

Trends V: Universities shaping the European Higher Education Area

AN EUA REPORT

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Education and Culture

Socrates

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Foreword

Trends V is perhaps the most ambitious project yet completed by EUA. This report provides the most comprehensive view available of the state of European higher education - as seen by higher education institutions themselves. Indeed, more than 900 European higher education institutions contributed to this report, either by responding to a wide-ranging questionnaire, or by hosting visits of research teams, or through providing input in other meetings. EUA is deeply grateful to everyone in the higher education community who has contributed to this common endeavour.

The report shows the progress made by Europe's universities in implementing the Bologna reforms, and outlines the main challenges ahead. It is thus a significant publication for all those concerned with European higher education, whether universities and students, or governments, business and industry, or other stakeholders.

Trends V is also the European universities' report to the Conference of Ministers of Education meeting in London on 17/18 May 2007 to discuss the culmination of the Bologna process by 2010. It thus mirrors issues addressed by the stocktaking exercise of the Bologna governments - degree structures, Bologna tools, quality and recognition. In addition *Trends V* also examines the response of higher education to lifelong learning, pays attention to the services in place to support students, and looks at the particular challenges being faced in the countries that are recent entrants to the Bologna process.

As the 2010 deadline set for the realisation of the European Higher Education Area approaches, the report demonstrates that there has been extraordinary change in European higher education, and that institutions are engaging seriously with the implementation of these reforms. Yet the report also points out that the cultural impact of the Bologna process has often been under-estimated, that there remains much work to be done throughout society, and that the European Higher Education Area will continue to be "work in progress" well beyond 2010.

The findings in this report will do much to shape the European Higher Education Area, and in turn the European Higher Education Area will be central to Europe's future. *Trends V* thus adds credence to EUA's central conviction that Europe needs strong universities for a prosperous future.



Professor Georg Winckler
EUA President

Acknowledgements

This study would not have been possible without the support of the European higher education community as a whole. EUA is deeply grateful for the trust invested by these numerous member and partner institutions to reflect the information they have provided well.

In many countries, the high response rates to the Trends V questionnaire would not have been achieved without encouragement from National Rectors Conferences. The National Rectors Conferences have also provided invaluable information themselves to help situate national developments accurately, as well as assisting in the organisation of the fifteen site visits which have provided crucial qualitative information for the report.

The authors acknowledge that not only has the research for this project been a collective effort, but so too has the writing of the report. Professor Sir Roderick Floud, EUA Vice President deserves particular thanks for his insightful comments on different drafts. Lesley Wilson, EUA Secretary General, and Andrée Sursock, EUA Deputy Secretary General, have also given continual advice, support and good guidance.

Bogdan Voicu from the Romanian Institute for Quality of Life in Bucharest, has been responsible for the statistical analysis of the questionnaires. Without his tremendous commitment and great expertise, this report simply would not exist.

The research team (see Appendix 3b) who undertook site visits for the report are responsible for the important insights in the report. They did great work, under considerable time pressure, and have also contributed valuable comments as the drafting of the report has progressed. Their work was also made possible by the group of national experts (see Appendix 3b) who accompanied them on the site visits and provided essential information on the national context.

The authors would also like to thank colleagues in the EUA secretariat for the immense help and support they have received in all aspects of the project. Charoula Tzanakou deserves particular thanks for participating enthusiastically and intelligently in every aspect of the work, and not least for ensuring that the project kept to schedule. The authors are also grateful to Diana David, who worked on the coordination of the questionnaires, and liaison with the Romanian Institute for Quality of Life during the early phase of the project.

Finally, EUA is grateful to the European Commission for the financial support granted to this project which has helped to ensure the necessary conditions to undertake this project successfully.

David Crosier, Lewis Purser, Hanne Smidt

Executive summary

1. Trends V

For the first time in the series, this Trends report is based on both quantitative and qualitative research, while previous Trends reports relied on one or other of these two methodologies. Trends V analyses the nature and extent of implementation of the Bologna reforms, and attempts to assess the impact that changes are having on a wider range of institutional development processes. Through comparison with the outcomes of earlier Trends projects, and in particular the Trends III results (2003) that to a large degree addressed the same questions, the report is able to measure the progress that has taken place in implementing higher education reforms. It also points to the challenges that institutions face at a time when they are being asked to respond to multiple societal demands. Bologna can increasingly be seen as a reform of structures that allows a wide range of other institutional development challenges to be addressed.

2. The European Higher Education Area – a shared objective for Universities

Trends V confirms that higher education institutions (universities in the broad sense of the term) are increasingly taking responsibility for the emerging European Higher Education Area. The focus has shifted from governmental actions, including legislation, to implementation of reforms within institutions, with broad support for the underlying idea of more student-centred and problem based learning. This confirms initial findings from Trends IV. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, Trends V shows that the general attitude displayed by institutions has also changed considerably in the past four years, with the vast majority of the 908 institutions involved stating that they consider it vital to move rapidly towards a European Higher Education Area.

3. Degree structures

Trends V gives clear evidence of dramatic progress in relation to the implementation of structural reform, with 82% of institutions answering that they have the three cycles in place compared to 53% in 2003. Across Europe, there is no longer any question of whether or not reform of degree structures will take place, but rather a shift to considering whether the conditions and support are adequate to enable the process to be successful. In this respect the national understanding of reforms becomes crucial, and important questions remain with regard to different national interpretations of the nature and purposes of the three cycles, and whether these different national interpretations will prove to be compatible. Trends V identifies, among other substantial issues to be addressed, the articulation between the cycles, admission to the first cycle, the different types of bachelors and masters being developed (for example, academic versus professional qualifications), while also pointing out the particular problems posed by the continued co-existence in some countries of old and new structures.

4. Employability

Trends V suggests that employability is a high priority in the reform of curricula in all cycles. This concern transcends national boundaries and implementation priorities. However, the results also reveal that there is still much to be done to translate this priority into institutional practice. This is a paradox for a reform process inspired, at

least in part, by a concern that higher education should be more responsive to the needs of a changing society and labour market. It indicates that one of the main challenges for the future is to strengthen dialogue with employers and other external stakeholders. For many institutions this requires a change in culture that will take time. It is essential that both governments and higher education institutions increase their efforts to communicate to the rest of society the reasons why the reforms are taking place, as a shared responsibility. It is also important for all governments to ensure that their own public sector employment structures adapt to take account of the new degree structures – an issue pointed out in Trends IV, but not yet entirely resolved.

5. Student centred learning

Although new degree structures are still commonly perceived as the main Bologna goal, there is increasing awareness that the most significant legacy of the process will be a change of educational paradigm across the continent. Institutions are slowly moving away from a system of teacher-driven provision, and towards a student-centred concept of higher education. Thus the reforms are laying the foundations for a system adapted to respond to a growing variety of student needs. Institutions and their staff are still at the early stages of realising the potential of reforms for these purposes. Understanding and integrating the use of a learning outcomes based approach remains a key medium-term challenge. When achieved, it will enable students to become the engaged subjects of their own learning process, and also contribute to improving many issues of progression between cycles, institutions, sectors, the labour market and countries.

6. Bologna tools: ECTS, Diploma Supplement and Qualifications Frameworks

The use of *ECTS as both a credit accumulation and credit transfer system* continues to become more widespread across Europe, with almost 75% of institutions reporting use of ECTS as a transfer system and over 66% as an accumulation system. Yet while a vast majority of institutions are now using ECTS, there remains much work to be done to ensure that they use it correctly. Incorrect or superficial use of ECTS is currently still widespread. Such usage hinders the re-structuring of curricula, and the development of flexible learning paths for students, while also making both mobility and recognition more difficult. Institutions have to take responsibility for driving the development of ECTS in a way which enables them to respond effectively to the challenges of an open and truly European higher education area.

Slightly less than half of Trends V respondents confirmed that they issue a *Diploma Supplement* to all graduating students. This is disappointing – even if a further 38% say that they have plans to use the DS – given the 2003 Berlin Communiqué commitment that all students would be issued a Diploma Supplement free of charge by 2005, and suggests that some national systems are lagging behind. Efforts to promote and publicise the Diploma Supplement also need to be renewed in order to enhance its usefulness to students and employers.

Although following the adoption in Bergen of the *Qualifications Framework* for the European Higher Education Area, qualifications frameworks are a topic of considerable policy debate, Trends V shows that there is much work to be done in informing higher education institutions and involving them in development at national level. Currently institutions – with the exception of those in Ireland – are generally

confused as to whether or not their national system has such a qualifications framework, as well as to the purposes that it serves. There is a danger that without proper understanding of the reasons for the development of qualifications frameworks, the result may be that they remain little known in institutions, thus seriously limiting their impact.

7. Student services

Trends V shows a growth in the provision of student services over the last four years. However, the results of the qualitative research undertaken indicate that while it appears that many institutions and systems offer a wide range of services, these may not be sufficiently developed or adapted to the growing needs of a diverse student body. Guidance and counselling services in particular merit greater attention, on the part of both institutions and governments. Professional staffing and adequate resourcing are key challenges, as is the monitoring of the quality of provision. Involving students – as users and beneficiaries – is sound practice and should be seen as a principle for further development.

8. Quality

The focus on quality in the Bologna process has certainly raised awareness within higher education institutions of the potential benefits and challenges of effective quality assurance and enhancement activities. More constructive discussion between institutions, quality assurance agencies, stakeholders and public authorities appears to be taking place, and the involvement of students in quality assurance activities also seems to be gaining ground. Indeed in some parts of Europe, quality assurance seems to be replacing degree structure reform as the main topic of interest in the Bologna process.

The results of the questionnaire (based on the criteria set out in the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) adopted by Ministers in Bergen) demonstrate that much work has been done to develop internal quality processes in institutions; student services, nonetheless, being one area that is still not widely evaluated. However, relatively few institutions seem to take a holistic approach to quality improvement. In this respect Trends V confirms the findings of Trends IV and the EUA quality culture project, that extensive internal quality processes are correlated with a higher degree of institutional autonomy.

External quality assurance systems also need to demonstrate that they actually produce an improvement in quality. Considerable concern still remains about the increasing bureaucratic burden on institutions. Meanwhile institutions need to continue to embed a responsible and responsive quality culture as a means of enhancing creativity and innovation in fulfilling their missions.

9. Mobility

The Trends V questionnaire data indicates that, although there are still major deficits in capturing reliable information on mobility, many institutions have a general perception that student mobility is increasing. It is important, however, to distinguish between different forms of mobility – within countries and between countries, within degree cycles and between degree cycles, and within organised mobility programmes or as “free movers”.

With regard to mobility between countries it seems that “free mover” mobility could be on the increase in some parts of Europe. However, another explanation of institutions’ perception of increased mobility is that greater attention is being given to international student mobility, largely as a result of the additional revenue streams that can be provided through international education. In terms of mobility flows, there is evidence that, as in the past, many central and eastern European institutions are exporting more students and staff than they are importing, while certain western European countries are clearly strong importers.

Mobility flows seem to be closely related to funding policy and socio-economic issues, while the changes in degree structures so far seem to have had only a marginal impact. Indeed, the potential for greater mobility between cycles is not greatly exploited at this stage, and is rarely an element of national or institutional policy. Indeed many national funding systems currently act as a disincentive to mobility, rewarding institutions that retain students, but not providing incentives to mobility.

Recognition of student learning also remains an important challenge, with considerable difficulties still existing in relation to the recognition of learning that has taken place outside a national environment. Because of the importance attached to mobility as an essential characteristic of the European Higher Education Area, an increased effort needs to be made to encourage academics to accept the long established principle of “mutual trust and confidence” in the recognition of learning and qualifications offered by others. Fine tuning in the use of learning agreements is also essential.

10. Lifelong Learning

“Lifelong learning” is a term used, confusingly, to cover both continuing education and training for well-qualified graduates and initial education for disadvantaged groups, possibly through part-time higher education. While many institutions perceive lifelong learning as an emerging priority, Trends V provides little evidence that they have taken strategic action to consider their missions in one or other of these endeavours or to anticipate the challenges ahead. Thus no coherent picture of the understanding and implementation of lifelong learning emerges from the report, although there are indications that this is an area where diversified funding sources exist and where there is considerable scope for cooperation with local partners. Once again, questions arise regarding the recognition of prior learning which need to be addressed. Some institutions suggested that the implementation of Bologna reforms has taken priority over developing lifelong learning strategies, but now consider that the conditions have been created for a more adequate response to be developed.

In relation to access in particular, while almost all institutions consider widening participation to be important, their expectations of being able to contribute to this development are rather low. This demonstrates the importance of government policy in this area and the need for incentives, all the more so given the obligation felt by many institutions to improve competitiveness by attracting the best students; they sometimes falsely believe that this precludes improving the diversity of the student base.

11. New member countries

The Trends V report has looked at the situation of some of the new member Bologna countries separately, discovering as much diversity within and between these countries as across the rest of Europe. The addition of Russia to the Bologna process in 2003 added a vast new territory and enormous number of institutions to the potential European higher education area. While there is a significant vanguard of institutions pushing forward reforms, the Bologna process nevertheless encapsulates both ideological and geographical issues, and it is not yet clear if a unified national strategy to implement reforms will emerge. There remains much to be done to support the work of the reform-minded academic community.

Institutions in South East Europe clearly perceive the Bologna process as providing a direction that is essential for societal development. Among the many challenges being faced, the step to move away from a culture of self-managed faculty independence is still the key issue if reforms are to prove sustainable and effective.

Georgia offers a case study of how the Bologna process can be used effectively to support a profound reform of higher education, with extraordinary change taking place in very little time. A key element to success has been the effort made to provide basic information on European texts in the national language.

12. International attractiveness

The reforms across Europe are also taking place in a context of increasing global interaction. The Trends survey shows that institutions are receptive to developments outside as well as inside Europe, and there is also increasing evidence of institutions in other world regions responding strategically to European developments. The responses of higher education institutions show interestingly and very clearly that as in 2003 inter-European cooperation remains the highest priority. However, relationships with higher education institutions and systems in Asia have become vastly more important in the past four years. There is also some evidence that attention is also focusing more than in the past on cooperation with the Arab world and Africa. It is difficult, however, to evaluate whether these institutional perceptions will prove to be ephemeral or part of a sustained trend. Nevertheless, higher education reforms in Europe are no longer a matter of interest only to Europeans, but also have an impact in the global arena.

13. Future Challenges

All of the issues addressed in Trends V have implications for the development of the European Higher Education Area, but three key challenges for the future can be highlighted:

1) Strengthening the relationship between governments, higher education institutions and other societal stakeholders is essential to anchor and sustain the goals of the Bologna process. One major priority must be to broaden debate with employers, students, parents and other stakeholders, and thus enhance trust and confidence in the quality and relevance of institutional engagement. In addition, institutions and governments need to join forces not only in implementing reforms, but in communicating widely the results and implications of the structural and curricular reforms which are taking place.

2) Institutions need to develop their capacity to respond strategically to the lifelong learning agenda, taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the structural changes and tools that have been developed through the Bologna process. This means that institutions must use these tools correctly, and develop them further to enhance student-centred and flexible learning, as well as greater mobility. Increasing dialogue with employers is again required if university courses, at all levels, are to meet the needs of a society and economy in which knowledge becomes rapidly out-of-date and in which, therefore, constant training and retraining is required. Through addressing these lifelong learning challenges, institutions can also tackle the social objective of ensuring equality of access to higher education for all those qualified and able to benefit from it.

3) Finally, institutions must begin to think through the implications of the existence of the European Higher Education Area after 2010. Some aspects of Bologna are likely still to require implementation or reconsideration, and it will be particularly important to do this with greater European vision to overcome some of the local and national obstacles that currently prevail. The European Higher Education Area is also being developed in an increasingly inter-connected global context, and its international reception is therefore of the utmost importance. Once again the responsibility lies with governments and institutions to explain reforms, and to support these major cultural processes that have now been set in motion.

List of Acronyms

| | |
|-------|---|
| ACA | Academic Co-operation Association |
| APCL | Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning |
| APEL | Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning |
| APL | Accreditation of Prior Learning |
| DAAD | German Academic Exchange Service |
| DS | Diploma Supplement |
| ECTS | European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System |
| EHEA | European Higher Education Area |
| ENIC | European Network of Information Centres |
| EQF | European Qualifications Framework |
| EUA | European University Association |
| HEI | Higher Education Institution |
| HRK | German Rectors' Conferences |
| LLL | Lifelong Learning |
| NARIC | National Academic Recognition Information Centres |
| NQF | National Qualifications Framework |
| QA | Quality Assurance |
| SME | Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise |
| VET | Vocational Education and Training |
| WBL | Work-Based Learning |

Methodology

This Trends V report has been produced through an analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. The primary data source for the project is a survey of higher education institutions undertaken between November 2005 and March 2006. The Trends V questionnaire was sent by email to all EUA member institutions, as well as to many other higher education institutions in the Bologna countries. It is impossible to quantify the precise number of institutions who received the questionnaire, as the survey was sent not only from EUA's office in Brussels, but also by National Rectors' Conferences to their members, and in addition a hyperlink to the questionnaire was placed on the EUA website. A number of other partner organisations also informed institutions of the survey.

908 individual institutional questionnaires are included in the analysis for this report. Part of the analysis involves a comparison with the Trends III institutional findings, based upon a similar questionnaire sent to institutions in 2002. The Trends V questionnaire maintained as many questions as possible from the Trends III survey, so that assessment of change during this four year period would be possible.

In order to have a comparable analysis of the two institutional samples, some of the responses to the Trends V survey have been treated separately when specific points of comparison over time are sought. This relates in particular to countries where no or very few institutional questionnaires were received in 2002. Mostly these are countries which joined the Bologna process either in 2003 or in 2005. It should also be noted that Serbia and Montenegro was a single state at the time of the survey, and is considered thus in any national analysis.

When national information is displayed regarding the Trends V questionnaire analysis, several countries have been excluded as too few institutions responded to give a reliable picture of national trends. This is the case for Albania (no responses) Armenia (no responses) Azerbaijan (1 response), Belarus (1 response), Holy See (2 responses), Moldova (2 responses).

Institutional questionnaires were also complemented by updates of questionnaires completed for the Trends IV project by National Rectors Conferences. These provided background information on recent national legislation and developments along the various Bologna action lines.

In addition to questionnaires, this report also draws upon qualitative research from site visits to 15 higher education institutions in 10 countries, undertaken between October and December 2006. A list of the institutions visited can be found in Appendix 3. The visits lasted 1.5 days in each institution and were conducted by a research team consisting of two international researchers and one national expert. The two international researchers were responsible for leading the discussions and reporting from the institution. The national expert, recommended by the relevant National Rectors' Conference, supported the international researchers by providing

contextual information on the national situation, and by clarifying any general questions that arose during discussions.

All site visits followed the same pattern of small group interviews with different actors within the institution: institutional leadership (rector, vice-rectors, deans); academics; junior lecturers/early-stage researchers; students from all cycles; administrative staff. Researchers were asked to consider the main issues under the Trends V institutional questionnaire themes, but not necessarily to report on every aspect. Reports from the site visits aimed to reflect the importance attached to different issues in the particular institutions.

The decision to limit the number of institutions and countries visited was taken because the primary source of information – the Trends V questionnaire – already covered the entire geographical area of the Bologna process. It was therefore felt more appropriate to concentrate efforts on a few institutions in as much depth as possible. The sample was not intended to be representative of institutions in Europe, but rather to provide an insight into some of the challenges being faced on the ground. It was felt important to visit both university and other higher education institutions, to include more comprehensive and more specialised institutions, and to have a balance of institutions in large cities and in regions.

As well as questionnaires and site visits, the report has also drawn upon information gathered from focus group discussions. These discussions took place during regular meetings held by groups of universities or partner organisations that generously allowed EUA researchers a space to bring questions to the table in the context of the Trends V project. This also includes meetings organised by EUA in the context of its own project on doctoral programmes – the primary source for information on this topic. A list of the focus group meetings which took place can be found in Appendix 4.

1: STRUCTURAL REFORM: IMPLEMENTING THE THREE CYCLES

Introduction

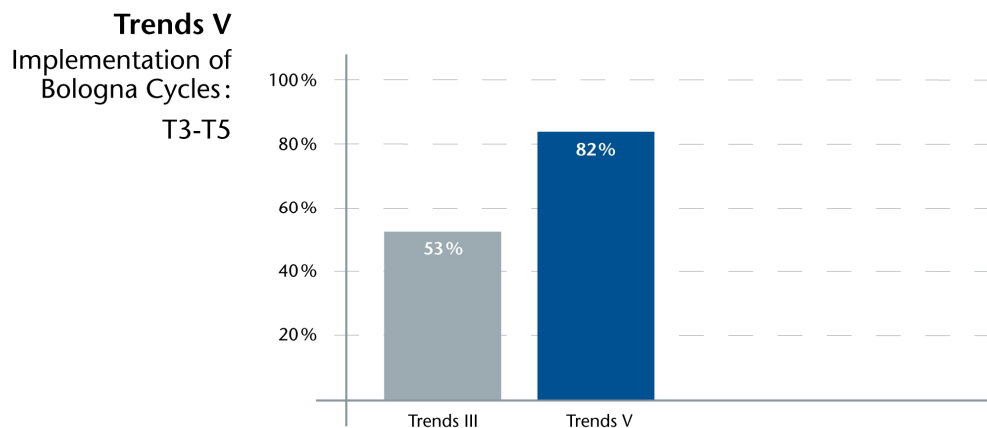
For many in Europe, the Bologna process has become synonymous with the reform of degree structures. The years following the signing of the Bologna Declaration stimulated widespread and ongoing debate, particularly in countries which had a long first cycle, regarding the quality of higher education systems. Many felt that there was nothing to be gained by reforming degree structures, and in a number of disciplines the view was often expressed that it was impossible to provide any meaningful higher education in a shorter first cycle.

This initial phase of the Bologna process can be seen to have culminated in important changes in national legislation, setting the framework for new degree structures. While some higher education institutions had been very much encouraging and anticipating these developments, others had been waiting to see whether movement for reform would be sustained. Once legislation was in place, however, even sceptical institutions began, albeit reluctantly, to engage with the reform process. The Trends III survey, undertaken in 2002/3, indicated that many institutions were then in a process of considering the implications of change, but were not fully committed to all aspects of it.

These findings were developed in greater depth in Trends IV in 2004/5. This major qualitative research project revealed that reforms were a highly complex affair for institutions, with societal demands increasing, but with policy messages often conflicting with each other, and priorities difficult to establish.

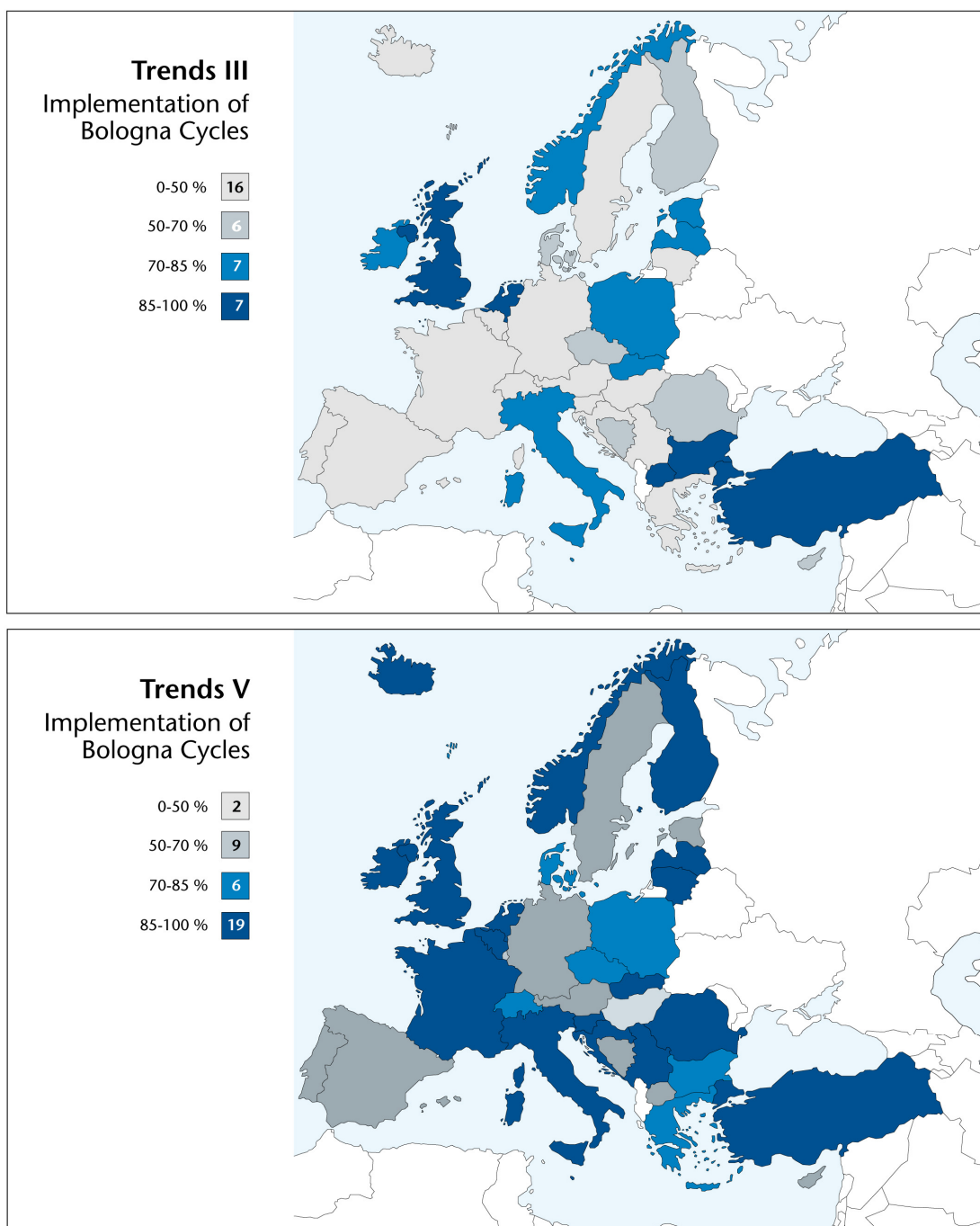
Two years later, the situation has moved on, and this Trends V report contains significant findings not only on the implementation of new Bologna degree cycles but also on the attitudinal shift that seems to have taken place across the higher education sector. The findings for this chapter are drawn both from the analysis of institutional questionnaires, and from qualitative research from the institutional site visits, while the section on developments in the third cycle (1.5) also uses information gained through EUA's project on the development of doctoral programmes in the context of the Bologna process as a primary source.

1.1 Implementation of degree structures



The evidence from the Trends V questionnaire responses on reform of degree structures is striking. All across Europe, institutions report that they have been changing to the Bologna degree structures, with only a small minority of institutions still in the process of preparing to do so. Compared to four years ago, the situation has changed dramatically, to the point where now it no longer seems relevant to question whether or not structural reforms will take place, but rather to examine in greater depth how these reforms are being implemented.

As far as the Bologna three cycle structure is concerned, 82% of institutions replying to the questionnaire stated that the three cycles are in place. This compares to a figure of 53% from the Trends III survey four years earlier, and is evidence that the situation around Europe is moving extremely fast. Moreover, less than 2% of the institutions stated that they do not plan to have a Bologna degree structure. Four years previously this figure was 7.5%. Only 15.4% stated that the three cycles are being planned rather than being implemented.



Comparing the Trends III and Trends V European maps of this situation, it is also clear that progress is taking place across the entire European continent. Indeed although some countries may be moving faster than others, all are moving. The responses also indicate that there are no significant differences when the sample is divided into university and other higher education institutions, nor when looked at

from the perspective of the mission of institutions (regional, national, European, worldwide). The phenomenon of structural reform is quite clearly having an impact on the entire higher education sector.

From the survey answers, the new structures also appear in some ways to be posing fewer problems than many had foreseen. Only 2% of respondents to the questionnaire consider that the Bologna degree cycles are not functioning very well, while 85% consider that they function either extremely well (24%) or reasonably well (61%). It is also interesting to note that the general attitude towards the idea of the European Higher Education Area is very positive. Indeed in institutions in all countries with the exception of the United Kingdom, the response “it is essential to make rapid progress towards the European Higher Education Area” was most often given. In the UK, the majority response was “the European Higher Education Area is a good idea, but the time is not yet ripe.”

As some of the most significant debates regarding Bologna concern why and whether radical change is necessary to move towards a coherent system of degree structures across Europe, these findings have to be considered as a signal of the major impact that the Bologna process is having on European higher education. It is unlikely that even the most far-sighted or optimistic of Education Ministers expected, when signing the Bologna Declaration in 1999, that seven years later, higher education institutions across Europe would have moved so far towards a common three cycle degree system. However, the qualitative research for the Trends V project, examined in greater depth in the next section, revealed that there are many complex issues to be addressed in moving towards three cycles, and that national or local interpretations of concepts and goals have a critical influence. Thus if the European Higher Education Area is to become a reality that really meets the objectives of the Bologna process, there are still many issues to consider and much work to be done.

Key Finding

- *Across Europe, there is no longer any question of whether or not Bologna reforms will be implemented, but rather a shift to considering the conditions in which implementation is taking place.*

1.2 Institutional attitudes

While the questionnaire findings offer impressive evidence of wide-reaching change, the picture is of course far more diverse and complex than statistics alone can reflect. This report examines many issues being faced by institutions regarding implementation, but it is important to state at the outset that the picture of change was largely confirmed in the institutional site visits. The general attitude encountered in institutions towards reform was positive, with more students, academic and administrative staff and institutional leaders emphasising the opportunities that they perceive through reform rather than highlighting obstacles and drawbacks. It also appeared that where institutions have had more time to adapt to change, and where the Bologna reforms have already had more time to mature, there is a tendency for their impact to be viewed more positively.

Indeed, only in very few institutions was a predominantly negative attitude to reform encountered. In such institutions many academics complained that they did not see the value of reforms and tended to feel that the Bologna process was being imposed on them – either by the institutional hierarchy and/or by the ministry. In some institutions, students also linked reform with greater risk to their study conditions, and considered that the learning process was being disrupted with few visible benefits.

The site visits also had the effect of confirming many of the findings made two years earlier in the Trends IV report. Importantly, and in a totally different sample of institutions, one of the key findings of Trends IV, that there is widespread support for “the underlying ideas of a student-centred approach and problem-based learning, even if staff were critical of various features of the implementation process”, remains valid two years later.

1.3 Issues regarding implementation of the three cycles

Relationship between national authorities and institutions

The overall positive impression should not detract from the major challenges that institutions are facing, and many concerns were explored during the site visits. The majority of the problems concerning implementation which were raised in institutions reflect difficulties in institutional relationships with national authorities. The issues most often identified here concern insufficient institutional autonomy to implement reforms in the way in which they would be most effective, and insufficient government support for reform. In one institution, in response to a question on the motivation for engaging in reform, the leadership team answered spontaneously “because we have to, and we have no choice”. Yet even in this institution, the same people stated that the reforms have reached a tipping point where nobody would now choose to go back to the old system.

Institutions were often critical of governments with regard to support for reform. This was most often mentioned in relation to lack of financial support to reform, reinforcing the finding of the Trends V questionnaire where two thirds of respondents stated that they had not received any additional financing to implement reforms. However, comments were not limited to financial matters. In many instances, institutions reported that dialogue with government over the policy objectives for higher education was insufficient, and that legislative changes had not been made with adequate involvement of the key stakeholders in society. This was not a feature limited to the Bologna process – more a reflection of “normal” societal practices. Yet as many legislative measures have been explained by governments in terms of necessary system adjustments to meet Bologna objectives, the Bologna process has sometimes become a focus of tension, with institutions perceiving their government as being more interested in the rhetoric of reform than in providing genuine support to institutions. Many academics questioned how they could be expected to make a radical change to their thinking about curriculum, at the same time as adapting to more rigorous quality demands, while receiving no incentives for additional work, and while the overall level of financial support from government was decreasing.

Divorcing structural reform from its objectives

While governments need to be confronted with these questions regarding the nature of their support to institutions in implementing reforms, there are also important questions to be asked within institutions about their motivation for undertaking reform. In this respect there was considerable diversity in site visits and focus groups, and a clear distinction can be highlighted between those institutions which have so far engaged in more cosmetic and superficial implementation – often to meet the basic requirements of compliance with new legislation – and those where reform has been appropriated and is being implemented intelligently, as part of an institutionally driven strategy.

It would be wildly unrealistic to expect complete coherence in implementation from all institutions when government support is often lacking and other stakeholders are not involved in broad societal discussion. Nevertheless the site visits revealed that the spirit and attitude towards reforms clearly have a strong correlation with their impact. In some institutions the researchers observed that the shift to a three-cycle system seems to have taken place largely in isolation from a debate on the reasons for doing it. It was noteworthy that where negative views on implementation were expressed, these were almost always made by people who made no connection between structural reform and the development of student-centred learning as a new paradigm for higher education, and who did not perceive any strong necessity for the institution to re-think its role in society. Conversely, where attitudes were positive, they were nearly always connected to the view that reforms were enabling a better-suited, more flexible educational offer to be made by institutions to students.

In some institutions and parts of Europe, implementation of the three cycles seems to have become a task which is considered as a goal in itself, rather than a means to achieve other objectives. The focus has been on changing structures before attention is paid to the real substance of reform. On occasions, questions that addressed perceptions of the underlying forces driving reforms at institutions were met with reactions of surprise, as if the fact of structural reform were self-sufficient and self-evident. One university leader responded thus to the question of why his institution was engaging in reforms: “for the past six years, we have been trying to implement Bologna reforms: and now you come and ask us why we’re doing it?”

Lack of attention to student-centred learning

Although progress in implementing new Bologna degree structures is clear, student-centred learning was mentioned surprisingly infrequently during the site visits as a guiding principle of curriculum reform. Paradoxically, however, this does not necessarily imply the absence of a move towards more student-centred learning, but rather that the shift in thinking may follow instead of precede a reform of structures. Indeed it was found that in many cases, reforming degree structures and curricula has obliged reflection on student needs. Thus, even where institutions had by their own admission initially engaged “reluctantly” in reforms, many now perceive benefits in terms of greater flexibility and variety of course offer for students.

It is important to highlight, however, that the mention of much of the terminology of the Bologna process – whether qualifications frameworks and learning outcomes, or to a lesser extent diploma supplements and ECTS – often met rather blank reactions. In many cases, further exploration revealed that a considerable amount of the content of reform takes place but using different local terminology. Meanwhile, the opposite phenomenon may also arise, as “Bologna” terminology is applied locally in a manner which may not be immediately understood from outside the particular system. Implementation of what appears to be a single European process is thus altered by the variety of national contexts in which the reforms are taking place. An additional cause of this problem is no doubt that the “Bologna language” that is spreading across Europe is developed within an overly restricted circle of “European specialists”, with not enough attention being paid to the process of dissemination of ideas. As one of the purposes of common terminology is to increase understanding and transparency, this is a serious issue in looking at how institutions and systems relate to each other, and one which has perhaps been underestimated.

Introducing change while maintaining elements of the previous system

One important issue picked up in the site visits is that, while the overall statistics regarding degree structures are impressive, they may in some instances not tell the whole story. For while the Trends V questionnaire asks about the new Bologna degree structures, it does not specifically ask whether in introducing a new system the old system has been replaced. And in some parts of Europe, the old system appears to be taking longer to disappear than in others. This can be the result of deliberate national policy and strategy. For example in Germany the new system has been introduced in parallel to the old, and while new degree structures are offered, many institutions still continue to enrol students into the old degree programmes.

This approach to reform is clearly having consequences which will continue for a considerable amount of time into the future. It can certainly be argued that a process of gradual reform gives both institutions and societies more time to adapt to change, thus becoming more evolutionary than revolutionary. Moreover, in countries where such an approach has been adopted, researchers in several site visits learned of some significant shifts in attitude among academic groups that were initially sceptical towards reform, but now are convinced of its necessity and have become champions of the process.

Yet fears were also expressed that failure to suppress the “former” degree programmes may create problems for citizens embarking on both old and new degree programmes alike. It can also be highly confusing both within the country and outside it to have two systems in coexistence.

This issue should be recognised as a widespread phenomenon. While Germany, as a larger country, is perhaps the most noticeable example of this general approach, in other parts of Europe, close examination of institutional practice and behaviour reveals that there are still very strong remnants of the old system persisting in many countries. This is perhaps part of the way an unregulated European process is adopted and appropriated by national systems, and it can create a misleading impression of

similarity and convergence. Very few of the institutions visited considered the reforms that were taking place to be a central element of a European process: rather their perception tended to be much more guided by local and national developments.

Practices from the previous system which continue into the new often cause confusion about such basic matters as naming cycles and qualifications, or specifying the purposes of different cycles and qualifications. If all these national particularities are cumulated, rather than presenting a picture of more convergent national systems in Europe, the picture is rather one of greater similarity at a superficial level, but significant diversity within and between national systems in all manner of details.

While diversity in thinking and culture is a great strength of European higher education, diversity in understanding and implementation of structures is likely to prove an obstacle to an effective European Higher Education Area. It seems as difficult in 2007 as in 1999 to find evidence that the “European dimension” of higher education is becoming a tangible aspect of institutional reality. While the process may seem to be providing the same structural conditions for all, closer inspection reveals that some “little differences” may confuse the picture.

There is therefore still considerable work to be undertaken to examine the relationships between institutions and systems, and to coordinate the implementation of common structures. The first step towards this is to examine some of the main developments in each of the three cycles.

Key Findings

- *Important questions at this stage of the Bologna process concern the national understanding of reforms, and whether the processes are being adequately supported.*
- *“Little differences” in national implementation of Bologna degree structures are creating problems of articulation between institutions and systems.*
- *In many cases, reform of structures seems to be taking place in advance of reform of substance and content, and without an explicit link being made to institutional strategic objectives.*

1.4 The Three Cycles

Re-thinking the role of the first cycle

Although it is clear that most countries and institutions have now embraced the three cycle system, the site visits revealed that it would be unrealistic to suggest that there is a shared vision and philosophy of the first cycle underpinning the reform process across Europe.

In the process of creating the first cycle degree – particularly where one long cycle previously existed – evidence from the site visits suggests that many institutions pass through a series of similar phases in the reform process. Often processes are initially driven not by responses to perceived challenges on the horizon but by more prosaic

concerns and obligations. Many institutions stated that national requirements had obliged them to introduce a first cycle or bachelor qualification, but that they had been involved in little consultation, and received scant guidance or support. Hence the early stages of development within these institutions have been characterised by a mixture of reluctant compliance coupled with a search to find institutional advantage and meaning from these obliged reforms.

Unsurprisingly, when starting in this mode, the process has sometimes been implemented rather superficially. Rather than thinking in terms of new educational paradigms and re-considering curricula on the basis of learning outcomes, the first reflex has been to make a cut in the old long cycle and thus immediately create two cycles where previously one existed. With minimal effort, the onerous task of “reform” is thus seemingly achieved. However, this approach inevitably has few positive consequences, and often has a counter-productive impact.

One common problem mentioned is that the length of studies for many students may actually increase rather than decrease as a consequence of reform. For example, a programme which theoretically lasted for a period of 4 years becomes adjusted as a combination of first and second cycle programmes of 180 plus 120 ECTS, or in years 3 + 2, thus adding a year to the point of exit for the majority of students.

In such cases, it is also common to hear claims that the space for student mobility periods has been squeezed, as there is a concentration of content loaded into the first cycle, while during the second cycle there is apparently insufficient time to undertake a mobility period. Thus there is apparently a lack of time for mobility periods, and only if it is planned as part of the curriculum does it appear possible.

The argument is often also made that the reform has not encouraged greater exit to the labour market at the end of the first cycle. This was the case in several institutions when responding to the question of what students could do, and what they actually do with their first cycle qualification. In several institutions the most common response was that nearly all students continue to the second cycle. Yet if first cycle programmes have not been designed as a self-standing entity, and if little effort has been made to consider whether or not the contents of the new first cycle are relevant for the labour market, it is not surprising that students will normally see little option but to continue to a second cycle programme.

The advisory role of trusted academic staff is also critical in this respect, and there is little evidence that there has been a major shift in mentality at this level. Instead, students continue to be advised to remain at the same institution for the second cycle, rather than to move to a different institution or enter the labour market. The institutional expectation is that students will continue to the second cycle, and as parents and other stakeholders often tend to be uninformed about new first cycle qualifications, there is a coalition of factors leading to a state of inertia.

While these phenomena are rather typical in many countries, it would be unrealistic to expect institutions to behave differently, given the fragmentation of policy thinking and action in many national contexts. Indeed, one of the major influences on institutional behaviour clearly appears to be government funding policy. Researchers noted that in several systems, universities are financed to a large extent on the basis of

either numbers of enrolled students or numbers of successful graduates – in the second as well as the first cycle. Such a funding system acts as a clear financial incentive for institutions to encourage their students to continue to the second cycle rather than to explore other options. It also acts as a brake to any development of vertical mobility between the cycles. Thus, from a student perspective, the first cycle qualification is seen more as a “staging post” than a real qualification in its own right. Academics and parents alike will often advise that the “real degree” is obtained at the master level, and in the absence of effective measures to promote the societal recognition of first cycle degrees, many students will inevitably continue to study in the same institution.

Moreover in several institutions visited, the link between first and second cycle was extremely strong, with a direct path from a first cycle programme to a particular programme in the second cycle, coupled with a lack of consideration of alternative routes for first cycle graduates. If the two cycles are to be used as a means of creating more flexibility in learning paths, these practices will have to be reconsidered.

It is also important to look at the effect that the new first cycle is having on the articulation with the rest of the educational world, and especially with the school system. In some institutions visited, this seemed to be a rather neglected aspect of reform. Neither secondary school professionals nor parents had been engaged in discussion on the nature of reforms taking place in higher education, and hence were often advising potential students on the basis of outdated information. Moreover, there is little evidence that re-thinking higher education cycles has led to any reassessment of higher education admission procedures. Yet if the purposes of the cycles are changing, and institutions aim to attract a more diverse student population, surely there is a need to consider which kinds of admission processes would be appropriate. These questions are all linked to the problem that guidance and counselling services are often woefully inadequate for a more diversified higher education population, an issue explored in greater depth in Chapter 3.

In some countries visited, particular issues were raised regarding coherence between first and second cycle programmes, and in particular regarding professional and academic tracks. In Italy, for example, many degree qualifications are issued as a state certificate with a “legal value” that has consequences for public employment. University professional or vocationally-focused bachelor programmes are, however, seldom recognised with this legal value. This causes confusion because many “non-legally validated” qualifications are being developed by universities in response to labour market demands. To add to the confusion, such “non-legally validated” programmes are often called “masters,” even though little attempt is made to ensure coherence with the European understanding of master programmes. For example, such “professional” master programmes can be found after the first or the second cycle, and do not necessarily give access to further academic studies. This muddled state of affairs obviously runs counter to the Bologna reforms.

Although the Trends V research has paid more attention to institutional implementation rather than subject-specific issues, it was interesting to find some examples in site visits of disciplines, which have often been rather uniformly considered as exceptions to the reform process, now also changing. Notably, examples of introducing cycles to medicine were identified, and this was perceived

within the discipline as having achieved positive outcomes. To those who do not see the utility of a first cycle medical degree, the employment market apparently reacts differently – at least in the countries where such qualifications exist. Indeed the opportunities for graduates who may combine a good basic knowledge of medicine through a first cycle programme with other skills and competences obtained through a second cycle programme in another field can be extremely attractive.

Despite the many challenges that remain, there are good reasons to be optimistic. Even in the institutions where initially debate on the purpose of structural reform was insufficient, it is impossible to travel too far down the road of reform without raising the question of why it is being done. Hence, the process cannot be considered as a one-off reform, but rather the manifestation of a shift towards an attitude where the concept of change becomes a permanent feature of educational thinking. Hence academics who a few years ago had perhaps never considered whether students would or would not be able to achieve a qualification in the notional timeframe of a programme are now addressing the relationship between content and time seriously. Moreover, the discussion on the purposes of the first cycle is leading to interesting debates within institutions about understanding of terms such as “employability”, and this in turn is leading to a reflection on curriculum. Questions of broadening access to higher education, and creating a better educated society are also undoubtedly growing, and higher education institutions are at the heart of these crucial societal discussions.

The amount of time needed to embed such radical reform to educational thinking has undoubtedly often been underestimated. While the 2010 deadline for implementation of the Bologna action lines is necessary to encourage developments, there is no doubt that it will take considerably more time to reap the benefits of long-term cultural change.

Reforming the Second Cycle

Although institutions have achieved significant reform of the cycles, the manner in which countries and institutions have appropriated and adapted the concepts to their own system has seemingly led to considerable diversification of the second cycle degree across Europe. Indeed the nature of programmes considered to be part of the second cycle would certainly merit a study of its own. In many ways, it is at the second cycle level that institutions are becoming most innovative and creative, and the rise of new types of master programmes should therefore be seen as a basis on which to build specific institutional strengths in Europe. While it may be necessary to assess whether qualifications are actually becoming more transparent and understandable, and to consider ways in which more coherent developments can evolve, societies also need to be able to cope with a certain amount of flexibility and uncertainty with regard to qualifications.

There are now examples of master programmes tied strongly to first cycle programmes, and also master programmes developed as preparatory qualifications for the third cycle. During the site visits, the Trends researchers came across a considerable number of “national peculiarities” which affected the implementation of the three cycles, but were predominantly related to the second cycle. For example,

there are several systems in Europe where it is common for institutions to offer both a master programme and a “post-master” master programme. While this is once again a continuation of previous systems – and many of the anomalies found across Europe can be explained by the introduction of a new system without completely letting go of the past system – it is a strange phenomenon to grasp for countries that have not had such a tradition. Meanwhile institutions were even found where a master qualification is offered within the third cycle – a practice difficult to understand from outside the system. It is also difficult to understand how such qualifications could be compatible with the European Qualifications Framework for higher education adopted in Bergen.

The site visits also revealed that terminology such as “professional master” can also cover a wide variety of realities. In some systems, the term may designate a specific qualification with a different legal and/or cultural value than an “academic master”. It may be common for such qualifications to be offered by more professionally-oriented higher education institutions, although this is one area where distinctions between institutional types are becoming increasingly blurred. In other countries, however, a programme may have a specific professional orientation but would not be considered as different in nature to any other master qualification. It is perhaps a similar distinction that can be drawn between countries that distinguish institutional types in terms of a binary divide, and those that have a unitary system with a range of institutions with diverse missions.

Another issue that is important to highlight is that in certain systems second cycle programmes are considered to carry greater academic prestige than first cycle programmes, and hence there are some consequences of reform that were not anticipated. Indeed, in certain academic cultures there seems to be a proliferation of new second cycle programmes, often driven by academic staff seeking greater professional and peer recognition. While to some extent this may result in greater innovation and a wider educational offer, the disadvantage is that such developments may also be contributing to fragmentation within the system, as well as to an uneconomic use of financial resources.

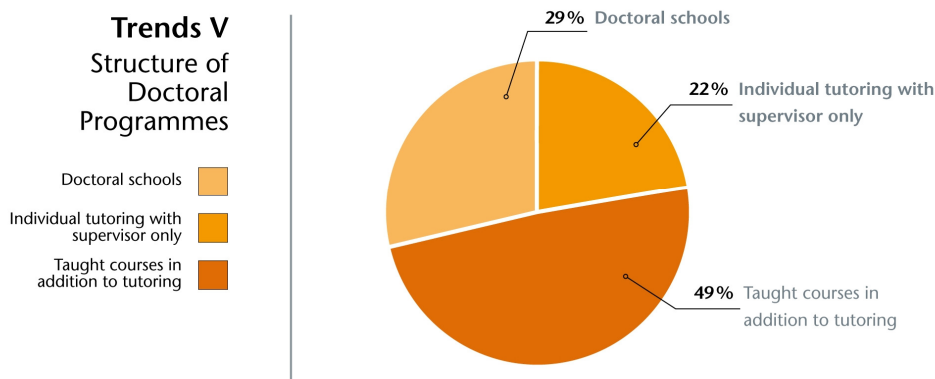
It is also not a trivial consideration, although one that is often overlooked, that the age of entry of post-secondary students varies considerably across Europe. While in some countries, such as the UK, a typical first year student may be eighteen or nineteen years old, her or his counterpart in Sweden or Finland would be three to five years older. Such considerations can have a major impact on the way in which programmes are developed, and the expectations that societies may have of students in terms of their personal development. This becomes a matter that is of particular relevance in the second cycle, as many more programmes appear to be consciously developed with a clear intention to be more internationally attractive. Yet the “typical” student for whom such courses are developed may be rather different from one national context to another, and these issues are likely to become more complex as lifelong learning becomes more of a reality across the continent. Although these phenomena are not new, the profile of students may often be taken for granted in national discussions, and hence their impact may be underestimated in terms of an emerging European Higher Education Area.

Reshaping the third cycle

Doctoral programmes are not only the third cycle of higher education, but also constitute the first phase of a young researcher's career. The core component of the third cycle is the advancement of knowledge through original research, and this makes the third cycle unique and different from the first and second cycles. The doctoral training phase constitutes the main link between the European higher education and research areas, and high quality doctoral programmes are therefore crucial in achieving Europe's research goals.

While the specific character of the third cycle needs to be taken into consideration, this does not mean that doctoral programmes should be seen in isolation, but rather as part of a continuum of implementation of the three cycles. It is important for all institutions offering research-based higher education to ensure that a research component is included and developed in all cycles thus allowing students to acquire research experience and encouraging an interest in research as a possible career.

The Bologna process was late in considering the impact of reform on the third cycle, and indeed only in the Berlin Communiqué in 2003 was the doctoral cycle brought into the reform of degree structures. It is evident, however, that many of the questions which have arisen with regard to first and second cycles are now being posed increasingly with regard to the third cycle. What are the purposes of the cycle? Is there a need for better, or at least clearer structures? What should be the conditions for access? How can funding be used most effectively? How can inter-disciplinary collaboration be strengthened? How can mobility be improved and increased? Should the third cycle be made more relevant for the labour market, and if so, how? How is the labour market for third cycle graduates changing? What is the role of doctoral candidates in the reforms? How can the primary emphasis on research be kept as other demands are considered? Are credits necessary and helpful? Are the changes that are taking place all coherent?



The Trends V questionnaire and site visits yielded fascinating results and an insight into a fast-changing situation that has also been confirmed through the findings of EUA's project on doctoral education. Institutions were asked whether taught courses are offered as part of the third cycle, and 49% of the sample answered that indeed

they are. Institutions were also asked if their third cycle programmes are based exclusively on the model of supervisor tutoring, and here 22% responded that this was the case. 29% of the sample answered positively to the question of whether a part of their doctoral programmes are offered in doctoral schools. In addition, 27% of institutions said that they use credits within the third cycle.

Taken together these findings indicate a quite astonishing development taking place across the continent. Even if nothing else were happening in European higher education, the speed of change within doctoral education would amount to a mini revolution.

Questions on the structure of doctoral programmes were also asked to Ministries in the survey of Bologna process member countries carried out for the EUA doctoral project. Out of the 36 countries that responded, 16 countries reported that their institutions have introduced doctoral, graduate or research schools, alongside existing models such as traditional individual training or 'stand alone' structured doctoral programmes.

Organisation of doctoral education

| Organisation of doctoral education | Number of countries | Countries |
|---|---------------------|---|
| Individual education only (1) | 5 | Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cyprus, Georgia, Malta, Montenegro |
| Structured programmes only (2) | 4 | Croatia, Estonia, Lithuania, Spain |
| Doctoral/graduate research schools only (3) | 3 | France, Liechtenstein, Turkey |
| Mixed (1) and (2) | 11 | Andorra, Austria, Belgium-Flanders, Czech Republic, Greece, Iceland, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovak Republic |
| Mixed (2) and (3) | 2 | Italy, Norway |
| Mixed (1) and (3) | 2 | Belgium-Wallonia, Netherlands |
| Mixed (1), (2) and (3) | 9 | Albania, Armenia, Germany, Denmark, Finland, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland, UK |

New organisational models

Different structural solutions are appropriate to different contexts, and the choice should be a matter for each institution, based upon the specific institutional aims which these structures are designed to meet. Two main organisational models are emerging as vehicles for promoting high quality, internationally oriented and networked doctoral programmes:

- **Graduate school** – an organisational structure that includes doctoral candidates and often also master students. It provides administrative, development and transferable skills development support, organises admission, courses and seminars, and takes responsibility for quality assurance.

- **Doctoral/ Research school** – an organisational structure that includes only doctoral students. It may be organised around a particular discipline, research theme or a cross-disciplinary research area and/ or it is focused on creating a research group/ network and is project-driven. It may involve one institution only or several institutions in a network.

These models are not mutually exclusive and often have shared characteristics. Countries and even individual institutions may also adopt both models. The advantages and added value of such schools may be summarised as follows:

- Offer a framework for a shared mission or vision that facilitates the process of turning doctoral candidates into excellent researchers
- Provide a stimulating research environment and cooperation across disciplines
- Facilitate clear administrative structure for doctoral programmes, candidates and supervisors, and clear profile and status for doctoral candidates
- Ensure critical mass and help to overcome the isolation of young researchers
- Bring junior and senior researchers together
- Support and facilitate the task of supervising candidates and the role of supervisors
- Organise admission with transparent rules and regulations
- Provide an environment conducive to transferable skills training
- Enhance career development opportunities, including advice on funding opportunities (scholarships, projects)
- Guarantee quality assurance and monitoring
- Provide a framework for the development of codes of practice, procedures and mechanisms within the university structure and acting as an independent arbitrator or ombudsman where necessary
- Enhance opportunities for mobility, international collaboration and inter-institutional cooperation

While these advantages are apparent to different degrees in different institutions, the site visits emphasised that the reality within institutions is extremely diverse, and it will take time to integrate and consolidate these newly emerging structures.

New types of doctoral programme

As well as new structural models, a range of innovative doctorate programmes are also emerging to respond to the changing demands of a fast-evolving labour market. Employability of doctoral candidates within and outside academic institutions, as well as individual and societal needs for lifelong education and training, have acted as a catalyst to the development of new programmes, including professional doctorates, more university – industrial collaboration based doctorates and increased European and international cooperation, often leading to joint or European doctorates.

Programmes known as “Professional doctorates” or practice-related doctorates merit particular attention. They focus on embedding research in a reflective manner into professional practice. In order to develop a broad discussion on this topic it will be important to ensure the dissemination of information from those European countries that have experience in this area, and particularly the UK, where the number of professional doctorates is growing rapidly. While they must meet the same core standards as “traditional” doctorates to ensure the same high level of quality, institutions involved in the EUA doctoral programmes project felt that it may be

appropriate to consider using different titles to distinguish between this type of professional doctorates and PhDs. *In the future, qualifications frameworks may help to clarify the relationship*

Diversity of doctoral programmes reflects the increasing diversity of the European Higher Education landscape in which higher education institutions have the autonomy to develop their own missions and profiles and thus their own priorities in terms of programmes and research priorities. Nevertheless, the discussion on new developments has led to the consensus that there should be no doctorate without original research - the main component of all doctorates - and that all awards described as doctorates (no matter what their type or form) should be based on core processes and outcomes.

Access to doctoral programmes

There is evidence from the site visits that many institutions are opening up their admission to doctoral programmes more broadly than in the past. In a fast-changing environment, it is essential to maintain flexibility in admissions to doctoral programmes. The diversity of institutional missions and context, and the growing importance of lifelong learning mean that there are good reasons for different access requirements in different institutions and for different programmes provided fairness, transparency and objectivity are ensured.

Particular attention is also being paid to the articulation between the second and third cycles. In general, institutions have few problems with access from the second cycle, but there is a considerable variety of practice with regard to other forms of admission. This is a matter for institutional and academic autonomy, and it is entirely in keeping with policy goals at national and European level that candidates with the potential to benefit from a third cycle degree should be encouraged.

One emerging concern with regard to the third cycle, however, is the socio-economic status of potential candidates. While much of the discussion with regard to the social dimension has, until now, focused on the first and second cycles, it is equally important that higher education institutions and national systems pay attention to the third cycle. Many graduates will have acquired considerable levels of debt by the end of the first and second cycles, and a hidden trend could be developing whereby access to the third cycle is determined in part by the ability of candidates to afford a further period of study with little income.

Mobility and internationalisation

Doctoral programmes are a key component of institutions' international strategy – whether this focuses on attracting the best doctoral candidates from all over the world, encouraging mobility within doctoral programmes, or supporting European and international joint doctoral programmes and co-tutelle arrangements. For some institutions and indeed, some smaller countries, mobility may be the only means of training their own young researchers in disciplines and transdisciplinary research areas where a critical mass of doctoral candidates or infrastructure does not exist at home.

It was noted in several institutions that there is a lack of financial support at European level for the type of mobility that doctoral candidates would appreciate. Hence although shared supervision or co-tutelle arrangements may suit some, there is a bigger unsatisfied need to cover shorter term mobility, and to use money flexibly during the course of a doctoral programme. Candidates often find themselves at the whim of their faculty and departments with regard to mobility arrangements. Moreover there is insufficient recognition of the added value of mobility for the career development of early stage researchers. Funding instruments are therefore needed to facilitate the mobility of doctoral candidates from all 46 Bologna countries. Legal, administrative and social obstacles, for example concerning visas, work permits and social security issues also need to be addressed by all partners in the process.

Finally increasing internationalisation inside universities, especially at doctoral level, should not be forgotten. Doctoral training is *per se* international in nature and sufficient opportunities should be provided for doctoral candidates to engage internationally. This can be done, for example, through the recruitment of more international staff; the organisation of international workshops, conferences and summer schools; the development of more European and international joint doctoral programmes and co-tutelle arrangements. The use of new technologies, such as using teleconferences, e-learning etc. should also foster the internationalisation of doctoral programmes.

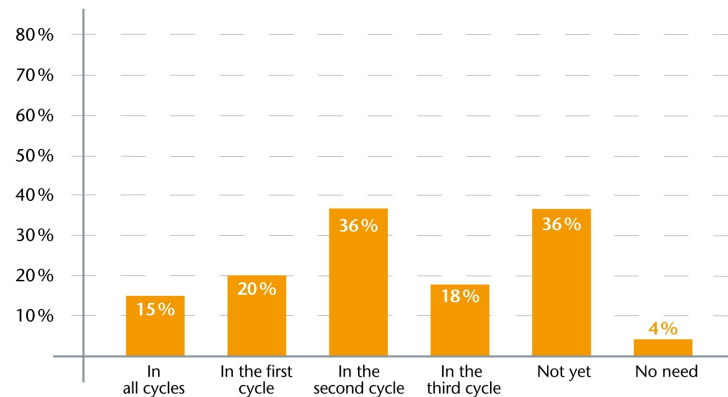
Key Findings

- *While considerable change is taking place in the first cycle, employers are rarely involved in these curriculum reform processes, and many other stakeholders are equally unaware of the nature of reforms.*
- *The level of diversification in second cycle programmes is particularly significant. While implementation of reforms here gives space for creativity and innovation, attention also needs to be paid to the overall system-level goals.*
- While the third cycle came late to the Bologna process (or vice versa), the speed of change now revealed is quite extraordinary. Institutions need to take responsibility for the further developments in this crucial cycle to sustain and enhance Europe's research and innovation capacity.

1.5 Joint programmes and degrees

Joint programmes and degrees have been given considerable attention as the Bologna process has developed. As early as the Prague Communiqué in 2001, Ministers were encouraging joint programmes as a major feature of attraction of the European Higher Education Area. At this time joint programmes were an interesting, but very marginal, phenomenon in Europe. Political rhetoric was given additional substance through the launch of the Erasmus Mundus programme, which has acted as a catalyst for institutions to develop new joint master programmes, and as an additional stimulus to governments to review legislation to ensure that joint degrees can be awarded.

Trends V
Joint Programmes
in Bologna Cycles



The findings of the Trends V questionnaire suggest that many institutions in Europe have now experimented with the development of joint programmes, or that if they have not yet done so, they intend to. 60% of institutions state that they have joint programmes in at least one of the three cycles, while only 4% answered that they do not see the need for joint programmes. The majority of joint programmes are in the second cycle, although the number of institutions that claim to have joint programmes in all three cycles is close to 15%.

When these statistics are examined in terms of countries, there are certain countries that seem to have more joint programme activity than others. These include Germany, Spain (which has a large concentration in the third cycle), France, Italy, UK, and the Netherlands.

Although the percentages of institutions with joint programmes are high, the statistic may give a slightly distorted image of reality. For although a large number of programmes may have been developed, there may be few examples in many institutions, and they may still represent a very small number in comparison to the overall programme offer. More importantly, in terms of students participating in such programmes the numbers may be even less significant. A recent study by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the German Rectors Conference (HRK) of joint programmes in Germany and other European countries identified a large number of programmes, mostly created since 2003, but where the average number of students participating was only 24. If this experience is representative – and as the study reached 33 of the 45 Bologna countries, there is good reason to consider that it is – it suggests that it may be premature to assess the potential impact of joint programmes.

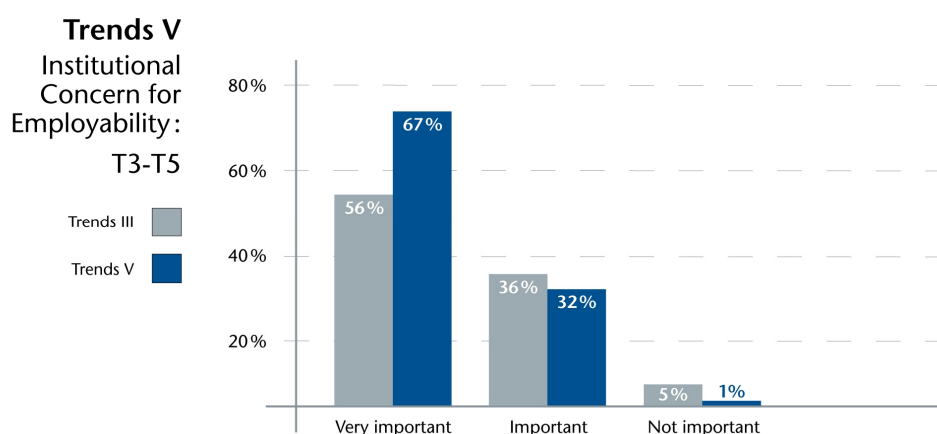
Nevertheless the site visits confirmed that undoubtedly joint programmes are an important aspect of the learning process for European higher education institutions in a phase of engaging in and constructing the European Higher Education Area. Indeed, they are one of the main ways of understanding how other institutions are adapting to a changing environment, and of developing trust across national frontiers through facing certain challenges together.

Yet joint programmes also require significant additional resources, and in an era where financing is being squeezed and institutions are required to be increasingly accountable for expenditure, it is difficult to imagine that in the future a significant

percentage of students will be experiencing higher education through such programmes. Indeed, given the additional costs involved, and with no sustainable funding source on the horizon, it is likely that many programmes that are in an early start-up phase may be difficult for institutions to prioritise, unless a specific funding source is identified. It is also unlikely that joint programmes will be able to deliver the significant increase in international mobility that was perhaps expected by Bologna reforms, but has so far yet to be realised.

At this stage, it would seem reasonable to suggest that joint programmes are playing a significant role in constructing the European Higher Education Area, by giving institutions opportunities to work together and learn from each other. However, whether in a decade's time there will be a significant increase in joint programmes, and whether more than an elite of European and global citizens will have any practical experience of such programmes, remains a matter of speculation.

1.6 Employability issues in a changing European higher education landscape



The responses to the Trends V questionnaire suggest that employability has grown in importance as a driver of change. 67% of institutions consider the concern for employability of graduates as “very important”. This figure has risen by 11% when compared to Trends III. A further 32% consider the issue “important”. Conversely, the number of respondents who answered that the concern for employability is “not important” is now less than 1% of the sample, whereas in Trends III it was 5%. Hence, the perceived importance of employability is certainly significantly greater in 2007 than it was in 2003.

Yet these data should not be considered in isolation from other responses. When asked if professional associations and employers are involved in the design of curricula, 29% responded that there is close involvement. This figure is very similar, and actually slightly less than the corresponding figure in Trends III (31%). While the number of institutions that answered that employers and professional associations are rarely if ever involved in curriculum design has dropped slightly, (from 25% to 20%) this particular question reveals a fairly static situation.

The Trends V questionnaire also asks institutions about their expectations for student choices after the first cycle degree. Here, only 22% report that most will enter the labour market.

Lack of employer awareness of reforms appears to be a key issue in this respect. Many institutions, particularly in systems where re-structuring has been recently undertaken, reported that employers are on the whole unsure what to expect from a university bachelor graduate. As the phenomenon of bachelor graduates is new, and there are relatively few examples, it will require time for the cultural change to take root. Moreover, in many countries, there has been little effort made either by governments or by institutions to involve employers in debate on the reforms. This issue, raised already in Trends IV, needs to be urgently addressed if the Bologna process is to be a sustainable success.

The issue of institutional differentiation also has an important impact on employability, and institutional attitudes had significant common features, particularly in countries where there is a clear differentiation between universities and other professional higher education institutions. In such cases, many within universities consider it a reasonable division of labour that other institutions concentrate on professionally relevant first cycle degrees, or on the question of first cycle employability. Meanwhile the typical profile of a university graduate will be a graduate at the master level. While there may be an element of institutional wishful thinking that this situation will continue, nevertheless it is a strong feature of reality in many countries at the moment.

It is also clear that, although employability of graduates is a general topic of discussion, there has so far been a lack of attention to relating this to the policy agenda linked to lifelong learning. Indeed, although lifelong learning is a rhetorical priority of higher education policy in most countries in Europe, there is little evidence that institutions have considered lifelong learning challenges as a priority during the process of reforming curricula. Again this may signal that structural change is preparing the way for further changes to come. From this perspective, it can be anticipated that the Bologna process will come to be perceived as a radical reform of structures that enables a wide range of other higher education challenges to be addressed.

Key issue

- Although the momentum of reform has clearly been gaining pace as the Bologna process advances, the greatest challenge is to communicate far more broadly the nature of these structural and curricular reforms. Without attention to this societal dialogue - involving institutions, public authorities, employers and citizen - the impact of the reforms risks being diminished, and qualifications misunderstood.

2. Bologna tools for mobility and recognition

Introduction

The main European tools that have been developed to help in the process of curriculum reform and recognition of learning outcomes are the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), the Diploma Supplement (DS), and more recently, qualifications frameworks.

ECTS is a credit transfer and accumulation system that is at the heart of the reforms taking place in higher education institutions. Previous Trends studies have reported the continual rise of ECTS as *the* credit system for the European Higher Education Area. However, the Trends IV report already noted that many institutions called for “a more European implementation of ECTS that would preclude inconsistencies caused by national or institutional approaches”, indicating their concern that ECTS was still not always being used correctly. The extent and quality of the use of ECTS has thus become a matter of key importance to Europe’s higher education institutions and students.

The Diploma Supplement is an instrument to improve transparency - developed to describe the nature, context, content and status of the studies successfully completed - and which all Bologna governments pledged to provide to all students free of charge by 2005.

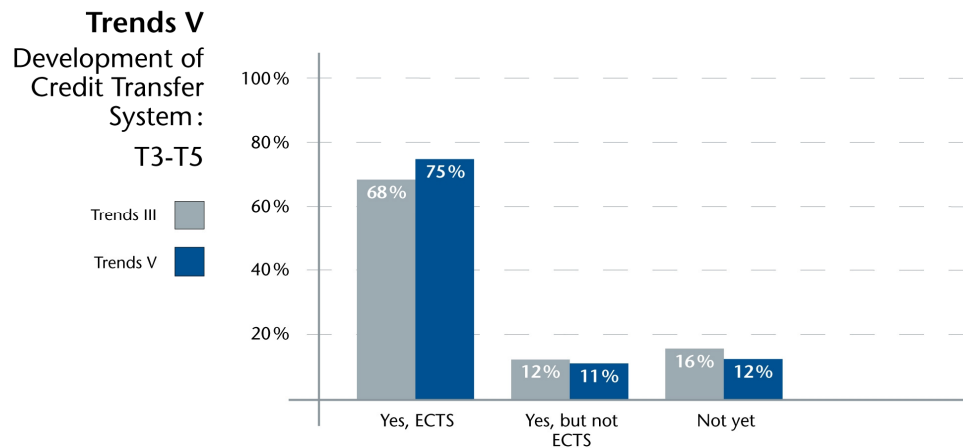
The idea of qualifications frameworks is to provide the overarching system-level architecture into which individual qualifications fit. Their purpose is to enhance transparency, and to make it understandable to citizens how qualifications can be used in a variety of ways – whether for further study or for the labour market. The Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (also known as the Bologna Framework) was adopted by Ministers of Education in Bergen in 2005 as an overarching framework with which national frameworks can relate. In Denmark, Ireland, and the UK, qualifications frameworks have also been established, while a number of other national qualifications frameworks are currently under construction – or at least under discussion. At this stage in the Bologna process, however, most institutions are unaware of these developments.

To assess progress with ECTS and the Diploma Supplement since Trends III, questionnaire responses on this topic have been compared both across the sample as a whole and by country. In addition, issues on the usage of ECTS and the Diploma Supplement were addressed specifically in all the institutional site visits. This chapter also considers developments in institutional approaches to internationalisation over the past four years. As qualifications frameworks were clearly not well known in most institutions, questions on their development have been considered mostly in the context of lifelong learning (see Chapter 5).

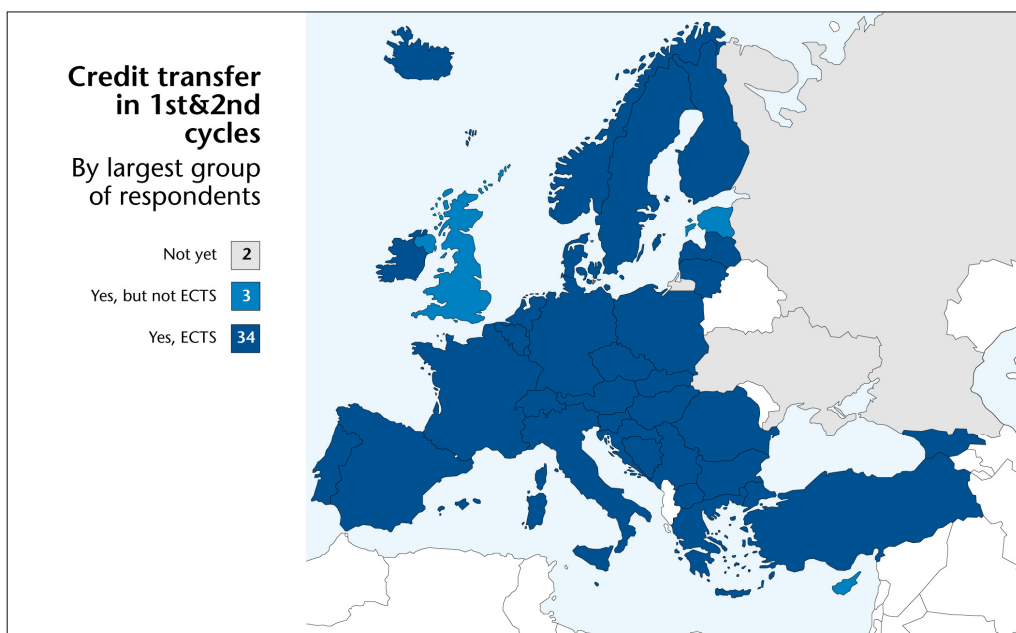
2.1 Credit Systems

Originally conceived twenty years ago as a credit transfer system to structure and improve the quality and recognition of student mobility in the ERASMUS programme, ECTS has been given additional significance since the goal of creating a European Higher Education Area was formulated. Indeed the Bologna process has acted as a catalyst for the development of ECTS, not only as a European credit transfer system, but also as a European credit accumulation system.

Credit Transfer System



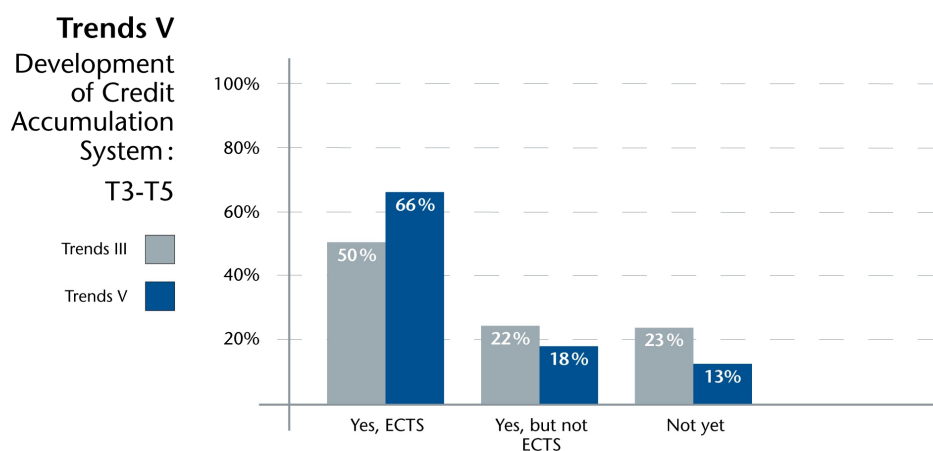
Three quarters of institutions responding to the Trends V questionnaire reported using ECTS for credit transfer in all Bachelor and Master programmes, compared to 68% in 2003, and the number of those intending to use a credit transfer system in the future dropped from 16% to 12% over the four year period. In both cases, the numbers of those not intending to use a credit accumulation or transfer system, or not responding, were negligible.



Geographically, the distribution across countries for Trends V also reflects significant swings towards the use of ECTS as a credit transfer system for all 1st and 2nd cycle degree programmes. 34 countries now have a majority of institutions reporting the use of ECTS for credit transfer, and only 3 countries have an overall majority of respondents saying that they use a different credit transfer system.

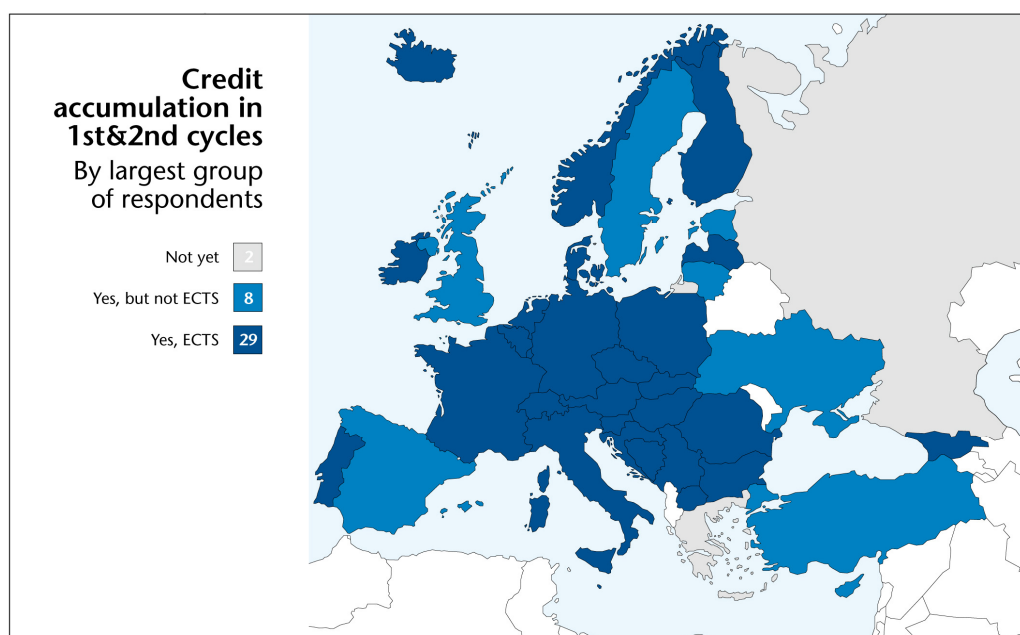
Credit Accumulation System

As a credit accumulation system, ECTS is able to support curricular reform and facilitate flexible learning paths within institutions and national systems, as well as internationally. Similar trends can be observed regarding the increasing use of ECTS for credit accumulation as for credit transfer.



Two-thirds of responding institutions report that they now use ECTS in this way, compared to 50% who responded positively to this same question in 2003. The

number of institutions reporting the use of a credit accumulation system other than ECTS dropped from 22% to 18%, while the number intending to use a credit accumulation system in the future dropped from 23% to 12%.



The geographical distribution shows that a majority of institutions in 31 countries now use ECTS as a credit accumulation system for all their 1st and 2nd cycle programmes. In 8 countries another credit system is used. These are the same countries as in 2003, with the exception of Finland, which has left the group by moving to ECTS in the intervening period, and Spain which has joined this group and is now implementing a national system. Greece and Russia are the only countries where the majority of institutions report that no credit accumulation system is in place.

Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Despite the findings on increased use of ECTS, a majority of institutions continue to rely on traditional end-of-year examinations to assess student knowledge. As the assessment of learning outcomes is required for credits to be awarded, this raises questions about how profoundly programmes have been restructured when introducing ECTS. Only 34% of Trends V respondents stated that the award of degrees/diplomas is made in all subjects on the basis of accumulated credits only, while 42% replied that awards are made on the basis of accumulated credits plus traditional exams. The comparative Trends III figures were 20% on the basis of accumulated credits only, and 46% on the basis of accumulated credits plus traditional exams.

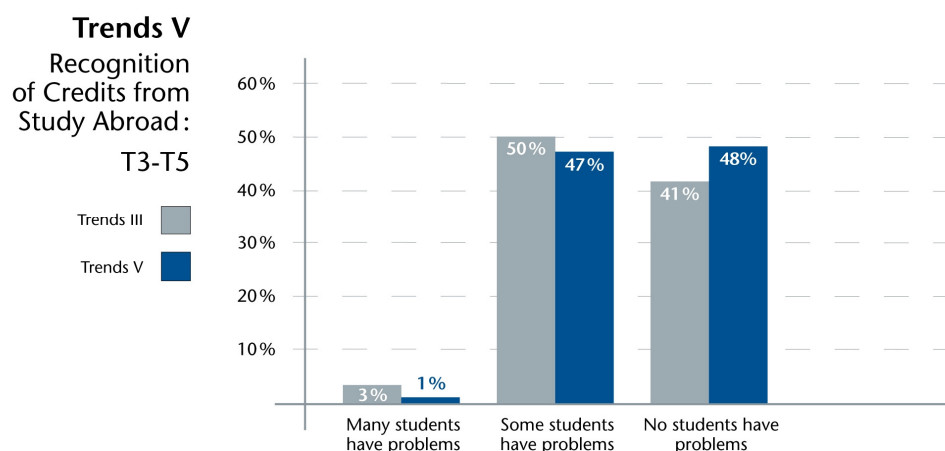
While some institutions may have found questions on this issue confusing, the responses indicate clear national differentiation. A significant majority of institutions in Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Macedonia, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey, as well institutions in Andorra and Malta, report that they award

degrees/diplomas in all subjects on the basis of accumulated credits only. At the other end of the scale, a third or fewer respondents say that they make their awards on the basis of accumulated credits in Austria, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, and the Ukraine. In these countries in particular, therefore, it would be important to examine further how the process of programme reform is taking place. Are new programmes, modules and student-centred learning paths being introduced within an organisational model that still includes traditional end of year examinations? Are learning outcomes being assessed more than once? Are reforms staying at the surface rather than dealing with the substance of curricula?

Although ECTS is already being used for a variety of purposes, and this process needs to be consolidated, further demands on the system can and should be anticipated. The recognition of informal, non-formal and work-based learning remains a key challenge to institutions in the context of lifelong learning, and ECTS now needs to be developed more holistically in order to ensure that learning outcomes are recognised appropriately in all institutions and for all types of learning. Moving to another level of ECTS development should not, however, deflect attention away from the crucial task of ensuring that the fundamental elements of the system – learning outcomes and student workload – are well understood and implemented.

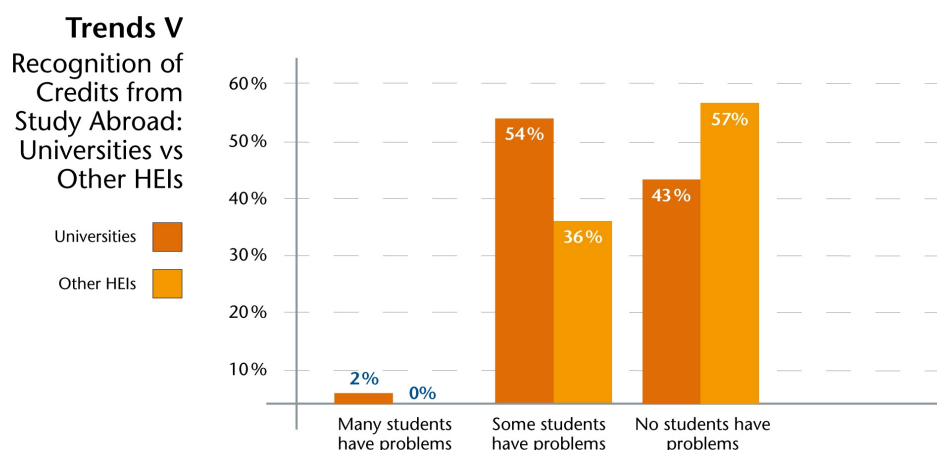
2.2 Recognition

The level of problems associated with the recognition of credits for students returning from a period of study abroad remains stubbornly high. 47% of institutions admit that some students have problems with the recognition of their credits gained abroad, an insignificant decrease since 2003. 48% venture to state that none of their students have such problems, which is likewise only a small improvement from the Trends III response.



In those countries where a majority of institutions state that no returning students have problems with the recognition of their credits, this majority is only a small one, and

only in Denmark, Portugal and Serbia and Montenegro does it exceed 60% of respondents. Countries where less than a third of responding institutions venture to claim that none of their students encounter such problems include Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Macedonia, Slovenia, Switzerland, and the Ukraine.



Differences between universities and other higher education institutions can also be observed, with the level of problems reported by universities being significantly higher than in other higher education institutions. This may be linked to greater student mobility between universities, but nevertheless the finding is striking.

These continued high levels of non-recognition have two possible implications: that institutional recognition procedures are not working optimally; and/or that ECTS is not being used properly. The evidence gained during the site visits would suggest that while the former is prevalent, the latter is also frequent.

The responses to the Trends V question on institution-wide recognition procedures back this up – since there is little change in the percentages of institutions with established recognition procedures since 2003. However, universities, particularly those founded pre-1900, are more likely than other higher education institutions to have such procedures, particularly for the recognition of foreign degrees (67% of universities, 51% of other higher education institutions).

The site visits confirmed the Trends III and IV data findings that although ECTS has emerged as *the* European credit system, familiar problems regarding recognition of credits still remain, albeit at a slightly lesser scale in some institutions. ECTS was used in all institutions visited, and the increased experience in the use of learning agreements for mobile students has led in many cases to some improvement in recognition processes. However, problems continue to be encountered, with mobile students often finding on arrival that courses are no longer available or that they do not correspond to the initial description, thus causing difficulties for the learning agreement. Flexible approaches to this problem have been developed in a number of cases, allowing for the learning agreement to be modified with a minimum of disruption for the student. A number of calls were made for the introduction of an

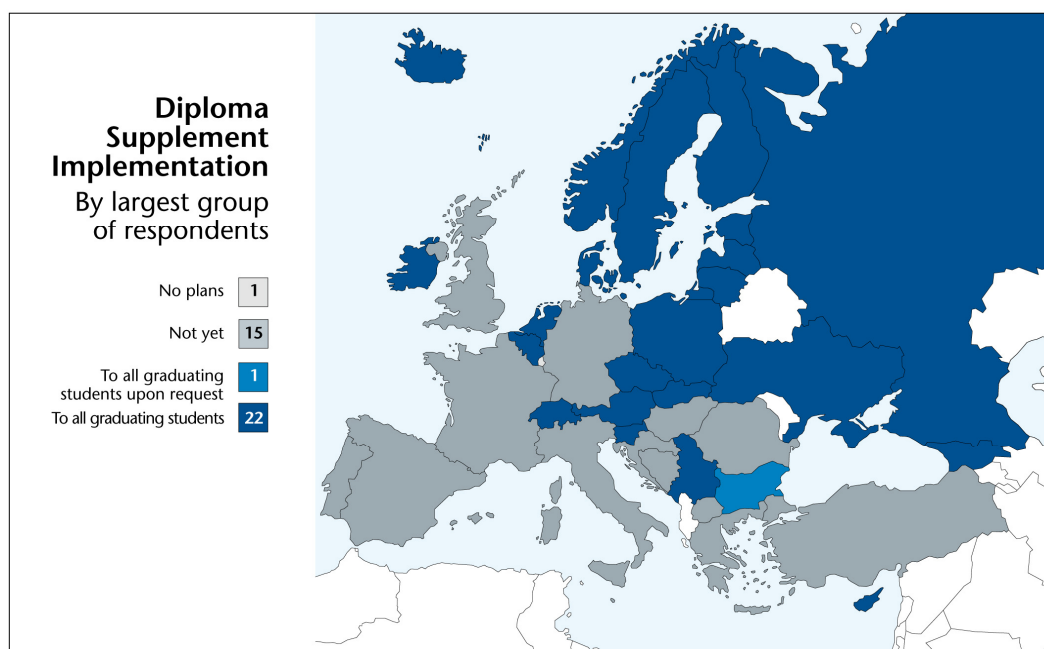
electronic tool to facilitate these administrative processes surrounding the management of learning agreements.

Although familiar problems persist, statements were made during a number of site visits to the effect that Bologna has made recognition within Europe much easier. There is certainly increased awareness of recognition issues, and in some countries evidence of increasing levels of cooperation with ENIC/NARIC structures.

2.3 Diploma Supplement (DS)

At the Berlin conference in 2003, Ministers set an objective that every student graduating from 2005 onwards should receive the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge, in a widely spoken European language. Data on this topic was not gathered in the Trends III survey, since the survey was undertaken prior to the Berlin conference. Disappointingly, in view of the Ministerial commitment, slightly less than half of the Trends V respondents confirmed that they issued the DS to all graduating students, with a further 11% saying they issued it to all graduating students who request it. A further 38% of higher education institutions say, however, that they plan to use the DS.

Within these overall figures, there are interesting variations between types and focus of institution. In general, universities are 10% less likely than other higher education institutions to issue the DS to all graduating students. 62% of those institutions who see themselves primarily as serving a European community state that they issue the DS to all graduating students, while only 41% of institutions serving a regional community say they do so, suggesting that perhaps the DS is perceived as a valuable tool for international mobility or the international labour market, but with less relevance locally.



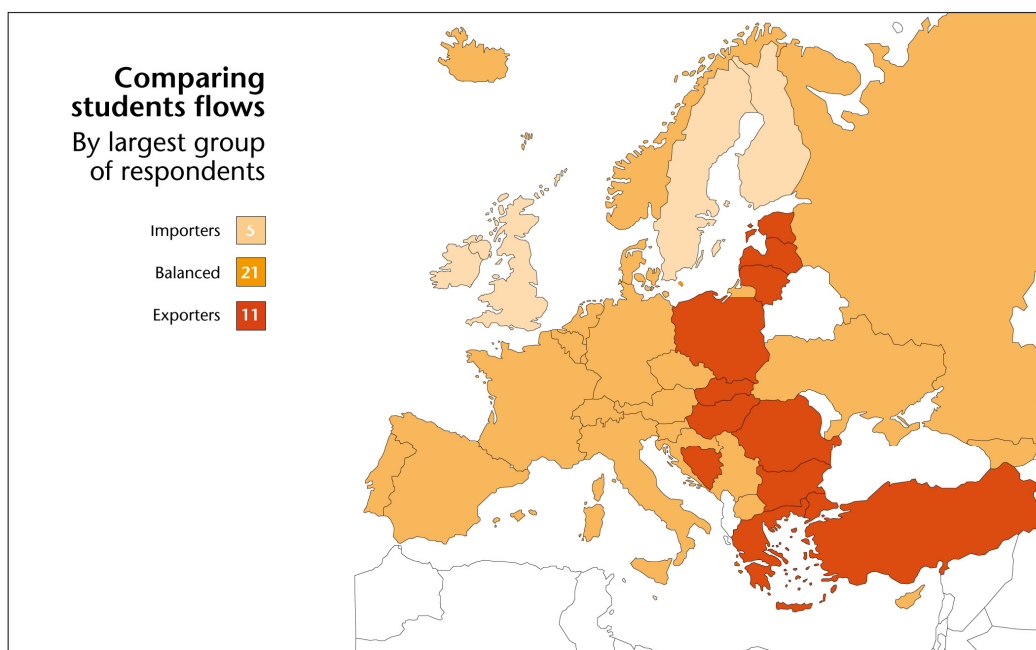
National analysis reveals that Europe divides very clearly between countries that have introduced the DS and those that are yet to do so. Three-quarters or more of respondents in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Georgia, Iceland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland say that they issue the DS to all graduating students. However, 20% or less are able to make this claim in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, and the UK. Interestingly, a third or more respondents in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania say they deliver the DS to all graduating students who request it. This no doubt indicates that the cost of producing the DS for all students is leading some institutions and national systems to a pragmatic approach of delivering the DS only when they perceive a genuine need.

The implementation of the DS is well under way in almost all visited institutions, despite technical difficulties linked with student records and, as noted in some cases, a lack of understanding regarding learning outcomes. However, introducing the DS has been and continues to be a costly exercise in administrative terms, and many universities report that employers are not using the DS, or if they are it is only in the case of the first employment after graduation. This should provide a clear message to Ministries and other authorities, as well as to higher education institutions themselves, regarding the need for greater communication and links with the labour market.

2.4 Mobility

In Bergen 2005, Ministers acknowledged the difficulties experienced over many years in obtaining reliable and comparable data regarding student and staff mobility, and charged the Bologna Follow-up Group to address this issue. In parallel, the Trends III and Trends V surveys asked higher education institutions to record the relative increases/decreases in student mobility, both incoming and outgoing, over the previous three years. The results reported by institutions show further increases in mobility in both directions. This growth is of course relative to previous levels, and in many cases may be from a very low basis, but if institutional perceptions are accurate it nevertheless represents sustained and cumulative year-on-year growth, stretching back to the year 2000.

However, this finding does not sit neatly with other studies, such as the 2006 ACA Eurodata study on Student Mobility in European Higher Education, which in addition to highlighting the fact that reliable data is not obtainable, does not offer evidence of a dramatic improvement in student mobility.



Mobility flows across Europe continue to be quite variable and the same strong East-West imbalances appear as in Trends III. This time, Sweden and Finland join Ireland and the UK, along with Malta, in the list of countries where at least 80% of institutions report significantly more incoming than outgoing students. At the other end of the scale, at least 75% of institutions in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Poland and Turkey report significantly more outgoing than incoming students. Greece and Hungary join the list of exporters when compared to Trends III, while Slovenia now joins the larger group of countries where most institutions report similar levels of incoming and outgoing students. It should, however, be remembered that these data refer to perceptions of student mobility between institutions, and do not therefore include students who may leave countries to study abroad as “free movers”.

Many voices within the institutions visited considered that the introduction of the Bologna first and second cycle degrees have had, and will continue to have, a negative effect on mobility, through shortening the overall length of studies and therefore reducing options for student mobility. However, these claims in many cases do not appear to be supported by the Trends V findings – even though the lack of concrete data should lead to rather cautious interpretation of any information in this field. Incoming and outgoing student mobility is reported to have risen over the last three years in over 70% of Trends V respondents, and evidence from the site visits also points to student mobility holding up well and even improving under the new Bologna system. In institutions that pointed to an adverse effect of reforms, there was usually also an obvious explanation. Often a decline in mobility could be directly attributed to the inflexible nature of some programmes, for example all modules being made compulsory, and/or rules being implemented stating that thesis work must be done at the home university. Such measures effectively leave little room for students to consider a semester or year in a partner university abroad.

In terms of responses to the need for increased mobility, there is widespread evidence from the site visits that the institutional focus is in many cases on international rather than EU students. Partly this is due to the need to balance incoming and outgoing numbers of Erasmus students. However, there is also a growing attention in some countries on the recruitment of non-EU fee-paying students. As well as furthering academic and research links with other regions of the world, these students provide an independent funding stream for the institution, which in some cases is used to make up part of the shortfall in national funding to meet the full economic cost of EU students.

The site visits also revealed rapid advancements in the provision of programmes through English, especially at Master and PhD levels. The introduction of these “Bologna” 2nd and 3rd cycle programmes has certainly boosted the international attractiveness of many universities. However, some systems do not allow teaching in the first cycle through English, but insist on the national language. Some universities offer parallel first-cycle programmes through English for international students – but staff and students often do not consider these courses to be of the same quality as the “national language” programmes. Language barriers therefore continue to pose major obstacles to mobility, even where programmes are now offered through English.

In larger countries with diversified higher education systems, the introduction of Bologna reforms is sometimes leading to greater student mobility between institutions in the same region, as institutional collaboration is developing more systematically in teaching, research and other activities. This regional collaboration would appear to be strongest at postgraduate levels and is often linked to institutional research strategy. These initiatives also have an international dimension, as one of the goals of such enhanced cooperation is in many cases to strengthen the collective international presence and competitiveness of the institutions and regions concerned.

Overall levels of student mobility are certainly affected by the fact that in almost all countries, a majority of students work on a part-time basis during their student years, and either cannot afford, or do not wish to lose this income. It was also pointed out in some institutions in Central and Eastern Europe that improving conditions at home universities and in the national environment generally meant that students are less likely to participate in mobility programmes. As seen from the Trends V data, however, many of these countries are still overall net exporters of students, as they have not yet become popular destinations for large numbers of students from other European countries.

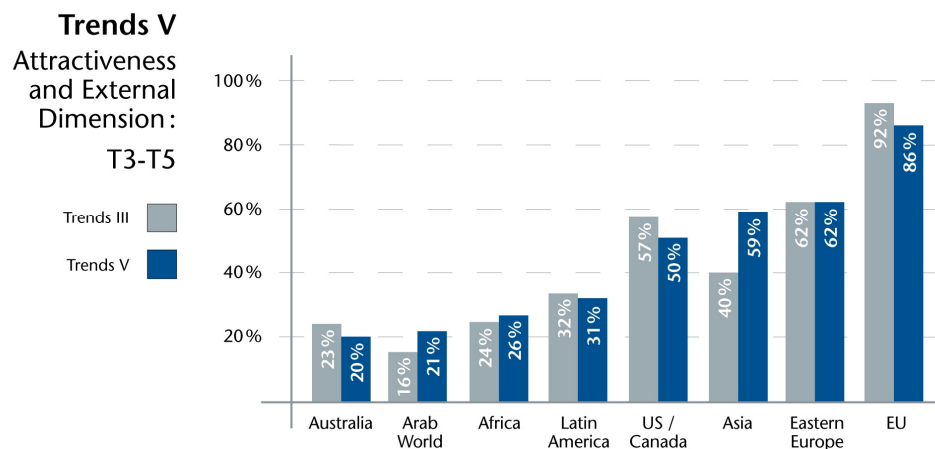
Information was also gathered from the site visits regarding staff mobility, although hard evidence here is even more difficult to discern than for students. Physical mobility for academic staff appears to be far more often linked to research than to teaching. Indeed, the new Bologna curricula combined with traditional academic structures and cultures often provides an array of difficulties for those who aspire to organising regular staff mobility programmes for teaching purposes. No obvious incentives currently exist for institutions to develop such mobility, and individual efforts will often be countered by arguments of insufficient teaching and administrative backup to cover colleagues who are abroad. As such mobility is usually neither recognised nor rewarded by the employer institution; the staff member may also face a backlog of additional work on returning home.

The lack of physical mobility does not necessarily mean that institutions are becoming more isolated. As international cooperation can be developed and maintained through the use of the internet and associated information and communication technologies, this is more often the preferred approach. Nevertheless, opportunities for relatively large numbers of students to benefit from academic mobility for teaching purposes are not currently being exploited to any significant degree.

2.5 Internationalisation

Increasing the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area for the rest of the world has been a driving force of the Bologna Process since its inception, and is one of the main goals which many of the action lines are intended to support. Both the Trends III and Trends V questionnaires therefore gathered data on this topic, in order to gauge the evolving positions and opinions of higher education institutions.

In terms of the geographical areas in which institutions would most like to enhance their international attractiveness, the EU remains the first choice by a margin of 25%. The small drop since 2003 can be attributed to EU enlargement and the fact that many Trends III respondents for whom the EU was a priority are now EU members themselves. Eastern Europe remains the second priority for enhancing attractiveness, with institutions in Spain, Sweden and Switzerland mentioning it least. Asia overtakes North America as the third priority, with an important increase since 2003, and over 70% of institutions in Finland, France, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, and the UK citing it as a priority. The US and Canada drop to fourth place, with Latin America remaining in fifth. Australia, the Arab world, despite some increase in attention, and Africa remain the lowest priority areas for higher education institutions across Europe.



Universities are considerably more likely than other types of higher education institution to list the US/Canada, Asia, Latin America and the Arab world in Trends V as priority areas for increasing their attractiveness. Not surprisingly, institutions which see themselves with primarily a European focus also see the EU and Eastern Europe as higher priorities. Likewise, institutions with a world-wide focus are more likely to

list all other continents and world regions as priorities than institutions with a regional, national or European focus.

In what could be interpreted as a vote of confidence in the Bologna process so far, Trends V respondents remain faithful to their Trends III predecessors, with a small but similar majority still considering that the European Higher Education Area will provide better opportunities for all students in their institutions, and for all participating institutions. However, an increasing number of institutions answer that mainly mobile students (incoming, outgoing or non European) will be the greatest beneficiaries, indicating that there is a lack of consideration of the benefits to all students of an international environment. Meanwhile, there has been a significant increase in the number of institutions that consider that the competitive institutions will benefit from the Bologna process, thus indicating that competition is more firmly a part of institutional reality than four years previously.

Key Findings

- *ECTS continues to gain ground as the credit system for the European Higher Education Area. Yet attention to correct understanding of the two key elements of the system – student workload and learning outcomes – is still imperative.*
- *The Diploma Supplement is being widely issued in many countries, with others still in a preparation phase. Dialogue with employers is again needed to ensure the utility of the tool.*
- *Although the perception of mobility is increasing, there remain many barriers to address. Institutions could and should do more to ease problems with recognition of qualifications and periods of study abroad.*
- *Internationalisation is an increasing priority for institutions, with Asia having become a major region of interest to European higher education institutions in the past four years.*

Key issue

- The tools developed to assist the Bologna process (ECTS, DS) are not always being exploited to their full potential. The challenge is therefore to ensure that tools are well understood and properly implemented so that everyone can benefit. It is particularly important for staff and students to think in terms of learning outcomes to ensure that curricula are re-considered in appropriate depth.

3. Student Support Services and Student Participation

Introduction

The topic of student support services has been largely neglected in European policy debates. The Trends IV report, however, noted that, *“in re-designing more student-centred curricula, institutions must foresee that students will need more guidance and counselling to find their individual academic pathways in a more flexible learning environment”* (Trends IV, p.20). This was followed by the first explicit mention of the topic in a Bologna Ministerial communiqué in Bergen 2005, where Ministers recognised that, *“The social dimension includes measures taken by governments to help students, especially from socially disadvantaged groups, in financial and economic aspects and to provide them with guidance and counselling services with a view to widening access”*.

The Trends IV study also found that institutions where student participation is active and encouraged were in general more positive about the implementation of reforms than those where students were very little involved.

It was therefore considered essential to pay strong attention in the Trends V project both to student support services and to developments in student participation. This has been done through analysis of specific questions in the Trends V survey, and also by greater focus on these issues during the site visits. The research team has also benefited from in-depth focus group discussions with professionals in various aspects of guidance and counselling provision during the 2006 annual conference of the European Forum for Student Guidance (FEDORA) network.

3.1 Student support services

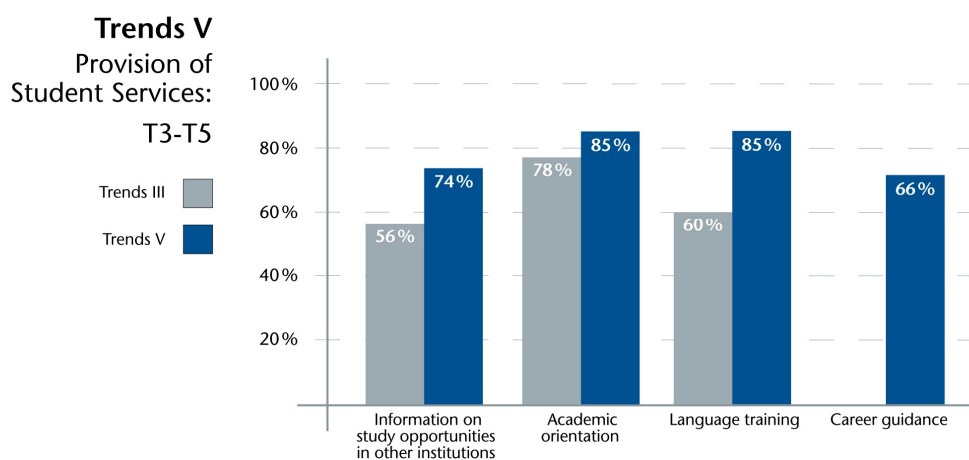
Student support services are necessarily wide-ranging, and should be adapted to the needs of the student body. As the Bologna reforms begin to take root within higher education institutions, students across Europe are experiencing important changes in matters such as degree structures, study programmes, teaching and learning methodologies, as well as the range of academic choices and progression routes open to them. Students should be, and hopefully are, the primary beneficiaries of these reforms, but if failures occur, they will also be the first affected. Any change process brings uncertainty, and it can be anticipated that students will routinely need explanation and advice in such a context – hence the need for effective services. It is also an aspect of democratic society that those who are the users of services should provide feedback on their quality and have a stake in their development. This is particularly the case when the shift in educational paradigm is from teacher to student-centred learning.

Student services such as academic guidance, career services, accommodation, psychological counselling and welfare services, play an increasingly important role when it comes to enhancing the attractiveness and the competitiveness of the European Higher Education Area. They provide national and international students

with the infrastructure to assist each individual student to navigate through higher education in the best possible way, and ideally should be adapted to each student's goals, objectives and personal circumstances.

Such services are also crucial in realising the aspiration of widening access to higher education to more diverse groups of learners, especially those currently under-represented in the student population who may need greater levels of support. Student services therefore form a vital part of the infrastructure required to support the lifelong learning mission of institutions, and are also crucial when attracting international students.

The Trends V survey indicates a growth in the provision of student services during the four-year period from Trends III to Trends V. The areas included in the survey were: information on study opportunities in other institutions (56% to 74%), academic orientation services (increase from 78% to 85%), language training (60% to 85%), career guidance services (new - 66%),



The results from the Trends V site visits indicate, however, that the questions on student services may have been answered by some institutions more in the context of mobility rather than with the whole student body in mind. Indeed the Trends III questions of 2003 in this area were explicitly set in the context of student mobility, and this assumption may have continued in the Trends V responses.

The sample of universities participating in the Trends V site visits all provided language training, guidance and counselling and accommodation as part of their service towards international students. This increase in the provision of services for international students also matches the Trends V findings regarding increases in student mobility, outlined in Chapter 2.

While the statistics from the Trends V institutional questionnaire indicate that many higher education institutions offer a considerable range of student services to at least a part of their student body, what is not captured in the data are the key issues of how

these services are staffed, the level to which they are funded, and whether or not there is any evidence that they are delivered effectively.

Language training

One example that indicates that answers have often been considered in the context of mobility is the provision of language training, which takes place in 85% of all institutions - an increase of 25% since Trends III. The site-visits found no evidence supporting such an increase in language training for the whole student body, but did find that in all institutions visited the provision of language training for outgoing and incoming students had increased. These interpretations are given further validity by the responses to the Trends V question regarding language and cultural support to incoming international students, to which 67% stated that they provided such services to incoming students, but only 18% provided them to all students at the institution. A further 13% admitted that they did not have any such support services.

Information on study opportunities in other institutions

73% of all participating institutions answered that they provide information on study opportunities in other institutions. However, the site-visits and focus groups would suggest that this answer was also made with consideration to information on institutions in other countries. Indeed, very few institutions visited, apart from in Romania, appeared to have any significant mobility between national institutions from bachelor to masters level. On the other hand, all the institutions visited provide information on their international partner institutions within mobility schemes during particular cycles.

Guidance and counselling

Attention to a supportive environment for learning has been growing throughout the Bologna process. The Berlin Communiqué highlighted *“the need for appropriate studying and living conditions for the students, so that they can successfully complete their studies within an appropriate period of time without obstacles related to their social and economic background”*. The Bergen Communiqué also further emphasised the need for governments to support students from socially disadvantaged groups both financially, and through providing guidance and counselling services. In addition to broadening participation, an underlying goal in many countries is to improve the student completion rate.

It is clear from the site visits and focus group discussions, that there is great diversity across Europe regarding guidance and counselling provision. Whereas diversity is often strength of European higher education, with regard to guidance and counselling services it should perhaps be recognised as a weakness.

One aspect of this diversity is in terms of where responsibility for guidance and counselling lies: with the state, with local public authorities, with public or private agencies, or with the higher education institutions themselves. The services themselves are defined in different ways, fulfilling different missions in different institutions and countries across Europe. The key services can be divided into academic orientation and career guidance on the one hand, and professional psychological counselling on the other.

There is diversity in terms of the value and support given to these services. Overall, there is insufficient recognition that in order to meet the ambitions set for higher education by the Bologna process and the Lisbon Strategy, and ease the pathways between secondary education, higher education, and the labour market, more solid guidance and counselling services are essential. These services are needed to support students in making choices linked to their academic studies and professional careers, and overcoming difficulties along the way, whether the students are local or international, and engaged in formal, non-formal or informal education. Guidance is especially important in institutions with a strong focus on lifelong learning, and which are working to attract a diversified student population. It is essential as part of an institutional approach to improving student retention, and should also be seen as a tool to support employability.

However, as discussed in Chapter 4, the Trends V data shows that student learning services – including guidance and counselling services – are rarely included in internal quality assurance. This was supported by the findings from the site visits. It would therefore appear crucial to start evaluating whatever services do exist in this field, and to build on these evaluations to expand provision and possibly to develop norms, whether at institutional or national level, to ensure the quality of these services. Such steps have already taken place in some systems, and are reported to have helped to develop sustainable and professional services for students.

Career guidance services

The Trends V survey shows that 66% of European HEIs provide career guidance services for their students. This data cannot be compared with 2003 since the question was not included in the Trends III questionnaire. However, it is possible that career guidance provision at institutions is increasing with the introduction of the three-cycle system. This would be coherent, since institutions say that they are concerned with employability, and increasing numbers of new bachelor degree holders will graduate and wish to enter the job market. The site-visits also showed some developments in the areas of tracking graduates and in improving contacts with the labour market, not least through the development of specific lifelong learning programmes, such as professional masters or other courses aimed at the regional labour market.

While career guidance has been carried out for a long time in some countries, it is clear that this is a service that needs to be expanded as the Bologna bachelors start to enter the labour market. Large numbers of these bachelor graduates can be expected from the academic year 2006-07 onwards. In some countries, universities have begun to evaluate the impact of the new degrees on the labour market so far through the tracking of graduates. However, the site visits indicated that there did not appear to be much feedback yet from employers, nor of their expectations.

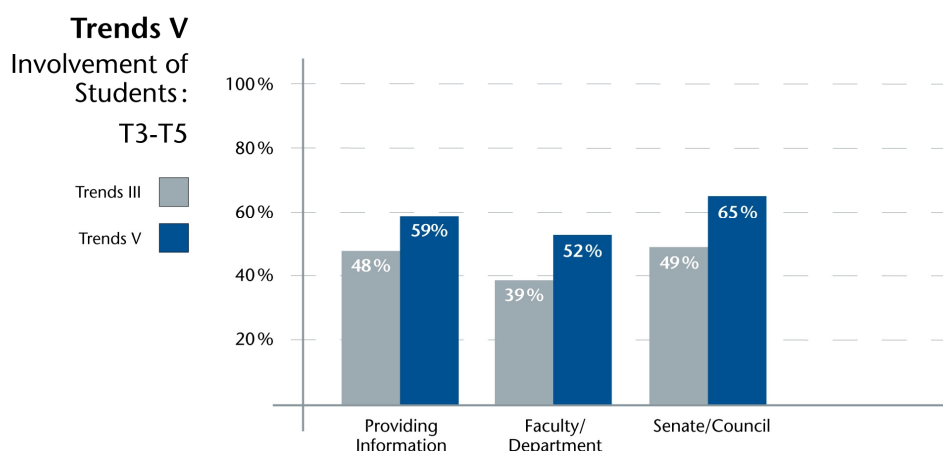
Part-time and double degree students

Echoing the findings reported in Trends III and IV, the Trends V site visits showed that significant proportions of students in many institutions across all countries of Europe are working part-time to support themselves, alongside their “full-time” studies. In many countries, a majority of students are *de facto* part-time due to their work commitments, but not registered as such. In other countries, it is common practice for students to register for two degrees in parallel, in areas that might support their research interests, or to improve their employability. The result is that the

student is only part-time in each of the degree programmes. Such double registration is especially common in countries where interdisciplinary degrees are not well developed, or where the introduction of the new degree structure has not lead to more flexible practice in the choice of elective modules, or in the choice of subject when moving from the bachelor to the master level.

These phenomena are not new, but have received insufficient attention at European level. National systems and institutions plan and behave as if most students study full time, whereas all must be aware that this is less and less the case. This is a sensitive issue, as it is linked to the question of financial support for students and pressure on the public purse, as well as to the question of access for those facing socio-economic disadvantage. While part-time working may be a positive and complementary element of the higher education experience for some students, it can become an obstacle to success for others, and solutions therefore need to be found by increasing flexibility of educational programmes in response to the needs of learners.

3.2 Student participation

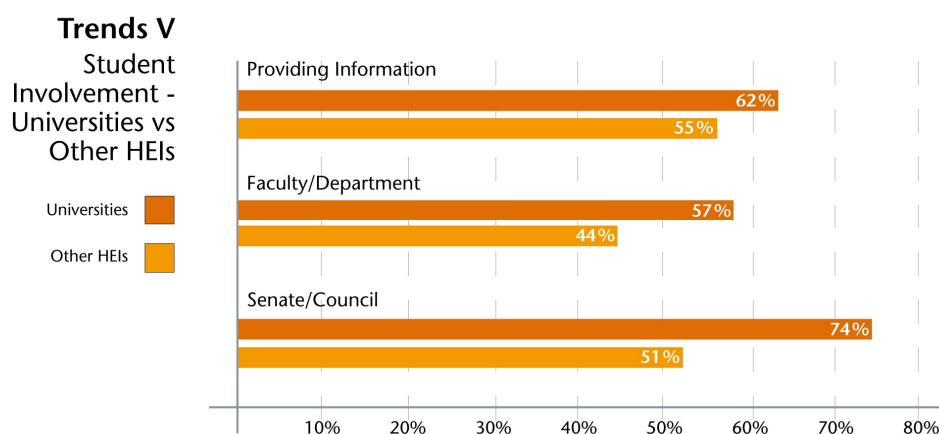


There has been a positive development since 2003 in the involvement of students in the implementation of reforms at institutional level. An increase in student participation of more than 10% overall has taken place, the most significant change being a 16% increase in central level participation. The Nordic countries tend to report very high levels of participation, as do Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Macedonia and Romania. The site-visits support these trends, with students better involved both formally and informally than in the Trends IV site visits in 2005. The general level of knowledge of the aim of the Bologna process has improved among student representatives and, perhaps to a lesser extent, among “ordinary” students also.

A future challenge outlined in the Trends III report referred to the need for improved involvement of students at institutional and particularly at departmental level in the reform process. While improvement has taken place since then, this remains weakest at faculty/departmental level, as the aggregate Trends V data shows, with only just over half of responding institutions involving students at this level. A third or fewer of institutions responding from Austria, Hungary, Iceland, Portugal and the UK

responded positively in this respect. Evidence emerged from the site-visits that student knowledge at faculty/departmental level varied considerably, as a consequence of different levels of involvement and reflecting the prevailing attitudes of staff within those units to the Bologna process. The site visits also raised questions about the level of involvement of students. While they may be involved formally in decision-making bodies, many pointed out that they are not involved in discussion to prepare key decisions, and it is at this stage that their input could be most effective.

Regarding the other challenge in this area highlighted in Trends III, the site-visits showed that overall student information regarding the Bologna process has improved, and that discussions now focus on the implementation of the various action lines and objectives, rather than just on the overarching goals. In only a very limited number of cases was there an ideological discussion on the perceived relationship between Bologna and a purely economic agenda.



Interestingly, the survey found significant differences between the student involvement in universities and other higher education institutions, especially at the more formal levels of the faculty/department and senate/council. The difference may often be explained by the fact that, within universities, students in most European countries have formal participation at the different levels of governance, while this is not true for all other higher education institutions. However, there is no reason, for instance, why there should be a difference of 7% between the numbers of universities and other higher education institutions that provide information to their students on Bologna issues.

Key findings

- *Guidance and counselling provision for students differs greatly across European higher education institutions, and in most systems these essential services are neither given sufficient priority, nor are monitored in quality assurance activities.*

- *Large numbers of full-time students across the whole of Europe are working part-time to support themselves during their studies, or indeed are undertaking two study programmes in parallel.*
- *Overall levels of student participation in the implementation of reforms at institutional level have increased since 2003, although increases are not spread evenly across all countries, and institutional types.*

Key issue

- The value of student support services needs to be better recognised, supported and developed in the interests of all students. In particular guidance and counselling services play a key role in widening access, improving completion rates and in preparing students for the labour market.

4. Quality assurance

Introduction

The context affecting quality assurance in the emerging European Higher Education Area has evolved significantly since 2003. Increasingly there is an awareness that concern for quality must be at the heart of the system, as exemplified by the Norwegian example, where the Bologna process has been assimilated into the national system, and is now referred to nationally as “the Quality Reform”.

A significant impulse for new developments took place at the Berlin Ministerial meeting in 2003 when Ministers declared that, “the primary responsibility for quality assurance lies with each institution itself and this provides the basis for real accountability of the academic system within the national quality framework.” Although this was the basis on which a number of national systems had already been operating, and was the concept which EUA had been promoting since the mid 1990s, the explicit statement by Ministers from 39 countries can now be seen to have sparked a significant change in attitude and perception in many countries across Europe, as well as in many academic and institutional European networks.

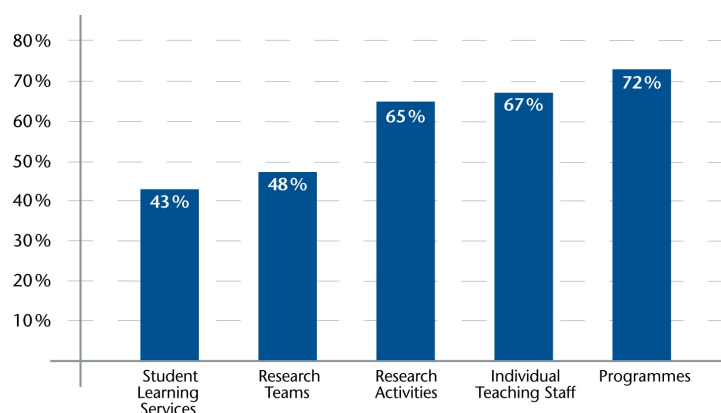
These changes in turn provided the basis for agreement on European standards and guidelines for internal and external quality assurance, which were the result of intensive work between quality assurance agencies, higher education institutions, and student representatives during the two years following Berlin. These standards and guidelines were formally adopted by Ministers in Bergen in 2005 and have since been widely disseminated, discussed and promoted.

The questions which have been asked of institutions in the Trends V questionnaire - on the different objects of internal evaluation - as well as the themes pursued in the site visits, are all based on the European Standards and Guidelines. Further information on national developments has been provided by National Rectors Conferences.

4.1 Internal Evaluation: questionnaire findings

Given the major policy changes in the field of quality assurance which have taken place on a European scale since 2003, the objective of the Trends V questionnaire in this field was to ascertain to what extent higher education institutions were taking a pro-active approach to internal quality assurance, and whether or not this was supported by external quality assurance processes. The aim was to explore the frequency of evaluations for programmes, student services and research teams. The institutions were also asked to indicate the character (obligatory or voluntary) of processes evaluating the individual teaching staff.

Trends V
Regular Internal
Evaluation by HEIs

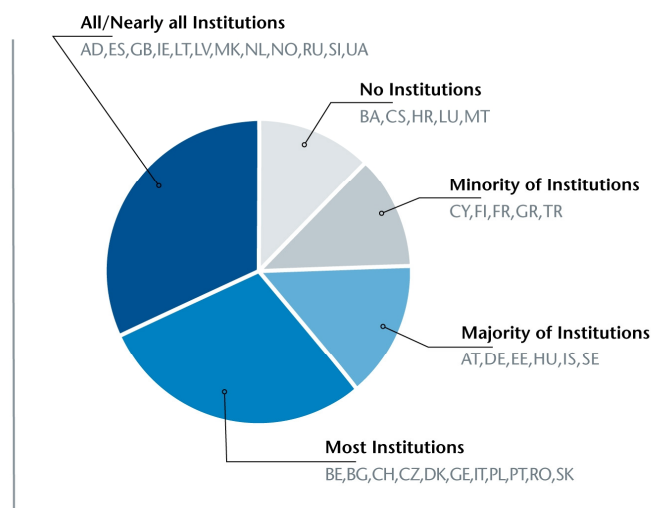


When comparing the relative reported levels of internal quality assurance activity, it can be seen that programmes are evaluated most regularly, while student learning services and research teams much less so. While the questionnaires did not explore the extent or consequences of these internal evaluations, nevertheless the responses provide a clear signal that most higher education institutions do undertake various forms of internal quality assurance. Furthermore, although Trends V and Trends III data are not directly comparable, it can be observed that considerably greater proportions of higher education institutions are now undertaking activities key to developing an active internal quality assurance system than in 2003.

Internal Evaluation of Programmes

Over 95% of responding higher education institutions stated that they conduct internal evaluations of their programmes, of which over 70% do so on a regular basis, while 24% do so “sometimes”. This compares favourably with the Trends III findings, where 82% answered that they had some form of internal mechanisms for monitoring the quality of teaching.

Trends V
Regular Internal
Evaluation of
Programmes



When examined nationally, it is clear that there are strong system trends underlying these responses, with 12 countries clustered in the category of all/nearly all institutions conducting regular evaluations, and a further 11 countries where most institutions undertake these processes. At the other end of the spectrum, it is not surprising to find that some of the institutions where none or only a minority of higher education institutions conduct such evaluations can be found in countries where there is not yet an operational quality assurance system.

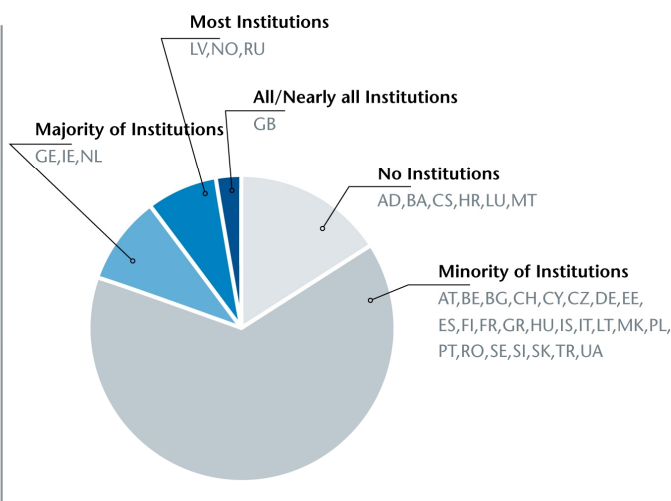
Linguistic confusion regarding the wording of this question is possible. In particular, the concept of “internal evaluation” may have been confused with “self-evaluation” as a preparatory phase for external quality assurance. Higher education institutions in those countries which have recently introduced new “Bologna” programmes, and where the QA mechanisms are so far linked to an external accreditation process, may also have responded with this in mind. Nevertheless, the overall responses give a clear indication of the extent of the regular use of internal QA mechanisms for academic programmes across Europe.

Evaluation of student learning services

The overall response is far less affirmative regarding the evaluation of student learning services, such as libraries, academic orientation/advisory services, etc. Only 43% of higher education institutions respond that they regularly evaluate such services, with a further 36% stating that they do so “sometimes”. 20% of responding institutions do not evaluate these services at all.

These rather low figures compare favourably, however, with the Trends III findings, where 26% stated in 2003 that they had internal mechanisms to monitor the quality of activities other than teaching and research.

Trends V
Regular Internal
Evaluation of
Student Learning
Services



The geographical variations in these Trends V responses are striking. In only a handful of countries do a majority of higher education institutions include such vital services as libraries and student advisory offices in their regular quality assurance procedures. These figures are also disturbing when viewed in relation to the provision of student services (see Chapter 3), where 85% of institutions report that they offer academic orientation services, a significant increase from 2003. Most of these services must either be so new that they have not yet been evaluated, or alternatively there are no plans to evaluate them on a regular basis.

There is a clear need for a more concerted approach to improving quality of these key elements of the teaching and learning environment. Effective quality culture is difficult to envisage if these services are neglected.

Evaluation of research teams

In the research field, slightly less than half of the higher education institutions stated that they regularly evaluate their research teams, while a quarter replied that they “sometimes” do so, and a further quarter responded “no”. However, nearly two-thirds of higher education institutions stated that they collected quantitative data systematically on all research activities, with a further quarter answering that they did so for some activities. Again, these figures are improvements on the Trends III data from 2003, where 53% of institutions stated they had some form of internal mechanism for monitoring the quality of research.

Evaluation of Individual Teaching Staff

Regarding the evaluation of individual teaching staff, two-thirds of responding higher education institutions stated that they had obligatory procedures, while a further 17% stated that voluntary procedures were in place. 16% stated that they did not have such procedures.

While these trends in increasing internal evaluation are evident, the main challenge appears to be to broaden the scope of institutional quality assurance activities. Extending quality assurance to the provision of vital student services, especially those related to guidance and counselling and thus to supporting students with the greatest needs, remains a particular challenge.

4.2 The rise of Quality Culture

A significant development in the quality assurance arena, supported by these findings on internal evaluation, has been a growing focus on quality culture, essential for institutions striving for excellence in their various fields of activity. This has been accompanied by a perceptible change in vocabulary since 2002, both on the part of QA agencies and higher education institutions, as the concept of quality culture has become assimilated. The rise to prominence of this concept can be attributed mainly

to the EUA quality culture project, which ran from 2002 to 2006 and involved 134 higher education institutions grouped in eighteen networks. The work of this project can be seen as one tangible response to the call from Ministers in Prague in 2001 for collaboration and dissemination of best practice between higher education institutions.

The institutional site visits provided considerable supplementary information to back up the questionnaire data and assess the development of quality culture. In all the institutions visited, it was apparent that a significantly increased emphasis is now being placed on internal QA mechanisms. This is a major development, all the more so since it is taking place across such a variety of institutions and range of countries. At the heart of these internal mechanisms lie a greater use of student and graduate feedback, and increasingly sophisticated uses of information platforms, which provide comparative internal data regarding student and staff performances, based on a wide range of criteria linked to the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching, learning, research and other activities.

Many institutions appear to have taken the opportunity offered by Bologna and the various structural reforms underway to introduce new systems for management of information, performance management and resource allocation. The administrative support system needed for ECTS, modularisation and the Diploma Supplement likewise provides relevant and up-to-date data which can support a pro-active internal quality assurance process. Once these administrative developments are fully operational, they will have the potential to provide far-reaching benefits for the strategic management and daily operations of the institution.

Another significant finding from the site visits was that students are increasingly present in the QA process within institutions. In many cases this is due directly to Bologna and the introduction of new degree structures, new academic programmes, and indeed to new concepts in quality assurance. This increased student “presence” at all levels of the institution, but particularly in terms of feedback mechanisms on the teaching and learning process, is in turn stimulating greater awareness of QA issues among staff. The EUA research teams heard on a number of occasions that this increased student involvement was in fact a driver of QA within the institutions concerned. In one case, the introduction of student fees was seen as driving the new focus on QA. In institutions with more experience of internal QA and in the more mature external quality assurance systems, high levels of student involvement were taken for granted and regarded as highly beneficial by both students and institutional leaders alike.

The site visits also provided evidence of the increasing use of external experts in various aspects of quality assurance across many types of academic activities. These included experts from other universities in the same country, or from abroad. Many of the activities were of an informal nature – such as bringing together groups of experts to advise on curriculum reform and new types of learning. Academic networks, both national and European, played an important role in such activities. Other more formal examples included the participation of international experts in external evaluation processes. The increasing importance attached by institutions to internationalisation (see Chapter 2) has resulted in some cases in the deliberate use of international experts in the quality assurance process.

4.3 *Autonomy*

In 2003, when institutions were asked to state whether the legal framework supported or undermined autonomous institutional decision-making in their countries, just over 50% of respondents responded that the framework supported or significantly supported such autonomy, while a further 40% stated that the framework both supported and undermined to varying degrees. Two years later, Trends IV site visits clearly found “that the institutions with the most systematic approach to quality are also those that benefit from the greatest institutional autonomy. Conversely, the institutions with the lowest degree of autonomy have not started to develop a systematic approach to quality.” (Trends IV, p.32)

The Trends V data show that over three-quarters of all institutions now state that their institution has sufficient autonomy to make decisions and manage its affairs in the best interests of students and society. Although this topic would need considerably more detailed exploration, it may be a preliminary indication that the many legislative and procedural reforms which have been taken place across most European higher education systems are in fact devolving greater autonomy to institutions. Difficulties obviously still remain, particularly in the area of financing, but the general direction would appear to be the right one, supporting the overall drive through the Bologna process to ensure greater autonomy for institutions, and thus encouraging them to become more responsive and accountable.

Major problems were however encountered in a number of cases when trying to match the need for a forward-looking innovative internal quality assurance system and a standardised accreditation procedure. The EUA research teams heard on several occasions how some accreditation procedures stand in the way of curricular innovation and reforms, for example preventing interdisciplinary programmes and inhibiting experimentation within new Bologna programmes. In countries where the national accreditation system is based at programme rather than institutional level, there is frequent tension with emerging institutional quality improvement strategies and procedures. It would also appear that in some cases, the accreditation objectives are not always in line with Bologna objectives.

A further problem linked to the accreditation procedures and the introduction of new Bologna programmes was widely reported. Given the number of new programmes in preparation, and the limited capacity of many accreditation bodies, higher education institutions were having to wait considerable lengths of time before a programme could actually go through the accreditation procedures and then be offered to students. Although essentially a logistical problem, it was causing important problems for a number of higher education institutions, at both first and second cycle levels, and highlights some of the disadvantages of such *ex-ante* accreditation procedures.

The influence of external QA procedures could also be observed in other ways during the site visits. Where, for example, the QA agency is moving towards an institutional audit approach to quality, institutions are focusing very much on their own internal processes in preparation for the external audit. Some of the same logistical problems were also being encountered in these cases, with institutions disappointed that they were being asked to wait several years before such an audit could take place. The difference in these cases is, however, that in the meantime the institution can

implement the programmes and take full responsibility, and the audit process will later examine whether the higher education institution was using suitably rigorous internal QA mechanisms to ensure the quality of its programmes.

One outcome of these various developments in the fields of both internal and external quality assurance is that there is a growing quality assurance community within higher education institutions, with emerging practitioner networks across Europe. Linked to this, and encouraged by these emerging networks and by the shift in focus of national quality assurance systems, considerably greater understanding and acceptance now exists within higher education institutions of the need for internal quality assurance policies and practices. The link between institutional responsibility, accountability and autonomy, on the one hand, and the need for reliable and transparent quality assurance mechanisms, on the other, would now appear to be firmly established and understood. The tendency seems to be that as institutions become more responsible and accountable, external quality assurance evolves to become less intrusive. This is reflected by the number of mature quality assurance systems which have moved away from a system of programme accreditation, replacing it with a focus on institutional evaluation or audit.

This emerging consensus across the higher education community, bringing the agencies, the institutions and the students closer together around overall goals and methodologies for quality assurance, has been accompanied by the continued growth and development in national and regional quality assurance systems across Europe. This growth and change, together with the increasing awareness within higher education institutions themselves of the benefits and challenges of effective quality assurance and enhancement activities, have paved the way for a considerably more constructive approach to quality assurance in general.

Key Findings

- *Progress in developing internal quality culture, and in improving the relationship with external QA agencies, is very encouraging.*
- *Essential student support services are often neglected in both internal and external QA processes.*
- *Many institutions and agencies currently consider only local or national dimensions to quality assurance and enhancement. Greater communication about developments across Europe in the QA field is vital.*

Key issue

- Many higher education systems are currently being held back from Bologna implementation – and thus from offering improved services to students and society - by national QA systems that are costly, offer no evidence of overall quality improvement, and stifle institutions' capacity to respond creatively to the demands of evolving European knowledge society.

5 Lifelong learning and widening access



The Bologna Process in the context of Lifelong Learning

Introduction

Lifelong learning offers ways to rethink approaches to higher education, as well as for institutions to develop relationships with other formal and informal education providers and the rest of society. However, the term “lifelong learning” is itself the subject of conceptual misunderstanding, used confusingly both to cover continuing education and training for qualified graduates, and initial education for disadvantaged groups often through part-time education. Although it may have been expected at the beginning of the decade that lifelong learning would be central to institutional reform processes, this has so far failed to happen, with issues of structural reform taking precedence over these challenges. Lifelong learning has thus been developed more on the periphery of institutional strategy, rather than as a driving element of it.

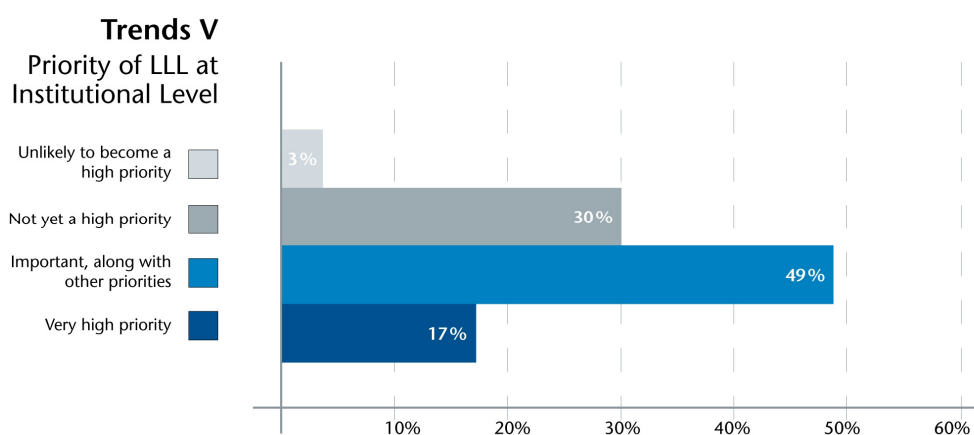
Yet economic imperatives seem to be bringing the agenda once again to the forefront of attention, as national and European policy discussions focus on the development of a more effective workforce for the knowledge society. Europe’s changing

demography, with ageing societies, declining younger generations, and the dramatic increase in representation of women in the student population, is inevitably set to have a major impact. In some countries, institutions may merge or close, but many can also be expected to diversify their educational offer and target different profiles of students.

The lifelong learning agenda challenges institutions to reorient provision to enable a broader range of individuals to fulfil their potential. Widening access is therefore a central element of the lifelong learning agenda. These issues have therefore been given considerable attention in the Trends V project, to find out to what extent the renewed political focus is mirrored in institutional reality. Questions posed in the Trends V questionnaire are not, however, directly comparable to the information gathered in 2003. At that time, the focus was on the strategic development of lifelong learning, whereas Trends V has concentrated on the activity that institutions are pursuing, and on the utility or otherwise of tools such as qualifications frameworks in this context.

5.1 *The priority of lifelong learning in European higher education institutions*

The Trends V questionnaire responses indicate that lifelong learning is a part of the educational landscape for the large majority of higher education institutions. The questionnaire looked at what priority European higher education institutions give to lifelong learning. Two thirds of the institutions (66%) answered that it either had high priority or had priority along with other priorities. However, only 17% indicated that it had very high priority for their institution.



Only in five countries (Croatia, Georgia, Greece, Italy and Serbia and Montenegro) did over 50% of the responding universities indicate that it is not yet a priority, but it may become one. The countries where over 30% of the responding institutions considered it to be a high priority were Austria, Denmark, Ireland and Russia. Interestingly, there is no notable difference in the distribution between universities

and other higher education institutions, nor if the sample is divided by the way they define their communities: regional, national, European or worldwide.

Although these findings are not directly comparable with Trends III, it is interesting to note that in 2003, 35% of institutions indicated that they had developed an overall strategy for lifelong learning and 31% that they were in the initial stages of doing so. Thus in 2003 66% of institutions were engaged in strategy discussions on lifelong learning, while exactly the same percentage of institutions today consider that lifelong learning has high or very high priority.

Although these statistics suggest uncanny coherence in the development of lifelong learning, little or no evidence was found from questionnaires or site visits of comprehensive national debates on lifelong learning strategies. Indeed no institution mentioned that it had taken part in a consultation process on the development of a national strategy despite the fact that the Trends III survey had pointed out that:

“a majority of countries have the intention or are in the process of developing a LLL strategy. Such policies already exist in one third of Bologna signatory countries, namely in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden and the UK. (Trends III p.91)

National Rectors’ Conferences also reported as part of the Trends V exercise that institutions have yet to consider lifelong learning as providing an overall framework for education in a cradle-to-grave perspective. Thus, it seems that while rhetoric on lifelong learning has been a constant feature of policy discussion throughout the Bologna period, action has still to follow.

5.2 Lifelong learning practices at European higher education institutions

The reports from the diverse sample of European institutions reveal no coherent picture of the understanding and implementation of lifelong learning, although a number of institutions indicated that lifelong learning is an area of growth, an area where diversified funding sources can become more dominant, and an area of great possibilities for regional cooperation and development. The regional stakeholders ranged from other higher education institutions to local or regional SMEs and public employers who through lifelong learning can update their staff and act as sounding boards for other full-time programmes.

The site-visit teams encountered a number of different examples of how the provision of specialised courses had improved cooperation between higher education institutions and local or regional industry - often as a result of partnership with the innovation office of the university. One example was found in Romania where EC Structural Funds financed the provision of professional up-dating for civil servants by the university in co-operation with the public authorities.

Although no institution visited defined its mission in a comprehensive lifelong learning perspective, the site visits revealed that universities have a variety of offers under the heading of non-formal or informal education together with offers of

professional education. Definition of educational offers and practices vary between countries and include education for:

- full-time mature students
- liberal adult education
- part-time degrees
- diplomas for those in work (post-experience)
- continuing professional development and training courses
- staff development
- open access courses
- regional development through open and distance learning, and networks of partnerships and collaboration with local stakeholders

A range of innovative practice was also identified in a variety of institutions. “Junior” university courses is a term used in some places for courses that prepare or motivate young people to take an interest in higher education. Some institutions were targeting specific secondary schools in order to attract the best students through this type of outreach activity. However, during the course of these site-visits no examples were found of access courses directed specifically towards socially disadvantaged students.

At the other end of the age spectrum, “senior” university courses also illustrated the diversification of the educational offer. Many of these courses are of a “self-improvement” character and are targeted specifically at the over 55 year old or retired population. Such senior university courses were found in several countries, but the course structure was different in each. In Portugal the “University studies for Seniors” (started in 2006) were intended for graduates over 55 years and, according to the course description, would give them:

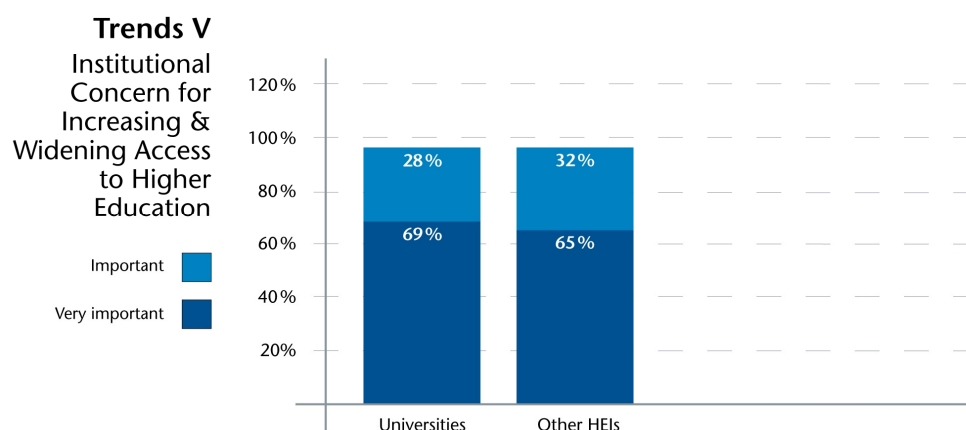
“an opportunity to re-evaluate the knowledge acquired both theoretically and through professional practice. Even though this kind of course falls neatly into one of the traditional university tasks, i.e. service to the community, it may also be seen as being part of teaching and research activities, since the programme aims at developing a self-questioning and research attitude”.

Part-time or open university students also play an increasingly important role in a large number of universities in Europe. Such students should not be confused with the large number of full-time students who are in fact only studying part time (see chapter 3). In some countries this profile of student is regarded as an important possibility for institutions to diversify both access and funding as typically such students will pay for their study programme or the costs are paid, at least in part, by employers. In the UK, for example 40% of all students are part-time and, according to a report by Brian Ramsden for Universities UK, the UK government is currently considering measures for funding this student category.

5.3 Lifelong learning, widening access and the social dimension

The Trends V data shows that 97% of all European higher education institutions find the widening of participation to be either very important or important, with very little

distinction to be made between universities and other higher education institutions. Indeed, if the sample is divided into universities and other higher education institutions, 69% of universities find it very important to increase and widen access to higher education while the corresponding figure for other higher education institutions is 65%.



Curiously, although 97% of European higher education institutions support widening participation, only 17% of all European higher education institutions expect socio-economically disadvantaged students to have better opportunity to access higher education in the future, while 69% think that opportunities will improve a little or stay about the same.

This lack of optimism for improving access for disadvantaged students is even more difficult to understand given the finding that institutions tend to consider that autonomy is improving. One explanation could be that access to higher education is only partially affected by institutions themselves, and to a large extent is a function of government policy and the prior educational system. This is perhaps also the reason why, when asked specifically on the need to take action in their institution more than 50% consider that their institution is already taking sufficient action to improve access for socio-economically disadvantaged students. Meanwhile 40% of all higher education institutions find that there is insufficient action taken at their institution.

Broken down by country, only in Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Ireland, Macedonia, Poland, Romania and the UK did more than 25% of all institutions expect better opportunities for access of socially and economically disadvantaged students. In Finland, Hungary, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland and the Ukraine more than 50% of all institutions expect the possibilities to remain the same and in Croatia, Germany and Russia more than 20% expect less opportunities. In Germany, where institutions are seemingly the most pessimistic, as many as 35% of the sample expect fewer opportunities for the disadvantaged in the future.

On the question of the need for further action to improve access by the higher education institutions themselves, more than 60% of respondents in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia,

Switzerland, Russia, and the UK consider that sufficient action is being taken. On the other hand, in Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Macedonia and Spain 60% or more of the respondents considered that they could improve the access of disadvantaged students to their institution, while in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Germany, Iceland, Lithuania and Ukraine more than 20% of the institutions did not think that it was part of their responsibility.

The survey thus found no consistency between the overwhelming consensus (97%) on the importance of widening access and the low expectation that European institutions have on their own possibilities of further assisting in the widening of access.

The site visits tended to confirm the impression that improving the diversity of the student profile is often not a major concern for institutions. On the contrary, there are few or no incentives to take action in favour of widening participation, while future funding seems increasingly dependent on demonstrable “academic quality”. In such a climate many institutions are therefore focusing on improving their competitiveness by trying to attract the best students possible rather than by aiming consciously to improve the diversity of the student base.

The social agenda of lifelong learning is a complex societal issue, and does not only involve the widening of access, but also the diversification of the educational offer and the funding of wider opportunities with the goal of improving employability. The site visits revealed an ongoing debate on the relationship between quality and diversification, with many considering the idea of diversifying the student body as being equated with lowering quality. The prevalence of this perception in the European academic community suggests that serious and broad debate on these issues is overdue.

While quality of education will increasingly be perceived in relation to institutions’ capacity to respond to the diversity of citizen needs, perceptions of academic quality and associated institutional behaviour merit attention. If widening participation is to be a goal for higher education institutions, action will need to be taken on matters such as career structures, so that not only excellent research is rewarded in academic careers, but also excellent teaching, and student success. Such debates are yet to take place in many institutions and countries, but unless they do, it is difficult to see why individuals and institutions would alter their behaviour.

Trends V shows that there is still much work to be done to address this agenda, and that it is closely related to national policies, culture and attitudes to retention and employability of students. The site visits did not indicate widening of participation through non formal or informal programmes as an important issue, yet both increasing and widening participation in higher education are key elements for the creation of a European knowledge society. There remains much work to be done to open up access to learning opportunities for citizens throughout their lives.

5.4 Lifelong learning and the qualifications framework for the European higher education area

“New style” qualifications frameworks are tools that are designed with the goals of making qualifications more transparent and learning paths more flexible. They build on the Bologna tools for creating the European Higher Education Area, including ECTS and the DS. Yet the results of the Trends V survey and the reports from Rectors’ Conferences show that, so far, national qualification frameworks have not been adopted or implemented except in a very few countries, and even when they exist, many institutions as well as citizens are unaware of them.

Implemented national qualification frameworks exist at the moment only in Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom, while a number of other countries have adopted legislation, but have yet to proceed with implementation. Yet the main finding in the survey is that institutions are currently either unaware of this issue or confused by it. European higher education institutions do not at the moment have any clear conception of national qualification frameworks, and indeed many institutions are unaware of whether or not there is a qualifications framework in their country.

Part of this confusion can perhaps be explained by the fact that the majority of European countries have some system of classification of qualifications, albeit one that has tended to act as a barrier between different levels or types of learning. Thus institutions may consider that a qualifications framework is in place if there is a system that specifies that an individual would have to complete one level in order to access the next level – from primary to secondary and from secondary to tertiary. Such existing systems may be confused with NQFs, even though the purpose of the new-type qualifications frameworks is to overcome barriers rather than to underline them.

Only Irish institutions appear to have a coherent understanding on this topic, since none responded that there is no NQF and 56% find the NQF useful when developing LLL. This is no doubt related to the fact that, since before the Irish framework was put in place in 2003, extensive consultation and communication activities were undertaken with all stakeholders, including the higher education institutions. The key to establishing a qualifications framework successfully therefore appears to be this element of broad societal dialogue, ensuring that all potential beneficiaries are involved in the process of development. The policy goals of increasing flexibility in learning paths between different educational sectors also need to be stated explicitly

5.5 Lifelong learning and recognition of prior learning

While the vast majority of European institutions support the concept of lifelong learning, its implementation is hugely complex. Institutions in the process of reconsidering their traditional curriculum in the light of current needs should acknowledge that learning takes place in many contexts and this has implications for the design of study programmes in terms of structure, delivery and assessment. Flexible learning paths, and the accreditation of work placements, blended learning, company in-house training, distance education, e-learning and learning through work

schemes all need to be increased and formally integrated within mainstream higher education provision.

These are issues that as yet seem to have been considered only on the margins of institutional strategic development. Yet the introduction of flexible learning paths is pivotal to the European Higher Education Area, and combining the different tools developed through the Bologna process gives the potential for major innovation and transformation. If implemented in a flexible way these tools have the potential to enhance the provision of education to a diverse population, but it is essential that they are developed and implemented simply, and that work is undertaken to ensure they are understood by all stakeholders. As Stephen Adam points out in his introduction to the Bologna Process seminar on recognition in Riga, 2007:

“When developments in qualifications frameworks, cycles, learning outcomes, quality assurance, credits, recognition and lifelong learning are put together something new and powerful will be created. The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) will provide immense opportunities for countries and institutions providing they fully embrace the changes inherent within the new architecture for higher education that is emerging... However, it must be remembered that for most countries the difficult task of producing and implementing qualifications frameworks and learning outcomes is just commencing.”

Among the instruments to support flexibility, transparency, mobility and academic quality are a range of tools and processes to recognise prior learning, including Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL), Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL), Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), and Work-Based Learning (WBL). In the future, these will surely be combined with ECTS to express learning outcomes of prior learning through credits, and then also linked to the different levels of qualification frameworks. However, such processes are currently only in their early infancy, and institutions need to take responsibility to ensure positive developments. Particular care should be taken not to develop overcomplicated, time-consuming, bureaucratic and expensive systems which deter academics as well as citizens seeking recognition of their skills and abilities.

The Trends V survey, the site visits and the focus group meetings all show that European universities are working with a broader range of issues related to higher education and lifelong learning than is generally recognised. Each individual university is at the centre of a growing number of processes and demands, and effort must be made to connect processes that sometimes appear to have different drivers, but which all rely on well-functioning institutions for coherence and sense.

Key Findings:

- *Dialogue on lifelong learning provision with employers and other societal stakeholders is currently lacking.*
- *Excellence in all higher education missions needs to be rewarded, as institutions require greater incentives to respond to the challenges of broadening their educational offer to “non traditional” students.*
- *National qualification frameworks are currently an aspirational rather than an actual tool for most systems. To be effective, they should be designed*

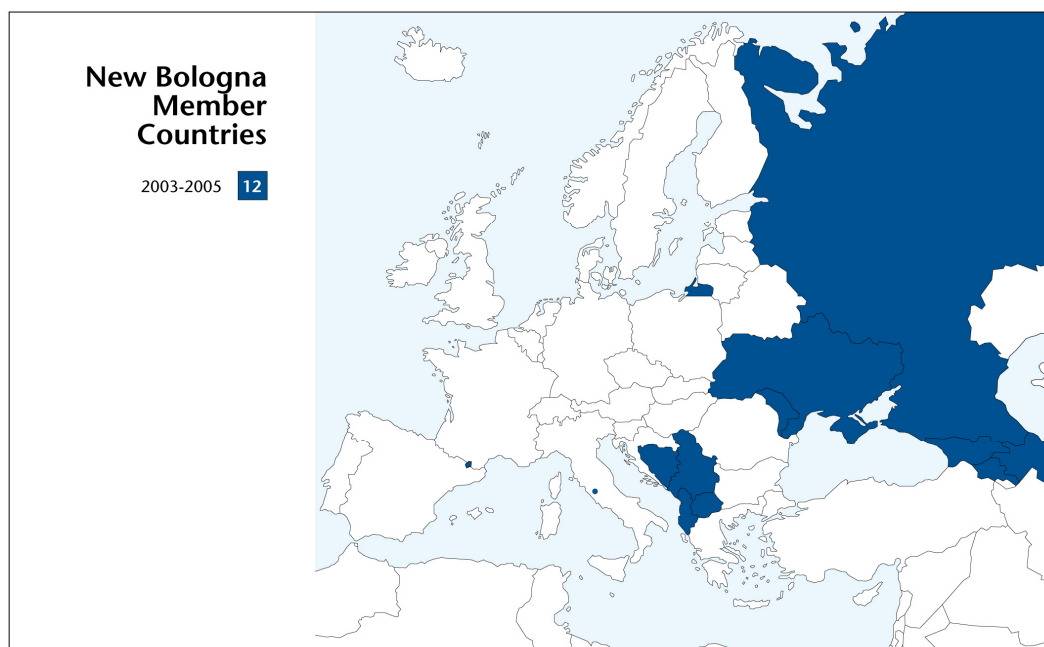
coherently with broad societal consultation and strong involvement of higher education institutions.

Key issue

- Institutions in the process of reconsidering their traditional curriculum need to give a higher priority to lifelong learning, and to consider this agenda as a central element of institutional strategic development.

6. New member Countries: implementing Bologna

Introduction



Since 2003 the Bologna process membership has swelled to 45 countries, dramatically affecting the conception of the European Higher Education Area. These additional countries comprise Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Holy See, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, and “the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” who all joined the process at the Berlin Ministerial conference in 2003, and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine who in 2005 became the latest countries to be welcomed to the Bologna process.

The scope of information gathered from the Trends V institutional questionnaire has also broadened considerably compared to Trends III, in particular by gathering responses from more institutions in these new member countries. Comparative analysis of how the situation has developed over the period between the two surveys is, however, not possible, as few institutions from some of these countries responded to the Trends III questionnaire.

For this reason it was felt important to consider the situation of at least some of the new member Bologna countries through separate analysis of the Trends V questionnaire, and also to use other methods to learn about developments. EUA has therefore taken the opportunity of undertaking more qualitative research, including a focus group meeting with universities in South East Europe that was held on 2/3 March 2006 in Vienna during a conference on higher education in South East Europe under the Austrian Presidency of the European Union. In addition, Trends researchers participated in a conference on Russian higher education organised by the Council of

Europe in Moscow in May 2006, and were able to gain further understanding of developments in the Russian Federation. EUA also organised a well-attended meeting on the Bologna process for Georgian universities at Tbilisi State University in December 2006, and this provided an opportunity to explore developments in Georgia.

The first, and perhaps obvious point to make, is that there is as much diversity in and between the new member countries as there is among the rest of the countries in Europe. While this is a rather banal observation, it is important to bear in mind. Often it can be rather convenient to imagine that “new member states” may all be addressing similar challenges in a similar way. In reality there is considerable diversity of challenges, responses and priorities, and therefore no easy solutions can be offered as to how best to support positive developments.

6.1 The impact of the Bologna process in the Russian Federation

Consideration of the Russian Federation illustrates that there is not only diversity between new member states but also within them. The scale of the country and of the higher education system is the first element to grasp, as the addition of Russia to the Bologna process dramatically expanded the geographical scope of the European Higher Education Area, as well as adding a vast number of new higher education institutions. EUA was delighted that, thanks to help with publicising the survey within the country – particularly by the Russian ENIC member – 50 institutional responses were received to the Trends V questionnaire. This is a significant number, particularly as EUA has only 19 member universities in the country, and provides interesting data about the perceptions of the Bologna process. However, these 50 responses represent only a small proportion of the total number of higher education institutions in the country, as there are 1146 accredited higher education institutions in the Russian Federation, according to the 2007 National Report to the Bologna process by the Russian Ministry. Moreover this Trends V sample may well be a biased one as it is a reasonable assumption that institutions that are not interested in the Bologna process may be less likely to answer than those that are. It is therefore impossible to draw any definite conclusions about the influence of the Bologna process in this huge country from an analysis of this sample of responses.

There are, however, many interesting points revealed from the Russian Trends V responses. Firstly, the sample of institutions reveals a very positive attitude towards the European Higher Education Area. 33 institutions consider that “it is essential to make rapid progress towards the EHEA”, 15 institutions answer that, “the EHEA is a good idea, but the time is not yet ripe”, and only one institution agrees with the statement, “I do not trust the idea of the EHEA”.

When visiting the country, however, Trends researchers learned that there are clearly distinct camps in Russian higher education – those for and against the Bologna process, or those for and against “westernising” higher education. Not only does this division encompass ideological differences, but it is also linked to geographical regions. It is mostly in the western parts of Russia that there is a strong interest among higher education institutions in adapting to the approach taken by the rest of Europe.

In the central and eastern regions of the country, institutions tend to consider cooperation in Asia as the primary objective, with important attention also paid to the relationship with the US system.

Analysis of the questionnaire responses indicates that there seems to be some confusion about the nature of the Bologna three cycles. 30 of the institutions felt that they already had the three cycle system before the Bologna process, while 12 answered that the three cycle structure was introduced as a result of Bologna, and 8 said that they do not yet have a three cycle system but that this is planned. It would appear that some institutions may consider the number of cycles to be the focus of the question, rather than the fact that cycles are constructed along Bologna lines. Whatever the reason for this confusion, the Trends researchers who visited the country were informed that only a small percentage of the student body actually follow programmes within a Bologna degree system. This is also confirmed in the 2007 Russian National Report to the Bologna process, which indicates that of the more than 7 million students currently enrolled in higher education, only 7% are in a bachelor programme and 0.6% in a master programme, while 92.4% are in programmes described as “specialist”, which correspond to the “former” 5 year first cycle programmes. Meanwhile doctoral programmes continue to be divided into two cycles – leading firstly to a “candidate” qualification, and then to a doctorate.

With regard to implementation, some issues also seem to be more advanced than others. Only 7 of the 50 institutions state that curricula have been re-considered in connection with the Bologna process in all departments, while 34 state that this is the case in some departments. A further 8 institutions say that curriculum reform has not yet happened. ECTS is not used, and it is unlikely that the discussion on “learning outcomes” has been influential. Indeed, although in many respects the questionnaire sample gives a very positive impression towards some aspects of Bologna reforms, on the ground it was found that there is now considerable discussion on Bologna, but concrete measures seem to be few.

The Ministry of Education clearly has a very significant impact on how the situation will develop. Although many institutions answered that they have enough autonomy, in conversation, institutions give little sense of autonomous decision-making, and point to the Ministry’s decision-making role in many areas. For example, it is currently stipulated in law that 85 % of the curriculum must be decided by the Ministry, although a forthcoming law will change this percentage – but not the practice - to 50 %. Centralisation therefore seems still to be the prevailing principle for governing this enormous system, and there is no doubt a particular concern to “control” quality. The approach towards quality assurance has been particularly developed as a response to the phenomenon of the emergence of many new and mostly private institutions established in recent years. One university commented in the Trends V questionnaire that, “Participation of Russian universities in the EHEA depends on the policy of the Russian ministry of higher education”, and this indeed seems to sum up the situation.

Nevertheless, there very clearly *are* networks and universities that are engaging with Bologna, that have thought through implementation measures effectively, and that have a thirst for greater European cooperation and discussion. It will be important to build sustainable relationships on these significant foundations in the future.

6.2 South East Europe

For the new independent states that emerged from former Yugoslavia, the Bologna process has been perceived as a key driver for rebuilding and reinvigorating higher education systems that all share a common heritage from their Yugoslav past. International support has also focused on the Bologna process, as this provides a European direction that is essential for the integration of these new nation states. Yet despite this, progress has been slow and difficult to sustain. While particular reasons vary from country to country, one of the main issues constantly pointed out is the legacy of Yugoslav self-management, and its embodiment in the notion of faculty independence. Despite the efforts that have been put into reform, the fundamental step of integrating universities into a coherent and manageable structure has only been achieved in very few instances.

This feature of former Yugoslav states was again a central consideration during the focus group discussion that took place on 3 March 2006 in Vienna, and that involved representatives of most of the universities in the region. As faculties rather than institutions still enjoy high levels of legal, functional and academic autonomy, it is extremely difficult to introduce coherent reforms even in one university, let alone across a national system. The structure of academic programmes and examinations makes it almost impossible for students to study and graduate within the normal timeframe. Curricula tend to be overloaded and over-specialised, with theoretical knowledge predominating over practical learning. There is a general and urgent need for a learning-oriented approach.

Universities all stated, however, that they had introduced the ECTS system, which is a significant change across the entire region compared to the Trends III responses. Yet when asked if this means that students are able to study a degree programme by selecting some modules from different faculties within their institution, the reply was that this would be very exceptional. Indeed, further exploration of the issue revealed that ECTS had been superimposed on a model of teaching and learning in place, rather than being used to re-think and re-organise teaching and learning through a more deep-rooted reform. Given the low levels of student mobility, and the lack of will or ability to address more profound questions of curriculum reform, it is difficult to see what potential benefits are to be derived from ECTS in this context, unless there is a serious attempt to make the fundamental change that is necessary for Bologna reforms to be effective.

Effective quality assurance is also proving to be an extremely difficult challenge to address. The responses across the SEE region to the Trends questions regarding internal quality procedures reveal little activity in this area, and with little or no change from Trends III to Trends V, with the exception of Macedonia. Many explanations were offered for this, but one significant aspect is that the basic tools for quality assurance are often lacking. University-wide data is rarely available in a coherent form when faculties are independent, and equally the lack of effective central management and administrative systems means that data gathering and analysis is time consuming and unreliable. Feedback and monitoring mechanisms are weak and inconsistent across institutions, and the institutional and governmental resources to provide incentives to implement change are often missing.

A further issue is that the expert pool in any single country that could be used to evaluate the quality of programmes is extremely limited, and this is clearly an issue where regional cooperation would seem to offer a solution. Yet, despite some notable disciplinary exceptions, regional cooperation in the context of countries that have emerged through conflict is unlikely to meet great enthusiasm at this stage of societal development.

A final and crucial issue that emerged in discussions is that student involvement is less evident in many South Eastern European countries than elsewhere in Europe. To many, this may be surprising as at European level, students from countries emerging from the former Yugoslavia have had a major impact through ESIB. Formally, many SEE institutions do involve students at institutional and faculty levels, yet in the national and institutional contexts, it is evidently a great challenge for student voices not only to be heard, but for what they say to be taken into account and acted upon. Of course, a non-integrated institution means that the student presence and voice is often fractured, along with the voices of other important players, adding to the overall incoherence and disparities across many institutions in the region, including in their approach to the Bologna reforms.

It is therefore important to underline the main message that was sent from the meeting of South East European universities in Vienna: *“governments in the region should continue to amend higher education legislation to integrate universities into one legal entity in order to accelerate the coherent implementation of the Bologna and European research agendas.”*

6.3 Georgia

Despite joining the Bologna process only in Bergen in 2005, the status enjoyed by the Bologna process in Georgia is particularly elevated. Indeed, the Trends researchers who attended a national seminar on Bologna implementation in December 2006 were astounded at the overall level of awareness of the Bologna process in the academic community. Not only is this noticeably higher than in many countries – including some that have been a part of the process since the beginning - but the enthusiasm for engagement with the main objectives of the process, and the sophisticated adaptation of the instruments and action lines to the local environment are quite exemplary. Indeed, the Bologna process has been grasped as a way of tackling problems inherent in the national system. It is now the central pillar of a new vision, inspired by the “rose revolution” of November 2003, that is transforming the higher education landscape.

Moreover, although some very strong measures have been taken by government to address problems of corruption and inefficiency in the university system, this has resulted in a generally very positive working relationship between the Ministry of Education and the higher education institutions. This can no doubt be explained by the shared feeling that the system had reached a point of near disintegration, and drastic measures were needed. Students and staff alike explained that their main concerns in the recent past have been of such a basic level that it is difficult to find common ground for any discussion with representatives from outside the country. Official staff salaries were set at a level that would make it impossible even to survive, yet alone to

live reasonably – and hence also contributed to the endemic corruption. Meanwhile, lack of money to maintain even a minimum infrastructure meant that many teaching and learning processes simply had to be abandoned for several months of the year. These issues, fundamental to any higher education system, have all been addressed by government reforms, and although the legacy of neglect to buildings, and the inadequacy of libraries and other facilities is evident, the benefits of new policy are also very clear for all.

It became clear that enormous progress had been made in re-shaping the higher education system through Bologna reforms. The three cycle structure is not only in place, but this has been done with a considerable amount of reflection and debate about what the goals of higher education should be. Thus the three cycles reflect an agreed response to dealing with the challenges of employability in society, and with a common desire to align to Europe. Evidence of this can be seen in the answers of the Georgian universities to the Trends V question on the importance of employability. Of the 14 institutions that responded, 10 institutions consider the issue as being very important, and the other 4 consider it to be important. These proportions are also mirrored in the answers on the attitude to the European Higher Education Area, with 10 institutions answering that it is essential to make rapid progress towards the EHEA, and the other 4 considering that the “EHEA is a good idea, but the time is not yet ripe.”

Not only has there been rapid progress in implementing the three cycles, but curriculum reform is taking place throughout the system, and ECTS is widely used and seemingly well understood. This no doubt has much to do with the fact that the main texts explaining the Bologna process, including the ECTS User’s Guide, have been translated into Georgian, and are not only disseminated in the institutions, but also available to download from the Ministry website. Over two-thirds of institutions responding to the Trends V questionnaire stated that they used ECTS for both accumulation and transfer, 50% claimed that none of their students have problems with the recognition of credits when returning from study abroad, and over 80% said they issued the Diploma Supplement to all graduating students. However, as in all other countries, these reforms are very much still work in progress, and everyone recognises that there is much more to be done.

The step which seemed most urgent to the Georgian academic representatives was the development of reliable quality assurance. The legislative base for reform has now been achieved, and some key measures have been taken with regard to university governance, including introducing a separation of powers regarding academic and financial matters, and giving a strong voice to students. A number of key questions are now, however, being faced in establishing a quality assurance system: the law stipulates that there should be accreditation of both institutions and programmes, but who should be responsible for what in practice? There is an awareness that a system requiring external evaluation of every programme would produce an enormous effort that would remove attention from other matters of institutional strategic development, and would lead to stifling bureaucracy. Thus the Georgian system is now seeking advice to identify the best way to support institutions in becoming responsible for the quality of their activities. As regards current practice, over two-thirds of responding institutions stated that they conducted regular internal evaluations of programmes, that they had obligatory processes for evaluating individual teaching staff, and that

they also had processes for regularly evaluating student learning services: when seen across all Bologna participating countries, these responses are above average.

Quality has also been considered in a broad framework, and although there has not been a great deal of attention to lifelong learning goals, the researchers had the impression that the Georgian academic community was aware of these challenges.

For any countries in need of renewed vigour in their approach to reform, Georgia would stand as an inspirational case study, illustrating how Bologna reforms can really be used effectively to respond to societal challenges.

Key Findings

- *Bologna new member states cannot be considered as a homogeneous group, as there is enormous diversity within and between them.*
- *In Russia, although it is difficult to develop a coherent national Bologna strategy, a significant proportion of the academic community is interested in Bologna as a means to transform the higher education system in line with the rest of Europe.*
- *Institutions in South East Europe clearly perceive the Bologna process as providing a direction that is essential for societal development, but the culture of independent faculties is holding back effective implementation.*
- *Georgia offers a case study of how the Bologna process can be used effectively to support a profound reform of higher education, and a key element to success has been the effort made to provide basic information on European texts in the national language.*

Key issue

- European countries could do more to support each other in implementing higher education reforms. While challenges may vary, all countries could benefit from increased cooperation.

7. Future Challenges

Although this report confirms the ongoing momentum of an extraordinary and wide-ranging process of higher education reform across the European continent, the findings also point to significant lack of information about the nature and value of this reform throughout society. This suggests that the greatest current challenge facing both institutions and governments is to communicate the results and implications of the structural and curricular reforms which are being implemented as a result of the Bologna process.

It is particularly important for institutions to work closely with employers, and their representative organisations, to spread knowledge of the new degree structures and their learning outcomes in different academic disciplines. There is otherwise a danger that the new degrees, particularly at the first cycle, will be misunderstood or mistrusted within the labour market.

Another neglected group in need of information on reforms are the parents of Europe's potential students. They exert enormous influence on the choices made by their children, and also need to be inspired, rather than discouraged, by reforms.

A second and related challenge is to develop further the processes of quality assessment and enhancement in institutions. The trends in this respect are positive, with institutions taking greater responsibility for the quality of their provision. Nevertheless, there remains considerable progress still to be made, and no institution can afford to be complacent about quality in an increasingly competitive environment. Governments, who normally sponsor or control quality assurance agencies, have a responsibility to ensure that systems are neither overly bureaucratic nor excessively costly or burdensome on institutions. After a first quality assurance cycle, agencies should adopt a risk-based approach, recognising that most assessment regimes have concluded that quality is generally satisfactory or better, even if continued vigilance is required both of academics and regulators. In this, as in many other aspects of Bologna reforms, the best guarantee of success is the efforts of autonomous and properly funded institutions that have well developed internal quality processes.

Trust in quality is the fundamental prerequisite of mobility and of systems of credit transfer and accumulation. ECTS, the Diploma Supplement, national and since 2005 the overarching European qualifications framework have provided the building blocks towards such mutual trust, but this report suggests that there is still much to do to ensure that academics, administrators, employers and governments fully understand these instruments and will encourage their rapid adoption in practice. Ensuring the participation of all stakeholders in discussions on the development of national qualifications frameworks is one important element, while there is also a need for institutions to take forward the adaptation of ECTS in the context of a fast-evolving environment.

Trends V suggests that institutions have a need to develop further their strategies and activities in the field of lifelong learning, and to think of lifelong learning as a core mission. Once again, an increasing dialogue with employers is required if university

courses, at all levels, are to meet the needs of a changing society and economy in which knowledge becomes rapidly out-of-date and in which, therefore, constant training and retraining is required. Higher education institutions have a major role to play in giving substance to the rhetoric of lifelong learning, and need to recognise that their own role is changing within this new paradigm. Higher education demands the same level of service no matter how it is delivered, and attention to the quality of lifelong learning provision is therefore essential.

The “social objective” of the Bologna process is to ensure equality of access to higher education for all those qualified and able to benefit from it. Once again, institutions need further to develop their strategies for making this aspiration a reality, working in collaboration with governments who are responsible for the earlier years of schooling and with employers who have an interest in part-time education for those who have been unsuccessful in education at earlier periods of their lives. Universities and their leaders have a responsibility to stress that widening access does not imply any reduction in quality. On the contrary, the quality of education systems needs to be evaluated in terms of how successfully the diverse educational needs of all citizens are met throughout their lives.

The international reception of the Bologna process is of great importance in a world of increasing student and employment mobility. Once again, governments and universities share responsibility for enhancing knowledge of the reforms which have taken place. They also share responsibility for assisting the more recent entrants to the Bologna process to implement the reforms, learning from all aspects of their experience.

Institutions must begin to think through the implications of the existence of the European Higher Education Area after 2010. Some aspects of Bologna are still likely to require implementation or reconsideration, and it will be particularly important to do this with greater European vision, moving away from local and national interpretations which, although seemingly coherent in a specific context, make interaction throughout the EHEA more difficult to realise.

There will also remain a need to pay attention to various impediments to student and staff mobility, as well as to continue to ensure the link to research and innovation through continuing to develop doctoral programmes and career opportunities for young researchers. Institutions also have to consider the future needs of society and the labour market, together with the implications for mobility, quality and access of the different methods of funding higher education which are, or are likely to be, adopted in the many countries of the EHEA.

Many have begun to question the timeline provided by Bologna. 2010 has clearly served as a significant and meaningful deadline, and one that has been used not only in the context of establishing a European Higher Education Area, but also as a target for the European Union’s Lisbon strategy, including the European Research Area and the Copenhagen process in vocational education. Yet the closer 2010 becomes, the stronger the realisation that the processes set in motion will neither be fully achieved nor come to a sudden end. Indeed these processes represent major cultural shifts that have been under-estimated in many ways, and will take more time to be fully integrated into societal reality. Far from reform coming to an end in 2010, the

likelihood is that Europe has only begun to lay the initial foundations for a more permanent process of societal innovation and change, in which the role of higher education is fundamental.

Strengthening the relationships between governments, higher education institutions and other societal stakeholders is essential to anchor and sustain the goals of the Bologna process. No institution can claim to be offering high quality education if it lacks adequate funding, good governance, research-based teaching, broad access, guidance and counselling services, and attention to employability. Governments need to examine whether they are really providing the support that institutions need, as well as ensuring that institutions have the necessary autonomy required to fulfil their missions. Broad stakeholder dialogue is also needed to raise awareness of how institutions can and do contribute to societal challenges and to ensure that incentives are put in place to encourage action on priority issues.

Whereas many doubts were cast in the early years of the Bologna process, it is now clear that institutions have appropriated the concept of a European Higher Education Area and are taking action to move forward as quickly as possible. It is noteworthy that this has happened without any central driving force or legally binding steering mechanisms. There has been no single “Bologna coordination centre” with the solutions to what to do and how to do it, nor any central monitoring system. Some have pointed to this as a weakness of the process, yet given the extent to which reforms have been made in a sector often perceived as resistant to change and development, it would perhaps be wise to revise this view. As they have done throughout their long history, universities and other higher education institutions are again showing that not only are they capable of adapting to meet the needs of a changing society, but that their role is fundamental if progress is to be sustained.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Trends V Questionnaire: TRENDS in European higher education (V)

I. General Questions

Q1. How many academic staff are employed at your institution?

(Please give an approximate figure)

Q2. a) How many full time students are enrolled at your institution?

(Please give an approximate figure)

b) How many part time students are enrolled at your institution?

(Please give an approximate figure)

Q3. When was your HEI founded? *Please mention the (approximate) year:*

Q4. What is the highest level (or equivalent) to which your institution trains students?

| |
|----------------------------|
| 1. Bachelor (first cycle) |
| 2. Master (second cycle) |
| 3. Doctorate (third cycle) |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q5. Which community do you see your institution primarily as serving?

| |
|---------------|
| 1. Regional |
| 2. National |
| 3. European |
| 4. World-wide |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q6. How would you describe the profile of your institution?

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Primarily research-based | |
| 2. Primarily teaching-oriented | <u>Your answer:</u> |
| 3. Both research-based and teaching-oriented | please choose one |

Q7. In the medium-term, does your institution plan to:

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. increase its share of teaching activities | |
| 2. increase its share of research activities | <u>Your answer:</u> |
| 3. maintain the existing situation | please choose one |

Q8. How important for your institution is the concern in society to increase and widen access to higher education?

| |
|----------------------|
| 1 Very important |
| 2 Important |
| 3 Not very important |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q9. Does your institution have a Bologna coordinator?

| |
|--------|
| 1. Yes |
| 2. No |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q10. Would you say that your institution has sufficient autonomy to make decisions and manage its affairs in the best interests of students and society?

| |
|--------|
| 1. Yes |
| 2. No |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q11. Has your institution received additional financing to support the implementation of the Bologna Process?

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Yes, we have received sufficient additional financing | |
| 2. Yes, but additional financing has not been sufficient | <u>Your answer:</u> |
| 3. No | please choose one |

Q12. Which statement best represents your opinion regarding the creation of a European Higher Education Area (EHEA)?

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. It is essential to make rapid progress towards the EHEA | |
| 2. The EHEA is a good idea, but the time is not yet ripe | |
| 3. I do not trust the idea of the EHEA | <u>Your answer:</u> |
| 4. I do not have an opinion on the EHEA | please choose one |

II. Degree structures and curricula

Q13. Does your institution have a degree structure based on either two or three main cycles (Bachelor, Master, PhD) in most academic fields?

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Yes, we already had it before the Bologna process | |
| 2. Yes, we introduced it as a result of the Bologna process | |
| 3. Not yet, but this is planned | <u>Your answer:</u> |
| 4. No, we do not plan to do this | please choose one |

Q14. If yes, would you consider that the two/three-cycle structure functions

| |
|--------------------|
| 1. Extremely well |
| 2. Reasonably well |
| 3. Not very well |
| 4. Not at all well |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q15. Has your institution recently re-considered curricula in connection with the Bologna process, particularly with regard to adapting programmes to the new degrees structure?

| |
|--|
| 1. Yes, in all departments |
| 2. Yes, in some departments |
| 3. Not yet, but we will do so in the near future |
| 4. No, we do not see the need for this |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q16. Does your institution offer any **joint programmes** with other **institutions in a different country**? (*several answers allowed; please mark the selected choices in the second column*)

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1 Yes, there are examples of joint programmes in all cycles | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 Yes, there are examples of joint programmes in the first cycle (bachelor) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 Yes, there are examples of joint programmes in the second cycle (master) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 Yes, there are examples of joint programmes in the third cycle (doctorate) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Not yet, but some departments are planning joint programmes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. No, we do not see the need for joint programmes | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q17. When designing or restructuring curricula in your institution, how important is the concern with the future "employability" of graduates?

| |
|------------------|
| 1 Very important |
| 2 Important |
| 3 Not important |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q18. Are professional associations and employers involved in designing and restructuring curricula with the relevant faculties and departments?

| |
|---|
| 1. Yes, they are closely involved |
| 2. Yes, they are occasionally involved |
| 3. No, they are rarely if ever involved |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q19. What do you expect your students to do after the first cycle (Bachelor) degree?

| |
|---|
| 1. Most will enter the labour market, while a minority will continue to study at Master level |
| 2. Some will enter the labour market, and some will continue to study at Master level |
| 3. A minority will enter the labour market, but most will continue to study at Master level |
| 4. Difficult to say at this stage |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q20. If your institution awards doctoral degrees, what structure of doctoral degree studies exists at your institution? (*several answers allowed; please mark the selected choices in the second column*)

| |
|---|
| 1. Individual tutoring with supervisor only |
| 2. Taught courses in addition to tutoring |
| 3. Doctoral schools |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q21. Does your institution systematically track the employment of graduates?

| |
|---|
| 1. Yes, we track the employment of all recent graduates |
| 2. Yes, we track some graduates |
| 3. No, there is no system |

Your answer:
please choose one

III. Credit systems and recognition

Q22. Does your institution use a credit accumulation system for all BA and MA programmes?

| |
|--|
| 1. Yes, ECTS |
| 2. Yes, but not ECTS |
| 3. Not yet, but we intend to develop one in the future |
| 4. We do not intend to implement one |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q23. Does your institution have a credit transfer system for all BA and MA programmes?

| |
|--|
| 1. Yes, ECTS |
| 2. Yes, but not ECTS |
| 3. Not yet, but we intend to develop one in the future |
| 4. We do not intend to implement one |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q24. If your institution uses a credit system, is it used for the award of degrees/diplomas? *(several answers allowed; please mark the selected choices in the second column)*

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Yes, in all subjects on the basis of accumulated credits only | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Yes, in all subjects on the basis of accumulated credits plus traditional end of year exams | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Yes, in some subjects on the basis of accumulated credits only | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Yes, in some subjects on the basis of accumulated credits plus traditional end of year exams | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q25. If your institution has a credit system, is it also used at doctoral level?

| |
|--|
| 1. Yes |
| 2. Yes, only for taught courses in doctoral programmes |
| 3. No, we do not intend to apply credits at the doctoral level |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q26. Do students returning to your institution from study abroad encounter problems with the recognition of their credits?

| |
|-----------------------|
| 1. Many have problems |
| 2. Some have problems |
| 3. None have problems |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q27. Does your institution issue a Diploma Supplement to graduating students?

| |
|--|
| 1 Yes, to all graduating students |
| 2 Yes, to all graduating students who request it |
| 3 Not yet, but this is planned |
| 4 No, there are no plans to do this |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q28. Does your institution have institution-wide recognition procedures?
(several answers allowed; please mark the selected choices in the second column)

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Q28_1 Yes, for the recognition of foreign degrees | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q28_2 Yes, for the recognition of periods of study abroad | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q28_3 Yes, for the recognition of degrees from other institutions in our country | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q28_4 Yes, for the recognition of periods of study in other institutions in our country | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q28_5 No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

IV. Mobility

Q29. Does your institution keep central records of students who come to study from abroad, and who leave to study abroad?

| |
|---|
| 1. Yes, central records are kept of all these students |
| 2. Yes, but only for students on official study exchange programmes (Erasmus, Tempus etc) |
| 3. No, information is kept only by faculties, schools or departments |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q30. If your institution keeps central records, has incoming student mobility increased at your institution over the last three years?

| |
|-----------------------------|
| 1. Yes, significantly |
| 2. Yes, slightly |
| 3. No change |
| 4. No, it has decreased |
| 5. No information available |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q31. If your institution keeps central records, has outgoing student mobility increased at your institution over the last three years?

| |
|-----------------------------|
| 1. Yes, significantly |
| 2. Yes, slightly |
| 3. No change |
| 4. No, it has decreased |
| 5. No information available |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q32. Comparing incoming and outgoing student mobility, what is the balance?

| |
|---|
| 1. Significantly more incoming than outgoing students |
| 2. Similar levels of incoming and outgoing students |
| 3. Significantly more outgoing than incoming students |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q33. Does your institution provide language and cultural support to incoming international students?

| |
|--|
| 1. Yes, we offer special support services to incoming international students |
| 2. Yes, we offer such support services to all students |
| 3. No, we don't have any such support services |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q34. Has teaching staff mobility increased at your institution over the last three years?

| |
|-----------------------------|
| 1. Yes, significantly |
| 2. Yes, slightly |
| 3. No change |
| 4. No, it has decreased |
| 5. No information available |

Your answer:
please choose one

V. Student Services & Student involvement

Q35. Which of these services does your institution provide for its students? (*several answers allowed; please mark the selected choices in the second column*)

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Q35_1 Academic orientation services | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q35_2 Accommodation facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q35_3 Career guidance services | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q35_4 Psychological counseling services | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q35_5 Sports facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q35_6 Information on study opportunities in other institutions | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q35_7 Language training | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q35_8 Social and cultural activities (bars, cinema clubs, theatre, music etc) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q36. How have you involved your students in the implementation of the Bologna Process at your institution? (*several answers allowed; please mark the selected choices in the second column*)

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Q36_1 Formally, through participation in senate/council | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q36_2 Formally, through faculty/department level | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q36_3 By providing information on the issues involved | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q36_4 By supporting our students to attend national discussions on the issues | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q36_5 Other (<i>please specify:</i>) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q36_6 Not applicable | <input type="checkbox"/> |

VI. Quality Issues

Q37. Does your Institution conduct internal evaluations of its programmes?

| |
|------------------|
| 1 Yes, regularly |
| 2 Yes, sometimes |
| 3 No |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q38. Does your Institution have regulations for student examination and assessment?

| |
|--------|
| 1. Yes |
| 2. No |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q39. Does your Institution have processes for evaluating individual teaching staff?

| |
|--|
| 1. Yes, they are obligatory |
| 2. Yes, they are voluntary (each teacher decides whether or not to participate) |
| 3. No |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q40. Does your Institution have processes for evaluating student learning services (e.g. libraries; student orientation/advice services etc.)?

| |
|------------------|
| 1 Yes, regularly |
| 2 Yes, sometimes |
| 3 No |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q41. Does your Institution have processes for evaluating research teams?

| |
|------------------|
| 1 Yes, regularly |
| 2 Yes, sometimes |
| 3 No |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q42. Does your Institution collect quantitative data systematically on its research activities?

| |
|----------------------------|
| 1. Yes, on all activities |
| 2. Yes, on some activities |
| 3. No |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q43. Do your external quality processes (Quality Assurance / Accreditation Agency) include an evaluation of the internal quality processes of your Institution?

| |
|--------|
| 1. Yes |
| 2. No |

Your answer:
please choose one

VII. Lifelong Learning and qualifications framework

Q44. What priority does Life-Long Learning (LLL) have at your institution?

| |
|---|
| 1. It has a very high priority |
| 2. It is important, along with other priorities |
| 3. It is not yet a high priority but may become one |
| 4. It is unlikely to become a high priority |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q45. If there is a National Qualifications Framework, is it useful when developing LLL programmes?

| |
|---|
| 1. Yes |
| 2. Sometimes |
| 3. No |
| 4. Too early to say |
| 5. There is no National Qualifications Framework in our country |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q46. If there is a National Qualifications Framework, is it useful when developing curricula corresponding to the (new) Bologna degree system?

| |
|---|
| 1. Yes |
| 2. Sometimes |
| 3. No |
| 4. Too early to say |
| 5. There is no National Qualifications Framework in our country |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q47. How useful do you consider an overarching European Qualifications Framework will be in developing programmes and understanding qualifications from other countries in Europe?

| |
|--|
| 1. Very useful |
| 2. Quite useful |
| 3. Not useful |
| 4. We don't know what a European Qualifications Framework is |

Your answer:
please choose one

VIII. Social dimension

Q48. Do you think that in the future socio-economically disadvantaged potential students will have

| |
|--|
| 1. much more opportunity to access higher education than today |
| 2. a little more opportunity to access higher education than today |
| 3. about the same opportunity to access higher education as today |
| 4. a little less opportunity to access higher education than today |
| 5. much less opportunity to access higher education than today |

Your answer:
please choose one

Q49. Do you consider that there is a need for action at your institution to improve access for disadvantaged students?

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. yes, there is insufficient action taken in our institution | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. no, there is sufficient action already in our institution | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. no, our institution considers that this is not part of its responsibility | <input type="checkbox"/> |

IX. Attractiveness and the External Dimension of European Higher Education

Q50. Do you expect that the emerging European Higher Education Area (EHEA) will provide better opportunities for:

Q50_1. Students: *(several answers allowed; please mark the selected choices in the second column)*

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. All students at your institution | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Most out-going students from your institution | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Most in-coming students to your institution | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Mainly the more affluent students at your institution | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Non-European students considering higher education in your country | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. None | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q50_2. Higher education institutions: *(several answers allowed; please mark the selected choices in the second column)*

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. All institutions part of the EHEA | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Mainly the institutions most competitive on the European higher education market | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Mainly the most prestigious institutions | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Mainly trans-national providers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Mainly postgraduate institutions | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Mainly institutions within the larger countries in the EHEA | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. None | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q51. In which geographical areas would your institution most like to enhance its international attractiveness?

(several answers allowed; please mark the selected choices in the second column)

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Q51_1 EU | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q51_2 Eastern Europe | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q51_3 US /Canada | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q51_4 Australia | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q51_5 Arab World | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q51_6 Asia | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q51_7 Latin America | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q51_8 Africa | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q51_9 None | <input type="checkbox"/> |

COMMENTS

Please use the space below to share with us some of your hopes and fears regarding the European Higher Education Area. Please add any comments and reactions to this questionnaire as well.

Appendix 2: Country distribution of received filled-in questionnaires

| Country | | Trends III | Trends V |
|---------|--|------------|----------|
| AL | Albania | 2 | 2 |
| AD | Andorra | 1 | 1 |
| AM | Armenia | 1 | 0 |
| AT | Austria | 32 | 30 |
| AZ | Azerbaijan | | 2 |
| BY | Belarus | | 1 |
| BE | Belgium | 31 | 32 |
| BA | Bosnia Herzegovina | 4 | 4 |
| BG | Bulgaria | 13 | 12 |
| HR | Croatia | 5 | 5 |
| CY | Cyprus | 5 | 4 |
| CZ | Czech Republic | 29 | 24 |
| DK | Denmark | 45 | 38 |
| EE | Estonia | 7 | 11 |
| FI | Finland | 27 | 18 |
| MK | Former Republic of Macedonia | 2 | 3 |
| FR | France | 78 | 88 |
| GE | Georgia | | 14 |
| DE | Germany | 58 | 52 |
| GR | Greece | 20 | 17 |
| VA | Holy See | 3 | 2 |
| HU | Hungary | 39 | 15 |
| IS | Iceland | 2 | 6 |
| IE | Ireland | 15 | 16 |
| IT | Italy | 27 | 63 |
| LV | Latvia | 29 | 21 |
| LT | Lithuania | 16 | 14 |
| LU | Luxemburg | 1 | 1 |
| MT | Malta | 1 | 1 |
| MD | Moldova | | 2 |
| NL | Netherlands | 12 | 22 |
| NO | Norway | 29 | 22 |
| PL | Poland | 38 | 99 |
| PT | Portugal | 32 | 20 |
| RO | Romania | 15 | 15 |
| RU | Russia | 1 | 50 |
| CS | Serbia & Montenegro | 6 | 2 |
| SK | Slovakia | 9 | 11 |
| SI | Slovenia | 3 | 3 |
| ES | Spain | 28 | 32 |
| SE | Sweden | 15 | 22 |
| CH | Switzerland | 14 | 16 |
| TR | Turkey | 19 | 30 |
| UA | Ukraine | | 8 |
| GB | United Kingdom | 44 | 56 |
| | Other (Eastern-Mediterranean University) | 0 | 1 |
| Total | | 758 | 908 |

Appendix 3 : Trends V Site Visits

a) Institutions participating in Trends V site visits:

Masaryk University, Czech Republic
University of Vaasa, Finland
Université Nancy 2, France
Aachen University of Applied Sciences, Germany
German Sport University, Germany
Politecnico di Milano, Italy
Libera Università di Lingue e Comunicazione, Italy
Leiden University, Netherlands
Norwegian University for Life Sciences, Norway
Warsaw Agricultural University, Poland
Poznan University of Technology, Poland
University of Oporto, Portugal
Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania
University of Aberdeen, United Kingdom
University of Sheffield, United Kingdom

b) Trends V Team Members

Research Team

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Michael Gaebel, EUA
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Dionnysis Kladis, University of Peloponnese
Ewa Krzaklewska, Erasmus Student Network
Tapio Markkanen, former Secretary General of Finnish Rectors' Conference
Vicky Petrounakou, University of Peloponnese
Lewis Purser, Irish Universities Association (IUA)/EUA
Cornelia Racke, University of Maastricht
Hanne Smidt, EUA
Athanassia Spyropoulou, University of Peloponnese
Charoula Tzanakou, EUA
Annamaria Trusso, EUA
Lazar Vlasceanu, UNESCO - CEPES

National Experts

Christian van den Berg, Association of Universities in the Netherlands

Stefan Bienefeld, German Rectors' Conference (HRK)
 Antonio Brito Ferrari, Universidade de Aveiro
 Jan Honzik, Brno University of Technology
 Andrzej Krasniewski, Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland
 Pascal Level, Conférence des Présidents d'Universités
 Roberto Moscati, University of Milano Bicocca
 Jessica Olley, Universities UK
 Alan Runcie, QAA Scotland /Universities Scotland
 Liisa Savunen, Finnish Rectors' Conference
 Ola Stave, Norwegian Association for Higher Education
 Peter Zervakis, German Rectors' Conference (HRK)

Appendix 4: National Rectors' Conferences that completed questionnaires

- Austria, Austrian Rectors' Conference
- Austria, Association of Universities of Applied Sciences
- Belgium NL, Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad
- Bulgaria, Bulgarian Rectors' Conference
- Czech Republic, Czech Rectors' Conference
- Denmark, Rektorkollegiet
- Estonia, Estonian Rectors' Conference
- Finland, Finnish Council of University Rectors
- France, Conférence des Présidents d'Université
- Germany, German Rectors' Conference
- Greece, Greek Rectors' Conference
- Hungary, Confederation of Hungarian Conferences on Higher Education
- Italy, Conferenza dei Rettori delle Università Italiane
- Latvia, Latvian Rectors' Conference
- Netherlands, Association of Universities in the Netherlands
- Norway, Norwegian Council for Higher Education
- Poland, Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland
- Slovakia, Slovak Rectors' Conference
- Slovenia, Association of Rectors of Slovenia
- Spain, Conferencia de Rectores de las Universidades Espanolas
- Sweden, Association of Swedish Higher Education
- Switzerland, Conférence des recteurs des universités suisses
- Turkey, Turkish University Rectors' Conference
- United Kingdom, Universities UK

Appendix 5: Focus Group Meetings

- 15th EAN Annual Conference, “The Social Role of Universities: Reaching out to the Community”, The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, 30th August - 2nd September 2006
- 16th EURASHE Annual Conference, "The Dynamics of University Colleges" University of Dubrovnik, Dubrovnik, Croatia, 27-28 April 2006.
- Coimbra Group Annual Meeting, University of Tartu, Estonia, 17-19 May 2006
- EUA Bologna Seminar in Tbilisi State University, Georgia, 18-21 December 2006
- EUA Seminar on Higher Education and Research in South East Europe "Strengthening Higher Education in South East Europe: Priorities for Regional and European Cooperation" University of Vienna, Austria, 2-3 March 2006 see also: <http://www.eua.be/index.php?id=174>
- International Seminar co-organised by the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia together with the Council of Europe within the framework of the Russian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, “ Making the European Higher Education Area a Reality: The Role of Students”, Moscow, Russia, 2-3 November 2006
- IXth FEDORA Congress, “Guidance and Counselling within the European Higher Education Area”/ “L’orientation et le Conseil dans l’Espace Européen de l’Enseignement Supérieur” Vilnius/Lithuania 22-25th October 2006