



The public responsibility of higher education in Europe: preparation for the labour market

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Employability aspects in the Bologna process

- **Bologna Declaration: a social, not an academic agenda**
- **Education policies also driven by eco/social issues**
- **Increased awareness of employability as a concern in higher education throughout Europe**
- **Bologna's emphasis on employability is largely welcomed and nostrified at national level**
- **A powerfull source of change/reform**
- **Bologna agenda overlaps with EU's Lisbon Strategy**
- **In EU, strong links to the European labour market**



Employability aspects in the Bologna process

- The debate has focused mainly on 3 aspects:
 - employability in Bachelor-level degrees
 - "academic" and "professional" HE
 - employability on European labour market
 - industry not involved in Bologna follow-up
- Priorities: Bologna and Lisbon strategies
 - degrees with validity in Europe
 - a framework of reference for qualifications
 - qualifications with a "European" dimension
 - quality assurance/accreditation



Lessons learnt & suggestions for policy development

- **HE is ever more integrated with economic policies as a key factor of competitiveness**
- **Employability should be taken into account, along with other dimensions, for all HE learning curricula/methods:**
 - **this is in line with the role of universities**
 - **no contradiction with other goals**
 - **for all types of HE and HEI**
 - **both for content and methods**



Lessons learnt & suggestions for policy development

- The relevance of HE should be assessed with reference to the European, not just the local labour market
- Employability should be assessed with regard to all forms of professional life, including self employment
- HEI should always seek sustainable employment, not a mere response to short term needs



Lessons learnt & suggestions for policy development

- **All initial and LLL courses should consider employability, but there are various ways in which HE qualifications can be "relevant to the labour market"**
- **Main challenge to come (for Bologna and Lisbon):**
 - **a coherent EQF serving as a common reference**
 - **quality assurance/accreditation tools creating enough trust and confidence**
 - **on this basis, more effective cross-recognition of qualifications at all levels (incl. short HE and PhD)**