

Education

Higher education: Socrates - Erasmus
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A2/PVDH

FROM PRAGUE TO BERLIN The *EU* Contribution

SECOND PROGRESS REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

In November 2001, *DG* Education and Culture of the European Commission released a working document called "*From Prague to Berlin, the EU Contribution*", outlining ten concrete measures the Commission would take in order to bring the Bologna process further. In August 2002, a first *Progress Report* was distributed.

This *Second Progress Report* is presented to the Bologna Follow-Up Group in Athens in February 2003, proving an update on steps already taken and work ahead towards a European Higher Education Area. A more detailed report and a position paper will be published in advance of the Berlin Conference as a Commission contribution to the debate and the adoption of the Berlin Communiqué.

From an *EU* perspective, the Bologna process fits into the broader agenda defined by the Heads of State and Government in Lisbon in March 2000, aimed at making Europe "*the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world; capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion*". In Barcelona, in March 2002, they added that the European education and training systems should become a "*world quality reference*". The *EU* Education Ministers have translated this ambition into a work programme on the concrete Objectives of education and training systems, which integrates various related initiatives (Action Plan Skills and Mobility, Action Plan on Mobility, eLearning, Bologna Process, Bruges-Copenhagen process etc.). All of them set within a Lifelong Learning perspective.

2. TEN CONCRETE MEASURES

In short, the following measures are being implemented by the Commission in partnership with the higher education sector.

Action line 1. Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees

1) *A wide-scale introduction of the Diploma Supplement, increasing substantially the understanding and recognition of degrees at all levels. Synergies with similar documents in vocational training will be sought.*

The wide-scale introduction of the Diploma Supplement will be supported (as an eligible expense) through the grants which Socrates-Erasmus National Agencies provide to universities for the Organisation of Mobility (OM) as from the academic year 2003/04.

The promotion of the Diploma Supplement is closely linked to the successful promotion of ECTS. A joint pool of ECTS/DS Counsellors has been formed in order to help universities, which make a proper use of these instruments, prepare for the ECTS label and/or the Diploma Supplement label (application date 1 November 2003 and subsequent years).

Action line 3. Establishment of a system of credits

2) *A broad pilot scheme to test, building on the ECTS experience, a European Credit Accumulation System for Lifelong learning, enabling citizens to accumulate credits gained through formal, non-formal and in-formal learning (a new Joint Action as a follow-up to the current exploratory projects under the Joint Actions Socrates-Leonardo- Youth).*

Exploratory projects have started in May 2002, they will report in the summer of 2003. They will be followed by small scale pilot projects in 2003-2004. A new broad scheme on Credits for Lifelong Learning (ECTS plus) could start in 2004-2005 involving learners, employers, universities, vocational training institutions and other LLL providers. Universities which have the ECTS label and wish to introduce mechanisms for credit accumulation may apply to their National Agency for an ECTS Credit Accumulation Grant as from spring 2004 (and annually thereafter).

Action line 4. Promotion of mobility

3) *The Socrates-Erasmus Student Charter. A one page leaflet or card stating clearly the rights and obligations of mobile students (no tuition fees, full academic recognition etc.) to be launched by the Commissioner at the occasion of the celebration of the one million Erasmus students in the course of the academic year 2002-2003.*

The charter has been launched as planned by Commissioner Viviane Reding, on the occasion of the celebration of one million Erasmus students in October 2002 and will be disseminated on a large scale to all potential Erasmus students during the academic year 2003-2004. Commissioner Reding stated her ambition to triple the number of Erasmus students by 2010 by combining public and private funding. She also urged Member States to make student loans and grants portable in order to enable their students to carry out short periods of study or full cycles in other European countries.

4) *The creation of models of European Virtual Universities, in order to offer citizens access to a Europe-wide course offer and provide incentives to combine physical and virtual mobility.*

The Commission had adopted a proposal for a new programme on e-learning programme on 19 December 2002, addressing this need.

Action line 5. Promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance

5) *A special action to promote a "quality culture" within universities, "bottom-up", in cooperation with the European University Association (EUA). This pilot scheme would help universities to introduce internal quality assurance mechanisms, improve their quality levels and being better prepared for external evaluations.*

A call has been launched and 50 universities have been selected to work in six groups on themes such as "research management", "teaching and learning" and "implementing Bologna reforms". First reports in springtime 2003.

6) *A Pilot Scheme on European Higher Education Quality Evaluation in order to experience what European transnational evaluation would mean on a voluntary basis, covering regulated professions (such as medical doctors) and non-regulated professions (such as business managers).*

A call has been launched and 15 universities have been selected among the members of Socrates-Erasmus Thematic Networks in History, Physics and Veterinary Science. They take part in the Transnational European Evaluation Pilot (TEEP 2002). In each area, five departments in five different countries are being evaluated against sets of common criteria. The coordination lies with the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education ENQA, in cooperation with the Thematic Networks. First report in springtime 2003.

In the summer of 2003, the Commission will produce a report to the Parliament and the Council on the implementation of the Council Recommendation of 24 September 1998 on European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education. The report will also serve as an input for the quality debate in the run-up to Berlin 2003.

Action line 6. Promotion of the European dimension in higher education

7) *Define and support European Masters and Doctoral Courses. Well defined European degrees can contribute to the quality and visibility of European Higher Education. The Commission would support the development and launch of a series of new European Masters and joint Doctoral Courses, the latter together with DG Research. A pilot project will test the running of European Masters (and Doctoral Courses) in the academic year 2002-2003.*

A call has been launched and 11 joint master programmes with in total 62 universities have been selected to take part in the 2002/03 Pilot. The pilot, organised by the European University Association, has been launched at a conference in Brussels on 20 September 2002, together with the presentation of a survey on master degrees and joint degrees in Europe. First reports in springtime 2003. Systematic support for a growing number of European Union Masters Courses is foreseen in the proposal "Erasmus World" mentioned below. Similar action is being considered for doctoral courses in collaboration with DG Research

Action line 9. Promotion the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area

8) *A Data-base (portal) on job and learning opportunities set up together with DG Employment, would help citizens find their way in the European education offer. The portal will be operational in the second half of 2002.*

The portal called PLOTEUS (<http://www.Qloteus.net>) is accessible since December 2002.

9) *Other measures will be identified in the Action Plan following the "Communication to the European parliament and the Council on strengthening cooperation with third countries in the field of higher education countries". Also DG EA C and DG Research will join efforts to create synergies between the "European Area for Higher Education" and the "European Research Area".*

The well received Commission Communication has led to a Commission proposal for co-operation with third countries in higher education called "Erasmus World", to be adopted by the European parliament and the Council of Ministers before the end of 2003. In the context of promoting a "Europe of Knowledge", DG Education and Culture and DG Research are preparing a series of joint activities in areas such as networking, mobility, science education and doctoral studies. A first result is the Commission Communication on the role of the universities in the Europe of knowledge of 5 February 2003.

Monitoring / Reports / Seminars

10) *Apart from the specific measures above, the Commission gives an overall support to the Bologna process through Monitoring / Reports / Seminars. In 2002 this means support for a Trends III report, an official Prague/Berlin Rapporteur and support for a limited number of official Bologna seminars that would fit the policies of the programme.*

The Commission has decided to support the production of a Trends III report on the implementation of the Bologna reforms in the 38 countries: 33 signatory states (EU/EFTA/Candidate countries) and 5 eligible western Balkan countries. A "Bologna score board" indicating the state of reform in each country will be made accessible via internet.

The Commission has decided to support the Convention of European Higher Education Institutions in Graz, 29-31 May 2003, the Ministerial Conference in Berlin, 18-19 September 2003, the official Rapporteur Prof. Dr. Pavel Zgaga (Slovenia) and several seminars dealing with Bologna Action Lines.

Another horizontal Commission supported Bologna activity is the project called "Tuning Educational Structures in Europe", a university initiative coordinated by the universities of Deusto (Spain) and Groningen (The Netherlands). Over one hundred universities are participating in this project, which addresses several of the action lines of the Bologna process, notably the adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees and the adoption of a two cycle system. More specifically, the project aims at identifying generic and subject specific competences for first and second cycle studies in seven subject areas (Business studies, Education Sciences, Geology, History, Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics) and provides a methodology for analysing common elements and differences. The final report on phase 1 of the project (2001-2002) is published in February 2003.

In Phase II (2003-2004), the project will consolidate and validate the findings with a series of stakeholders (employers, professional associations, quality assurance agencies, credential evaluators etc.). Participation will be extended to new subject areas (European studies and nursing) and to acceding and candidate countries. The Tuning methodology will be transferred to the Socrates-Erasmus Thematic Networks, which act as permanent platforms, with other actors, for the continuous development and updating of the competences in their field of expertise.

BOLOGNA ACTION LINES

The Bologna declaration contained six Action lines and the Prague communiqué has added three more. Most Action lines coincide with Commission policies, supported through the Socrates programme over the years. Others require new initiatives as described above.

Bologna Declaration

1. Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees
2. Adoption of a system essentially based on two cycles
3. Establishment of a system of credits
4. Promotion of mobility
5. Promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance
6. Promotion of the European dimension in higher education

Prague Communiqué

7. Lifelong learning
8. Higher education institutions and students
9. Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area

Relevant Web Sites

DG Education and Culture

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture/index_en.htm

Objectives of Education and Training

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/objet_en.pdf

Bologna Process

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education.html>

<http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de>

Bruges-Copenhagen Process

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/copenhagen/index_en.html

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/copenhagen/resolution_en.pdf

Communication on the role of the universities in the knowledge society

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/com_2003_0058_f_en.pdf

Communication on Benchmarking

http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2002/com2002_062gen01.pdf/bologna_en

Communication on Investment

http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2002/com2002_077gen01.pdf

Erasmus World programme proposal

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/world/index_en.html

E-learning programme proposal

http://europa.eu.int/eur-ex/en/com/availabiliy/en_availability_number_2002_16.html

ENIC and NARIC networks

<http://www.enic-naric.net>

PLOTEUS

<http://www.ploteus.net>

Tuning educational structures in Europe

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/tuning.html>

<http://www.relint.deusto.es/TuningProiect/index.htm>

ENQA

<http://www.enga.net>

EUA

<http://www.unige.ch/eua>

EURASHE

<http://www.eurashe.be/info/info.htm>

ESIB

<http://www.esib.org>