

Trends in Learning Structures in European Higher Education III

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- 1. Aims of the study**
- 2. Actors and driving forces of the Bologna Process**
- 3. Toward comparable structures and beyond**
- 4. Autonomy and Quality Assurance**
- 5. Lifelong learning**
- 6. Conclusions**

1. Aims of the study

Bologna Process: from intergovernmental commitments to institutional realities

- originally intergovernmental
- but the idea of creating a „European Higher Education Area“ will only become a reality if **Higher Education Institutions** subscribe to the aims, implement the operational objectives and **fill with meaning** what the Bologna Declaration and the Prague Communiqué sets out to achieve
- to see what progress has been made we have to look not only at the national level legislation, policies and incentives but also at the **institutional realisation** of the central objectives
- the challenges differ at the various levels

Trends 3 data

- questionnaires sent
 - to all ministries
 - to all rectors conferences
 - to national and European student associations
 - to national employers' associations
 - to 1600 European higher education institutions, avoiding open questions in order to maximise the rate of return
- data grouped according to institutional types and countries
- data supplemented by recent comparative studies and data (especially valuable for mobility, quality assurance and lifelong-learning)

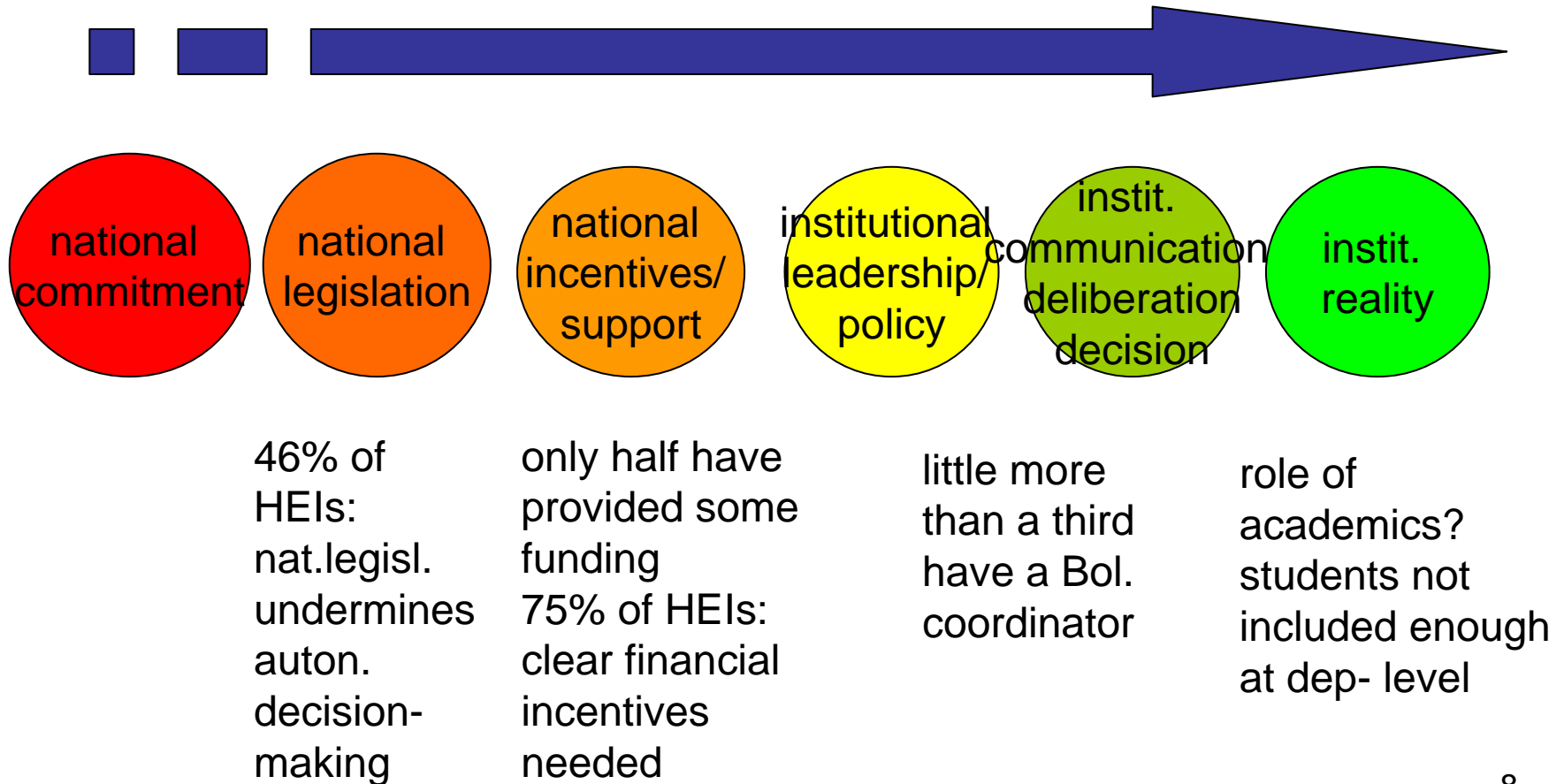
Trends 3:

- concerned not just with national legislation and policies but also ***institutional judgements, expectations and problems of implementation***
- observed considerable discrepancies between countries as well as between national rhetoric and institutional realities
- was able to identify the problems and challenges faced at institutional level with the implementation of the Bologna reforms

2. Actors and driving forces of the Bologna Process

Bologna: From commitment to reality

It takes concerted action on all levels to make the European Higher Education Area a reality...



What's the Progress?

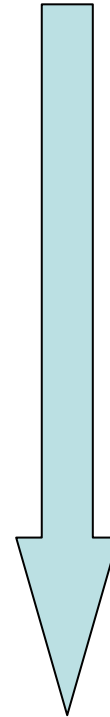
The Trends 3 survey revealed considerable progress in the creation of more transparent and compatible structures but also a considerable discrepancy

- between national policies and institutional realities;
- between individual countries.

The systemic implications of the „Bologna Package“ are only beginning to become apparent.

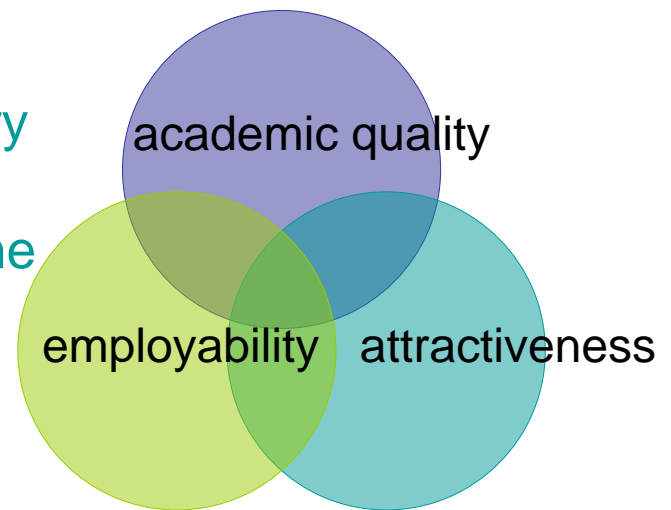
System of Actors and awareness

- national governments
 - rectors' conferences
 - heads of institutions
 - academics
(less than half „reasonably aware,
30% „not very aware“)
 - students
 - administrators
- } less aware



Which goals are the driving forces of Bologna?

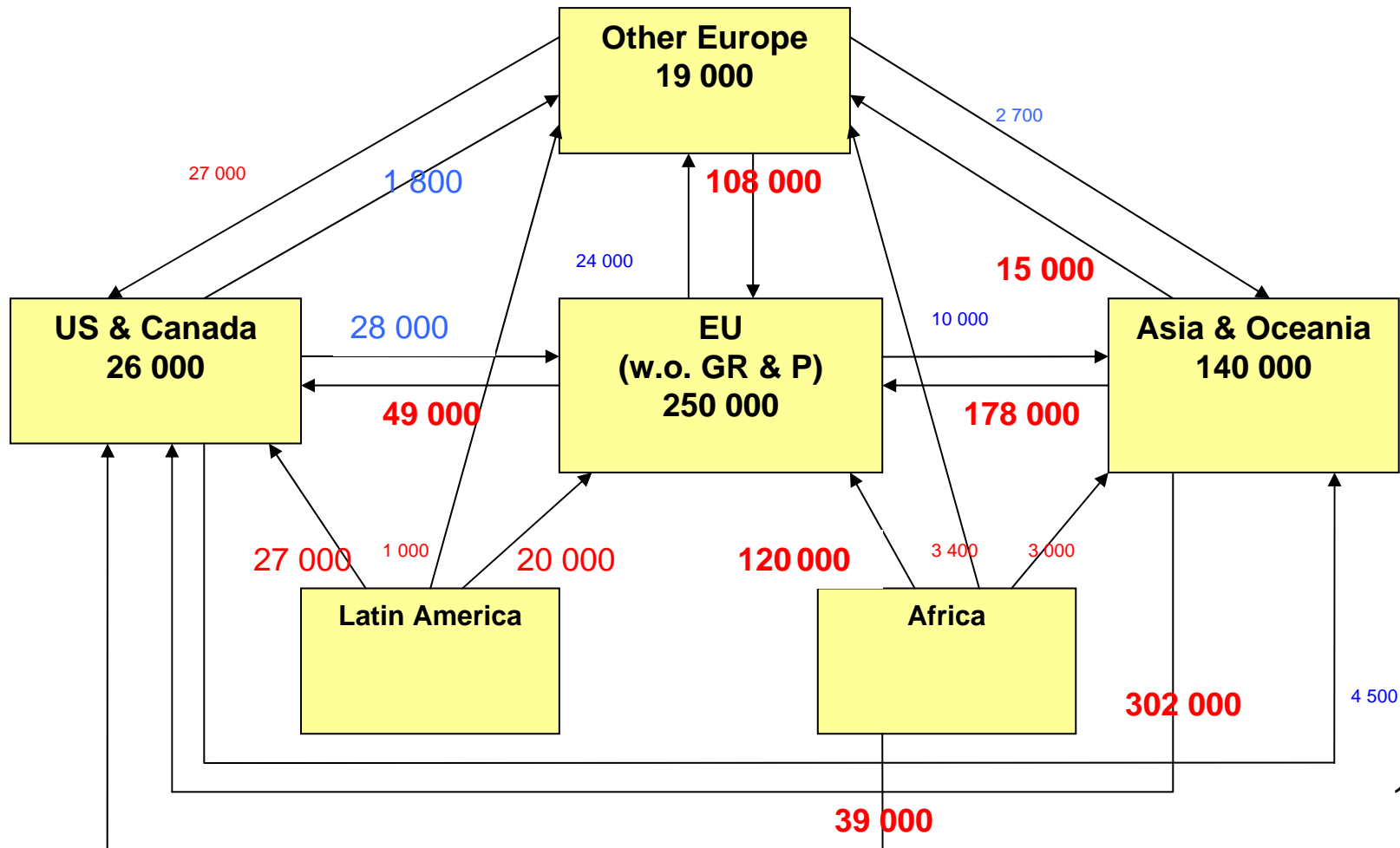
1. enhancement of academic quality – reforms go beyond just a formally changed degree system
2. preparing graduates for the European labour market – 91% of heads of HEIs regard employability as important of very important when redesigning curricula (70% of HEIs track employment of some or all graduates)
 - how to make sustainable employability and academic quality compatible values is the core challenge of curricular reform
3. competitiveness/ attractiveness of **national** (not European) system of HE



Promote attractiveness/competitiveness of national system of HE: why?

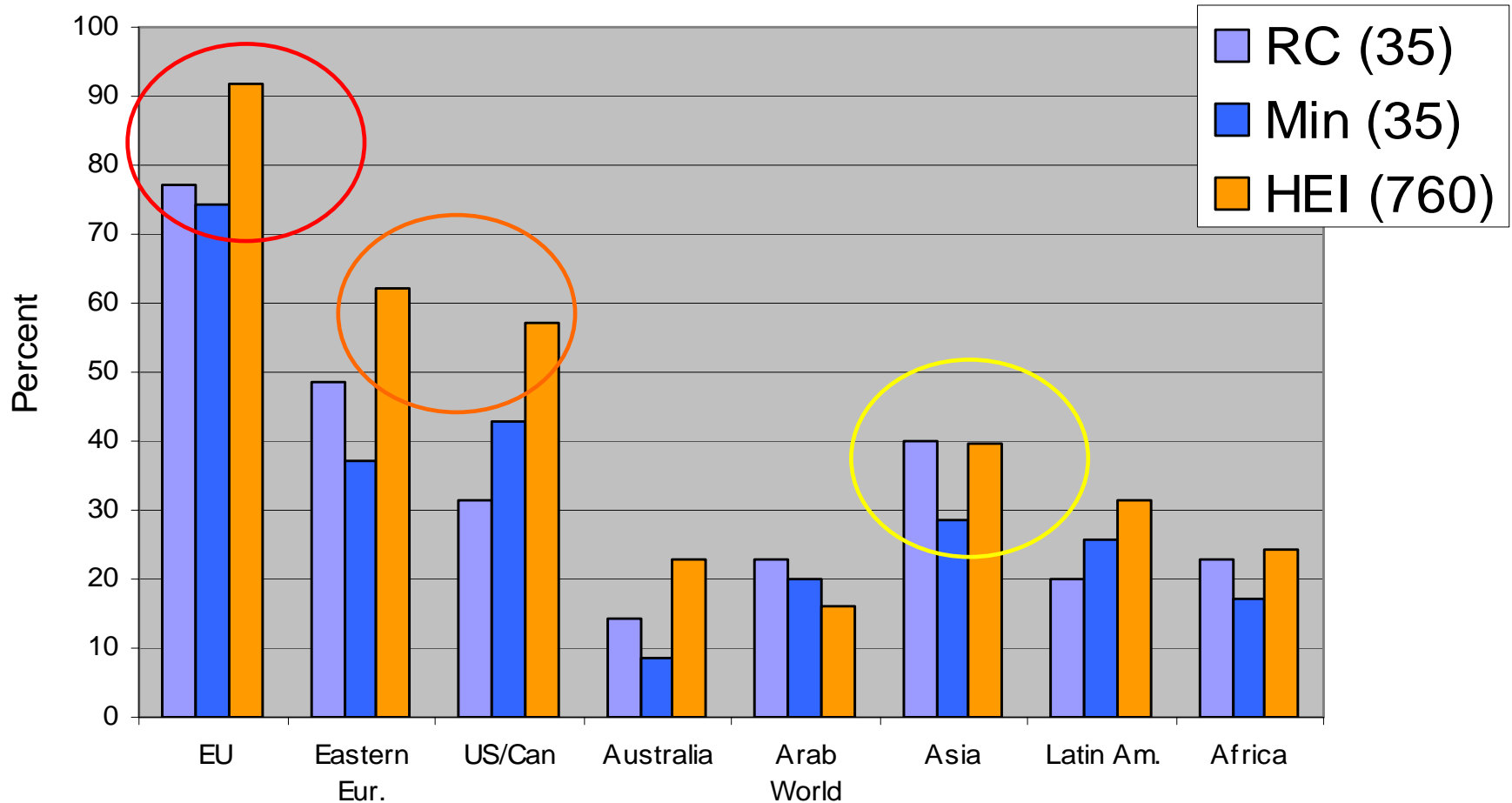
Student migration between world regions:

Foreign students enrolled in Tertiary education in 1999

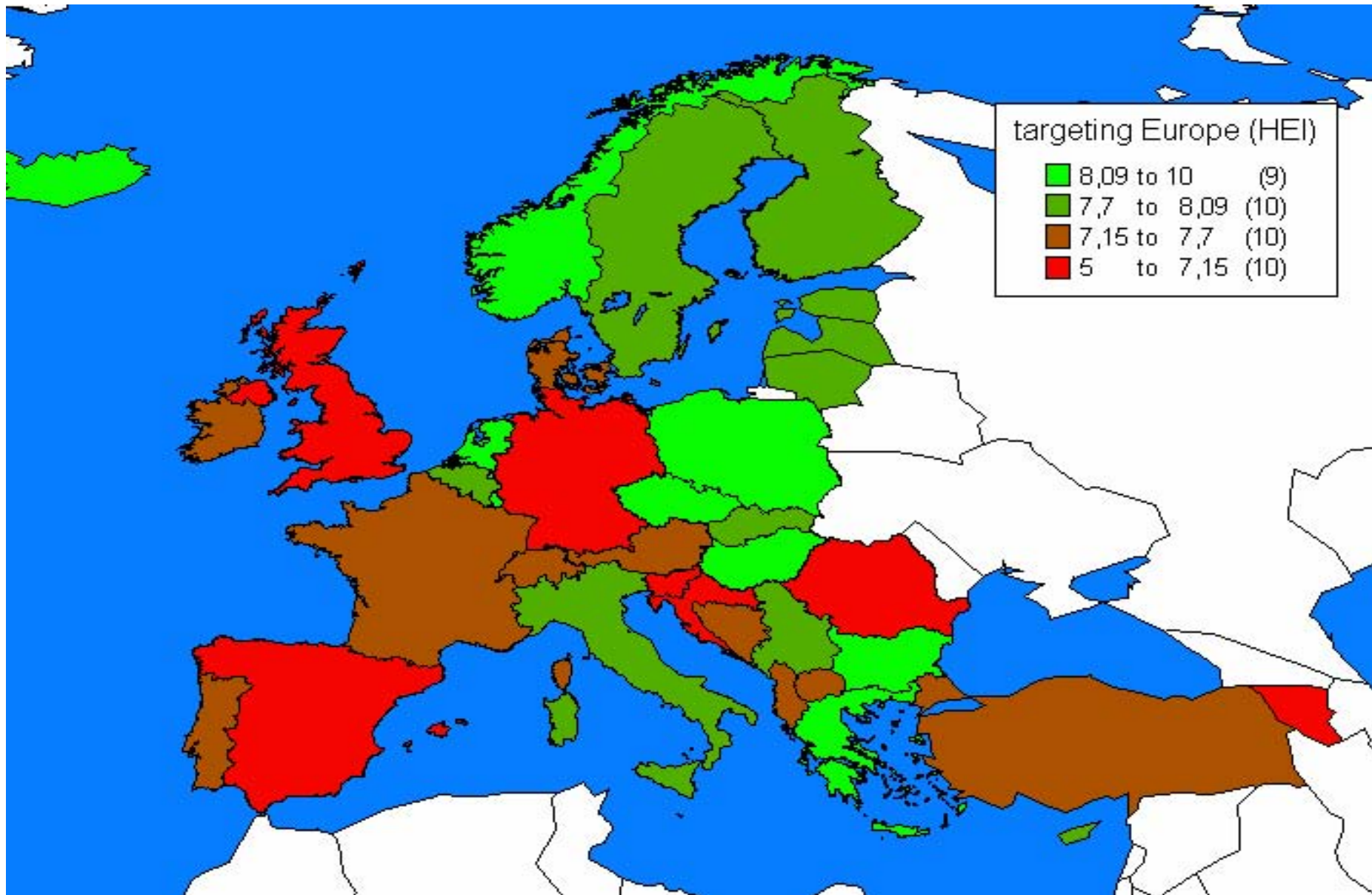


Promote attractiveness where?

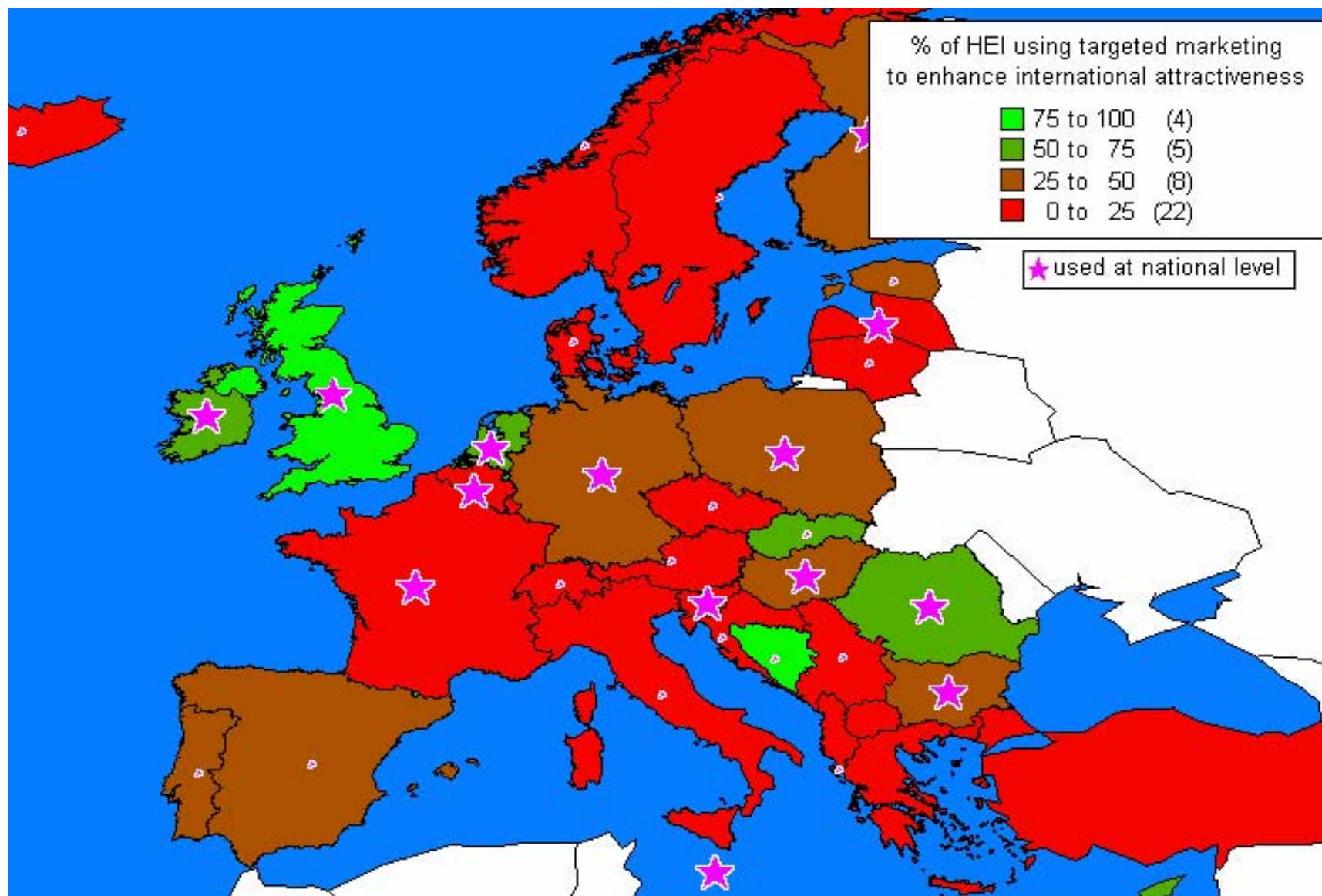
Figure 6: Priority Areas of European HE (2003)



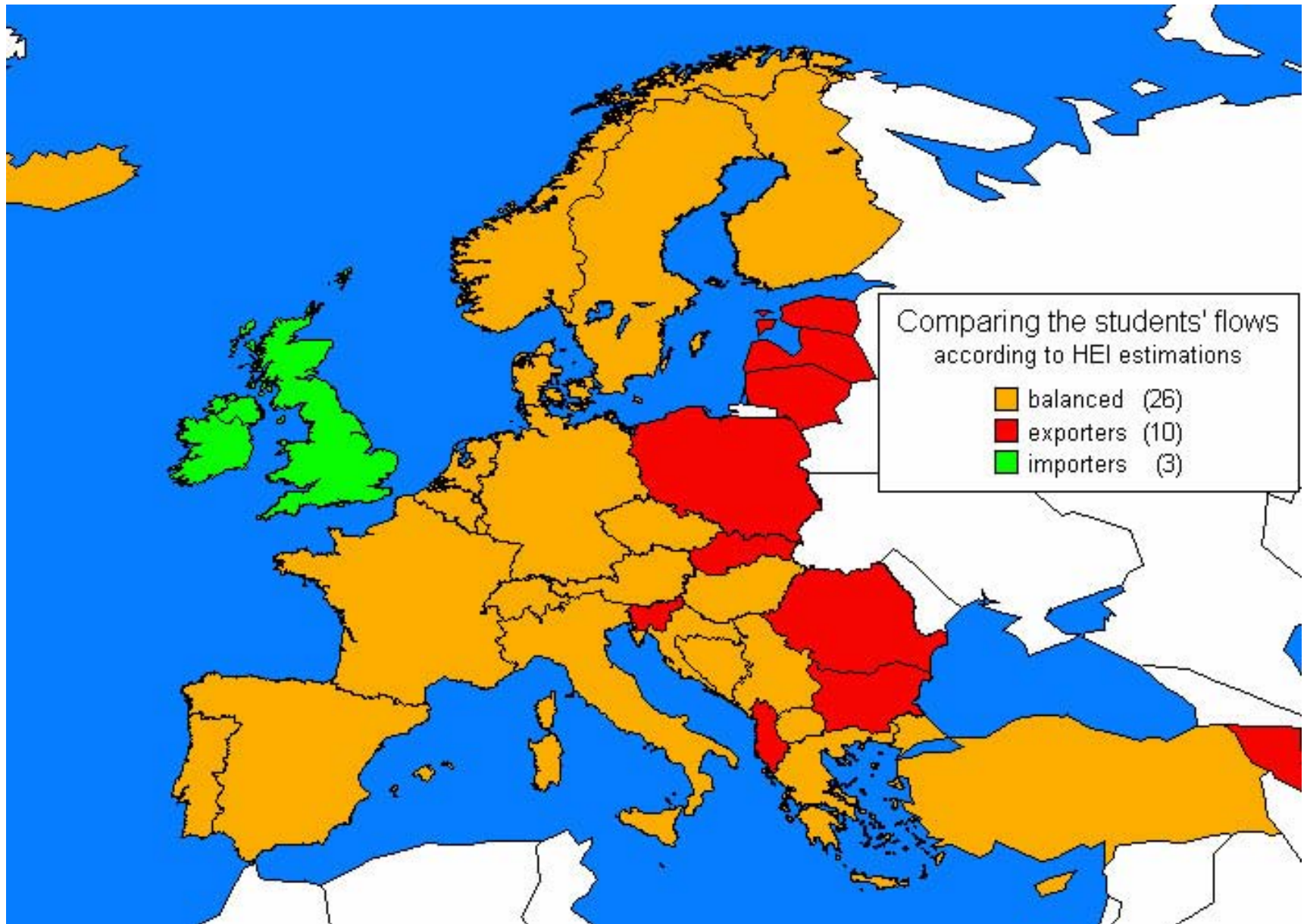
Targeting Europe?



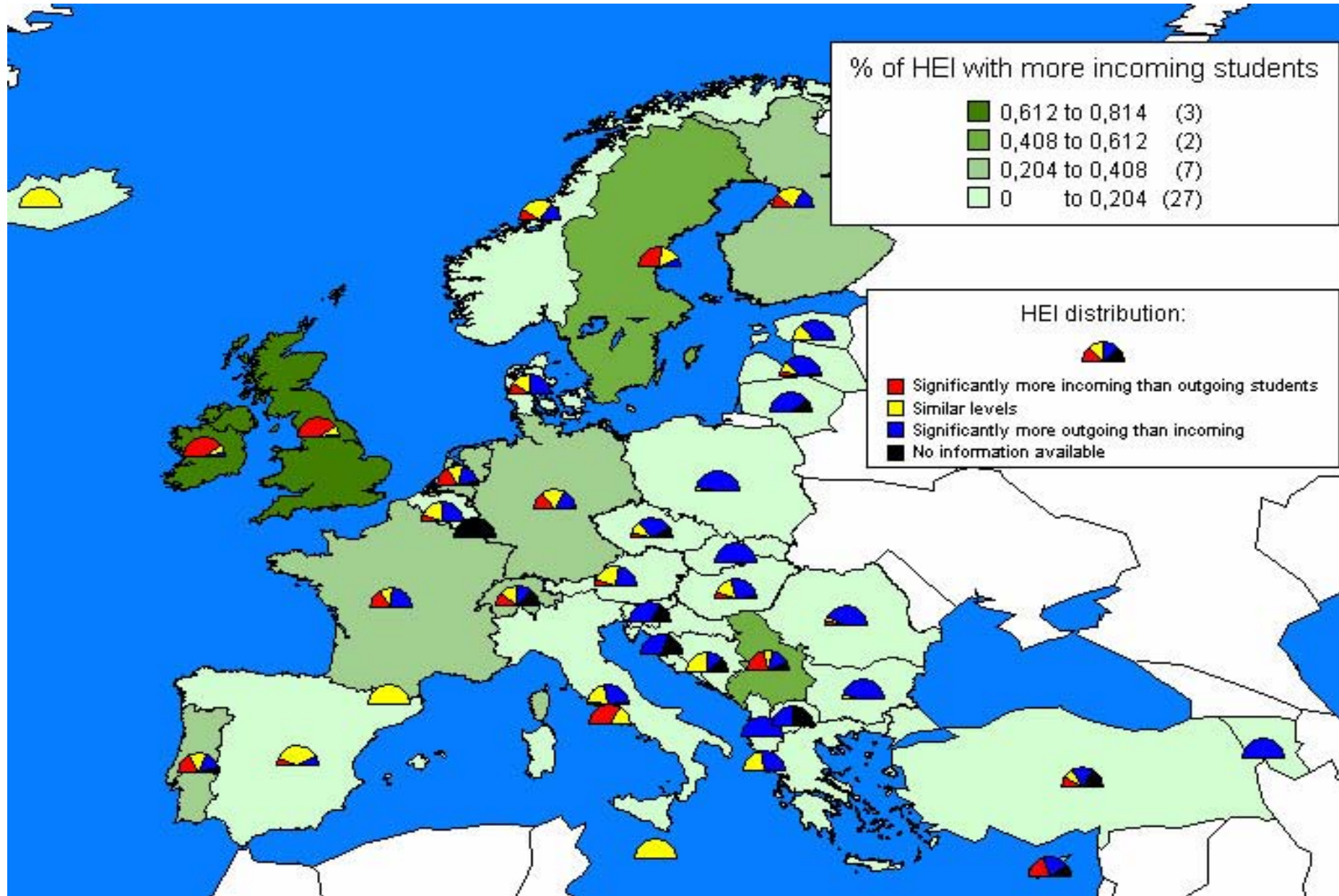
Marketing at HEIs



Mobility: Imbalances



Imbalances between institutions



Future challenges:

- obstacles to mobility have not been addressed sufficiently
- how to address the imbalances
- need for comparative data to monitor progress!
 - existing mobility figures only include exchange schemes
 - national data not aggregated at European level
 - many countries in Europe have insufficient data even at national level

What about the Social Dimension?

- counterbalance to the pure competitiveness agenda
- consensus: Higher Education is a public good and a public responsibility (continuing role for state support)
- needs for enhanced support structures for students (and academics) : social conditions of studies and mobility, incl. tuition fees, portable grants but also transferable pension rights for mobile academics
- the issue of addressing solidarity not only within but also between countries (Graz process)
- regarding the related GATS discussion, trends 3 data reveal that awareness at national and institutional level leaves considerable room for improvement)

2 conflicting agendas in European, national and institutional policies:

1. competitiveness agenda (international, global):

- focussed on research and technology transfer
- aiming at concentration of excellence, creating critical masses with optimal conditions
- tough competition for funds: winners and losers
- entailing selectivity to optimise potential of assembling the winners in these competitions
- internationally oriented

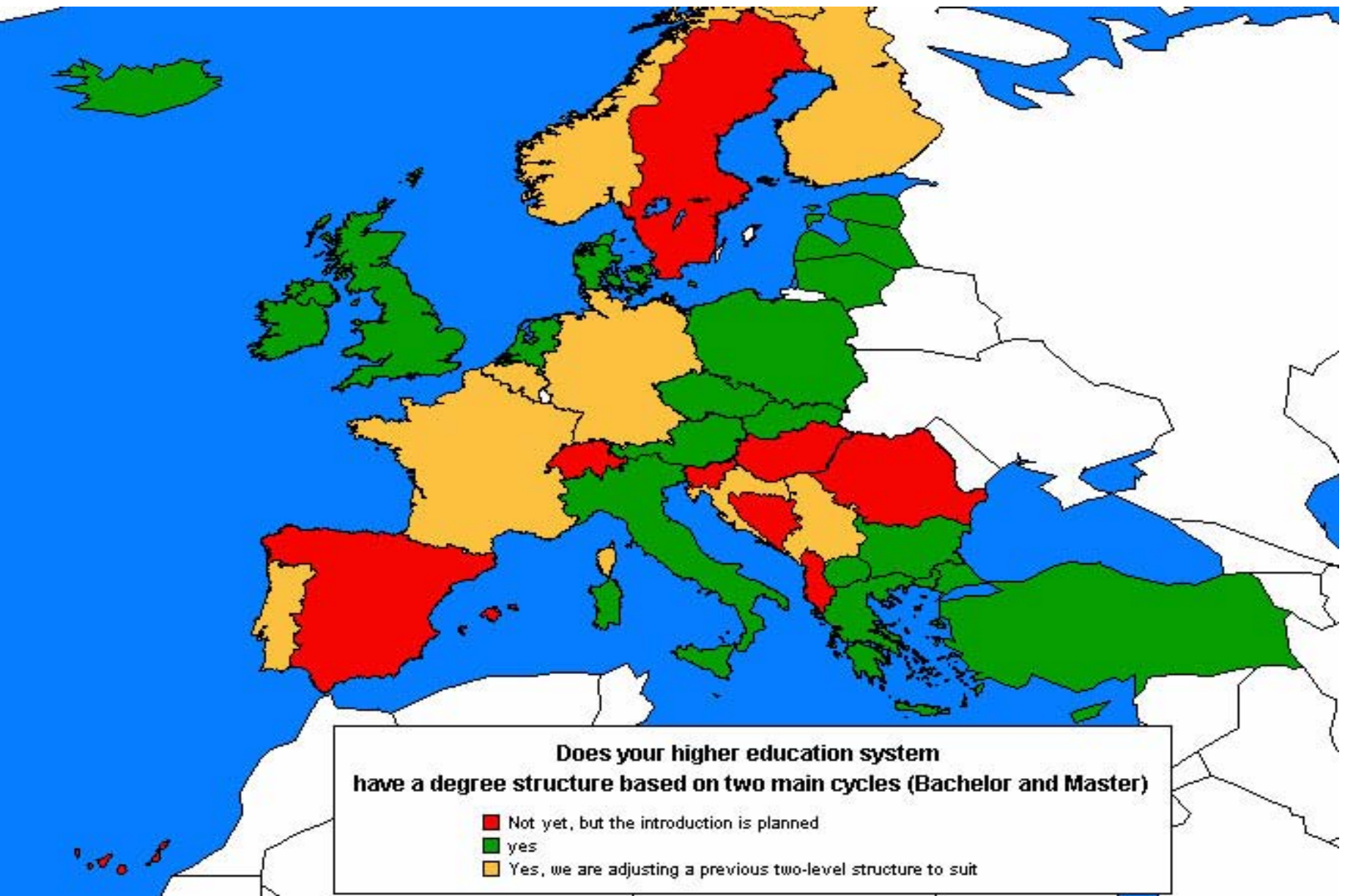
2. social agenda (LLL, access etc.), often with a more regional focus

3. Toward comparable structures and beyond

Degree Structures

- 80% of the Bol. countries already have the legal possibility to offer two-tier structures or are introducing them, often with a fixed deadline. The remaining 20% are planning the introduction.
- 53% of HEIs have two tiers or are introducing them, 36% are planning it. Only 11% see no need for structural reform.
- Agreement on credits/workload:
180-240 ECTS credits for Ba. level degrees,
90-120 (60) credits for a Ma. level degree
- „Third tier“: in 50% of the countries doctoral students receive mainly indiv.supervision, in the others taught courses are offered additionally. In 40% of countries credits are used at doctoral level.

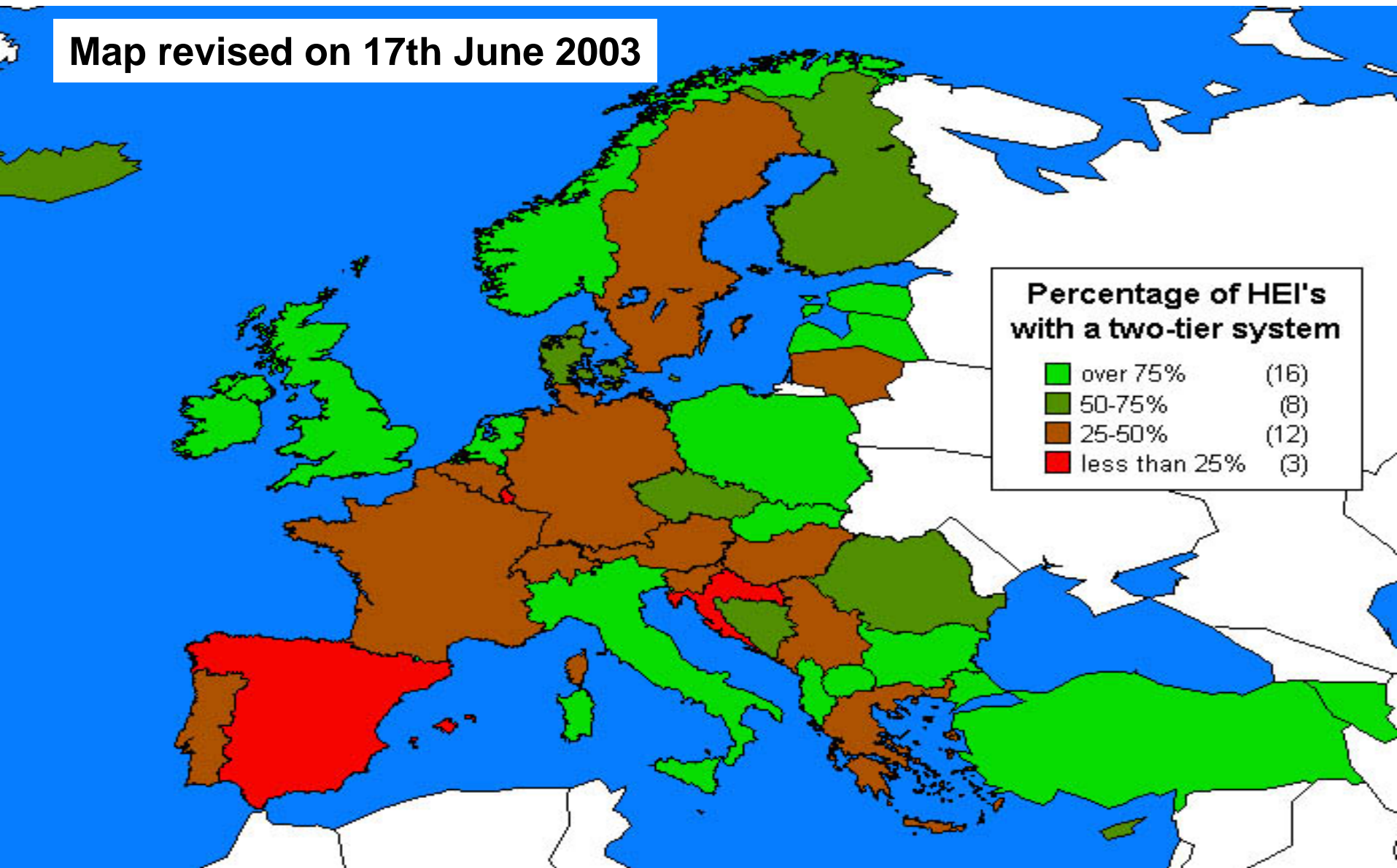
Ba/Ma systems according to Ministries



Bachelor/Master at European HEIs

Does your institution have a degree structure based on two main cycles (Bachelor, Master) as envisaged by the Bologna Declaration, in most academic fields?

Map revised on 17th June 2003



Students mostly welcome the introduction of two-tier degrees in the EHEA

Trends 3 question answered by 37 student associations

Yes, because:

- They will allow more individual learning paths: 22
- They will facilitate student mobility: 21
- They will increase the employability of graduates: 9

No, because:

- Bachelor/Master programmes are shorter than long one-tier programmes and will therefore make student mobility more difficult: 5
- They are mainly an attempt by governments to save money by shortening study duration: 6
- Too much importance is attached to the “production” of employable graduates, at the expense of the traditional advantages of academic education: 12

But what is behind these reforms?

- In countries where degrees at Bachelor level have not existed before, the tendency is to see them rather as stepping stones, not as valid terminal degrees.
- More than 90% of HEIs see „employability“ as an *important or very important* criterion in curricular development BUT:
- A regular and close involvement of professional associations and employers in CD is still the exception.

Beyond structures and labels: The need for descriptors, level indicators and frameworks

- There is a risk that the new degree structures are introduced in superficial and incompatible ways.
- To achieve a real system of „easily readable and comparable degrees“ we need more than relabelling.
- From input to output orientation: several initiatives to define descriptors, levels and learning outcomes (Joint Quality Initiative, Tuning Project, Copenhagen Seminar etc.)

Qualifications Frameworks

- Some countries already have or are working on national qualifications frameworks
- QF provide transparency, not by defining core curricula but general descriptors for qualifications, linked to levels
- More governments should encourage the elaboration of QF
- These should be in tune with an „acceptable, non-intrusive, over-arching European qualifications framework to accomodate the huge diversity of European educational awards“ (S. Adams)

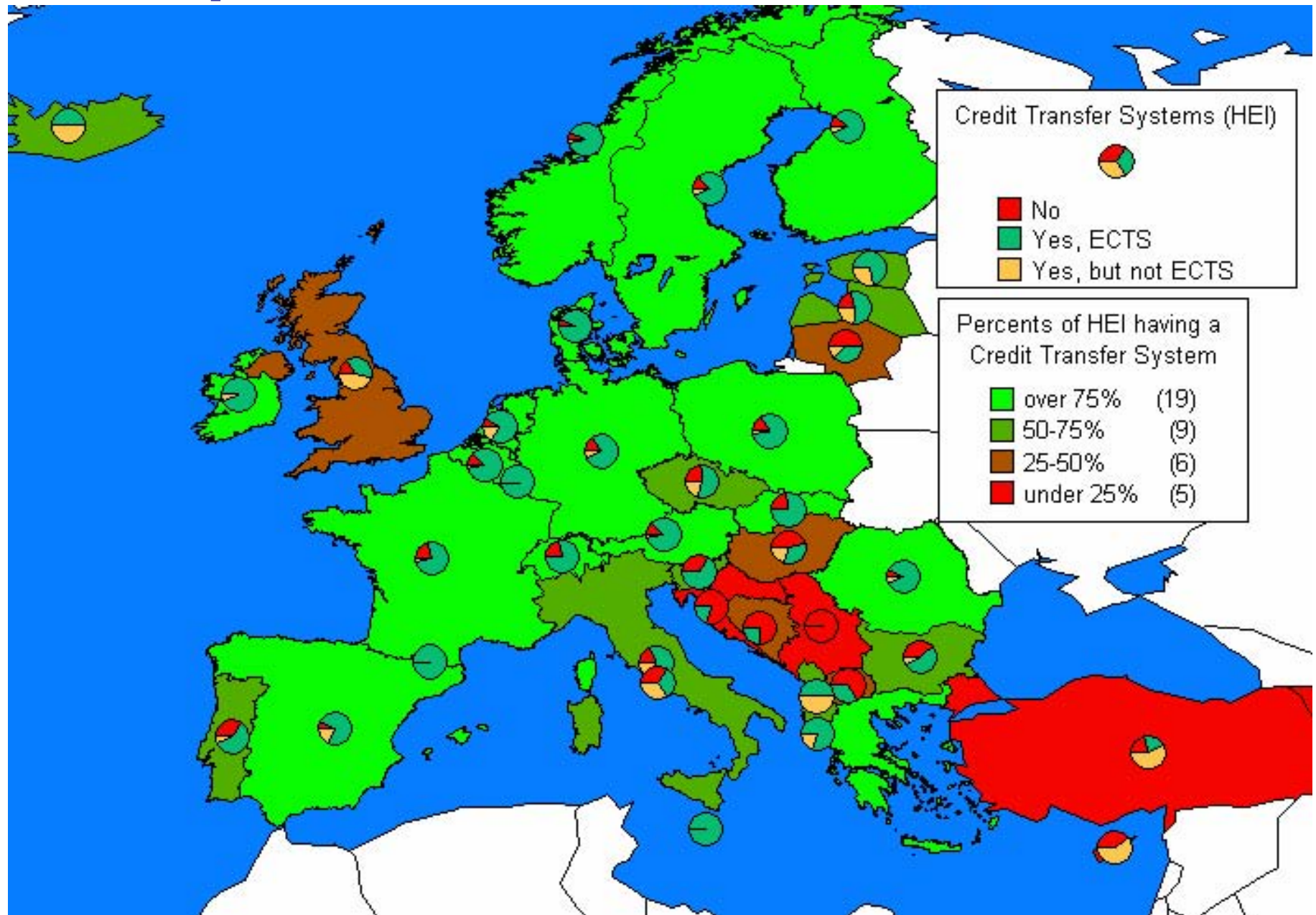
An unrealised potential: Joint degrees

- Mentioned in Bologna D. and Prague C., and linked to all EHEA objectives, BUT:
- relatively low priority at national levels.
- Stronger support from HEIs and students, but JD have not yet been realised as a core tool for institutional development
- More than 50% of national legislations do not yet allow JD
- Huge opportunity to foster mobility within Europe, attractiveness to people outside of Europe, for strategic positioning of institutions and networks
- EUA Conference on JD, ERASMUS Mundus

ECTS: Key findings

- ECTS is clearly emerging as *the* European credit system. In many countries it has become a legal requirement, other countries with national credits systems are ensuring their compatibility with ECTS.
- Two thirds of HEIs today use ECTS for *credit transfer*, 15% use a different system. As for *credit accumulation*, almost three quarters of HEIs declare that they have already introduced it.
- While HEIs are rather optimistic with regard to the smoothness of recognition procedures of study abroad periods, students' experiences contradict this.
- In many HEIs the use of ECTS is still not integrated into institution-wide policies or guidelines and its principles and tools are often insufficiently understood.

Implementation of ECTS at HEIs



ECTS: Future Challenges

- The basic principles and tools of ECTS (“Key features”) have to be conveyed to academic and administrative staff and students alike in order to exploit the potential of ECTS as a transparency tool. To achieve this, ECTS requires institutional guidelines.
- Support and advice is particularly needed regarding credit allocation related to learning outcomes, workload definition, and the use of ECTS for *credit accumulation*.
- ECTS Label

What are the benefits of a credit accumulation system for students?

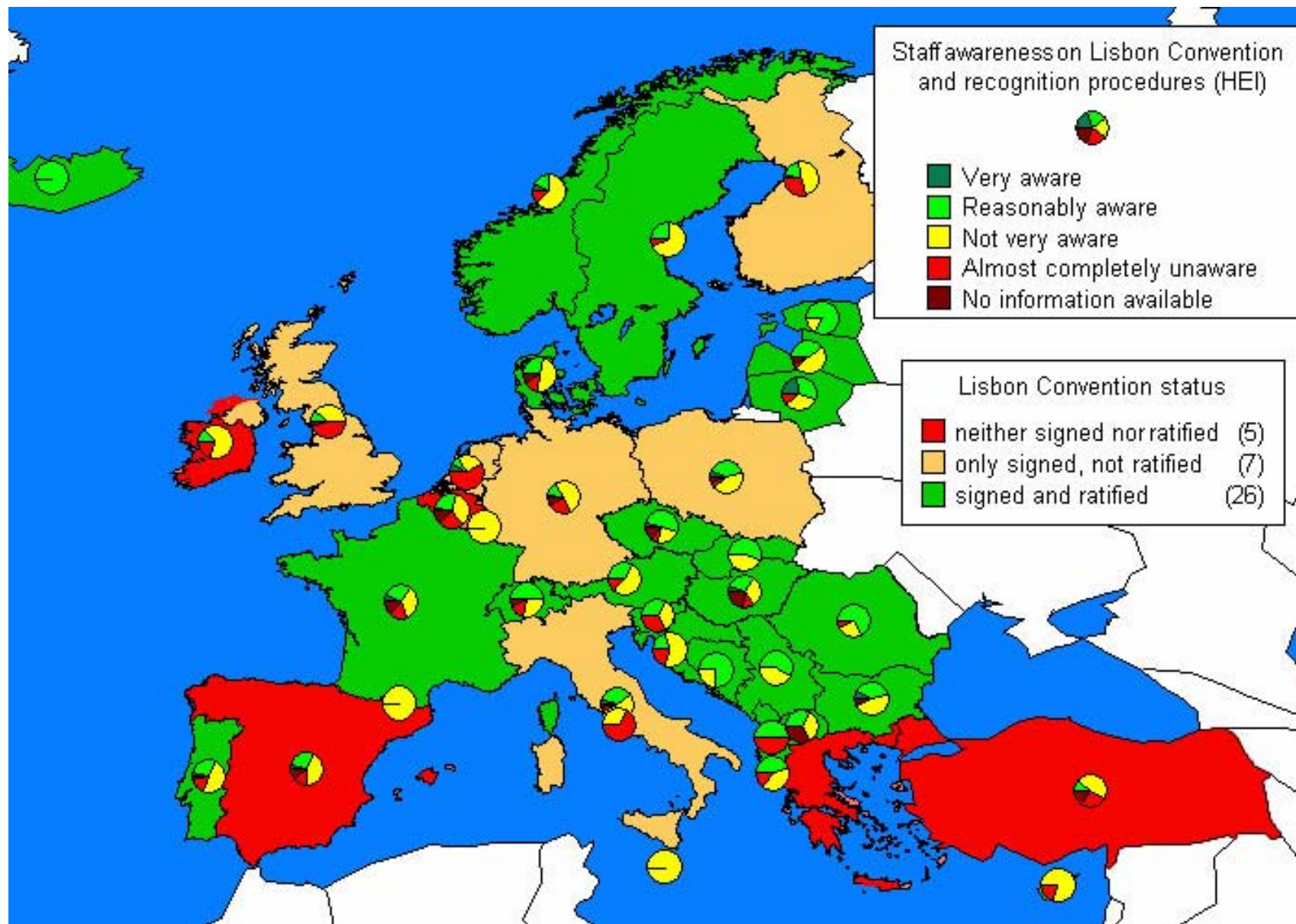
Trends 3 question answered by 37 student associations

- More flexible learning paths: 26
- Greater coherence between study programmes in the same institution: 16
- Less overloaded curricula and examinations: 12
- Shorter study duration because of more distributed assessments: 5
- Benefits are unclear: 5
- None:1

Recognition: Lisbon Recognition Convention and ENIC/NARIC

- Two thirds of the Bol. countries have ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention
- More than half of the academic staff seem to be *not very aware* or *not aware at all* of the LRC
- Cooperation between HEIs and ENIC/NARIC: 20% report close cooperation, 25% don't cooperate at all and 28% didn't know ENIC/NARIC (or not under that name)

Recognition



Recognition at institutional level

- Two thirds of Ministries, more than half of the HEIs and less than 50% of the students' associations expect that Bologna will greatly facilitate academic recognition procedures.
- Almost 90% of the students' associations reported occasional or frequent recognition problems after study abroad.
- In many countries, institution-wide recognition procedures seem to be underdeveloped
- The Diploma Supplement is being introduced in ever more countries, but awarenesses among employers is still insufficient.

4. Autonomy and Quality Assurance

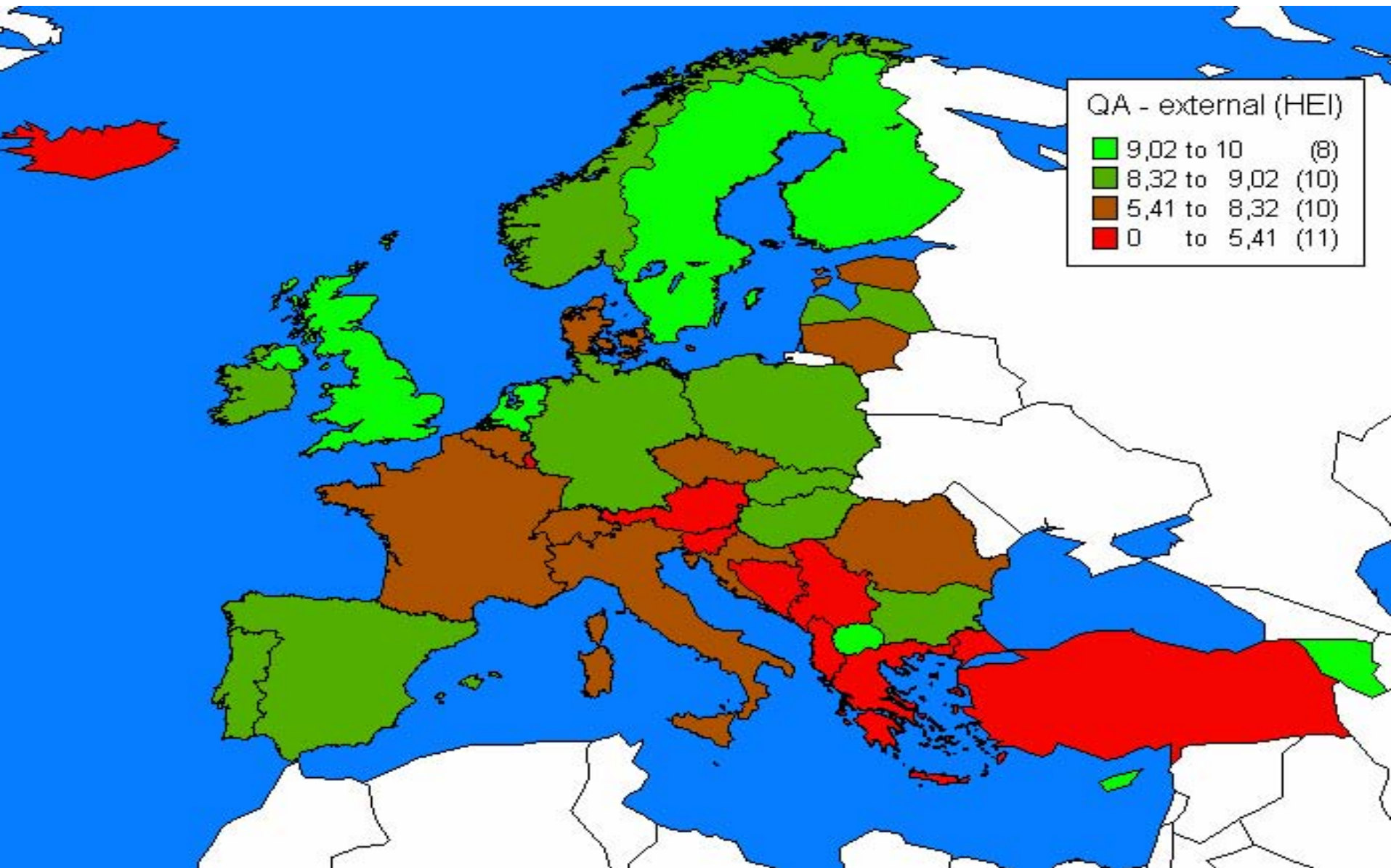
Quality and Autonomy

- legislative changes in many Bologna signatory countries but 46% of HEI rectors find that national legislation still undermines autonomous decision-making
- autonomy = state intervention ↓
but also influence of other stakeholders ↑
- renegotiate system of outside influences rather than realise the dream of self-regulation

External Quality Assurance

- practically every country has a QA agency (those which don't are about to establish one), 80% HEI undergo external QA
- softening opposition between accreditation (more dominant in Eastern Europe) and qual. evaluation (more dominant in Western Europe) – use of standards and importance of improvement orientation
- softening opposition between programme and institutional focus, increasing mix
- pre-dominantly oriented toward improvement (exceptions F, UK, Slovakia: accountability)
- high acceptance among HEIs (as enhancing qual. culture)
- criticism of costs and burden in some countries: more focus on internal QA to alleviate the extent of external QA

Quality external (aggregate index of QA in teaching, research, other)



Internal Quality Assurance

- existant at 80% of HEIs in Europe
- predominantly focussed on teaching
- only half of HEIs have internal QA reg. research
- only 25% address other aspects of QA internally
- in most countries the existing internal QA is not robust enough to justify reducing external QA

European cooperation in QA

- significant exchange of information and models of good practice across Europe
- ministries, RC, HEIs, students prefer mutual recognition of national QA and accreditation procedures over European structures
- HEIs more positive on European structures: nearly half would welcome a pan-European accreditation agency

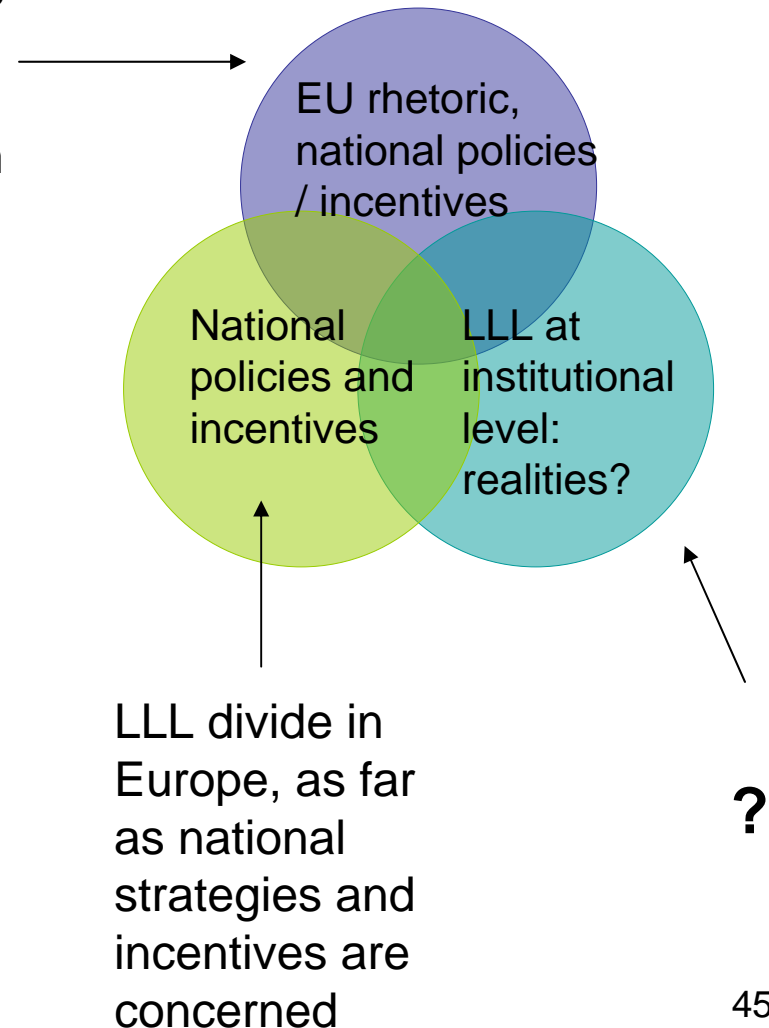
Quality Assurance: future challenge

- establishing improvement-oriented QA without disproportionate costs and administrative burden
- creating transparency, exchange of good practice but also enough common criteria to allow for mutual recognition of each others' principles and procedures without undermining its positive forces of competition and diversity by mainstreaming the system

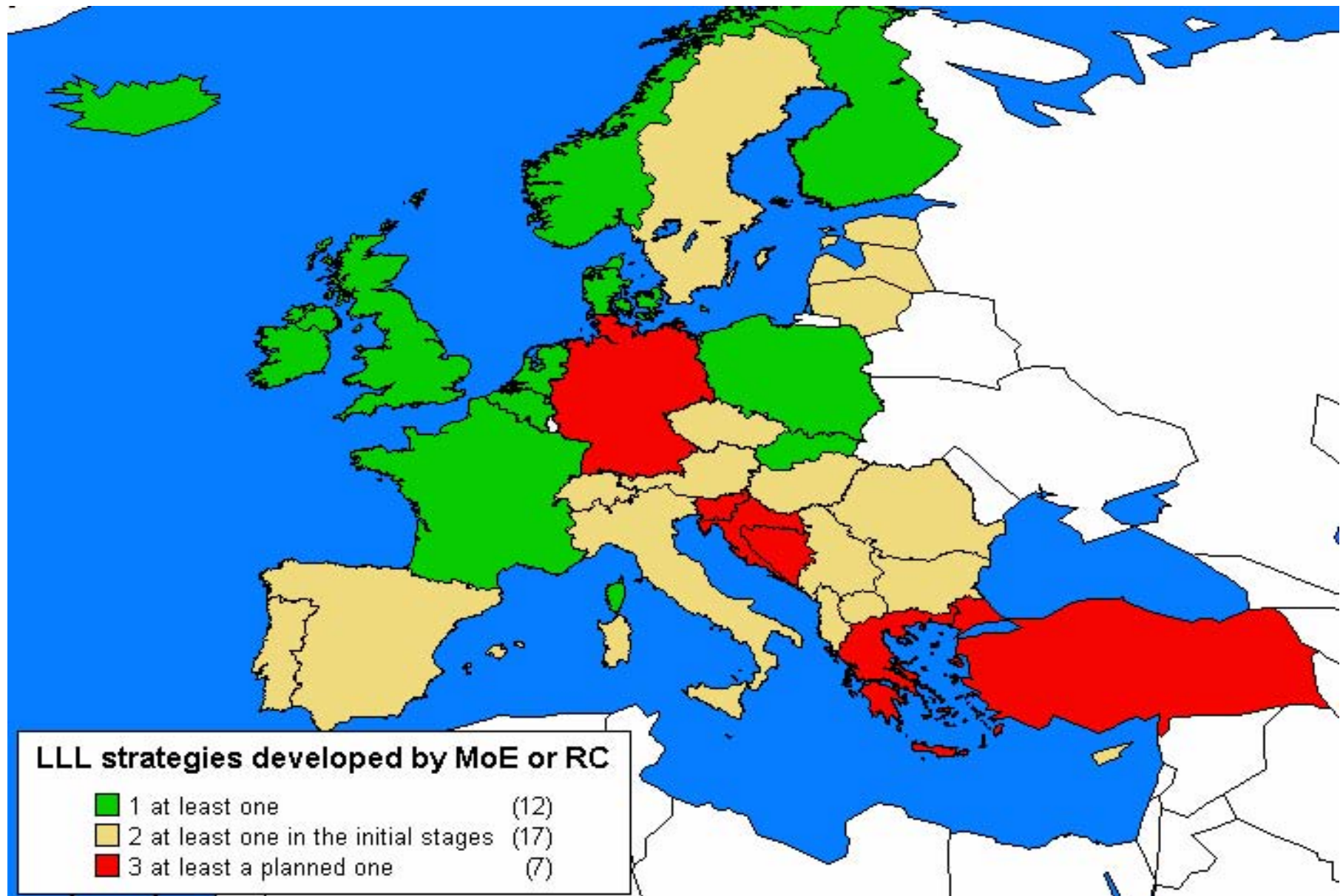
5. Lifelong learning

LLL between Rhetoric and Reality

- **Lisbon Summit 2000:** „Improving basic skills, particularly IT, is a top priority to make the Union the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy of the world.“
- Report on **Concrete Objectives** of Education and Training Systems (Stockholm 2001), high-level Task Force on Skills and Mobility (report Dec. 2001); EU work programme Barcelona, spring 2002
- **Eur. Action plan:** opening up Eur. Labour markets to everyone by 2005
- **Guidelines for MS employment policies** 2001 stress need for MS to set out coherent strat. on LLL
- **European Social Agenda** (access for LLL)
- **Memorandum on LLL**, October 2000, **Consultation** until 2001
- National reports November '01, EUA coordinated consultation of HEIs
- **European Action plan** on LLL 2002
- **Quality Indicators in LLL**, 2002



LLL strategies at national level



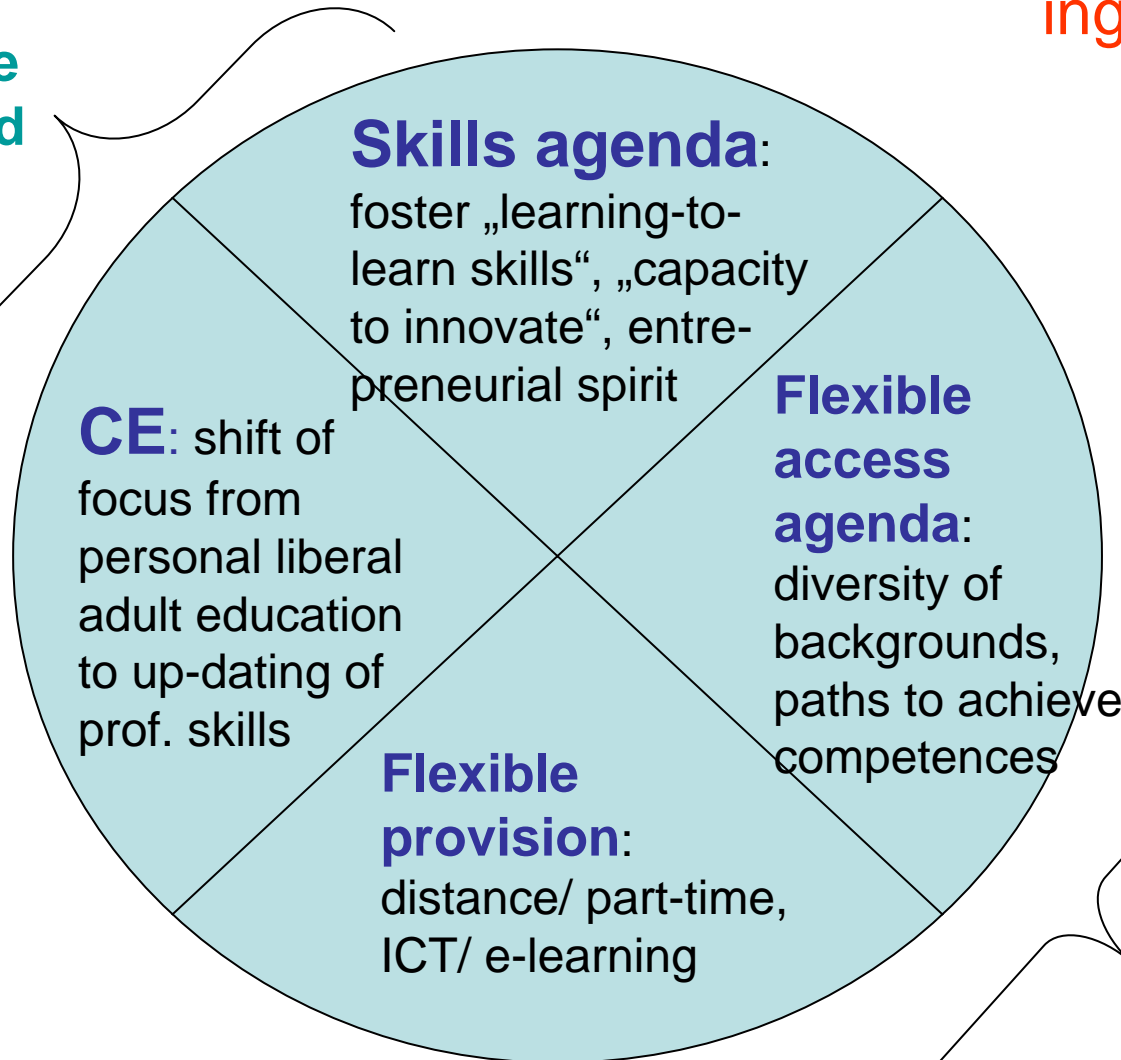
Extensive LLL policy developments

What is new and what is old about LLL?

Not the ingredients

Flexible demand

but the strong focus on flexible learning



Flexible offer

Lifelong Learning and Bologna: Opportunities

- Opportunity offered to the status and integration of LLL in HEIs offered by Bologna trends, because of emphasis on flexibility (of units, degrees, institutions, systems)
→ potential for greater integration of LLL into HE central concerns
- BP has something to gain from LLL, namely its attention to/ experience with learners needs, competence-based learning and assessment
- Opportunity offered by LLL as experienced promoters of regional development, experienced with attention to stakeholders' needs

LLL and Bologna: Problems and Threats

There is a long way to go...

- LLL and Bologna are still completely separate agendas at institutions
- European cooperation in LLL is not very developed (LLL partnerships tend to be regional)
- LLL policies are not supported by appropriate funding, i.e. developing LLL often has to be realised at the cost of other core processes and reforms
- LLL policies do not target HE as such
- HEIs have not sufficiently defined their unique role in fostering LLL

Diversification of institutional profiles

In light of the diversification of functions (including LLL, technology transfer, dialogue with public, fostering interest in S&T)

the European HE landscape remains relatively homogeneous:

- 16% of univ. and 10% of other HEIs declare serving a world-wide community,
- 7% (both types of HEIs) a European community
- 52% univ. and 62% other HEIs serve a national community,
- 20% and 31% a regional community

Unexploited opportunities for institutional positioning:

- presuppose autonomy, non-mainstreaming funding mechanisms
- could be greatly enhanced by positioning with European partners on an international stage have not been exploited enough, strategic networking at European level is still underdeveloped (incl. joint degrees)

Conclusions

In order to make Bologna reforms innovative and sustainable...

- they have to be integrated into other core functions and development processes of HEIs.
- they should not be pushed forward at the expense of other urgent innovations and reforms at HEIs.
- they have to be reflected in the funding and funding mechanisms.
- their European-level interpretations and frameworks should be reference points and triggers for improvement-oriented reflections and reforms rather than prescriptions, additional regulation.
- they have to allow for enough time to transform legislative changes into meaningful academic aims and institutional realities.

The Bologna Process

- is more worthwhile as a trigger for reforms if dealt with **holistically**
- should be dealt with **systemically**
- will only lead to success if addressed in its **ambivalent dimensions** (competitiveness and social agenda)
- **should include** the essential actors: **the academics** who are responsible for teaching and researching !