the framework of the Erasmus Mundus programme. Through this programme, the Commission will also support a marketing strategy for European higher education, bringing European quality and distinctiveness higher up the attention scale of the best partners, students and scholars world-wide.

12.1.8 Stocktaking

The Commission, through the Eurydice Network, has helped undertake the stocktaking exercise (cf. chapter 9) in close cooperation with the Bologna Board and the Bologna Secretariat. The Commission also supported the EUA survey (Trends IV) and the student survey by ESIB.

12.1.9 Bologna Promotion, Seminars and Conferences

The Commission supports National Teams of Bologna Promoters, the production of Bologna information and a series of Bologna events, seminars and conferences, including the Glasgow Higher Education Convention of EUA and the Bergen Ministerial Conference.

12.2 The Council of Europe

12.2.1 Contributions to the overall process

The Council of Europe has organised or co-organised Bologna seminars on the Public Responsibility for Higher Education and Research (Strasbourg, September 2004), on New Generations of Policy Documents and Laws for Higher Education (Warsaw, November 2004) and Improving Recognition Systems of Degrees and Periods of Studies (Riga, December 2004). Members of the Council's Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research (CDESR), of the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee and the ENIC Network, and of the Council of Europe Secretariat have contributed to the Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks as well as to a number of Bologna Seminars as rapporteurs and speakers.

The CDESR has considered issues of relevance to the Bologna Process and constitutes a unique pan-European forum of both academic and government representatives.

The Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee and the ENIC and NARIC Networks⁵ are the most important forums for the development of recognition policies within the European Higher Education Area. In 2004, the Convention Committee adopted the Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees as a subsidiary text to the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention as well as the ENIC/NARIC Charter, while the ENIC and NARIC Networks adopted a new information strategy aimed at making it easier for learners, employers and others to obtain relevant information on recognition. The ENIC and NARIC Networks adopted the Strasbourg Statement on their contributions to the Bologna Process.

12.2.2 Building bridges to new and future members

The Council of Europe has taken on a special responsibility for building bridges between the Bologna Process and countries that have joined the Process recently or that have yet to do so. This has been done through conferences, seminars and policy advice. The events have in general included representatives of Ministries, higher education institutions (mostly through the EUA) and ESIB among international experts as well as from the host country.

⁵ The European Network of National Information Centres on academic recognition and mobility is served jointly by the Council of Europe and UNESCO; the Network of National Academic Recognition Information Centres by the European Commission. The ENIC and NARIC Networks hold joint annual meetings. See <http://www.enic-naric.net>.

Such events include:

- A regional conference for the four South East European countries that acceded to the Bologna Process in 2003 (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”), held at Council of Europe Headquarters in Strasbourg in December 2003;
- An informal conference of the Ministers of Education of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, held at Council of Europe Headquarters in Strasbourg in December 2003;
- A regional conference on student participation for 7 countries, held at the Russian University of Peoples’ Friendship in July 2004 with participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine.
- Extensive advice on legislation and higher education policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the Education Unit of the Council of Europe Office in Sarajevo and international experts;
- Advice on higher education legislation in Armenia;
- National conferences and seminars in countries party to the Bologna Process: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”;
- Projects on the reform of law faculties in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- National conferences and seminars in countries applying for accession to the Bologna Process in 2005: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

12.2.3 Publications

The Council of Europe Higher Education Series was launched in 2004.

The first two volumes:

1 *The University as Res Publica* (November 2004),

2 *The Public Responsibility for Higher Education and Research* (April 2005),

both address key issues in the Bologna Process. Future topics will include recognition and higher education governance as well as a compilation of the Council of Europe/ UNESCO Convention and its subsidiary texts.

12.3 UNESCO-European Centre for Higher Education (UNESCO-CEPES)

12.3.1 Addressing issues relevant to the Bologna Process

UNESCO-CEPES has promoted co-operation in European higher education which contributed to the implementation of the objectives and principles of the Bologna Process, while also paying attention to the external dimension of the process. In this respect, UNESCO-CEPES has organised or co-organised seminars on *Doctoral Degrees and Qualification in the Context of the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area* (Bucharest, September 2003), on *Ethical and Moral Dimensions for Higher Education and Science in Europe* (Bucharest, September 2004), and on *New Generations of Policy Documents and Laws for Higher Education: Their Thrust in the Context of the Bologna Process* (Warsaw, 4-6 November 2004). These events were based on thorough surveys, case studies and debates, and have been concluded with statements or declarations that included mobilising recommendations for new policy initiatives, as well as with informative publications that were widely distributed to those concerned. At the same time, UNESCO-CEPES has co-operated closely with various partners in the monitoring of developments specific to transnational or cross-border provision of higher education in the UNESCO Europe Region.

UNESCO-CEPES and the Council of Europe serve as Co-Secretariats of the ENIC Network, which co-operates with the NARIC Network of the European Union in addressing academic recognition matters at the European level. In this context, and also in view of the implementation of the Council of Europe/UNESCO Lisbon Recognition Convention, appropriate recognition

policies within the European Higher Education Area have been developed. The ENIC and NARIC Networks adopted the ENIC/NARIC Charter and the Strasbourg Statement. The networks have also developed their co-operation with ENQA, and are further exploring appropriate ways for building up a stronger partnership on matters of common interest related to the implementation of the Bologna Process.

12.3.2 Support to the Countries Applying for Accession to the Bologna Process

UNESCO-CEPES promoted and assisted, together with the Council of Europe and the European University Association (EUA), the organisation of the international seminar on *Higher Education in Ukraine and the Bologna Process* (13-14 May 2004, Kiev, Ukraine). UNESCO-CEPES contributed to the elaboration of the report on the state of the Ukrainian system of higher education from the perspective of the objectives of the Bologna Process and to the elaboration of a set of recommendations with a view to the further reform of Ukrainian higher education. A monograph on Ukrainian higher education has also been published in order to provide updated information to credential evaluators and to all those interested. UNESCO-CEPES, through its representatives, has also participated in conferences or seminars and provided policy advice to other countries that have joined recently or plan to join the Bologna Process.

12.3.4 Publications and Information

UNESCO-CEPES has acted as a clearinghouse for information on issues related to higher education in general and the Bologna Process in particular, and has published monographs on certain national higher education systems, research papers, documents and studies. In this context mention should be made of:

- Monographs on *Higher Education in the Republic of Moldova* (2003), *Ukraine* (2005), *Turkey* (2005);
- Papers on Higher Education: *Quality Assessment and Accreditation: A Glossary of Basic Terms and Definitions* (2004);
- Studies on Higher Education: *Doctoral Studies and Qualifications in Europe and the United States: Status and Prospects* (2004), and *Indicators for Institutional and Programme Accreditation in Higher/Tertiary Education* (2004);
- Quarterly review *Higher Education in Europe* with the following topics: *The External Dimension of the Bologna Process: Higher Education in South East Europe and the European Higher Education Area in a Global World* (Vol. 28, No. 3, 2003); *Public Relations: An Instrument for the Transformation and Development of Higher Education* (Vol. 28, No. 4, 2003); *Thematic Reflections on Higher Education* (Vol. 29, No. 1, 2004); *Entrepreneurial Studies in Higher Education* (Vol. 29, No. 2, 2004); *Brain Drain and the Academic and Intellectual Labour Market in South-East Europe* (Vol. 29, No. 3, 2004).

12.4 ESIB – The National Unions of Students in Europe

12.4.1 Spreading information / raising awareness

Since Berlin, ESIB's Bologna Process Committee has organised training for member unions on several occasions. For the Socrates countries, financial support has been made available by the EU Commission. Two training events have taken place and a third is planned for July 2005. Members were divided into groups according to the state of implementation of the Bologna reforms in their respective countries. The training focused on the various action lines of the Process (degree structure, recognition, quality assurance, etc.) but also on ongoing or future developments (qualifications frameworks, learning outcomes, etc). Training has also been organised in connection with events of regional networks of members (Nordic, South-Eastern Europe, Benelux, etc.) and for student representatives in countries where no national union of students exists.

A seminar will be organised in May 2005 to prepare for the Bergen Ministerial Conference and to discuss the future of the Bologna Process amongst student representatives. All members of ESIB are invited and 130 participants are expected.

Members of the Bologna Process Committee have been invited to a number of meetings organised by the member unions of ESIB. Advice has been sought, especially when member unions were involved in the process of developing higher education legislation, but also when they wanted to contribute to a better implementation of Bologna-related reforms.

In order to spread information and to keep the members and the partners up to date with ESIB activities relating to the Process, electronic newsletters have been produced. For the members, an internal newsletter is regularly produced. ESIB's partners have been informed of the activities by external newsletters, the "European Student Voice" and the "Link". The ESIB web site has continuously been updated with a number of relevant documents

12.4.2 Promoting the views of the students in Europe

As a consultative member, ESIB has taken an active part in the work of the BFUG and its Board. Policies adopted by the members of ESIB were promoted during meetings. ESIB has also contributed to the activities of various BFUG Working Groups.

ESIB produced, with the contribution of its members, the "Luxembourg Student Declaration", which outlines the students' position towards the Bergen summit.

12.4.3 ESIB participation in Bologna Follow-up Seminars

Representatives of ESIB participated and made contributions in almost all the Bologna Follow-up Seminars and co-organised two (with Slovenia on employability in October 2004 and with France on the social dimension in January 2005). In this way ESIB contributed to the deepening of the work of the BFUG and the areas related to the Bologna Process. ESIB representatives have also participated in other Bologna-related seminars.

12.4.4 Surveys

Surveys covering all action lines carried out by ESIB among its members will give a student perspective of the Bologna reforms all over Europe. The results will show the impact on the life of students around Europe but also the problems that still remain. Such surveys have also given input to the BFUG stocktaking process.

12.5 The European University Association (EUA)

12.5.1 From Graz to Glasgow: Strong Universities for Europe

Assisting members with the implementation of the Bologna Process has been a key issue for EUA during the period that has spanned the Berlin to Bergen ministerial conferences. Based upon the 2003 Graz Declaration, the EUA Action Plan 2004/2005 set the framework for EUA to explore emerging issues and develop policy on behalf of its 753 members in key areas, and to provide support to its members in the implementation of the Bologna reforms.

This work has been carried out through pilot projects and programmes, member services, studies for publication, conferences, seminars, and workshops on key Bologna Action Lines. EUA has also made a particular effort to support the integration of institutions in new Bologna participating countries.

Bologna Engagement

Since 2003, awareness of and engagement with the Bologna reforms has been raised considerably across Europe's universities through the dissemination of the report *Trends 2003: Progress towards the European Higher Education Area*. Building on the opportunity that this interest offered, EUA has worked to support universities to enhance European cooperation, and promote exchange of knowledge through its activities. EUA has also represented the academic community in the various Bologna seminars held during this period, acting as co-organisers and speakers on numerous occasions, and widely disseminated the results.

Quality

EUA's involvement with the European higher education quality theme continues on two levels. Firstly, EUA maintains active engagement with the policy debates on the development of the European dimension to quality assurance, and has contributed through the work of the E4 in preparing the ENQA report. Secondly, EUA continues striving to assist members to improve their own institutional quality enhancement processes and to develop beneficial relationships with national quality assurance agencies building on the recognition by ministers in the Berlin Communiqué of the primordial role of universities in this process. Expertise along thematic lines of internal quality processes has been developed and shared through three rounds of Quality Culture projects (involving in total over 141 higher education institutions in 38 countries) as well as in EUA's own Institutional Evaluation Programme that celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2004. In addition, a new project was launched to develop an evaluation methodology for internal quality assurance procedures of Joint Master programmes.

Research

The need to promote closer links between the EHEA and the ERA, acknowledged by Ministers of Education in Berlin, has correspondingly led to a period of heightened activity by EUA in relation to European research policy debate and to ensuring that the link between teaching and research be maintained and its implications better understood. EUA has concentrated much of its efforts in exploring the special position of universities for conducting research and training the new generation of researchers. Issues such as the structure and organisation, financing and innovative practice in doctoral programmes in European universities have been explored in EUA's Doctoral Programme Project. The results of this project were fed into the Salzburg seminar (chapter 4, section 4.13). One of EUA's three conferences in 2004, "Research Training as a Key to a Europe of Knowledge", hosted by the University of Maastricht, further considered the changing nature of researcher careers and the unique role of universities in training researchers. EUA also included analysis of these issues in the *Trends IV* report (see below) in addition to the three stocktaking priorities to which reference is made in the Berlin Communiqué.

Other projects

EUA has acted as a conduit for its members' concerns in the Bologna discussions on the development of a European Qualifications Framework, and continues to encourage good use of ECTS and coherent curriculum development in line with the Bologna structural changes and shift towards student-centred learning. Work on these issues and broader issues of institutional governance has been undertaken particularly in South-East Europe, where EUA makes a conscious effort to disseminate knowledge and experience in institutions facing specific challenges of post-Communist transition and post-conflict regeneration. South-East Europe continues to be a geographic region of specific priority in EUA's Action Plan.

Preparation of the Glasgow Convention and the Glasgow Declaration

EUA organised three conferences in the course of 2004 as preparation for the Glasgow Convention. In addition to the Maastricht conference mentioned above, these were the conference "University and Society: Engaging Stakeholders" (June 2004) at the University of Turin, focusing

on the implications for academic values of massification, globalisation and competition, and the conference “University and Society: Engaging Stakeholders” (April 2004), hosted by the Université de la Méditerranée (Aix-Marseille II), which explored the need to increase stakeholder engagement in universities. Discussions in Glasgow were based upon these conference discussions, as well as the results of EUA’s pilot projects and the findings of *Trends IV*. The participation of more than 600 universities and partners demonstrated the commitment of the academic community to making the Bologna reforms a success while at the same time allowing Europe’s university leaders to discuss the Bologna reforms in the wider debate on the role of the university in society, and to draw conclusions and make recommendations both to governments and higher education institutions for the coming period.

12.5.2 Trends IV: Assessing Implementation in Universities

The *Trends IV* report provided important input to EUA’s Glasgow Convention discussions and represents EUA’s contribution to the stocktaking process. The production of the *Trends IV* report has required a collective effort of Europe’s higher education institutions to gain information on the ways in which institutions are responding to the Bologna reforms. The findings are based on 62 institutional site visits in 29 countries and analyse progress made hitherto with the implementation of the Bologna reforms inside institutions, as well as presenting the impact of reforms on other institutional development processes. While the research findings contained in the report are qualitative in nature, and therefore do not provide statistical certainty, *Trends IV* provides an in-depth and the most up-to-date snapshot of the state of implementation of Bologna reforms in Europe’s universities.

Embracing Reform

The findings regarding attitudes to reform in universities contrast sharply with the views expressed by institutional leaders only two years ago through the *Trends III* questionnaires. General acceptance of the need for reforms seems to be widespread in universities. Indeed, many institutions have made great efforts to “internalise” the reform process, incorporating Bologna issues into their own institutional strategies and activities. In many cases, reforms are recognised as an opportunity to address problems which have long been known to exist. The overwhelming perception from the site visits is that actors in institutions are now facing and tackling the challenges of implementation with commitment and energy.

Coping with Reform

Criticism of the reforms from within universities tends not to focus on the purpose of reform – there is considerable consensus that change is needed - but rather upon the extent to which reforms are, or are not, being supported. Often implementation is being hindered by lack of the necessary institutional autonomy to make key decisions or the additional financial resources for universities to cope with such a major restructuring exercise and the new tasks which have emerged as part of the reforms. At the same time, the role of leadership within universities is also critical: wherever the leadership is providing strong and positive support to the process, allowing enough space for internal deliberation, progress is smoother.

The introduction of three cycles

Considerable progress has been made in introducing three-cycle structures across Europe, although there are still some legislative obstacles to structural reform in a few countries five years after the signing of the Bologna Declaration. Many institutions, however, have now reached the heart of the transition process. Structural change must be matched with proper redevelopment of the curricula, and often this has not been completed. Confusion sometimes exists regarding the objectives of the first cycle degree (which many mistakenly regard as a compressed version of former long-cycle programmes), and in many cases there has not been adequate time for

institutions and academics to address reforms in a comprehensive way and to benefit from the opportunities offered through restructuring of the curricula.

The impact of structural reforms

All too often, Bologna is still conceived as essentially a process of harmonising degree structures. *Trends IV* illustrates that, although much progress is being made, the process of moving towards a comprehensible three-cycle system throughout Europe is a highly complex cultural and social transformation that has set off a chain of developments with their own dynamics in different contexts. While changes to the length of studies can be described easily, measuring their significance and their impact requires much greater and more sophisticated analysis: for example, the acceptance of new first-cycle qualifications in society, the extent to which these new qualifications meet the needs of the labour market, and the implications of a pedagogical shift to student-centred learning.

Employability of first cycle graduates

In the majority of universities visited concerns were expressed about the employability of first cycle graduates. Indeed, in countries moving away from a long first cycle, many academics are not ready yet to trust fully the new first cycle qualifications, and are frequently advising their students to remain in higher education until the end of the second cycle. On the other hand, institutions in countries where the structural reforms began earlier report far fewer problems of labour market acceptance of first cycle graduates – indicating that countries experiencing difficulties are perhaps simply at an earlier stage of a normal transition. However, significant differences do exist between the disciplines. The findings also show that more public debate on the reforms is needed and suggest that public authorities are lagging behind in adapting their own career structures to accommodate new first cycle qualifications. Professional bodies – especially in regulated professions – also play an important role. The report includes both examples of areas in which professional bodies encourage new programmes, and others where there are major obstacles. Meanwhile, many institutions themselves are also still not addressing seriously the needs of local, regional, national and international employers when constructing their new study programmes.

Enhancing quality

The study's findings show that universities are increasingly aware of the importance of improving the quality of their activities, and this is expressed in a wide range of processes that go far beyond formal and obligatory responses to the requirements of external quality assurance. While the need for improved cooperation between institutions and quality assurance bodies is undisputed, *Trends IV* points to a range of other factors, including student participation, which have a very direct impact on quality improvement. Notably there is clear evidence that success in improving quality within institutions is directly correlated with the degree of institutional autonomy. Institutions which display the greatest ownership of internal quality processes are also those with the most functional autonomy.

Recognition of qualifications

Improved quality is regarded as one of the keys to more automatic recognition of qualifications across Europe. The site visits show that considerable progress in recognition is being made, but again there is a need to do more to ensure a systematic use of the commonly agreed Bologna transparency tools, in particular ECTS and the Diploma Supplement. The Diploma Supplement is certainly being introduced in all the countries visited, in line with the commitment of the Berlin Communiqué, but in addition to technical problems, the challenge of providing clear information about learning outcomes remains. Meanwhile ECTS is being widely used for “student transfer”, and generally seems to work well. However, it is still often perceived as a tool to translate national systems into a European language, rather than as a central feature of curriculum design.

Thus, strengthening efforts to mainstream these European tools in institutions across Europe continues to be a priority.

The link between higher education and research

In relation to their teaching and research missions institutions and individual academics often experience a pull in different directions by the conflicting demands placed upon them. According to many academics, the necessary focus upon re-structuring curricula and the challenges of designing new study programmes and putting in place additional counselling and support for more flexible learner-centred teaching have meant that they have less time than before to devote to their research activities. This is a particular cause for concern in view of the growing awareness at European level of the need to enhance the attractiveness of research careers, and underlines the importance of linking the higher education and research agendas. There is so far little evidence that such discourse has been translated into concrete action and prioritised in universities.

Conclusions

Trends IV shows that continuous reform and innovation is already a reality - and the only serious option - at many universities, and that many factors are combining to affect the nature and success of these complex processes. If reforms are to be successful, there needs to be a much greater awareness throughout society that this current period represents a major cultural shift which is transforming long-accepted notions of higher education and that implementing the reforms in a sustainable way needs time and support. Governments must be sensitive to the fact that the goals will not be achieved simply by changing legislation. Institutions need more functional autonomy as a fundamental condition for successful reform, and accept that this implies strengthening governance structures, institutional leadership and internal management. The question of the funding of reform has to be addressed and with it the broader issues of investment in higher education as a means of meeting the demands of Europe's developing knowledge societies. After all, Europe's strength derives from the conception of higher education as a public responsibility responding to societal needs, and this requires the commitment to a long-term and sustainable public funding base.

13 THE ACTIVITIES OF THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP (BFUG)

13.1 Meetings of the BFUG

The Follow-up Group has met once under each of the successive chairmanships of Italy, Ireland and the Netherlands, and three times during the chairmanship of Luxembourg (the last meeting being held on 18 May 2005 in Bergen). Norway has been Vice-Chair in the whole period from Berlin to Bergen.

13.1.1 Meeting of the Bologna Follow-up Group in Rome, 14 November 2003

- Short debriefing after the Berlin Conference
- The ENQA work plan in view of the work to be accomplished in accordance with objectives defined in the Berlin Communiqué
- The EU Commission Communication “From Berlin to Bergen, the EU contribution”
- Discussion and approval of a draft document tabled by the Chair:
 - responsibilities and composition of the Board
 - tasks of the Secretariat
 - priority issues for the work programme 2003-2005
 - deadline for submission of proposals for Bologna events
- Deadline for candidatures for General Rapporteur to the Bergen Conference
- Deadline for candidatures for hosting the next Ministerial Conference in 2007
- Communication of the Norwegian delegation on the Bergen Ministerial Conference

13.1.2 Meeting of the Bologna Follow-up Group in Dublin, 9 March 2004

- BFUG Work Programme 2003-2005
- Bologna Follow-up Seminars 2003-2005
- An Overarching Qualifications Framework for the EHEA
- Organisation of the Bologna Process Stocktaking 2005
- Reporting to the 2005 Ministerial Conference
- Supporting new Member Countries
- Progress report from ENQA
- Contributions from the EU Commission
 - EUROPASS
 - Report on European co-operation in quality assurance
 - Financing activities of the BFUG Work Programme
 - Promoting Bologna
- Information from partners in the Bologna Process

13.1.3 Meeting of the Bologna Follow-up Group in Noordwijk, 12-13 October 2004

- ENQA project on quality assurance (status report)
- Working Group on Stocktaking (status report)
- Working Group on Overarching Qualifications Framework (status report)
- BFUG follow-up of seminars in the BFUG Work Programme
- Further Accessions to the Bologna Process: Procedures for evaluation of applications and reports from potential new members
- Invitations to the Bergen Ministerial Conference
- Programme outline for the Bergen Ministerial Conference
- A first discussion on issues for the Bergen Communiqué
- Deadline for candidatures for the following Ministerial Conference
- Contributions from BFUG members and consultative members (for information)

13.1.4 Meeting of the Bologna Follow-up Group in Mondorf, 1-2 March 2005

- ENQA project on quality assurance
- Project on an Overarching Qualifications Framework for the EHEA
- The Stocktaking Project
- National Reports 2004-2005
- General report “From Berlin to Bergen”
 - Outline of the report
 - Bologna Follow-up Seminars
- Challenges regarding mobility
- Applications for participation in the Bologna Process
- Possible Bologna Partnership with other regions
- Criteria for new consultative members and BFUG Partners
- The Bergen Ministerial Conference
- Drafting the Bergen Communiqué
- Draft discussion document for the Bergen Conference (The EHEA beyond 2010)
- Contributions from BFUG members and consultative members (for information)

13.1.5 Meeting of the Bologna Follow-up Group in Mondorf, 12-13 April 2005

- A European Quality Assurance Register Committee
- General report “From Berlin to Bergen”
- Applications for participation in the Bologna Process
- New consultative members and BFUG Partners
- The Bergen Ministerial Conference
- Draft discussion document for the Bergen Conference (The EHEA beyond 2010)
- The Stocktaking Project
- Drafting the Bergen Communiqué
- Preliminary discussion on possible Ministerial Conferences 2007/9/10
- Procedure for election of new Board members

13.2 The Board of the Bologna Follow-up Group

The Berlin Ministerial Conference decided that a Board chaired by the EU Presidency shall oversee the work between the meetings of the Follow-up Group. The Board is composed of the Chair, the next host country as Vice-Chair, the preceding and the following EU Presidencies, three participating countries elected by the Follow-up Group for one year, the European Commission and, as consultative members, the Council of Europe, the EUA, EURASHE and ESIB. For the first period after Berlin, Austria, Belgium and Finland were elected Board members, and for the second period, Latvia, Malta and Slovenia.

The BFUG Board was given a more detailed mandate by the BFUG meeting in Rome on 14 November 2003. The Board shall support the BFUG in its activities and provide efficiency to the management of the Bologna Process, at the same time assuring its continuity. As such, the responsibilities of the Board consist in coordinating and monitoring the effective implementation of the Work Programme. The BFUG may also delegate to the Board to carry out tasks which it deems to be appropriate and necessary to achieve the objectives of the Bologna Process. In line with these responsibilities, the Board shall prepare matters for discussion in the BFUG. If urgent decisions have to be taken on specific issues, the Board will consult the BFUG members by e-mail before taking any decision.

The BFUG Board met on 15 November 2003 in Rome, 29 January 2004 in Oslo, 14 June 2004 in Dublin, 13 September 2004 in The Hague, 9 December 2004 in Oslo (Ask), 25 January 2005 in Brussels, 11 April 2005 in Mondorf, 26 April 2005 in Luxembourg and 18 May 2005 in Bergen.

13.3 The BFUG Secretariat

In their work between Berlin and Bergen, the Follow-up Group and the BFUG Board have been assisted by a Secretariat set up by Norway as host country of the Bergen Ministerial Conference. The Secretariat has assisted the Chair in the preparation of documents for the successive Board and BFUG meetings, and has assisted the host country in the preparations for the Bergen Conference.

All documents and reports referred to in this general report are available on the web page operated by the Secretariat at <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no>.

Working documents for the BFUG and the Board in the period from 2003 to 2005 have been available “Behind the Curtain” at <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/b/hind.htm>. When the Norwegian Bologna Secretariat ceases to exist on 30 June 2005, the web page will be “frozen” and will constitute the archives for the Bologna Process for the 2003-2005 period, available for all interested parties.