



Ministerie van de
Vlaamse Gemeenschap



**INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR
BOLOGNA
AND THE CHALLENGES OF E-LEARNING
AND DISTANCE EDUCATION**

THE CONTRIBUTION OF NON-CLASSICAL LEARNING AND TEACHING FORMS TO
THE EMERGING EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

Ghent, 4-5 June 2004

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Drivers for the EHEA are diverse. They include mobility, response to the rapidly changing knowledge society, attention for social inclusion and equity, and efficient investment in human capital.

The Seminar demonstrated that e-learning and distance education are to be considered an integrated part of the regular activities alongside mainstream higher education. E-Learning as part of a well balanced blend, is not only instrumental for this purpose but a necessity to bring lifelong learning to its full potential: it facilitates self-directed learning, can easily match individual needs and provides sufficient flexibility.

Without such flexibility, the integration of the lifelong learning perspective will remain an empty concept; and the EHEA will remain socially exclusive instead of inclusive.

Collaborative networking between institutions, both conventional and dedicated distance teaching ones, and even including the corporate world i.a. through private-public partnerships, will help to meet these needs in a timely, high quality, efficient and effective way.

On the basis of these observations, we make the following recommendations for the further development of the Bologna process:

- To open up the EHEA to 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 qualification 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 could be used to establish 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 to take on board in the design of international mobility schemes.
- To promote a broad approach to all “Bologna tools” (as for instance ECTS and Diploma Supplement) to include e-learning and non classical teaching and learning forms.