



Seminar on Bachelor's Degrees

St. Petersburg,
25-26 November 2004



What is the Bologna Process?

- A process between nation states, with stakeholder participation
- Not "à la carte"
- Ministers define objectives and priorities
- Implementation at the European, national and institutional level



The Bologna Declaration (1999)

- "Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate. Access to the second cycle shall require successful completion of first cycle studies, lasting a minimum of three years. The degree awarded after the first cycle shall also be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification. The second cycle should lead to the master and/or doctorate degree as in many European countries."

The Helsinki Seminar, 2001

- Problems with old structure:
 - long first study cycles
 - high dropout rates
 - little flexibility
- Advantages of bachelor:
 - flexible, promoting mobility
 - allows more interaction with working life
 - helps satisfy the labour market's need for more higher education graduates
 - facilitates better recognition of European degrees
 - increases attractiveness of European higher education

The Helsinki Seminar, 2001 (ctd.)

- Recommendations:
 - 180-240 ECTS, 3-4 years
 - different orientations, different types of higher education institutions
 - orientation and outcomes explained in Diploma Supplement
 - should not be regarded simply as part of a longer curriculum
- Integrated programmes may continue to exist in some fields

Current situation

- Expansion of the Bologna Process
- Most countries have begun implementing the two-cycle system (Eurydice 2003). Also noted by Ministers in Berlin – “a comprehensive restructuring of the European landscape of higher education”
- Dublin descriptors
- The Berlin Communiqué:
 - Commitment by ministers to starting implementation of the two-cycle system before 2005
 - Call for improved understanding of the new qualifications through dialogue
 - Qualifications should be described in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile
 - First cycle degrees should give access to second cycle programmes
 - Second cycle degrees should give access to doctoral studies



The bachelor's degree in Russia

- First bachelors introduced in 1989 at Peoples' Friendship University
- More broadly implemented from 1992
- Implementation optional for institutions
- 7,2 % of students in bachelor programmes

Experiences from Germany

- Problems with old system: long duration, inflexible programmes, high drop-out rates
- Binary institutional system
- Legislative changes from 1998 (federal level and Länder)
- Bachelor standard qualification in future (at all institutions)
- 3 or 4 years (82,8 % are 180 ECTS)
- Only one type
- Labour market qualification *and* foundation for further studies
- Around 10 % of students in bachelor programmes
- Accepted in labour market



Experiences from Finland

- Bachelor's degree existed in humanities and natural sciences, but mainly as a step towards a master
- New legislation prepared in close cooperation with institutions
- New degree structure in force from 2005
- Bachelor obligatory in all fields except medicine and dentistry
- Different profile: universities and polytechnics
- Internationalisation important motivation
- Earmarked government funding to aid transition



Russia: Problems under discussion

- Degree of phasing out of old system
- How to avoid throwing the good things over board
- Pace of change
- How to improve dialogue with employers
- Structure of postgraduate degrees
- Relationship between Ministry and institutions



Pro et Contra

Arguments in favour:

- More flexible in relation to the labour market, lifelong learning and mobility
- Compatibility (Europe and the world); promotes transparency, recognition, mobility and ultimately quality

Arguments against:

- May reduce standards
- Not well known/understood
- Should not be forced on institutions and/or students

Preliminary recommendations I

Kasevich:

- The bachelor's degree must become the basic type of higher education. Exceptions in the form of integrated long programmes must be well justified in each case.
- The main characteristic must not be the time of learning, but the outcomes and the number of credits.
- Working on generic attributes is useful, but special descriptors must be worked out by the specialist community.
- The creative development of the student should be stimulated. Therefore, the bachelor's degree should involve the student in research. This is not sufficiently emphasised at present.

Preliminary recommendations II

Lukichev

- Closer cooperation higher education – labour market (employers)
- Balance between specialist knowledge and generic skills, with an emphasis on “learning to learn”
- Introduction of new quality criteria emphasising final competences
- Student involvement in planning of study programmes
- No division between academic and professional bachelors; all should be research-based and research-driven

Preliminary recommendations III

Troyan

- 4+2+3 model with 4-year bachelor
- 4+5 years in exceptional cases
- Doctorates (“kandidat nauk”) only at universities, which should have full authority over standards
- “Doktor nauk” to be preserved

Preliminary recommendations IV

Heerens

- All bachelor programmes should address all the four main purposes of higher education:
 - personal development
 - preparation for life as a citizen
 - development and maintenance of an advanced knowledge base
 - preparation for the labour market
- Balance between broad and specialist knowledge
- Transversal skills and "sustainable employability"
- Students central role in curriculum development



Bologna Process web page:

- www.bologna-bergen2005.no