

ENQA, ESIB, EUA, and EURASHE (E4 Group)

Report of the E4 Group on Quality Assurance

to the Bologna Follow-Up Group

Berlin, 5-6 March 2007

FINAL VERSION

28 February 2007



Preface

Ministers responsible for higher education in the Bologna signatory states welcomed in 2005 the principle of a European Register of quality assurance agencies based on national reviews. They asked ENQA, in cooperation with EUA, EURASHE and ESIB (E4 Group), to develop the practical aspects of the Register and report back through the Bologna Follow-up Group.

The E4 Group accepted this responsibility and met nine times between the Bergen ministerial meeting and February 2007. It hired a consultant to carry out a round of interviews with various stakeholders around Europe and consulted with a law firm about the legal aspects of the Register.

The work of the consultant was supported by the Socrates Programme and by the EUA using funds received from the Swiss Confederation. The necessary legal consultations were similarly supported by the EUA using funds from the Swiss Confederation.

The present document is the E4 Group's final report to the London ministerial meeting. It is based on the outcomes of the E4 Group discussions, the report from the consultant, the legal advice and the feedback from the BFUG on the earlier drafts of the report. This final report also proposes a draft text for the London Communiqué.

INTRODUCTION

Ministers in Bergen adopted the European Standards and Guidelines and welcomed the notion of a Register for QA agencies working in Europe. The Bergen Communiqué (20 May 2005) states:

Almost all countries have made provision for a quality assurance system based on the criteria set out in the Berlin Communiqué and with a high degree of cooperation and networking. However, there is still progress to be made, in particular as regards student involvement and international cooperation. Furthermore, we urge higher education institutions to continue their efforts to enhance the quality of their activities through the systematic introduction of internal mechanisms and their direct correlation to external quality assurance.

*We adopt the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area as proposed by ENQA. We commit ourselves to introducing the proposed model for peer review of quality assurance agencies on a national basis, while respecting the commonly accepted guidelines and criteria. **We welcome the principle of a European register of quality assurance agencies based on national review.** We ask that the practicalities of implementation be further developed by ENQA in cooperation with EUA, EURASHE and ESIB with a report back to us through the Follow-up Group. We underline the importance of cooperation between nationally recognised agencies with a view to enhancing the mutual recognition of accreditation or quality assurance decisions.*

The E4 Group has taken as its starting point this ministerial request.

OUTCOMES OF THE E4 DISCUSSIONS

The following sections describe the basic features of the Register which the E4 Group has prepared and agreed upon. The Group discussed all advice provided by the BFUG and prepared the following recommendations.

1 General summary

This report summarises the practicalities of establishing the European Register for Higher Education Quality Assurance Agencies (REHEQA) as prepared and agreed by the E4 Group.

The Register should assist in the establishment of the European Higher Education Area by providing clear and reliable information about quality assurance agencies operating in Europe which conform to the standards contained in the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in

Higher Education. The Register should be easily accessible and updated as required.

As a structure it should involve a partnership of all interested stakeholders in order to gain the trust of all EHEA actors, as well as the European public and non-European countries.

The Register should rely, so far as possible, on the experience, expertise and authority of organisations and structures which already exist within the Bologna Process. The Register should make use of the evaluations carried out nationally or by ENQA, provided that they meet the criteria laid down in the European Standards and Guidelines adopted in Bergen and that they provide sufficient information. In case an evaluation does not meet the necessary criteria, a supplementary evaluation should be carried out.

The Register should be governed by the REHEQA Committee, which would consist of E4 and social partners. Governmental representatives would have observer status. The Register should have a small, dedicated and independent secretariat (about 1.5 FTE) that is accountable only to the REHEQA Committee.

The secretariat and the seat of the Register would be based in Brussels. In order to allow the Register and REHEQA Committee to work independently it should be created as a private non-profit legal entity founded by the E4 members.

The Register would not undertake reviews itself and so would not incur the costs of undertaking reviews. The secretariat supporting this structure would therefore be minimal and inexpensive to run.

The information provided by the Register would bring clear added value to the European Higher Education Area.

2 Purposes and added value of the Register

The overarching purpose of the Register is as follows:

"The Register should assist in the establishment of the European Higher Education Area by providing clear and reliable information about quality assurance agencies operating in Europe which conform to the standards contained in the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education."

The Register will help to:

- promote student mobility by providing a basis for the increase of trust among higher education institutions

- reduce opportunities for “accreditation mills¹” to gain credibility
- provide a basis for governments to authorise higher education institutions to choose any agency from the Register, if that is compatible with national arrangements²
- provide a means for higher education institutions to choose between different agencies, if that is compatible with national arrangements³
- serve as an instrument to improve the quality of quality assurance agencies and to promote mutual trust amongst them

2.1 Relationship between the Register and ENQA membership reviews

ENQA is the main forum bringing together quality assurance agencies at European level. ENQA describes its aims and purposes as follows:

“the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, disseminates information, experiences and good practices in the field of quality assurance (QA) in higher education to European QA agencies, public authorities and higher education institutions.... promote European co-operation in the field of quality assurance.... sharing and developing experience in the area of quality assurance.” (<http://www.enqa.eu/>)

The criteria and procedures that ENQA has introduced for granting Full membership have been formulated on a very similar basis as those envisaged for the Register. ENQA has published ‘Guidelines for national reviews of ENQA member agencies’ (Annex 3) and undertakes a rigorous and challenging consideration of reports resulting from five-yearly national reviews.

The Register is intended to fulfil a different purpose from ENQA. Its intention is to provide clear and reliable information to all EHEA stakeholders and the general public regarding the compliance of QA agencies (whether members of ENQA or not) with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). This important function cannot be provided by any single existing organisation but requires a partnership approach based upon the involvement of all stakeholders in higher education as a way of ensuring the trust and confidence of all in the decisions taken. Hence, the Register requires its own independent structure and organisation, and should be governed by the E4 partners and the social partners jointly. It is intended as an objective information tool only and should not serve any other purpose, such as networking or sharing experiences between QA agencies, which is the role of ENQA.

¹ Accreditation mills are bogus agencies that are usually linked to diploma mills networks. The strategy of these accreditation mills is to gain credibility through the accreditation and evaluation of legitimate higher education institutions or programmes.

² Recommendation of the European Parliament and Council on further cooperation in quality assurance in higher education of 15 February 2006 (http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_064/l_06420060304en00600062.pdf)

³ Ibid

Nevertheless, it is important that the Register should not duplicate reviews undertaken rigorously, against the same criteria, by ENQA for the purpose of granting Full membership of that body. To that end, Full membership of ENQA will normally constitute *prima facie* evidence for inclusion in the Register.

3 Name and location

The Register should be called the Register of European Higher Education Quality Assurance Agencies (REHEQA).

It is proposed that the REHEQA is located in Brussels, Belgium.

4 Legal form of the Register

Based upon the recommendations of a leading Belgian law firm (cf. Annex 1) it is proposed that the REHEQA be established as a private non-profit association (*Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif*, AISBL) under Belgian law thus creating an 'independent legal personality'.

The establishment of an AISBL would provide a flexible framework within which different types and forms of membership could be encapsulated, allowing its members to have appropriately differentiated roles, levels of responsibility and decision making powers within the Association.

The AISBL is a flexible structure in terms of membership of the association and internal governance structure.

The law firm consulted proposes preparing a more extensive report and/or draft statutes once decisions have been taken on the above-mentioned issues, and in particular once the roles and responsibilities of the different members and membership categories have been agreed.

5 Founding members

REHEQA should be founded by the E4 organisations jointly.

6 Organisational structure

The organisational structure of REHEQA should consist of:

- the REHEQA Committee,
- an annual meeting (General Assembly)
- an independent secretariat to manage the work of the Register.

6.1 REHEQA Committee

The REHEQA Committee should be the governing body of the REHEQA. The REHEQA Committee would be responsible for all decisions regarding the Register, including which agencies would be listed in the Register.

The E4 proposal is that it should comprise:

- 2 members nominated by each E4 organisation,
- 4 members nominated by the social partners
(2 by employers' organisations and 2 by trades unions)

In addition, 5 governmental representatives would attend all meetings of the Committee as observers.

The BFUG, or any successor body, would be invited to nominate the governmental representatives. Notwithstanding their observer status, the governmental representatives would receive and have access to the same information and documents as the Committee members.

Members of the Committee should be nominated in their personal capacity and not as representatives of the organisations which nominate them. They should work for the Register as independent individuals and not represent the interests of their nominating organisation.

6.2 Annual Meeting

The Register would hold an Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting would receive a report by the REHEQA Committee and the Secretariat, and would approve the budget of the REHEQA. There would be advantage in the Annual Meeting being held in conjunction with the European Quality Forum so as to provide an opportunity for a consultation forum between the REHEQA, the BFUG and the wider QA community.

6.3 Secretariat

The REHEQA Committee should have a dedicated secretariat that is accountable only to the Committee. The Secretariat and the seat of the REHEQA should be located in Brussels, Belgium. It may, however, be co-located physically with another organisation to enable the efficient use of resources and to profit from synergies regarding office services.

The role of the secretariat will be to process applications, staff the Committee meetings and annual assemblies, manage the web site, provide information and represent the Register.

Once the register is fully operational it is estimated that the workload could be managed by 1.5 FTE staff (Secretary to the Committee, and part time administrative assistant). Should additional support be required in the start up phase then temporary staff on short term expert contracts, or on secondment, would be employed.

7 Budget and funding

7.1 Budget

The starting point of the budget calculation is the consultant's Report, which was provided to the BFUG in Helsinki. Estimates are based on costs in Belgium and specifically on EUA's experience of operating as an association in Belgium. The estimates start from the assumption that the Secretariat would consist of 1.5 FTEs. Further details are found in Annex 2.

7.2 Funding

It is estimated that the annual funding required would be a maximum of 185,000 – 245,000 Euro once the structure was fully operational, and bearing in mind that additional expert support might be required in the start-up phase.

REHEQA should be funded through a combination of sources, including, for example, application administrative fees, funding from EHEA governments and from other appropriate European organisations. The E4 organisations will contribute to establishing and maintaining the REHEQA. The preparation of an application to the EC for start up funding is envisaged.

8 Nature of the Register

Application by agencies for inclusion in the Register would be voluntary. In line with the BFUG conclusion reached in Helsinki (October 2006), the E4 proposes that inclusion in the Register should be restricted to applicant agencies that satisfy the Committee that they comply substantially with the criteria (i.e., it will be an exclusive Register). There should be no information on any other quality assurance or accreditation agencies operating in Europe. This will help exclude accreditation mills from the Register and minimise legal recourse from such bodies.

In spite of the exclusive nature of the Register it is important to point out that the non inclusion of an agency in the Register would not prevent a government from recognising or funding that agency.

9 Information to be included in the Register

The Register should consist of a database of agencies publicly available on its own website. The following general information about it should be included on the website:

- general information about REHEQA and about its organisational structure;
- information about the application procedures
- information about the approval procedures
- information about the appeals procedures
- contact information of the secretariat

The following information about the agencies included in the Register would appear on the website:

- name
- date of establishment
- date of first entry into the Register
- contact information and website address
- ownership
- field(s) covered
- type(s) of quality assurance services provided
- countries the agency operates in
- countries the agency is officially recognised in
- ENQA membership of the agency: yes/no (if yes, then also the year of having become an ENQA member should be mentioned, together with the date of the last five-yearly review)
- hyperlinks to evaluation / accreditation reports by the agency

Once in operation, the REHEQA Committee should decide whether the review reports of the agencies listed in the Register should be published.

10 Application and approval policies

The application and approval rules and procedures of the Register should be clear and transparent, so that applicants are fully informed in advance of the requirements and approval process. Applicants should be required to undergo an external review in order to be considered for inclusion in the Register.

There would be two different ways in which external reviews could be organised and applicants might apply:

1. An external review organised at the national level, either for the purpose of applying for Full ENQA membership and/or meeting national requirements, or solely for the purpose of entering the Register. A nationally recognised organisation (for example the Ministry for Education or a national quality assurance body) independent of the applicant agency would organise such a review. This would be the normal way to enter the Register.

2. A non-national review, undertaken by an organisation (which could include ENQA) that was acceptable to the Register Committee. This would mainly apply to applicants that were not affiliated to any national higher education system or where a nationally-coordinated review would not be possible.

10.1 Criteria and rules for implementation

The principal criterion for inclusion in the Register should be substantial compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines for external quality assurance agencies.

A set of rules for implementation would be derived from the European Standards and Guidelines by the REHEQA Committee. They should facilitate the determination of whether satisfactory levels of compliance with the ESG have been met by applicants.

Applicants should be required to demonstrate to the Committee, through their external reviews, that they have met the principal criteria and the rules for implementation. The Committee should use the principle of "substantial compliance" to determine whether the criteria have been met.

The European Standards and Guidelines propose "a mandatory cyclical external review of the agency's activities at least once every five years" (ESG 3.8, Accountability procedures, guideline 3, p. 26). Reconfirmation by the Register Committee of an agency's continued presence in the Register should depend on a satisfactory re-review every five years.

10.2 Appeals

According to the legal advice that the E4 group received from the Belgian law firm, it is recommended that when an application is submitted which does not meet the relevant criteria for inclusion in the Register, the applicant be informed and invited to submit a revised application, pending which no decision is made. Thus, the Register Committee would technically not be taking a decision that could trigger a potential appeal.

Alternatively, the application form should clearly state that, by submitting an application, the applicant recognises that the sole channel for appealing against a negative decision of the Register Committee is the external appeals procedure set up and organised by the Committee. However, this technically would not prevent an applicant from filing a lawsuit with a national court.

Once the legal structure is agreed, further thought should be given to the setting up and organisation of an external appeals procedure as a staged process.

11 Amendments to the ESG

It is probable that the ESG will need to be revised from time to time. They should not, however, be changed during the first two years of the Register's existence, in order that there should not be uncertainty about the status of the criteria for inclusion. Care should be taken to make sure that the European Standards and Guidelines do not become a simple checklist for compliance purposes and that any revisions reflect the needs of higher education more broadly. Responsibility for commissioning revisions to the ESG should rest with the BFUG or any successor body; the BFUG should request E4 to recommend revisions when E4 considers it appropriate to do so Alternatively, BFUG could delegate that responsibility to E4. In normal circumstances, however, revisions might be expected every five years.

12 Proposed text for the London Communiqué

The E4 Group proposes the following text about REHEQA for the London Communiqué:

"We adopt the operational model of a Register of European Higher Education Quality Assurance Agencies, as proposed by ENQA in cooperation with EUA, EURASHE and ESIB. We commit ourselves to the implementation of the Register in order to allow all stakeholders and the general public to freely access objective information about quality assurance agencies that are working in line with the European Standards and Guidelines. We ask the E4 Group to establish the Register and report back to us through the BFUG.

We welcome the success of the first European Quality Assurance Forum, jointly organised by EUA, ENQA, EURASHE and ESIB in 2006 which provided an excellent opportunity to discuss European developments in quality assurance. We encourage the four organisations to continue organising the European Quality Assurance Fora on an annual basis."

Annex 1: Legal advice concerning the Register

This memorandum by Mr. Bruno Hubart and Mr. Henri Tack (Belgian lawyers) summarises a discussion on December 5, 2006, held with Mrs. Lesley Wilson, Mr. John Ashton (EUA).

I. Structure

We recommend that the Register of European Higher Education Quality Assurance Agencies (the "Register") be organised as a non profit international association ("*association internationale sans but lucratif*" or "AISBL") governed by Part III ("*titre III*") of the Belgian law of June 27, 1921, as amended by the Belgian law of May 2, 2002 (the "Law").

The AISBL perfectly meets the key requirements that the Register be organised as a non-profit and international entity, and that there be a distinction between the founding members and the observers. In addition, the AISBL presents the additional advantage of being very flexible *inter alia* in terms of membership (several categories of members are conceivable, such as "active" members, "associated" members and "honorary members") and governance. Finally, the fact that the AISBL's legal personality is granted by royal decree is often viewed as a "quality label".

To the extent that amendments to the charter of an AISBL are subject to the prior approval of the authorities, we recommend that the charter of the Register be as concise as possible and limited to the mandatory provisions under the Law.

II. Relationships with Partners

Such relationships may generally be organised as the members see fit. For example, an internal regulation of the Register may provide that partners who are not members may nevertheless attend *ad hoc* or annual meetings of members, participate to working sessions within the Register (e.g., for purposes of defining the admission criteria) and provide comments on work carried out by the Register. Partners could as well be admitted as pure "honorary members".

III. External Appeals Procedures

We recommend that when the file submitted by an applicant does not meet the relevant criteria to be included in the Register, the applicant be informed and invited to submit an improved file pending which no decision is made. Thus, the Register would technically not take a decision triggering a potential appeal. Alternatively, the application form should bear a clear mention that, by submitting an application, the applicant recognises that the sole channel for appealing a negative decision of the Register is the external appeals procedure set up and organised by the Register. However, this technically would not prevent an applicant from filing a lawsuit with a national court.

Further thought should be given on the setting up and organisation of an external appeals procedure, as it may prove to be costly (constitution a panel of experts willing to act on appeals, fees and reimbursement of expenses of experts...).

IV. Protection of the Resources of Founding Members

The Register having its own legal personality, it will act and contract in its own name and account, thereby avoiding jeopardising the limited resources of the founding members.

However, it would be unusual for the founding members of an association not to contribute at least some limited resources to the association.

Annex 2: Cost estimate of the Register

The starting point of the following calculation is Bastian Baumann's Report. Estimates are based on costs in Belgium and specifically on EUA's experience of operating as an association in Belgium. Furthermore, the estimations start from the assumption that the Secretariat would consist of 1.5 FTEs: 1 senior officer/Committee Secretary and 1 part time administrative assistant.

Costs that would incur are related to:

- Office rental
- Office running costs, other administrative costs and equipment
- Salary and other costs associated with the secretariat
- Travel costs: 2 annual meetings of the RC, 1 annual meeting of the responsible bodies of the Belgian association (Board, General Assembly of members), Experts carrying out external reviews?
- Information and publications, incl. website development and maintenance
- Expert fees for the external reviews carried out by the RC?

Re 1: Office rental – 2 offices for 3 people: **€20,000 - €25,000** annually

Re 2: Running costs - **€50,000 - €70,000** incl. purchase of necessary equipment, all office supplies, website maintenance etc... The costs for office and equipment could be reduced considerably if the secretariat were physically located with a Brussels-based organisation, which would agree to cover above costs or parts thereof.

Re 3: Salaries – for 1.5 FTEs as mentioned above: **€85,000 - €100,000** depending upon the seniority of the persons employed

Re 4: Travel Costs for:

- annual meetings of the RC, calculated on the basis of 10 members and 2 meetings - **€15,000 - €20,000** (and if not paid by the sending organisations)
 - 1 annual meeting of the organs of the Belgian association to take place at the same time as one of the RC meetings
1. Staff travel - **€5000 - €10,000**
 2. Expert travel for the conduct of external reviews – **for discussion**

Re 6: Expert fees - for legal advice, external auditor, IT support, etc. (for the conduct of external reviews? - **for discussion**)

Re 5: Information and Publications - **€10,000 - €20,000**

Total – first estimate: €185,000 - €245,000

Note: If the Register needed to conduct its own reviews the experts' travel and fee would be covered by the agency being reviewed.

Annex 3: Guidelines for national reviews of ENQA member agencies

These guidelines describe ENQA's requirements for the acceptability of national reviews of quality assurance agencies for the purpose of demonstrating compliance with ENQA's Full membership criteria.

1. Introduction

The membership regulations of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) require all member agencies to undergo an external review at least once every five years. External reviews are expected to include consideration of how far agencies meet the criteria for Full membership of ENQA. These criteria are identical with the European Standards and Guidelines in Quality Assurance (ESG) in the European Higher Education Area, adopted by ministers in Bergen in 2005. In line with the principle of subsidiarity which underpins the ESG, the five-yearly reviews will normally be conducted at national level.

2. Organisation of reviews

National reviews

External reviews of ENQA member agencies will normally be initiated and coordinated by national authorities, as part of their routine quality assurance arrangements. These guidelines are intended to help members ensure that their national reviews will produce the information needed to satisfy the requirements of ENQA membership. The guidelines build on the theoretical model presented in the annex to the ESG.

ENQA co-ordinated reviews

ENQA itself has only limited resources to co-ordinate reviews. There may, however, be instances where it is not appropriate or not possible for the review to be organised at a national level; for example where there is no suitable or willing national body to co-ordinate the review. Agencies wishing to engage ENQA to conduct their review must be able to justify why a national review would not be appropriate or possible. ENQA reserves the right to decline to coordinate an agency's five-yearly external review.

Guidance on the procedures and processes of ENQA co-ordinated external reviews of member agencies are available from the Secretariat.

3. Remit of the review

There are likely to be two types of nationally co-ordinated external review:

- a) a review whose sole purpose is to fulfil the periodic external review requirement of ENQA membership; and

b) a review which has a number of purposes, one of which is to fulfil the periodic external review requirement of ENQA membership.

4. Key features of the review

Certain elements will be required in a national review for it to be acceptable to the ENQA Board as a vehicle for demonstrating that the agency has met the Full membership criteria.

- the management of the review process must be completely independent of the agency itself;
- all parts of the review's management and process must be transparent and therefore easily open to examination by the ENQA Board;
- the report produced must be sufficiently detailed to provide satisfactory assurance for the ENQA Board of the robustness of the review;
- the report must provide sufficient, verified, information which clearly shows that the ENQA membership criteria have been met.

The review will generally consist of six phases – these are outlined below with a commentary on key features that lend themselves to the fulfilment of the above requirements.

I. Notification to ENQA

As soon as a member agency knows that a national review is to take place it should inform the ENQA Secretariat. The Secretariat should be provided with the identity and contact details of the body co-ordinating the review and vice versa. Although the review is being conducted on a national level it is advisable that ENQA should be kept informed of progress throughout the review, no matter whether it is of type (a) or (b). This is both to enable the Board to plan its workload and to help ensure that the outcomes of the review process meet the requirements of the ENQA Board in assessing compliance with membership criteria.

II. Formulation of terms of reference and protocol for the review

The terms of reference for the review should be drafted well before the process starts – and should clearly identify whether the review is intended to be a type (a) or type (b) evaluation. They should also state clearly the relationship of the review to the ENQA membership criteria.

An outline of how the review is going to run – number of reviewers, administrative arrangements, approximate timings etc – should also be clearly stated.

III. Nomination and appointment of a panel of reviewers

There is no single ideal model for the composition of a review panel. The key

requirements, however, are that members of the panel should be totally independent of the agency under review and have a sufficient level of knowledge, experience and expertise to conduct the review to a high standard.

A review panel will be able to perform its independent function most successfully when it comprises members who between them have a wide range of professional experience of higher education and quality assurance; this might well include:

- quality assurance experts from outside the system being reviewed;
- representatives of higher education institutions;
- student members;
- stakeholder members (for example, an employer).

International member(s) on the panel can provide very valuable insights for the review and help to establish its credibility, and it is therefore recommended that at least one member of the panel should be a quality assurance expert from beyond the jurisdiction of the agency under review.

The review panel should include a member who will act as secretary to the review.

No current or recent former member of staff of the agency under review should take part in the review panel or act as secretary to the review.

Nominations of experts could be sought from a wide range of sources – including agencies, stakeholders, local authorities, etc. – but the selection process must be carried out by a third party (ie, not by the agency being reviewed), to preserve the integrity of the process.

IV. Production of a self-evaluation report by the agency under review

The exact form and content of the self-evaluation report is something which will need to be negotiated between the panel and the agency under review. As, however, the self-evaluation report normally provides a substantial portion of the evidence which the panel will draw on in forming its conclusions, it is important that the report is both full, frank and that its contents can be corroborated by documentary and/or oral evidence.

The Annex to the ESG gives a detailed account of what might be included in the self-evaluation report of an agency undergoing an external review. This suggests that it is likely to be useful for a self-evaluation to contain:

- a brief outline of the national higher education system, the history of the particular agency and of the evaluation of higher education in general;
- evidence of the external quality assurance undertaken by the agency;

- details of the evaluation method applied by the agency including: the elements of the methodology; an account of the role of the external expert group;
- documentation of the agency's processes and procedures;
- details of the system of appeal;
- details of the agency's own internal quality assurance procedures;
- information and opinions on the agency from its key stakeholders.

V. A site-visit by the panel of reviewers to the agency under review

The details of the duration and schedule of the site visit may vary between reviews and may depend on whether the review is a type (a) or type (b). The length of the visit should be determined at the beginning of the review process when terms and conditions are being decided upon.

It is likely that a visit duration of at least two days will be necessary for a review panel to validate fully the self-evaluation and clarify any points at issue.

VI. Production and publication of a final report

It is essential that before publication the agency under review is provided with a copy of the draft report and sufficient time to check its contents for errors of fact.

Also see section five, below.

5. Key features of the report

The form of the review panel's report is likely to depend on the type of review that has been carried out.

Type A

Where the sole purpose of the review is the fulfilment of ENQA's membership requirements, the report should be clearly structured with this end in mind. Each membership criterion should be discussed separately.

To assist the ENQA Board to reach a sound conclusion, it is necessary for the report to include more than just a statement of compliance (or partial or non-compliance) for each criterion under scrutiny.

For each criterion, therefore, it is necessary to include:

- a summary of the evidence gathered
- an analysis of how far, based on the evidence available, the agency does (or does not) meet the criterion

- a summative conclusion stating whether the agency is fully or substantially compliant; partially compliant; or non-compliant.

Where an agency is found to be either partially compliant or non-compliant with a criterion, the reason for this should be explained. Full or substantial compliance may be impossible for some agencies, owing to restrictions placed on them by the very nature of their work and/or legislation in place in their country(ies) of operation. When considering such cases, the ENQA Board will take mitigating circumstances such as these into account.

Type B

Where a review has a wider purpose, it is recommended that the report should nevertheless include a full chapter which deals specifically with the ENQA membership criteria, written in the same manner as has been described above for type (a) reviews. This would then provide the primary source of reference for the ENQA Board when forming its conclusions. The full report should still, however, be submitted for consideration.

Further characteristics for reports type A and B

It would be useful for all reports also to include the following information:
an executive summary (including an overall conclusion regarding compliance with the ENQA membership criteria);
contextual information:

- reason(s) for the commissioning of the review;
- the place of the agency in the quality assurance structure of its jurisdiction;
- the main functions of the agency;
- the engagement of the agency with the ESG;
- the terms of reference of the review;
- the details of the timescale over which the review was conducted;
- the identity of all panel members and administrative support arrangements;
- a description of the main stages of the review;
- any recommendations for improvement.

Key pieces of evidence – i.e. extracts from legislation, policies and procedures etc. – may be added to the report in the form of appendices.

6. Consideration of national review reports by ENQA

ENQA's General Assembly has delegated to its Board consideration of review reports and subsequent decisions in respect of membership. Where possible, the Board will use national reports to reach a conclusion on whether an agency has or has not met the membership criteria. If the report's contents, or the way the review has been conducted, do not, in the Board's opinion, allow it to come to a conclusion, it will decide what additional information it requires. This may comprise further documentary evidence, additional information from the review organisers or the agency itself, or information acquired during a short visit to the review organisers, review panel or agency. The Board's powers in respect of

membership matters, and the rules relating to appeals against a decision of the Board, are contained in paragraphs 3.7 and 4.2.5 of the Regulations of the Association.

Approved by the ENQA Board
21 September 2006



National Qualifications Frameworks Development and Certification

**Report from Bologna Working Group on
Qualifications Frameworks**

May 2007

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

CONTENTS

Executive summary

Part I	Role of the Working Group
Chapter 1	Introduction to the work of the Working Group
Part II	Bologna Framework and the European Qualifications Framework and other aspects of the Bologna Process
Chapter 2	Bologna Framework and the European Qualifications Framework
Chapter 3	Qualifications frameworks and other aspects of the Bologna Process
Part III	Support for the Development of National Frameworks of Qualifications
Chapter 4	Summary of the workshops and other activities
Chapter 5	Result of the Work
Part IV	Verification of the Compatibility of National Frameworks to the Bologna Framework – Outline of Pilot Verifications and Lessons Learned
Chapter 6	Summary of Completion of Work in Scotland and Ireland
Chapter 7	Lessons Learned from Process and Procedures
Chapter 8	Lessons Learned from Criteria
Part V	Conclusion
Chapter 9	Findings and recommendations

Appendices

Appendix 01	Terms of reference of the Working Group
Appendix 02	Members and experts of the Working Group
Appendix 03	Programme for the Hague workshop
Appendix 04	Participants in the Hague workshop
Appendix 05	Programme for the Budapest workshop
Appendix 06	Participants in the Budapest workshop
Appendix 07	Programme for the Athens Workshop
Appendix 08	Participants in the Athens Workshop
Appendix 09	Programme for the Madrid/Alcala workshop
Appendix 10	Participation in the Madrid/Alcala workshop
Appendix 11	Reports from pilot projects

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

Executive summary

The Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks was mandated, as its main tasks, to consider what further development of the EHEA-framework may be required particularly the linkage between the national frameworks and the EHEA-framework, monitor the development of the EU “European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning” and provide assistance to member countries working to introduce national frameworks.

The working group has conducted four regional workshops on developing national qualifications frameworks and supported especially new Bologna members through participation in conferences and meetings. It has overseen the completion of two pilot projects in Ireland and Scotland on verification on the compatibility of national qualifications frameworks with the overarching EHEA-framework.

The main findings of the Working Group are:

The overarching Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area and the procedures and criteria for verification of compatibility of national qualifications framework with the overarching framework, as adopted by Ministers in Bergen, are adequate and serve their purpose. No amendments to the EHEA-framework is therefore required.

The workshops and the stocktaking have made evident that more than half of the member countries are in the beginning of the process of developing national qualifications frameworks. The workshops also underlined the need for countries to offer and receive mutual support in the elaboration of their national qualifications frameworks.

Facilitating experience sharing and mutual support is not a task for a new working group, but should be vested in a permanent international organisation with own resources. The Working Group propose that this task is entrusted the Council of Europe, which already carries out the role of co-secretariat for the ENIC Network (with UNESCO-CEPES) in the field of recognition and to which notification of self-certification of national qualifications frameworks is given.

We are satisfied that national qualifications frameworks compatible with overarching EHEA-framework will also be compatible with the proposal from the European Commission on a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning. It is incomprehensible for us that the ECVET proposal does not relate to ECTS. The group therefore recommend that the EU-member-states ask the European Commission to revise its proposal for ECVET in a way that builds on or relates to ECTS.

In order to avoid confusion by the existence of two overarching frameworks it is important that the promotion of European higher education in a global context should build on the overarching EHEA-framework.

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

Part I – Role of the Working Group

Chapter 1- Introduction to the work of the Working Group

Bergen Communiqué

On 20 May 2005 in Bergen Ministers responsible for higher educations within the European Higher Educations Area (EHEA) agreed:

We adopt the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA, comprising three cycles (including, within national contexts, the possibility of intermediate qualifications), generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences, and credit ranges in the first and second cycles.

We commit ourselves to elaborating national frameworks for qualifications compatible with the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA by 2010, and to having started work on this by 2007.

We ask the Follow-up Group to report on the implementation and further development of the overarching framework.

We underline the importance of ensuring complementarity between the overarching framework for the EHEA and the proposed broader framework for qualifications for lifelong learning encompassing general education as well as vocational education and training as now being developed within the European Union as well as among participating countries. We ask the European Commission fully to consult all parties to the Bologna Process as work progresses.

We charge the Follow-up Group with continuing and widening the stock-taking process and to continue in the fields of the degree system,

.....

In particular, we shall look for progress in:

-*
- implementation of the national frameworks for qualifications;*

The Working Group

In its meeting in Manchester on 12-13 October 2005 BFUG approved the establishment of a working group to consider and report on the implementation and further development of the overarching framework.

Members of the Working Group were BFUG-representatives from the following countries:

1. Denmark (N-Europe), chair (continuing)
2. Netherlands (NW-Europe, substituting Ireland)
3. Russia (NE-Europe, substituting Latvia) (non EU)
4. Hungary (Central Europe, continuing)

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

5. Spain (SW-Europe, substituting France)
6. "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (SE-Europe, new seat) (non EU)
7. Chair of the WG on Stocktaking
8. Bologna Presidency (UK-AT-FI-GER)

The Working Group could draw on expertise and commission research, as it feels appropriate and it called for expertise from consultative organisations as well as national experts on qualifications frameworks.

BFUG asked the Working Group to

1. *consider what further development of the framework may be required, particularly the linkage between national frameworks and the EHEA-framework; the Working Group may invite member countries to participate in pilot projects of self-certification of national frameworks; it may conduct a survey on how credit ranges and credits are defined in national legislation.*
2. *support the Working Group on Stocktaking in the stocktaking exercise of implementation of national frameworks.*
3. *monitor the development of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning with the aim of ensuring complementarity between that framework and the EHEA framework and advise BFUG on the matter.*
4. *provide assistance to member countries working to introduce national frameworks.*

The two principal questions thus to be answered in this final report are:

- Is the Bologna Framework as adopted in Bergen adequate to fulfil its purposes of international transparency, recognition and mobility?
- Are the criteria and procedure for alignment sufficient enough to secure trust and make more efficient the recognition of foreign qualifications within EHEA.

The Working Group has had meetings in November 2005 and in February, September and December 2006.

It has conducted four regional workshops on developing National Qualifications Frameworks (June and September 2006) and supported especially new Bologna members through participation in conferences and meetings. The Council of Europe has generously supported the participation of representatives from new member-countries in the workshops.

It has overlooked the completion of two pilot projects on verification on the compatibility of National Qualifications Frameworks with the EHEA-framework

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

It has asked the European Commission to bring the question on how credit ranges and credits are defined in national legislation to the ECTS-counsellors.

The Group has submitted progress reports to BFUG and the Board and submits this final report of its findings to the London Conference through BFUG.

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

Part II – Bologna Framework and the European Qualifications Framework and other aspects of the Bologna Process

Chapter 2 Bologna Framework and the European Qualifications Framework

At present there are two overarching qualifications frameworks processes going on in Europe: One within the Bologna Process for higher education for the 45 Bologna member-countries and another one proposed by the European Commission for lifelong learning for the 27 EU-member-states. The questions discussed in the Working Group and elsewhere were whether this situation is satisfactory as regards transparency and whether there are complementarities between the two frameworks.

The Bologna frameworks consist of national qualification frameworks embracing higher education qualifications for each member-country linked together by an overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA. The overarching framework was adopted in Bergen in 2005 and at the same time agreed that work on national qualifications frameworks should have started by 2007 to be completed by 2010.

The implementation of the Bologna Framework for Qualifications is going on many member countries and will thus continue as planned and decided in Bergen. Progress in the development of national qualifications frameworks is part of the stocktaking exercise prepared for the London Conference 2007. The preliminary results show that almost all member countries have started developing national qualifications framework but most countries are in the beginning of the process.

The European Commission proposal for a recommendation on the establishment of a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning issued in September 2006 is based on a European Commission consultation paper that was discussed intensively in the EU-member states and at a conference in Budapest in February 2006. It aims to cover the entire education and training systems of the EU-member-states.

It is the overall opinion of the Working Group that the two frameworks will co-exist. The group takes note that they have different scope and purposes and use a different methodology.

First, the geographical scope of the two overarching frameworks is different. The EQF/LLL encompasses only the 27 EU members while as the Bologna framework embraces all the 45 Bologna members.

Second, that the purposes are different. The EHEA framework aims at embracing higher education qualifications at the national level and facilitate transparency, recognition and mobility among higher education degree holders. The EQF/LLL and its possible national counterparts that are not mandatory aim at connecting the different parts of the education system into a comprehensive framework.

Third, that the sets of level descriptors have different applications. The descriptors in the EQF/LLL are not higher education descriptors but generic descriptors that can be used to describe all types of learning. They are more general compared to the more

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

specific Bologna cycle-descriptor for higher education, especially in the final proposal from the European Commission compared to the descriptor in the Commission discussion paper that was issued in 2005 for consultation.

Fourth, the two frameworks are linked together: The EQF-descriptors for the upper levels (level 6, 7 and 8) are general for all kinds of qualifications but for HE-qualifications there is a reference to the descriptors used in the Bologna framework. These have to be used for as a European reference for higher education qualifications.

The differences in scope and purpose make it clear that the two frameworks can't substitute each other but the group is satisfied that national qualifications frameworks compatible with overarching EHEA-framework will also be compatible with the proposal from the European Commission on a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning.

In order to avoid confusion by the existence of two overarching frameworks *the working group recommends that the promotion of European higher education outside Europe should build on the overarching EHEA-framework, which includes the Dublin descriptors.*

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

Chapter 3 – Qualifications frameworks and other aspects of the Bologna Process

Sectoral/profile developments and the framework of qualifications

The Report for Bergen from the previous Working Group noted the centrality of fields of learning in the European tradition of higher education. Attention was drawn to work such as that of the Tuning project to enhance the European Higher Education Area by developing mutual understanding within communities of scholars of the scope and ambitions of higher education programmes within their fields of learning.

The instruments of the framework and in particular the Dublin Descriptors have stimulated further collaborations within disciplines. The Joint Quality Initiative at a meeting to review the development of the Dublin Descriptors in October 2006, heard from representatives in fields such as music, chemistry and engineering. Discipline-specific descriptors have been elaborated that either build on the Dublin Descriptors directly or have been compared to them. In some cases these have been put forward as possible bases for programme accreditation.

These developments can be helpful in promoting recognition and mobility. International disciplinary and sectoral networks are an indispensable feature of a dynamic higher education system. These networks are encouraged to examine how their disciplines intersect with the features of the overarching framework, such the Dublin Descriptors. The development of shared understanding can help to promote quality, for example through mutual participation in benchmarking activities. Nevertheless professional profile is a national matter. Developments within disciplines cannot supplant the competent national responsibility for standard setting. Accreditation is likewise a national prerogative to be performed within the appropriate national legal and educational tradition.

Disciplinary and sectoral associations also have a role in the formulation of national frameworks. The working group encourages them to use their voices, drawing on their connections with transnational networks, to inform national discussions. However individual disciplinary concerns, even with the purported weight of European sectoral positions behind them, are only one source for consideration in the development of national frameworks of qualifications. It is important that each national framework reflects a consensus that meets a range of national needs and objectives.

Credit Systems

The Bologna Framework adopted in Bergen incorporates the European Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (ECTS) as a key instrument, informing the credit systems that operate within the national frameworks of the EHEA. This is reflected in Criterion 3 for the alignment of national frameworks. The experience of operating ECTS since the adoption of the revised handbook in 2005 and the alignment of the Scottish and Irish national frameworks with their respective credit systems demonstrate that ECTS continues to be fit for purpose. The technical questions that persist, for example around the link between workload and learning outcomes, are best resolved through ongoing practical implementation activities of institutions and national agencies, rather than by means of premature solutions imposed from above. Such a combination of a minimum but adequate superstructure and extensive localized cooperation reflects the genius of the EHEA. The mooted survey of national variations in credit ranges has not emerged as an urgent priority during the period of operation of the working group.

The European Commission has recently issued a consultation document on the development of the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET). This Commission Working Document is subject to consultation in the first part of 2007.

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

Although the EQF-LLL embraces the Bologna Framework, as discussed in Chapter 2, the ECVET proposal makes no substantive reference to ECTS, the credit system associated with the Bologna Framework. This is a missed opportunity.

The higher education qualifications within national frameworks that are to be referenced to the EQF-LL will have ECTS compatibility. Typically there are credit systems associated with these national frameworks. Countries will expect that their credit systems facilitate recognition between Vocational Education and Training and Higher Education sectors. The design of the ECVET should reflect this ambition by explicitly linking to ECTS.

The Working Group recommends that the EU-member-states ask the European Commission revise its proposal for ECVET in a way that builds on or relates to ECTS.

Recognition

One of the principal purposes of the overarching framework of qualifications is to enhance the international recognition of qualifications. It does this by providing a common understanding of the outcomes of qualifications rather than mere assertion of comparability. This shift facilitates recognition across a range of recognition purposes, including access to employment and continuing education. This in turn enhances mobility of learners and citizens in general.

The introduction of national frameworks and the cumulative alignment of national frameworks to the overarching framework will have implications for recognition practices in Europe. The ENIC and NARIC networks are the repository of the self-certification statements. The networks have been entrusted with this responsibility in acknowledgement of the central function they play in recognition activities in Europe. It is important that members of the networks, as well as other actors in recognition activities, including the higher education institutions themselves, should have regard to the information about learners' qualifications contained or implied in the position of the qualifications in national frameworks. In time this will lead to more efficient and accurate recognition processes that do not rely on detailed evaluation of individual qualifications by foreign agencies, but instead place confidence in the position of quality assured qualifications in a national framework that has itself undergone a rigorous alignment process.

The working group recommends that agencies and institutions develop their qualifications recognition practices to exploit the framework.

External dimension

As the Bologna Process has gathered momentum and concrete examples of its impact are noted, particularly in the area of the three-cycle system of qualifications and the emerging qualifications framework, increasing attention is being paid to the external dimension. The external dimension has been the subject of three official Bologna seminars in 2006.

The new qualifications system, summarised in the Bologna Framework, is seen as one of the features that enhances the attractiveness of the EHEA. It makes European higher education more coherent and comprehensible to learners and institutions within and outside Europe. One question for an emergent EHEA strategy on the external dimension is how to make the most of this achievement. While there is considerable uncertainty about the way forward for the institutionalisation of the EHEA, the proposal from the Oslo seminar that a Bologna Portal be developed is supported.

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

The group advises that information on the EHEA framework of qualifications form a central plank of a future Bologna information portal.

The Oslo Seminar on the external dimension also encouraged UNESCO to continue its work on revising the regional conventions on recognition of qualifications. The experience of the Bologna Process in developing national frameworks of qualifications and an overarching framework of qualifications, based on learning outcomes, and linking these to transparent quality assurance systems may be of relevance to these revisions. Developments based on similar principles will enhance the possibilities for recognition across regions also. This is particularly important in the context of transnational higher education provision. Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, which belong to national frameworks aligned to the Bologna Framework, are delivered to learners outside the EHEA also. Full recognition for these EHEA qualifications depends on understanding of the EHEA framework by competent authorities outside the region.

Conclusions to part II

In relation to qualifications frameworks and other aspects of the Bologna Process the Working Group recommends

- *that the EU-member-states ask the European Commission revise its proposal for ECVET in a way that builds on or relates to ECTS.*
- *that agencies and institutions develop their qualifications recognition practices to exploit the framework.*
- *that the promotion of European higher education outside Europe should build on the overarching EHEA-framework, which include the Dublin descriptors*

and advises

- *that information on the EHEA framework of qualifications form a central plank of a future Bologna information portal.*

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

Part III – Support for the Development of National Frameworks of Qualifications

Chapter 4 Summary of the workshops and other activities

The working group was of the opinion that the best way to assist member countries in framework development was to create fora for mutual exchange of experiences and good practice and to facilitate networks of people involved in framework development. The Working Group decided then to organise workshops across Europe for these purposes.

In addition to the workshops members of the Working Group have given presentations at seminars and conferences organised by the Council of Europe including informal Ministerial Conferences for the Western Balkans and for the countries that acceded to the Bologna Process in 2005.

Four workshops were organised for different parts of Europe. The workshops were located in The Hague, Budapest, Athens and Madrid/Alcala. Around 100 experts representing 32 Bologna countries attended the workshops.

To the first workshop in **The Hague** on 30 June 2006 representatives from the following countries were invited:

Belgium
Denmark
Finland
Germany
Iceland
Ireland
Liechtenstein
Netherlands
Norway
Sweden
Switzerland
United Kingdom

The workshop had 26 participants. Some of the countries had already a qualifications framework in working and many of the others were in the middle of the development process. Presentations of work in progress were given by Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands, Flanders and Ireland. The discussions focused on specific issues from national developments and the demands rose in the self-certification process such as how to reflect different profiles, integration of existing frameworks, administration of frameworks, organisation of a self-certification process and questions raised by the EQF and sectoral frameworks.

To the second workshop in **Budapest** on 4 September representatives from the following Central- and NE-European countries were invited

Austria
Czech Republic
Estonia

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

Hungary
Latvia
Lithuania
Moldova
Poland
Russian Federation
Slovak Republic
Slovenia
Ukraine

The workshop had 19 participants. Of these countries only the host country had any experiences with qualifications frameworks. The host gave a presentation of the process of developing a Hungarian Qualifications Framework and of the special project of implementing descriptors of learning outcomes at Hungarian universities. The discussion then focuses on how getting started and the design of a national qualifications framework.

To the third workshop in **Athens** on 11-12 September representatives from the following countries were invited:

Albania
Armenia
Azerbaijan
Bosnia-Herzegovina
Bulgaria
Croatia
Cyprus
Georgia
Greece
Romania
Serbia
Montenegro
“the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”
Turkey

The workshop had 25 participants. None of these countries had any experiences in framework building and the workshop then concentrated on how to get started and on exercises in framework design

To the forth and last workshop in **Madrid/Alcalá** on 18-19 September representatives from the following countries were invited:

Andorra
Belgium (Communauté Française)
France
Italy
Holy See
Luxembourg
Malta
Portugal
Spain

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

The workshop had 23 participants. The represented countries were just going to start or had just started the development of a qualifications framework. The host gave a presentation of the higher education reform to be launched the next day and most of the discussion took this as a starting point for the theme reform agenda and qualifications framework.

The overall impression from organising the workshops were:

32 of the 45 Bologna members did send representatives to the workshops. This is a fairly good share but many countries were missing that could have contributed to the exchange of ideas and experiences.

The level of representation in the workshops was quite diverse. Some countries send representatives from ministries, others from agencies (quality assurance or recognition) or from HEI/Rector's Conference.

The experience from the quality assurance area shows that real progress is only obtained if there is knowledge and understanding of the subject area at both national and institutional area.

The Working Group finds it important that expertise in framework development within the country is available at all levels and recommends that this expertise be developed in the ministries and agencies (QAA, ENIC and NARIC) as well at the institutional level in Rector's Conferences and student organisations.

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

Chapter 5 Result of the Work

For the purpose of assisting the Stocktaking Group in monitoring the progress of establishing national qualifications frameworks the Working Group developed the following “step-ladder” from start of work to certification of a national framework.

Establishing National Qualifications Frameworks for Higher Education in Bologna Member States. Steps/stages:

1	Decision to start	Taken by the national body responsible for higher education (minister?)
2	Setting the agenda: The purpose of our NQF	WG-Report nr. 1 (section 2.3)
3	Organising the process	Identifying stakeholders; setting up a committee/WG
4	Design	Profile Level structure Level descriptors (learning outcomes) Credit ranges
5	Consultation	National discussion and acceptance of design by stakeholders
6	Approval	According to national tradition by Minister/Government/legislation
7	Administrative set-up	Division of tasks of implementation between HEI, QAA and other bodies
8	Implementation at institutional/programme level	Reformulation of individual study programmes to learning outcome based approach
9	Inclusion of qualifications in the NQF	Accreditation or similar (cfr. Berlin Communiqué)
10	Self-certification of compatibility with the EHEA framework (Alignment to Bologna cycles etc.)	WG Report nr. 1 Pilot projects

The sequence of steps needs not to be identical in the different countries.

The stepladder was used by the Stocktaking group in a simplified form for the scorecard on progress on qualifications framework.

The “step-ladder” also served as a basis for organising the four workshops on national qualifications frameworks that was the main instrument in the Working Group’s attempt to assist member-countries working to introduce national frameworks.

The purpose of the workshops was to give the participants possibilities to share experiences and discuss problems and questions concerning frameworks.

The workshop in Hague had its own agenda as mentioned in the previous chapter.

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

At the other workshops the presentations and discussions were divided into several themes:

A. Organising the process

- Initial decision
- Purposes
- Identifying stakeholders
- Setting up a committee/working group

The point for discussion here were how to get the process started: who should take the decision (Parliament, minister or a board concerned). Should the framework be part of a higher education reform agenda or should it just reflect status quo? Who should be responsible for and involved in the project and would the project need a staffed project organisation or would a working group be sufficient?

In most countries the decision to start would be taken by the minister in charge of higher education and the framework be part of a higher education reform agenda. There was broad consensus about having stakeholders from all areas of higher education including labour market organisations represented in a working group or steering committee.

B. Design of Framework

- Cycles and levels
- Profiles
- Award types
- Learning outcome/Output descriptors/Dublin descriptors
- Credits and Workload

The points for discussion under this item were the number of levels needed in the participating countries. How profiles could or should be reflected in binary systems. Could award types be the building stones in the framework or would you like to go further down to clusters of subject areas? How learning outcome could be described in generic terms. Would a translation of the Dublin Descriptors fulfil the purpose? Should the framework at all levels include credits?

Many of the countries expressed the opinion that they would need more than three levels first and foremost because they had short cycle programmes within their higher education. Those countries with binary systems intended to have different award types but there were exceptions: The binary system of Hungarian higher education was not reflected in the Hungarian framework and this was agreed by universities and professional schools to have the same award types and outcome descriptors. Hungary and Romania experimented with descriptors for clusters of subject areas but most countries stuck or would stick to award types as basic elements of their framework. The Dublin Descriptors was developed as common denominators for award descriptors in the member states of the Joint Quality Initiative. National descriptors could be more detailed and encompass other dimensions than those included in the Dublin Descriptors. Few countries had any experiences on credits integrated in their frameworks.

C. Consultation and approval

- Broad consultation to reach all that are later involved
- Formal approval

These points did not give much occasion for discussion. It was generally agreed that the consultation on the proposal for a national qualifications framework should at least in-

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

volve those stakeholder that would take part in the implementation of the framework. The formal approval would be in accordance with national practice and normally the same that has taken the initial decision.

D. Administrative set up

- Which bodies are involved
- Distribution of functions
- Inclusion of qualifications into the framework
- Implementation at institutional level

If an adopted qualifications framework has to be an entity in public life and not just another piece of paper it has to be decided which bodies are going to use the framework and what their specific tasks should be. It is of equal importance to decide how new qualifications are connected to the framework. And of no less importance is the question of how the framework and the learning outcome approach are implemented at higher educations institutions.

The bodies most likely to be involved at the national level, apart from the ministries and related agencies, would be the academic recognition information centre (NARIC) and the quality assurance agency. Some countries would in addition to that have an accreditation body with a role to play.

The procedures for inclusion of new awards or award types in the framework is crucial for the trust other countries might have in the right placement on awards on the appropriate level. The procedure must be transparent and documentation available.

Implementation of the award type descriptors at institutional level in the programme descriptions is certainly the most challenging part of the process. Denmark could offer experiences of results from a non-mandatory implementations process and at the Budapest workshop Hungary explained how a project has been developed at Hungarian institutions of higher education.

E. Self-certification

- Verifying the compatibility of national frameworks of qualifications with the framework of qualifications of the EHEA
- Criteria
- Procedures

At each of the four workshops a summary of the Irish and the Scottish self-certifications processes were given. Many questions were raised such as the role of quality assurance agencies, of international experts and the relations between the Dublin Descriptors and the outcome descriptors in the national frameworks. For a more detailed discussion on these and other issues see the next three chapters on the pilot studies.

The main lesson from the pilot studies was that the criteria to be met in the self-certification process have to be taken into account at the very beginning of the framework developing process.

Conclusions

The workshops have been efficient fora where a lot of basic questions being asked and where sharing of experiences could take place. Many countries were still (September 2006) at a stage considering how to get started.

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

The basic information source was still the report from the previous working group on qualifications framework but web sites and documents from countries that have already introduced QF may be useful to consult.

There seems to be a strong need to share experiences in order to assist national development.

The Working Group recommends that these experience-sharing meetings continue on a regional basis as workshops or conferences and that an appropriate international organisation or network secure the facilitating of the meetings.

The international organisation to be given this task has to encompass all the Bologna countries and have its own financial resources. The Council of Europe fulfils these requirements and is as co-secretariat for the ENIC and NARIC Networks already involved in the recognitions of foreign qualifications, which is closely connected to the idea behind the overarching qualifications framework. The Council of Europe is also keeper of the evidences from the self-certification processes and the self-certification reports are published on the ENIC/NARIC website.

The Working Group recommends that the tasks of promoting and facilitating information and experience sharing activities are given to the Council of Europe and when appropriate in cooperation with ENIC and NARIC Networks, ENQA and other relevant organisations.

Conclusions from part III

In drawing conclusion from the regional workshops the Working Group finds it important

- *that expertise in framework development within the country is available at all levels and recommends that this expertise be developed in the ministries and agencies (QAA, ENIC and /NARIC) as well at the institutional level in Rector's Conferences and student organisations*

It also recommends

- *that these experience-sharing meetings continue on a regional basis as workshops or conferences and that an appropriate international organisation or network secure the facilitating of the meetings, and*
- *that the tasks of promoting and facilitating information and experience sharing activities are given to the Council of Europe and when appropriate in cooperation with ENIC and NARIC Networks, ENQA and other relevant organisations.*

Part IV – Verification of the Compatibility of National Frameworks to the Bologna Framework – Outline of Pilot Verifications and Lessons Learned

Chapter 6 – Summary of Completion of Work in Scotland and Ireland

Introduction

The way in which national frameworks are aligned to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area is of utmost importance. For the functioning and reputation of the EHEA Framework it is vital that there are clear and demonstrable national processes in place for aligning national frameworks with the Bologna Framework.

Thus, when Ministers met in Bergen in May 2005, they adopted criteria and procedures for verifying the compatibility of national frameworks with the Bologna Framework, which had been proposed to them in the report of the Working Group. The criteria that were adopted set out the minimum requirements that a national framework must fulfil before it, and its compatibility with the Bologna Framework, are considered acceptable to its peers in other signatory states and by other stakeholders in the European Higher Education Area. The procedures that were adopted set out the various stages that each country should undertake in the verification process.

Scotland and Ireland were both invited by the chairperson of the Bologna Follow-Up Group Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks to undertake pilot projects of the self-certification of the Compatibility of their respective National Frameworks of Qualifications with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

It is important to note that while the two verification processes are pilot projects from the point of view of the working group they are full and complete processes for Scotland and Ireland and now that they have been completed the Scottish and Irish Frameworks are aligned with the Bologna Framework.

The aim in inviting Ireland and Scotland to undertake these initial verification processes was that the processes could be implemented in a way which provided the Working Group to review the effectiveness of the processes and to look at any issues arising from the processes for the effectiveness of the criteria and procedures and for whether it would be necessary to develop the criteria and procedures further for future verification processes.

Summary of Scottish Process

QAA Scotland Committee is the competent national body, as designated by the Scottish Executive, responsible for the maintenance and preservation of standards within the framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland. QAA Scotland Committee asked the Scottish Advisory Committee on Credit and Access (SACCA) to undertake the verification process and to report back and make recommendations to QAA Scotland Committee.

SACCA is a committee constituted jointly by QAA Scotland and Universities Scotland. The latter is the autonomous voice of higher education institutions in Scotland, and, with QAA Scotland, the Scottish Qualifications Authority, the Association of Scotland's Col-

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

leges and the Scottish Executive, forms the development and implementation partnership for the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.

SACCA therefore convened the working group to take the verification process forward. The working group was chaired by the current chair of SACCA (Professor John Harper, Vice-Principal, Robert Gordon University), and was composed of senior representatives from a wide range of Scottish Higher education institutions, a student and two international experts. The two international experts were Ms Eva Gonczi, Hungarian Ministry of Education and Dr Aune Valk, Head of the Open University Centre, University of Tartu, Estonia.

In August 2006 a consultation seminar took place involving a wider group of stakeholders. At the seminar these organisations had the chance to comment on the report and the verification process.

The report was then finalised by SACCA and submitted to the QAA Scotland Committee, which then signed off on the report.

Summary of Irish Process

The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland established a steering group for the verification process, chaired by the Authority, with representatives of the Irish Universities Association, the Higher Education and Training Awards Council and the Dublin Institute of Technology. In addition, following consultation with the Chairperson of the Bologna Qualifications Frameworks Working Group, Robert Wagenaar and Sjur Bergan joined the group. Robert Wagenaar of the University of Groningen is the joint co-ordinator of the Tuning project. Sjur Bergan is the Head of the Department of Higher Education and History Teaching at the Council of Europe (Directorate of School, Out-of-School and Higher Education Directorate General IV - Education, Culture and Cultural Heritage, Youth and Sport).

The steering group drafted a report, which was published in June 2006. Submissions were invited on the draft and a workshop was held on 3 October with a wider group of stakeholders, including representatives of higher education institutions, students the Department of Education and Science, the Higher Education Authority, the Irish Universities Quality Board and social partners (including employer and trade union representatives). Following this the steering group finalised the report and the report has now been agreed among the Authority, the Irish Universities Association, the Higher Education and Training Awards Council, the Dublin Institute of Technology, the Higher Education Authority and the Irish Universities Quality Board.

The summary of the verification report is being translated into a number of European languages.

Summary of Scottish Outcome

The Scottish verification report summarises the outcome of the process as follows:

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

EHEA qualification Cycles	Qualifications within the Scottish FQHE
First cycle qualifications	Scottish Bachelors Degree with Honours Scottish Bachelors Degree
Short cycle qualifications within or linked to the first cycle	Diploma of Higher Education
Intermediate awards within the first cycle	Certificate of Higher Education Graduate Certificate Graduate Diploma
Second cycle qualifications	Masters Degree Integrated Masters Degree MPhil Degree
Intermediate awards within the second cycle	Postgraduate Diploma Postgraduate Certificate
Third cycle qualifications	Doctoral Degrees including Doctorates by Research

The Scottish verification report is available on the web here:

http://www.enic-naric.net/documents/QF-Scotland_en.pdf

Summary of Irish Outcome

The Irish verification report summarises the outcome of the process as follows:

- “The Irish Higher Certificate is an intermediate qualification within the Bologna first cycle.
- The Irish Ordinary Bachelor Degree is compatible with the Bologna first cycle descriptor. However, holders of Irish Ordinary Bachelor Degrees and their equivalent former awards do not generally immediately access programmes leading to second cycle awards.
- The Irish Honours Bachelor Degree is compatible with completion of the Bologna first cycle.
- The Irish Higher Diploma is a qualification at the same level as completion of the first cycle, and is a qualification typically attained in a different field of learning than an initial first cycle award.
- The Irish Masters Degree is compatible with completion of the Bologna second cycle.
- The Irish Post-Graduate Diploma is an intermediate qualification within the Bologna second cycle.
- The Irish Doctoral Degree is compatible with completion of the Bologna third cycle.

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

It is of note that there is an apparent inconsistency or paradox in the treatment of both the Ordinary Bachelor Degree and the Honours Bachelor Degree as first cycle qualifications compatible with the Bologna first cycle descriptor. The compatibility of both with the Bologna first cycle descriptor has been demonstrated in terms of the comparisons of the learning outcomes. Notwithstanding this, these awards are included at two different levels in the Irish framework, with different descriptors, and the Ordinary Bachelor Degree does not typically give access to Masters Degree (second cycle) programmes at present in Ireland.

Furthermore, it is considered that the Irish authorities should review this verification in the light of the implementation of the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area by other countries, particularly in the context of new progression arrangements being put in place. It is anticipated that such a review might take place when at least 20 countries have aligned their national frameworks to the European Framework.”

The Irish verification report is available on the web here:

http://www.enic-naric.net/documents/QF-Ireland_en.pdf

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

Chapter 7 – Lessons Learned from Process and Procedures

Introduction

This Chapter covers issues relating to the process and procedures in general. Procedures for verifying that national frameworks are compatible with the EHEA framework were set out in the report to Ministers in Bergen as follows:

- “The competent national body/bodies shall certify the compatibility of the national framework with the European framework.
- The self-certification process shall include the stated agreement of the quality assurance bodies in the country in question recognised through the Bologna Process
- The self-certification process shall involve international experts
- The self-certification and the evidence supporting it shall be published and shall address separately each of the criteria set out
- The ENIC and NARIC networks shall maintain a public listing of States that have confirmed that they have completed the self-certification process
- The completion of the self-certification process shall be noted on Diploma Supplements issued subsequently by showing the link between the national framework and the European framework.”

The Working Group considered that it was not necessary to work through the procedures one by one as the procedures are related to one another.

Nature of Frameworks in Scotland and Ireland

Both Scotland and Ireland are relatively unusual in the Bologna process in that both countries have had Frameworks in place prior to the adoption of the Bologna Framework in 2005. Thus while the alignment process has now been completed subsequently, it was not something that was taken into account in the development of the Scottish and Irish Frameworks. The approach is likely to be quite different for most other countries engaged in the Bologna process as these will be developing National Frameworks having regard to the Bologna Framework that is already in place. Thus issues concerning alignment of National Frameworks and the Bologna Framework are likely to be part of the development of National Frameworks in most countries and, in some cases there may not need to be detailed additional consultation on alignment after the formal adoption of a National Framework in such countries. *The working group recommends that in developing their National Frameworks, countries should be have a eye on the need to align the National Framework to the Bologna Framework while noting that the Framework development process and the subsequent alignment are separate processes.*

However, for both Scotland and Ireland, there have already been extensive consensus-building exercises in the development of their Frameworks. This has not been the case in many other countries to date and thus both Scotland and Ireland were in a position to build upon their existing consultative processes in the alignment process. For other countries they will need to develop their own consultative processes in the design of the own

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

National Frameworks and the experience in Scotland and Ireland demonstrates that this is not an exercise that can be speedily undertaken as it involves trust-building.

In addition, the Scottish and Irish Frameworks are not merely theoretical entities but have been proven to be feasible in practice, while elements of implementation are still continuing. *The Working Group considers that countries should ensure that there is some element of testing or implementation of a national framework before the process of aligning it to the Bologna Framework is completed.*

Also, both Scotland and Ireland have already been working together for a number of years. This has been the case on a bi-lateral basis and in context of links between the United Kingdom and Ireland which have lead to the establishment of linkages between the Scottish and Irish Frameworks. Also, Scotland and Ireland have been involved in the development of the Bologna Framework and in the development of the European Qualifications Framework. A high level of mutual respect and trust has been built up between the two countries and they have worked together in undertaking their separate, but linked, verification processes. *The Working Group would suggest that it might be helpful for small groups of countries to co-operate in undertaking alignment processes.*

The Frameworks in place in Scotland and Ireland are different: the Irish Framework has a statutory basis while the Scottish Framework has not been developed on such a basis. In both cases there is an overall National Framework of Qualifications in place for all learning. In Scotland this is also a credit framework.

For both Ireland and Scotland there are international qualifications recognition agreements in place, for example, with China. The Scottish agreement is in the context of a UK-wide agreement with China. Also, both Ireland and Scotland have strong traditions for student mobility, and indeed labour market mobility generally, with neighbouring countries. Thus Irish and Scottish qualifications are well known in some neighbouring countries. It is not always the case that these strong traditions of mobility will be in place. It can also be the case that there is a tradition of mobility for learners between two countries that are not geographical neighbours. *The working group notes that some countries have qualifications recognition agreements with other countries, sometimes outside of Europe, and suggests that consultation be undertaken by a country aligning a national framework to the Bologna Framework with any such country with which it has a qualifications recognition agreement. Furthermore, countries with a tradition of having award holders move to other (perhaps neighbouring) countries may also wish to discuss any alignment process with those countries or perhaps involve peers from such countries in their alignment process.*

Nature of Verification Processes

Slightly different verification processes were put in place in place in Scotland and Ireland. However, in both cases they provided for a small expert group to develop detailed proposals and an opportunity for wide discussion with stakeholders in these proposals in advance of the finalisation of them. *The Working Group considers that the small steering group model, together with consultation with stakeholders on a transparent basis is a good model for all countries. At the same time, the Working Group recognises that different models may work well for other countries.*

Quality Assurance Bodies

One of the procedures is that the self-certification process shall include the stated agreement of the quality assurance bodies in the country in question recognised through the Bologna Process. This was written in the context of developments prior to the Ministers

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

meeting in Bergen in May 2005 and the report of the working group that recommended the Bologna Framework noted that while the precise outcomes of the ENQA work at the time had yet to be determined, it was envisaged that a peer-review process was to be put in place which would identify national quality assurance bodies and that all such quality assurance bodies should be involved in the verification process. In Scotland there is a single such body and in Ireland there are a number of such bodies. A key issue in the verification processes in both Scotland and Ireland has been that the arrangements for requiring the stated agreement of certain stakeholders have been clear from the start of the verification process and have been appropriately completed. *The Working Group considers it important that there is clarity on this issue when a verification process is initiated.*

International Experts

The issue of the engagement of international experts in the process is important. In particular, it is helpful to note the purpose of engaging the international experts in the process in terms of their expertise, credibility and the way in which they add an external dimension. Such experts, while bringing an independence to the verification process, also need to have an understanding of the complexities of the national framework whose Bologna Framework compatibility is being tested. It is considered by both Scotland and Ireland that the areas of expertise of the experts across international recognition, international accreditation and international standard setting as well as their having differing experiences is very helpful. It is felt by both countries that the engagement of the international experts in the processes has been very helpful. In both cases two international experts were involved in the detailed preparatory work and had an opportunity to take part in the wider consultation with stakeholders. *The Working Group considers that the manner in which Scotland and Ireland have involved international experts in their work through membership of the steering group has been exemplary. The Working Group also considers that there are issues that will need to be addressed in the future about the availability and financing of experts to assist countries in their verification processes. There will be linguistic challenges, particularly where a verification process is undertaken in a national language whose use is not widespread across Europe and, certainly at this stage in the development of national frameworks, there is not a significant number of potential experts available. One option which the working Group suggests could be explored is that the Council of Europe might assist some countries in the identification of potential international experts for national verification processes.*

Evidence

An important element in both processes has been the publication of a detailed report addressing each element in the criteria and procedures in turn as well as providing succinct background analytical and systemic information, initially on a draft basis and, following consultation and further amendment, as part of the final report. *The Working Group considers that the format of the two reports can act as exemplars for the formats of the reports of other countries. Indeed the working group notes that there is a need for two outcomes from the process:*

- *The first is the detailed verification document analysing in detail all issues and addressing each of the criteria and procedures*
- *The second is a simple summary of the outcomes for communication to the general public.*

Number of Alignments Completed

There have now been two alignment processes completed and it is hoped that many further such processes will be undertaken in the coming years. Further information will

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

emerge over time as new alignment processes taken place. *The Working Group considers that all future alignment processes should take note of any alignment that has been completed.*

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Working Group considers that the procedures established for the verification process have been effective in providing for a transparent process. The Working Group makes the following findings and recommendations in relation to the continuing implementation of the procedures by countries:

- *In developing their National Frameworks, countries should have a eye on the need to align the National Framework to the Bologna Framework while noting that the Framework development process and the subsequent alignment are separate processes.*
- *countries should ensure that there is some element of testing or implementation of a national framework before the process of aligning it to the Bologna Framework is completed*
- *it might be helpful for small groups of countries to co-operate in undertaking alignment processes*
- *while some countries have qualifications recognition agreements with other countries, sometimes outside of Europe, and the Working Group suggests that consultation be undertaken by a country aligning a national framework to the Bologna Framework with any such country with which it has a qualifications recognition agreement. Furthermore, countries with a tradition of having award holders move to other (perhaps neighbouring) countries may also wish to discuss any alignment process with those countries or perhaps involve peers from such countries in their alignment process.*
- *the small steering group model, together with consultation with stakeholders on a transparent basis is a good model for all countries. At the same time, the Working Group recognises that different models may work well for other countries.*
- *It is important that there is clarity on the arrangements for requiring the stated agreement of certain stakeholders of the verification when a verification process is initiated.*
- *the manner in which Scotland and Ireland have involved international experts in their work through membership of the steering group has been exemplary*
- *there are issues that will need to be addressed in the future about the availability and financing of experts to assist countries in their verification processes. There will be linguistic challenges, particularly where a verification process is undertaken in a national language whose use is not widespread across Europe and, certainly at this stage in the development of national frameworks, there is not a significant number of potential experts available. One option, which the working Group suggests could be explored, is that the Council of Europe might assist some countries in the identification of potential international experts for national verification processes.*
- *The format of the Scottish and Irish reports can act as exemplars for the formats of the reports of other countries.*
- *that there is a need for two outcomes from each self-certification process:*
 - *The first is the detailed verification document analysing in detail all issues and addressing each of the criteria and procedures*
 - *The second is a simple summary of the outcomes for communication to the general public*
- *all future alignment processes should take note of any alignment that has been completed.*

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

Chapter 8 – Lessons Learned from Criteria

Introduction

This Chapter covers issues relating to the criteria in the alignment of national frameworks to the Bologna Framework. Criteria for verifying that national frameworks are compatible with the EHEA framework were set out in the report to Ministers in Bergen as follows:

- “The national framework for higher education qualifications and the body or bodies responsible for its development are designated by the national ministry with responsibility for higher education
- There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications in the national framework and the cycle qualification descriptors of the European framework
- The national framework and its qualifications are demonstrably based on learning outcomes and the qualifications are linked to ECTS or ECTS compatible credits
- The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national framework are transparent
- The national quality assurance system for higher education refer to the national framework of qualifications and are consistent with the Berlin Communiqué and any subsequent communiqué agreed by ministers in the Bologna Process
- The national framework, and any alignment with the European framework, is referenced in all Diploma Supplements
- The responsibilities of the domestic parties to the national framework are clearly determined and published.”

The Working Group considered that it was helpful to work through the criteria one by one.

Criterion 1 – The national framework for higher education qualifications and the body or bodies responsible for its development are designated by the national ministry with responsibility for higher education.

There were not any particular issues arising for Ireland and Scotland in relation to the designation of the body with responsibility for the Framework in each country. However, *the Working Group notes that this could be an issue for other countries. For such countries, the national actors who initiate Framework development may not be the same as the body ultimately responsible for the Framework. For example it may be initiated by students or the rectors' conference, but pass formally to a Ministry or an existing or new, ad hoc, agency. This is a natural development and does not undermine the ultimate legitimacy of the Framework which will eventually need to be adopted in a formal way in each country.*

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

Criterion 2 – There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications in the national framework and the cycle qualification descriptors of the European framework

The second criterion has proved to be the most important one in the verification process in both Scotland and Ireland. This refers directly to cycle descriptors and does not refer to the associated progression issues which are referred to in the Bologna Process. In both countries there had been a detailed analysis of learning outcomes issues with solid pieces of work undertaken in both countries. The analysis essentially involves two stages: first, the structures and technical bases of the National Frameworks and the Bologna Frameworks were analysed and compared – for example, a comparison is made of the strands of learning in descriptors; then a detailed comparison is made between the actual descriptors that define the cycles/levels in each framework.

Relationship between descriptors for national frameworks and those for Bologna Framework

An important issue in relating awards to national frameworks in the first instance is one of how to make judgements on the links between National Frameworks and the Bologna Framework. In the Lisbon Recognition Convention, the concept of substantial difference has been developed. The concept of substantial difference has to date related to comparing two individual qualifications, or to comparing an individual qualification to a generic type of qualification. Thus far, the concept has not generally related to comparing two generic descriptors for types of qualifications. However, it is considered that this concept of substantial difference is relevant to the consideration of the clear and demonstrable link between qualifications and national frameworks and the cycle qualification descriptors of the European framework. Accordingly, in both Scotland and Ireland it has been set out that there are no substantial differences between certain descriptors for major award-types in the National Frameworks and the cycle descriptors. This is also in line with trying to get a ‘best fit’ in relating national frameworks to the Bologna frameworks. Both countries have worked on this basis in defining the clear and demonstrable link. *The Working Group recommends that the work of the ENIC and NARIC networks in examining issues relating to the concept of substantial difference be informed of issues arising in the verification process and that consideration be given to the development of formal linkages to this work.*

The concept of ‘best fit’ is a crucial one. This is true both in practical terms and in terms of public perceptions of the role and purposes of qualifications frameworks. It is highly unlikely, even undesirable, that there will be a perfect match between different national frameworks of qualifications, even those with high degrees of mutual mobility and it is even more unlikely that there will be a perfect match between a national framework of qualifications and the EHEA Framework, given that they serve different purposes. In the case of both pilots, the descriptors of the national framework of qualifications are considerably more detailed than those of the European framework. However, the reports demonstrate that there is a compatibility, or consistency, between the descriptors of the national frameworks and the EHEA Framework. This is an extremely important concept, as it is a principle of the Bologna Process that it is about seeking broad convergence, not about forcing uniformity.

Progression

A further major issue highlighted in both the Scottish and Irish processes has been that there is a difference between qualifications per se based on learning outcomes and the linked issue of programmes of higher education and transfer and progression between programmes and cycles. It was noted that in both countries there were not detailed prescriptions on the nature of programmes but rather there may be typically understood ar-

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

rangements and that these are set out in relation to credit and progression routes, for example. Furthermore, the Bologna cycles are understood within the context of progression being facilitated from the first to the second cycle and from the second cycle to the third cycle. Both countries have gone into some detail in their verification reports about the typical progression routes in their countries. *The working group recommends that in making report all countries should seek to address progression issues.*

Levels in National Frameworks

In both countries there are examples of more than one level in a National Framework within a cycle. This is the case for the first cycle in both countries. There are also more than one typical type of award, or award-type, in at least two of the three cycles for both countries. Both countries have intermediate qualifications and these intermediate qualifications are in place at both the first and second cycles. While some of the intermediate qualifications are common to both countries, they are not all the same across the two countries and reflect differences in the systems in the two countries.

Both countries decided to include in the verification process the alignment with the higher education short cycle (as an intermediate qualification signalled by Ministers) and its descriptor given that the descriptor has much agreement across Europe in the context of the work of the Joint Quality Initiative and the recommendations of the Bologna working group. It is of note that the descriptor is now also included in the European Qualifications Framework. Both countries also identified intermediate qualifications in the second cycle. *The Working Group recommends that countries should identify intermediate qualifications in their verification processes and examine the possibility of aligning any first cycle intermediate qualifications with the Joint Quality Initiative's descriptor for the higher education short cycle.*

In both countries there are particular issues with the Ordinary Bachelor Degree. These relate to the different traditions in both countries. While in Ireland, there is a typical (but not absolute) progression route from this to an Honours Bachelor degree, in Scotland this is not generally a stepping stone to an Honours Bachelor degree. In relation to accessing second cycle programmes with the Ordinary Bachelor Degree generally, while it is not typical in either jurisdiction, it is not ruled out and there can be access with some work experience to Masters programmes. Also, in both countries, the Honours Bachelor Degree provides admission in certain cases to the third cycle. In other countries it is likely that similar issues will also arise.

The working group considers that there will be issues for many countries in terms of having more than one level in a National Framework relating to a Bologna cycle and of having intermediate qualifications and levels. The Working Group considers that the approaches undertaken in the Scottish and Irish Reports, in terms of identifying these can act as examples for other countries which have intermediate qualifications and levels.

Labour Market Relevance

The working group notes that the Bologna declaration sets out that “The degree awarded after the first cycle shall also be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification.” While this was clearly taken account of in the drafting of the Bologna Framework and in the descriptor for the first cycle, the issue has been raised in the national reports. In both Ireland and Scotland the two levels of Bachelor degrees have a tradition (which can be tracked on an evidential basis) of relevance to the labour market. For countries where a first cycle qualification or qualifications are new constructs, this

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

will not be the case and *the Working Group considers that there is a need to ensure that national verification reports address the issue of labour market relevance of first cycle completion.*

International Mobility

In both reports the recognition of qualifications for holders of Scottish and Irish qualifications within Europe and on a wider international basis were identified as an issue. In both cases, it was difficult to find information. There are a number of reasons for this. One is that, of course, there are not National Frameworks in many countries to date and thus there is very little experience to go on. It is also of note that there are extensive profile issues arising internationally in Europe in the consideration of the compatibility of Frameworks from other European countries with the Bologna Framework. It is unclear at this time what decisions will be made on the verification process by these countries. Thus, at this stage it is not possible to be certain of the recognition of Scottish and Irish qualifications by higher education institutions in other countries and, vice versa, of the recognition of other countries awards by Scottish and Irish higher education institutions. Indeed, the working group notes a likelihood that there will be different types of qualifications within cycles in a number of European countries, perhaps with different profiles. The working group notes that it has been very difficult for Scotland and Ireland to address such recognition issues given the state-of-play in the implementation of the national frameworks incorporating the Bologna cycles. Nevertheless, the Group considers that given that this is one of the key aims of the Bologna Framework, it is important that all countries endeavour to seek appropriate information in this regard as part of their verification work. The Group considers that this is an area where the ENIC and NARIC Networks can be of assistance.

In both country reports it has been noted that National Frameworks are subject to review and to potential change arising from any such review. The Working Group considers that all countries should provide for the review of the verification of the alignment of their National Framework to the Bologna Framework where there have been any major amendments to their National Framework.

Legacy awards

The issue of legacy awards (awards that will no longer be made but which are important as there will continue to be many holders of such awards) was raised in the context of both national reports. This is an important issue as, if the relationship between such awards and new awards in national frameworks are not defined, there can be a lack of clarity for the meaning and relevance of such awards. Furthermore, it will take some time for the new awards in Frameworks to be made and the vast majority of European citizens hold such legacy awards. While such legacy awards may not have been designed in the same way as new Framework awards (based on learning outcomes) it should be possible for national frameworks to include them on a best-fit basis. *The working group considers that it is important that legacy awards (awards that will no longer be made but which are important as there will continue to be many holders of such awards) are included in, or related to, National Frameworks as they are being developed and implemented and that these are taken into account in the verification of the alignment with the Bologna Framework.*

Criterion 3 – The national framework and its qualifications are demonstrably based on learning outcomes and the qualifications are linked to ECTS or ECTS compatible credits

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

There were not any major issues arising under this criterion in the Scottish and Irish reports. In Scotland the credit arrangements were in place in advance of the ECTS system and are now compatible with this. The Scottish arrangements also include credit in vocational education and training. There are typical credit arrangements in terms of award-types and links to learning outcomes put in place for both Frameworks. Indeed, the outcomes approach in both Frameworks results in there being variations in the duration of programmes rather than the development of typical durations. Thus both national frameworks either refer directly to credit or set out typical credit arrangements and do so not just for higher education but also for vocational education and training and facilitate links between the two. The learning outcomes contained in the national frameworks are essential to the process of aligning the national framework with the EHEA framework. While ECTS makes reference to learning outcomes, these are contained in the relevant qualifications frameworks.

Criterion 4 – The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national framework are transparent

It is of note that procedures for inclusion of qualifications could mean procedures for the inclusion of individual awards against the types of qualifications in the Framework or indeed the development of new types of qualifications. The criterion refers to the location in the Framework of awards and the validation of programmes linking to these awards.

An issue arises in relation to legacy awards is referred to above under criterion 2. The issue of how to deal with such legacy qualifications will arise in all countries in the Bologna process.

A further issue arises in relation to awards made to learners in one country by awarding bodies based in other countries. The typical way to recognise such activity in many countries is to seek to recognise such activity on a cross-country basis in line with the Lisbon Convention. However, in Ireland, the Framework allows for these awards to be aligned with it. A recent policy provides for the alignment of such awards on the basis of best fit of learning outcomes to levels or award-types in the Irish Framework. Criteria include legal authority to make the awards in the home country; inclusion in the national Framework or equivalent in the home country; and external quality assurance in the home country which is also applied to such awards made in Ireland by awarding bodies from other countries where the learning programme was provided in Ireland. The development of this policy arises from a desire in Ireland to be proactive and seek to develop a full picture of all of the non-Irish awarding bodies and institutions operating in Ireland. The issue of how to deal with such qualifications will arise in most countries in the Bologna process as transnational provision of courses and qualifications increases.

Criterion 5 – The national quality assurance systems for higher education refer to the national framework of qualifications and are consistent with the Berlin Communiqué and any subsequent communiqué agreed by ministers in the Bologna Process

When Ministers met in Bergen in May 2005 they adopted *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*. In order for there to be absolute clarity about whether all of the quality assurance arrangements in the Bologna Process have been implemented in quality assurance, it is arguable that there needs to have been published reports on the completion of external peer reviews of agencies in line with the standards and guidelines. It was considered by the Bologna working group in an early clarification as the verification processes were underway that it is not appropriate that this be required in the verification process. To make it a requirement would require there to

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

have been reviews of the application of the European quality standards completed for all relevant quality assurance agencies in advance of the completion of the verification process.

Notwithstanding this, the approach undertaken in both countries was to note the incorporation of the European standards in institutional and agency approaches to quality assurance. In the Irish case, this has been subject to review for the Higher Education and Training Awards Council, the quality assurance agency in the non-university sector. Thus the key issue for both countries is that there is a cross-reference between the quality assurance systems and the Frameworks. Indeed, such a cross-referencing would demonstrate that there is an interdependence between the Frameworks and quality assurance at the three relevant levels – the level of the programme, institutional level and national level.

The working group recommends that in the implementation of the verification process countries should demonstrate that their national systems – at institutional and agency level – are deliberately seeking to implement the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and that the state-of-play in relation to reviews in line with the Standards and Guidelines should be set out while at this time such review need not to be undertaken. The working group notes that it is the intention of many countries to implement the standards and guidelines within the next four years and considers that any verification report should be added to and the Council of Europe notified where a review in line with the Standards and Guidelines has been completed. Additionally, the Working Group recommends that for any self-certification process underway after 2010, it should be a requirement that agency reviews in line with the standards and guidelines are completed in a satisfactory way prior to the completion of any self-certification process.

It is also of note that quality assurance arrangements will change overtime and that this may relate both to the approaches to quality assurance and indeed to the agency structures.

Criterion 6 – The national framework, and any alignment with the European framework, is referenced in all Diploma Supplements

There were not any major issues arising under this criterion in the Scottish and Irish reports.

Criterion 7 – The responsibilities of the domestic parties to the national framework are clearly determined and published.

There were not any major issues arising under this criterion in the Scottish and Irish reports.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Working Group considers that the criteria established for the verification process have been effective in providing for a transparent process. The Working Group makes the following findings and recommendations in relation to the continuing implementation of the criteria by countries:

- ***Criterion 1 – The national framework for higher education qualifications and the body or bodies responsible for its development are designated by the national ministry with responsibility for higher education.***
 - *that while there were not any particular issues arising for Ireland and Scotland in relation to the designation of the body with responsibility for the Frame-*

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

work in each country, this could be an issue for other countries. For such countries, the national actors who initiate Framework development may not be the same as the body ultimately responsible for the Framework. This is a natural development and does not undermine the ultimate legitimacy of the Framework which will eventually need to be adopted in a formal way in each country.

- ***Criterion 2 – There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications in the national framework and the cycle qualification descriptors of the European framework***
 - *that the work of the ENIC and NARIC networks in examining issues relating to the concept of substantial difference be informed of issues arising in the verification process and that consideration be given to the development of formal linkages to this work.*
 - *that in making report all countries should seek to address progression issues.*
 - *that there will be issues for many countries in terms of having more than one level in a National Framework relating to a Bologna cycle and of having intermediate qualifications and levels and that the approaches undertaken in the Scottish and Irish Reports, in terms of identifying these can act as examples for other countries which have intermediate qualifications/levels.*
 - *The Working Group recommends that countries should identify intermediate qualifications in their verification processes and examine the possibility of aligning any first cycle intermediate qualifications with the Joint Quality Initiative's descriptor for the higher education short cycle.*
 - *The concept of 'best fit' is a crucial one. It is not expected, nor is it desirable, that there will be an exact match between descriptors of different frameworks, which will have different purposes and contexts. The pilots showed that many qualifications will have elements which fit to a higher or lower level of the framework than the level at which the qualification as a whole is placed. The purpose of frameworks is to help understand both similarities and differences between different qualifications which do not have exact matches or equivalences.*
 - *there is a need to ensure that national verification reports address the issue of labour market relevance of first cycle completion.*
 - *The working group notes that it has been very difficult for Scotland and Ireland to address such recognition issues given the state-of-play in the implementation of the national frameworks incorporating the Bologna cycles. Nevertheless, the Group considers that given that this is one of the key aims of the Bologna Framework, it is important that all countries endeavour to seek appropriate information in this regard as part of their verification work. The Group considers that this is an area where the ENIC and NARIC Networks can be of assistance.*
 - *that all countries should provide for the review of the verification of the alignment of their National Framework to the Bologna Framework where there have been any major amendments to their National Framework.*
 - *that it is important that legacy awards (awards that will no longer be made but which are important as there will continue to be many holders of such awards) are included in, or related to, National Frameworks as they are being developed and implemented and that these are taken into account in the verification of the alignment with the Bologna Framework.*

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

- ***Criterion 5 – The national quality assurance systems for higher education refer to the national framework of qualifications and are consistent with the Berlin Communiqué and any subsequent communiqué agreed by ministers in the Bologna Process***
 - *that in the implementation of the verification process countries should demonstrate that their national systems – at institutional and agency level – are deliberately seeking to implement the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and that the state-of-play in relation to reviews in line with the Standards and Guidelines should be set out while at this time such review need not to been undertaken. The working group notes that it is the intention of many countries to implement the standards and guidelines within the next four years and considers that any verification report should be added to and the Council of Europe notified where a review in line with the Standards and Guidelines has been completed. Additionally, the Working Group recommends that for any self-certification process underway after 2010, it should be a requirement that agency reviews in line with the standards and guidelines are completed in a satisfactory way prior to the completion of any self-certification process.*

Part V - Conclusion

Chapter 9 Findings and recommendations

Principal questions on the further development of the EHEA-framework

In the Bergen Communiqué BFUG was asked to report on the implementation and further development of the overarching framework and this task was given by BFUG to the Working Group in its mandate. As the implementation is part of the Stocktaking Process the Working Group on Qualifications Framework will focus on the need for further development.

The two principal questions to be answered in the final report are:

- Is the Bologna Framework as adopted in Bergen sufficient to fulfil its purposes of international transparency, recognition and mobility?
- Are the criteria and procedure for alignment sufficient enough to secure trust and make more efficient the recognition of foreign qualifications within EHEA.

The two principal questions have to be positive answered:

The overarching framework has in the pilot project of verification shown to be a useful instrument for comparison and analysis. In addition it has been of inspiration for the countries developing national frameworks. Even if many countries regret the omission of the short cycle in Bergen the working group have no basis at the moment for proposing amendments or changes to the framework.

A similar answer has to be given concerning the criteria and procedures for alignment that is part of the Bologna Framework. The Working Group considers that the procedures established for the verification process have been effective in providing for a transparent process and it considers as well that the criteria established for the verification process have been effective in providing for a transparent result.

The specific recommendations from the parts of the report are:

Conclusions from part II

In relation to qualifications frameworks and other aspects of the Bologna Process the Working Group consider that there are problems to be solved and recommends

- *that the EU-member-states ask the European Commission revise its proposal for ECVET in a way that builds on or relates to ECTS.*
- *that agencies and institutions develop their qualifications recognition practices to exploit the framework.*
- *that the promotion of European higher education outside Europe should build on the overarching EHEA-framework, which include the Dublin descriptors*

and advises

- *that information on the EHEA framework of qualifications form a central plank of a future Bologna information portal.*

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

Conclusions from part III

In drawing conclusion from the regional workshops the Working Group finds it important

- *that expertise in framework development within the country is available at all levels and recommends that this expertise be developed as well in the ministries and agencies (QAA and ENIC/NARIC) as at the institutional level in Rector's Conferences and student organisations*

It also recommends

- *that these experience-sharing meetings continue on a regional basis as workshops or conferences and that an appropriate international organisation or network secure the facilitating of the meetings, and*
- *that the tasks of promoting and facilitating information and experience sharing activities are given to the Council of Europe and when appropriate in cooperation with ENIC/NARIC, ENQA and other relevant organisations.*

Conclusion from part IV

In conclusion, the Working Group considers that the procedures established for the verification process have been effective in providing for a transparent process. The Working Group makes the following findings and recommendations in relation to the continuing implementation of the procedures by countries:

- *In developing their National Frameworks, countries should have a eye on the need to align the National Framework to the Bologna Framework while noting that the Framework development process and the subsequent alignment are separate processes.*
- *countries should ensure that there is some element of testing or implementation of a national framework before the process of aligning it to the Bologna Framework is completed*
- *it might be helpful for small groups of countries to co-operate in undertaking alignment processes*
- *while some countries have qualifications recognition agreements with other countries, sometimes outside of Europe, and the Working Group suggests that consultation be undertaken by a country aligning a national framework to the Bologna Framework with any such country with which it has a qualifications recognition agreement. Furthermore, countries with a tradition of having award holders move to other (perhaps neighbouring) countries may also wish to discuss any alignment process with those countries or perhaps involve peers from such countries in their alignment process.*
- *the small steering group model, together with consultation with stakeholders on a transparent basis is a good model for all countries. At the same time, the Working Group recognises that different models may work well for other countries.*
- *It is important that there is clarity on the arrangements for requiring the stated agreement of certain stakeholders of the verification when a verification process is initiated.*
- *the manner in which Scotland and Ireland have involved international experts in their work through membership of the steering group has been exemplary*
- *there are issues that will need to be addressed in the future about the availability and financing of experts to assist countries in their verification processes. There will be linguistic challenges, particularly where a verification process is undertaken in a national language whose use is not widespread across Europe and, certainly at this stage in the development of national frameworks, there is not a significant number of potential experts available. One option which the working*

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

Group suggests could be explored is that the Council of Europe might assist some countries in the identification of potential international experts for national verification processes.

- *The format of the Scottish and Irish reports can act as exemplars for the formats of the reports of other countries.*
- *that there is a need for two outcomes from each self-certification process:*
 - *The first is the detailed verification document analysing in detail all issues and addressing each of the criteria and procedures*
 - *The second is a simple summary of the outcomes for communication to the general public*
- *all future alignment processes should take note of any alignment that has been completed.*

In conclusion, the Working Group considers that the criteria established for the verification process have been effective in providing for a transparent process. The Working Group makes the following findings and recommendations in relation to the continuing implementation of the criteria by countries:

- ***Criterion 1 – The national framework for higher education qualifications and the body or bodies responsible for its development are designated by the national ministry with responsibility for higher education.***
 - *that while there were not any particular issues arising for Ireland and Scotland in relation to the designation of the body with responsibility for the Framework in each country, this could be an issue for other countries. For such countries, the national actors who initiate Framework development may not be the same as the body ultimately responsible for the Framework. This is a natural development and does not undermine the ultimate legitimacy of the Framework which will eventually need to be adopted in a formal way in each country.*
- ***Criterion 2 – There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications in the national framework and the cycle qualification descriptors of the European framework***
 - *that the work of the ENIC and NARIC networks in examining issues relating to the concept of substantial difference be informed of issues arising in the verification process and that consideration be given to the development of formal linkages to this work.*
 - *that in making report all countries should seek to address progression issues.*
 - *that there will be issues for many countries in terms of having more than one level in a National Framework relating to a Bologna cycle and of having intermediate qualifications and levels and that the approaches undertaken in the Scottish and Irish Reports, in terms of identifying these can act as examples for other countries which have intermediate qualifications/levels.*
 - *The Working Group recommends that countries should identify intermediate qualifications in their verification processes and examine the possibility of aligning any first cycle intermediate qualifications with the Joint Quality Initiative's descriptor for the higher education short cycle.*
 - *The concept of 'best fit' is a crucial one. It is not expected, nor is it desirable, that there will be an exact match between descriptors of different frameworks, which will have different purposes and contexts. The pilots showed that many qualifications will have elements which fit to a higher or lower level of the framework than the level at which the qualification as a*

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

whole is placed. The purpose of frameworks is to help understand both similarities and differences between different qualifications which do not have exact matches or equivalences.

- *there is a need to ensure that national verification reports address the issue of labour market relevance of first cycle completion.*
 - *The working group notes that it has been very difficult for Scotland and Ireland to address such recognition issues given the state-of-play in the implementation of the national frameworks incorporating the Bologna cycles. Nevertheless, the Group considers that given that this is one of the key aims of the Bologna Framework, it is important that all countries endeavour to seek appropriate information in this regard as part of their verification work. The Group considers that this is an area where the ENIC and NARIC networks can be of assistance.*
 - *that all countries should provide for the review of the verification of the alignment of their National Framework to the Bologna Framework where there have been any major amendments to their National Framework.*
 - *that it is important that legacy awards (awards that will no longer be made but which are important as there will continue to be many holders of such awards) are included in, or related to, National Frameworks as they are being developed and implemented and that these are taken into account in the verification of the alignment with the Bologna Framework.*
- ***Criterion 5 – The national quality assurance systems for higher education refer to the national framework of qualifications and are consistent with the Berlin Communiqué and any subsequent communiqué agreed by ministers in the Bologna Process***
 - *that in the implementation of the verification process countries should demonstrate that their national systems – at institutional and agency level – are deliberately seeking to implement the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and that the state-of-play in relation to reviews in line with the Standards and Guidelines should be set out while at this time such review need not to be undertaken. The working group notes that it is the intention of many countries to implement the standards and guidelines within the next four years and considers that any verification report should be added to and the Council of Europe notified where a review in line with the Standards and Guidelines has been completed. Additionally, the Working Group recommends that for any self-certification process underway after 2010, it should be a requirement that agency reviews in line with the standards and guidelines are completed in a satisfactory way prior to the completion of any self-certification process.*

Appendices

- Appendix 01 Terms of reference of the Working Group**
- Appendix 02 Members and experts of the Working Group**
- Appendix 03 Programme for the Hague workshop**
- Appendix 04 Participants in the Hague workshop**
- Appendix 05 Programme for the Budapest workshop**
- Appendix 06 Participants in the Budapest workshop**
- Appendix 07 Programme for the Athens Workshop**
- Appendix 08 Participants in the Athens Workshop**
- Appendix 09 Programme for the Madrid/Alcala workshop**
- Appendix 10 Participation in the Madrid/Alcala workshop**
- Appendix 11 Reports from pilot projects**

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

Appendix 01

TERMS OF REFERENCE

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

A. Bergen Communiqué

On 20 May in Bergen Ministers responsible for higher educations within the European Higher Educations Area (EHEA) agreed:

We adopt the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA, comprising three cycles (including, within national contexts, the possibility of intermediate qualifications), generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences, and credit ranges in the first and second cycles.

We commit ourselves to elaborating national frameworks for qualifications compatible with the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA by 2010, and to having started work on this by 2007.

We ask the Follow-up Group to report on the implementation and further development of the overarching framework.

We underline the importance of ensuring complementarity between the overarching framework for the EHEA and the proposed broader framework for qualifications for lifelong learning encompassing general education as well as vocational education and training as now being developed within the European Union as well as among participating countries. We ask the European Commission fully to consult all parties to the Bologna Process as work progresses.

We charge the Follow-up Group with continuing and widening the stocktaking process and to continue in the fields of the degree system,

In particular, we shall look for progress in:

-
- *implementation of the national frameworks for qualifications;*

B. Membership of the Working Group

In its meeting in Manchester on 12-13 October BFUG approved the establishment of a working group to consider and report on the implementation and further development of the overarching framework.

Members of the Working Group are BFUG-representatives from the following countries:

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

1. Denmark (N-Europe), chair (cont.)
2. Netherlands (NW-Europe, subst. Ireland)
3. Russia (NE-Europe, subst. Latvia) (non EU)
4. Hungary (Central Europe, cont.)
5. Spain (SW-Europe, subst. France)
6. Macedonia/FYROM (SE-Europe, new seat) (non EU)

7. Chair of the WG on Stocktaking
8. Bologna Presidency (UK-AT-FI-GER)

The Working Group can draw on expertise and commission research, as it feels appropriate.

C. Terms of Reference

In order to realise the objectives set by the Ministers, the Working Group shall

1. consider what further development of the framework may be required, particularly the linkage between national frameworks and the EHEA-framework; the Working Group may invite member countries to participate in pilot projects of self-certification of national frameworks; it may conduct a survey on how credit ranges and credits are defined in national legislation.

2. support the Working Group on Stocktaking in the stocktaking exercise of implementation of national frameworks.

3. monitor the development of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning with the aim of ensuring complementarity between that framework and the EHEA framework and advise BFUG on the matter.

4. provide assistance to member countries working to introduce national frameworks.

The Group will submit progress reports to BFUG and a final report of its findings to the London Conference through BFUG.

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

Appendix 02

Bologna Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

Members:

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Appendix 03

1. workshop on national qualifications frameworks

The Hague 30 June 2006

Venue: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Rijnstraat 50

Programme:

09.30-10.00	Arrival, coffee and tea
10.00-10.30	Opening by Demetrius Waarsemburg (chair of the meeting) Introduction to the workshop by Mogens Berg
10.30-12.00	Presentation of work in progress by Pekka Auvinen, Finland Albin Gaunt, Sweden Anne Kathrine Mandrup, Denmark Marlies Leegwater, Netherlands Marie-Anne Persoons, Flanders Bryan Maguire/Edwin Mernagh, Ireland
12.30-13.30	Lunch
14.00-15.30	Special Issues: How to reflect different profiles Integration of existing frameworks Administration of frameworks
15.30-16.00	Self-certification. The pilots. Introduction by Bryan Maguire Interventions and discussions
16.00-16.30	Conclusions and winding up by Marlies Leegwater End of Workshop

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

Appendix 04

Workshop in The Hague 30 June 2006

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Appendix 05

2. workshop on national qualifications frameworks

Budapest 4 September 2006

Venue: Conference centre, Reviczky u. 6, H-1088 Budapest

Programme:

09.00-09.30	Arrival
09.30-09.40	Welcome by Eva Gönczi Introduction to the workshop by Mogens Berg
09.40-10.00	The Hungarian QF. The process by Eva Gönczi and József Temesi
10.00-11.00	A. Organising the process. Initial decision, stakeholders etc Introduction by Mogens Berg Interventions and discussion
11.00-11.15	Coffee break
11.15-12.30	B. Design. Levels, Profiles, outcome descriptors etc. Introduction by Mogens Berg Interventions and discussion
12.30-13.30	Lunch
13.30-14.30	C. Consultation and political approval Introduction by Mogens Berg Interventions and discussion
14.30-15.30	D. Administrative set up. Inclusion of qualifications. Implementation at institutional level Introduction by Mogens Berg/Bryan Maguire Interventions and discussion
15.30-15.45	Coffee break
15.45-16.30	E. Self-certification. The pilots. Introduction by Bryan Maguire Interventions and discussions
16.30-17.00	Summery by Mogens Berg and Eva Gönczi End of Workshop

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

Appendix 06

Workshop in Budapest 4 September 2006

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BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

Appendix 07

3. workshop on national qualifications frameworks

Athens 11-12 September 2006

Venue: The Danish Institute at Athens, Herefondos 14, Plaka, GR-105 58 Athens

Programme:

Monday 11 September

13.30-14.00	Arrival
14.00-14.10	Welcome by Erik Hallinger, Director of Danish Institute at Athens Introduction to the workshop by Mogens Berg
14.10-14.30	Recent higher education reforms in Greece By Secretary for Higher Education, Prof Athanasios Kyriazis
14.30-15.30	F. Organising the process. Initial decision, stakeholders etc Introduction by Mogens Berg Interventions and discussion
15.30-16.00	Coffee break
16.00-18.00	G. Design. Levels, Profiles, outcome descriptors etc. Introduction by Mogens Berg Interventions and discussion
	End of day 1

Tuesday 12 September

09.00-10.00	H. Consultation and political approval Introduction by Mogens Berg Interventions and discussion
10.00-11.00	I. Administrative set up. Inclusion of qualifications. Implementation at institutional level Introduction by Mogens Berg/Stuart Garvie Interventions and discussion
11.00-11.15	Coffee break
11.15-12.00	J. Self-certification. The pilots. Introduction by Stuart Garvie Interventions and discussions
12.00-12.30	Summery by Mogens Berg End of Workshop

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

Appendix 08

Workshop in Athens 11-12 September 2006

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Appendix 09

4. workshop on national qualifications frameworks

Madrid/Alcala 18-19 September 2006

Venue: Rectorado of the Universidad de Alcala de Henares

Programme:

Monday 18 September

13.00-14.00	Arrival and lunch
14.00-14.10	Welcome by Javier Vidal Garcia, General Director for Universities (Spanish Ministry of Education and Research). Introduction to the workshop by Mogens Berg
14.10-14.30	Higher Education reforms and Qualifications Framework in Spain By Jose-Gines Mora (Ministry of Education and Research).
14.30-15.30	K. Organising the process. Initial decision, stakeholders etc Introduction by Mogens Berg Interventions and discussion
15.30-16.00	Coffee break
16.00-18.00	L. Design. Levels, Profiles, outcome descriptors etc. Introduction by Mogens Berg Interventions and discussion
	End of day 1

Tuesday 12 September

09.00-10.00	M. Consultation and political approval Introduction by Mogens Berg Interventions and discussion
10.00-11.00	N. Administrative set up. Inclusion of qualifications. Implementation at institutional level Introduction by Mogens Berg/Bryan Maguire Interventions and discussion
11.00-11.15	Coffee break
11.15-12.00	O. Self-certification. The pilots. Introduction by Bryan Maguire Interventions and discussions
12.00-12.30	Summery by Mogens Berg End of Workshop

BFUG Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

Appendix 10

Workshop in Madrid/Alcala 18-19 September 2006

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Appendix 11

Reports from the pilot projects

IRELAND:

The Irish verification report is available on the web

http://www.enic-naric.net/documents/QF-Ireland_en.pdf

SCOTLAND:

The Scottish verification report is available on the web

http://www.enic-naric.net/documents/QF-Scotland_en.pdf

Bologna Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks

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Key issues for the European Higher Education Area – Social Dimension and Mobility

Report from the Bologna Process Working Group
on Social Dimension and Data on Mobility
of Staff and Students in Participating Countries



MAY 2007



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Government Offices
of Sweden

Key issues for the European Higher Education Area – Social Dimension and Mobility

Report from the Bologna Process Working Group
on Social Dimension and Data on Mobility
of Staff and Students in Participating Countries

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Table of contents

Part I. Introduction	4
I.1 Context	4
I.2 Composition of the Working Group	6
I.3 Summary of recommendations from the Working Group	8
Part II. Social Dimension.....	11
II.1 Defining the social dimension	11
II.2 Rationale for the social dimension.....	12
II.3 Commitments already made in the official Bologna documents.....	13
II.4 How to transform political commitments into actions	14
II.5 Data on the social dimension	16
II.5.1 Providers and availability	17
II.5.2 Data on main domains within the social dimension	20
II.5.3 Synthesis of data on the social dimension	38
II.5.4 Information from national reports for the London ministerial meeting	40
II.6 Recommendations from the Working Group	35
Part III. Mobility.....	45
III.1 Defining mobility	45
III.2 Rationale for mobility.....	46
III.3 Commitments already made in the official Bologna documents	47
III.4 How to transform political commitments into actions	48
III.5 Data on mobility	51
III.5.1 Mobility of students	51
III.5.2 Mobility of staff	57
III.6 Recommendations from the Working Group	65
Annexes to the report:	
ANNEX 1 Terms of reference: Working group on Social dimension and data on the mobility of staff and students in participating countries.....	67
ANNEX 2 Suggested approach of the work on national strategies on the social dimension.....	70
ANNEX 3 National reports for the London ministerial meeting: List of answers to question on measures being taken to widen access to quality higher education.....	73
ANNEX 4 National reports for the London ministerial meeting: List of answers to the questions on measures to remove obstacles to student and staff mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.....	75
ANNEX 5 Schematic synthesis of data availability on the social dimension..	77

Part I. Introduction

I.1 Context

This report has been prepared by the Working Group on Social Dimension and Data on Mobility of Staff and Students within the Bologna Process. The basis for the work has been the text on the social dimension and mobility in the Bergen Communiqué¹ agreed by the Bologna Process Ministers assembled in Bergen, Norway, on May 19-20 2005:

The social dimension

The social dimension of the Bologna Process is a constituent part of the EHEA and a necessary condition for the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA. We therefore renew our commitment to making quality higher education equally accessible to all, and stress the need for appropriate conditions for students so that they can complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background. 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.

Mobility

We recognise that mobility of students and staff among all participating countries remains one of the key objectives of the Bologna Process. Aware of the many remaining challenges to be overcome, we reconfirm our commitment to facilitate the portability of grants and loans, where appropriate through joint action, with a view to making mobility within the EHEA a reality. We shall intensify our efforts to lift obstacles to mobility by facilitating the delivery of visa and work permits and by encouraging participation in mobility programmes. We urge institutions and students to make full use of mobility programmes, advocating full recognition of study periods abroad within such programmes.

Taking stock on progress for 2007

We also charge the Follow-up Group with presenting comparable data on the mobility of staff and students as well as on the social and economic situation of students in participating countries as a basis for future stocktaking and reporting in time for the next Ministerial Conference. The future stocktaking will have to take into account the social dimension as defined above.

The tasks given to the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) concerning the social dimension and mobility, presented in the Bergen Communiqué, were agreed to be taken forward by appointing a joint working group for the two issues.

The terms of reference² for the Working Group (henceforth referred to as the WG) on Social Dimension and Data on the Mobility of Staff and Students in Participating Countries were agreed by the BFUG in November 2005. The terms of reference are summarised as follows:

- to define the concept of social dimension based on the ministerial communiqués of the Bologna Process
- to present comparable data on the social and economic situation of students in participating countries
- to present comparable data on the mobility of staff and students
- to prepare proposals as a basis for future stocktaking

The social dimension has been an integral part of the Bologna Process since the first ministerial follow-up meeting in Prague in 2001. The social dimension was included in the Prague Communiqué at the suggestion of the student representatives at the meeting. In the subsequent communiqués the social dimension has been recognised as crucial for the success of the European Higher Education Area.

Mobility of staff and students was one of the key objectives when the Bologna Process was established. Mobility was one of the main action lines in the Bologna Declaration in 1999. As a consequence most of the commitments made within the Bologna Process aim at promoting mobility.

At the outset, the WG would like to stress that strengthening the social dimension and enhancing mobility of staff and students cannot be done within higher education systems alone. It calls for the involvement of many actors. Achieving the commitments also depends to a great extent on increasing the aspirations of all children to fulfil their educational potential through the support of families and educational systems. Barriers to education should be addressed and overcome at all education levels. It is important that individuals receive proper support and guidance throughout their education before coming to higher education. Neither can solutions be found solely within the competence of education min-

² See Annex 1.

isters. When tackling these issues the WG quickly ran into questions related to direct and indirect financial support systems, social security systems, immigration policy and the delivery of visas and work permits etc. Some of these areas will be developed further below.

The WG would like to emphasise that success in strengthening the social dimension and enhancing mobility is partly dependent upon properly functioning and well-resourced public systems. This relates to the first statement of the Bologna Process Ministers in Prague in 2001 on higher education as a public good and a public responsibility. Another important principle stated in the Prague Communiqué is that students are full members of and partners in the higher education community.

Strengthening the social dimension of higher education and enhancing mobility for students and staff is an evolutionary process that requires the ongoing commitment and effort from all relevant stakeholders.

I.2 Composition of the Working Group

After the BFUG decision on the terms of reference for the WG was taken in November 2005 the group has expanded. The members of the WG have been:

Austria	Martin Unger Institute for Advanced Studies
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Semra Cavaljuga/Zenan Sabanac Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Croatia (since Spring 2006)	Melita Kovacevic Ministry of Science, Education and Sports
France	Hélène Lagier Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research
Ireland	Patrick Dowling/Brian Power Department of Education and Science
Luxemburg	Germain Dondelinger Ministry for Culture, Higher Education and Research
Russia (since Spring 2006)	Victor Chistokhvalov Peoples' Friendship University of Russia
Sweden	Annika (Persson) Pontén and Myrna Smitt Ministry of Education and Research
UK	Keith Andrews Department for Education and Skills

EUA (European University Association)	Nina Arnhold/David Crosier
EI (Education International) – Pan European Structure	Ann Fritzell
ESIB (the National Unions of Students in Europe)	Michael Hörig/Sanja Brus
Bologna Secretariat	Ann McVie

The WG has been chaired by Annika (Persson) Pontén, Sweden.

The WG established a subgroup. The subgroup has focussed on the collection and exploration of data. The task given to the WG concerning data collection was to explore data within three strands: the socio- and economic situation of students, the mobility of students and the mobility of staff. The two groups have worked in close cooperation, feeding discussions and results into each other's work. Several members of the WG have also participated in the subgroup. The subgroup was chaired by Germain Dondelinger, Luxembourg.

Members of the subgroup

Eurostat ³	Jean-Louis Mercy Education, Science and Culture Statistics Unit
Eurydice	Arnaud Desurmont European Unit Studies and Analyses
Eurostudent	Dominic Orr HiS (Hochschul-Informations- System), Eurostudent project, Germany
Luxembourg Income Study (LIS)	Thierry Kruten
EUA	Bogdan Voicu Romanian Academy of Science
ESIB	Colin Tück/Sanja Brus

The following countries also sent representatives to the subgroup:

Austria	Martin Unger Institute for Advanced Studies
France	Jean-Michel Durr Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research
Switzerland	Laurence Boegli Federal Department of Home Affairs
United Kingdom	Jain Ramnik Department for Education and Skills

³ Also representing UNESCO and OECD as far as the joint Unesco/OECD/Eurostat (UOE) data collection is concerned.

The WG has been in contact with other working groups within the Bologna Process, including the Stocktaking Working Group, the Working Group on Portability of Grants and Loans and the Working Group on the External Dimension of the Bologna Process. Some members of the WG on Social Dimension and Data on the Mobility of Staff and Students have also been members of these parallel working groups, which facilitated the exchange of information amongst the groups.

Several official Bologna seminars have been held directly related to the issues of social dimension and mobility within the Process⁴. The outcomes of these seminars have been fed into the discussion in the WG.

This report is the responsibility of the Working Group. The recommendations to Ministers are to be taken forward by BFUG as Ministers consider appropriate.

I.3 Summary of recommendations from the Working Group

A. SOCIAL DIMENSION of higher education

Strengthening the social dimension is key to enhancing the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA. There are, however, considerable differences and challenges in relation to the social dimension of higher education between the participating countries. The WG has found that it is not appropriate to narrowly define the social dimension or suggest a number of detailed actions for all countries to implement. Instead, the WG proposes that the following overall objective for the social dimension should be agreed by the ministers:

We strive for the societal goal that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of our populations. We therefore pledge to take action to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity.

Each country should develop its own strategy, including an action plan, for the social dimension. Initially such a strategy will call for the identification of possible under-represented groups.

⁴ Social dimension: *Exploring the Social Dimensions of the EHEA* 19-20 February 2003 in Greece, *Student participation in Governance in Higher Education* 12-14 June 2003 in Norway and *The social dimension of the EHEA and world-wide competition* 27-28 January 2005 in France.

Mobility: *Designing policies for mobile students* 10-12 October 2004 in the Netherlands, The EI-ESIB-UCU Seminar *Making Bologna a Reality – Mobility of Staff and Students* 8-9 February 2007 in the UK.

Concerning data on the social dimension, there is no comprehensive survey, which covers the necessary aspects of the social dimension. The WG has also found that there are several important data gaps and challenges in relation to the social dimension: not all Bologna countries are covered, there is no common deadline for surveys, requirements for indicators need to be matched with data availability and comparability, statistics from different sectors need to be brought together to get a fair picture of the social dimension and most of the currently available data is not appropriate for analysis of change. However, the feasibility of a report on the social dimension in the EHEA has been demonstrated by the WG, but further work is required.

The WG proposes actions at both national and European level:

Measures at national and institutional level

- By 2009 the countries should report to the BFUG on their national strategies for the social dimension, including action plans and measures to show their impact. All stakeholders should actively participate in and support this work at the national level. The WG suggests an approach to the work on national strategies in Annex 2 to this report.
- Student survey data should be collected with the aim of providing comparable and reliable data concerning the social dimension.

Measures at BFUG level

- The collection of data on the social dimension needs to go beyond the present stocktaking method. The BFUG should entrust Eurostat, in conjunction with Eurostudent, with a mandate to develop more comparable and reliable data to inform progress towards the overall objective for the social dimension in all Bologna countries. Data should cover participative equity in higher education as well as employability for graduates. This task should be overseen by the BFUG and a report should be submitted for the 2009 ministerial meeting.
- To give an overview of the work on strategies and action plans carried out in participating countries in order to exchange experiences.

B. MOBILITY of students and staff

The promotion of mobility of students and staff is at the core of the Bologna Process. The objective should be *an EHEA where students and staff can be truly mobile*. However, the participating countries face challenges concerning both the facilitation of mobility itself and finding comparable and reliable data on mobility. Among the obstacles to mobility, issues related to immigration, recognition of study and work periods abroad and lack of financial incentives feature prominently. Data are

scarce and those that are there show significant weaknesses in giving a full picture of mobility. First of all, there is no common and appropriate definition of mobility for statistical purposes. Also, there are no data covering all Bologna countries, no comparable and reliable data on genuine student mobility, hardly any data on staff mobility and the staff data that is there is not comparable between countries. Further work on mobility data is required.

The WG suggests that a wide definition of mobility should be used within the Bologna Process. It should cover all forms and lengths of mobility within higher education in a global perspective:

Mobility of students: Refers to a study period in a country other than that of prior permanent residence or prior education (completed or ongoing) for a period of study or a full degree.

Mobility of staff: Refers to a working period in a country other than that of prior permanent residence or prior employment (terminated or ongoing) for a limited or extended period.

The WG proposes actions at both national and European level:

Measures at national and institutional level

- By 2009 the countries should report to the BFUG on actions taken at national level to remove obstacles to and promote the benefits of mobility of students and staff, including measures to assess their impact at a future date.
- Countries should focus on the main national challenges: delivery of visas and work permits, the full implementation of established recognition procedures and creating incentives for mobility for both individuals and higher education institutions.
- To address the institutional attitude towards and responsibility for mobility. This includes making mobility an institutional responsibility.
- To facilitate mobility through strengthening the social dimension of mobile students and staff.
- To support the development of joint programmes as one way of enhancing trust between countries and institutions.

Measures at BFUG level

- The collection of data on mobility of staff and students needs to go beyond the present stocktaking method. The BFUG should entrust Eurostat, in conjunction with Eurostudent, with a mandate to provide comparable and reliable data on actual mobility across the EHEA.
- The BFUG should also consider how best to overcome the many obstacles to mobility of students and staff. Progress in this work should be reported for the ministerial meeting in 2009.

Part II. Social Dimension

The WG was given the following tasks in relation to the social dimension:

- to define the concept of social dimension based on the ministerial communiqués of the Bologna Process
- to present comparable data on the social and economic situation of students in participating countries
- to prepare proposals as a basis for future stocktaking

II.1 Defining the social dimension

The 45 countries that participate in the Bologna Process are **extraordinarily diverse**, even considering only the crudest economic and statistical indicators. The countries range in population from less than 1 000 individuals to over 140 million, in the number of public higher education institutions from 1 to over 1 200, and in student numbers from 330 to more than 8.5 million. Seven of the top ten world economies ranked by GDP per capita are part of the Bologna Process, but one participating state came in 136th out of the 181 world economies, and another five are found below 100th place. As well as this immense spread of quantitative factors, there are also very significant differences in social and political culture and in the systems and structures of education in the different states⁵.

Partly due to the vast differences between the Bologna countries the WG considers that the social dimension should be **defined broadly rather than specifically**. It is not appropriate to narrowly define the social dimension or suggest a number of detailed actions that might be unduly difficult or inappropriate to deliver for all countries involved. The social dimension should be regarded as the **process** leading to the objective (see sections II.4 and II.6) that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of our populations. This process will be different depending on the country and individuals involved and we have to respect those differences in order to progress in this area.

The broad definition of the social dimension is made through formulating why the social dimension of higher education needs to be developed, what the countries should be aiming at and describing areas and actions that could be considered the core of the social dimension and that would lead us to achieve the overall objective for the social dimension.

⁵ *Constructing Paths to Staff Mobility in the European Higher Education Area: from Individual to Institutional Responsibility*, Conor Cradden 2007.

II.2 Rationale for the social dimension

Strengthening the social dimension is key to enhancing the attractiveness and competitiveness of the European Higher Education Area. It will foster social cohesion, reduce inequalities, raise the level of competencies in society and maximise the potential of individuals in terms of their personal development and their contribution to a sustainable and democratic knowledge society.

The rationale behind the social dimension of higher education is at least three-fold:

Firstly, it is a question of **equal opportunity**. Knowledge plays a stronger role in our societies than ever before. All individuals should have equal opportunities to take advantage of higher education leading to personal development, preparation for sustainable employment and life as an active citizen. A strong social dimension is a necessary prerequisite for all students to successfully enter, carry out and complete their studies.

Secondly, taking steps to meet the increasing demand for quality higher education creates opportunities to **reinforce the social, cultural and economic development of our societies**. Education is vital for sustainable economic growth, which is a prerequisite for a stable and wealthy society. Opening up opportunities to higher education for everyone means maximising the potential within societies, contributing to social equity and ensuring the development and maintenance of an advanced knowledge base. This is particularly relevant in Europe with an ageing population. Inequities in education and training systems increase the risk of unemployment, social exclusion and, in the end, result in large costs to society. Higher education also plays a key role in developing and maintaining a democratic culture. Widening opportunities for everybody to participate in higher education will contribute to the strengthening of pluralistic democracy and tolerance.

Thirdly, a strong social dimension **enhances the quality and attractiveness of European higher education**. With equal access opportunities and an active and questioning approach from the students the traditions and practices within the institutions are challenged. Different perspectives meet, challenge and develop the academic culture and approaches to teaching and research. A strong social dimension with a study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience will make European higher education attractive for students and staff from other countries and continents.

II.3 Commitments already made in the official Bologna documents

The social dimension has been an integral part of the Bologna Process since the Ministerial meeting in Prague. There are a number of commitments concerning the social dimension already made in the official Bologna documents. The commitments concern both the **social dimension in the home country of the student** and the **social dimension of mobility**. The commitments show that the social dimension is relevant to all action lines within the Process.

The social dimension in the home country of the student

1. Quality higher education should be equally accessible to all (Berlin and Bergen Communiqués)
2. Students should have appropriate studying and living conditions, so that they can complete their studies within an appropriate period of time without obstacles related to their social and economic background (Berlin and Bergen Communiqués)
3. Opportunities for all citizens, in accordance with their aspirations and abilities, to follow the lifelong learning paths into and within higher education should be improved (Sorbonne Declaration and Berlin Communiqué)
4. Governments should take measures to provide students with guidance and counselling services with a view to widening access (Bergen Communiqué)
5. Students are full partners in higher education governance and should participate in and influence the organisation and content of higher education (Prague and Berlin Communiqués)
6. Governments should take measures to help students, especially from socially disadvantaged groups, in financial and economic aspects with a view to widening access (Bergen Communiqué)

The social dimension of mobility

7. Ministers should take measures to facilitate the portability of national loans and grants (Berlin and Bergen Communiqués)
8. Mobility should be promoted by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement with particular attention to:
 - for students, access to study and training opportunities and to related services
 - for teachers, researchers and administrative staff, recognition and valorisation of periods spent in a European context researching, teaching and training, without prejudicing their statutory rights (Bologna Declaration)

II.4 How to transform political commitments into actions

The political commitments already made cover the social dimension in the home country of the student as well as the social dimension of mobility. The social dimension of mobility is discussed in the section on mobility (see part II).

The political commitments in the Bologna Declaration and the subsequent communiqués are **to a large extent general in character**, stating for example that “students should have appropriate studying and living conditions, so that they can complete their studies within an appropriate period of time without obstacles related to their social and economic background”. As mentioned earlier the social dimension should be regarded as a process that needs to be dealt with in every country in the Bologna Process. At the same time Ministers have made certain commitments covering aspects of the social dimension.

In order to implement the commitments made the Bologna countries **need to agree on what we are aiming at**. The concept of social dimension needs to be turned into an **overall objective** and **actions that will deliver these commitments** and lead us to the objective. Therefore, the WG has transformed the political commitments into an overall objective and possible political actions.

As stated in the rationale, **a basis for the social dimension is the question of equal opportunities**. For equal opportunities to be effectively implemented, discrimination must be absent both in policy and in practice. This may be achieved formally through legislation in line with the European Convention on Human Rights, providing guarantees that higher education is accessible to all without direct or indirect discrimination on any actual or presumed ground such as sex, race, sexual orientation, physical or other impairment, marital status, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, association with a national community, property, birth or other status. Beyond such de jure conditions to ensure the absence of discrimination, the Council of Europe recommendation No. R (98) 3 on access to higher education also points out that, “the promotion of effective equality may require the adoption of special measures where this is necessary and consistent with the principle of non-discrimination to take account of the specific conditions of individuals or groups in society.”

In order to find a common aim for the Bologna countries concerning the work on the social dimension of higher education, the WG has agreed on the following **objective for the social dimension**:

We strive for the societal goal that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of our populations. We therefore pledge to take action to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity.

While committing to the same objective, the means of reaching the objective should be adapted to national priorities and circumstances. The objective should be transferred into national strategies for the social dimension, including action plans and measures to show their impact.

Below, the WG has identified a number of actions that could be considered the core of the social dimension. They should be considered a list of possible actions that could be taken in each country. The actions are addressed to governments and higher education institutions or other relevant stakeholders, according to the allocation of responsibilities in each country. In arriving at this list of actions, the WG focussed on actions that would not be covered by the work of other Bologna working groups. The action areas below are possible areas to be covered in national action plans. In Annex 2 to this report, further guidance in the development of national strategies and action plans is provided.

Possible actions and tools to be implemented in participating countries:

Measures to promote equal opportunities for access, participation and completion

- Anti-discrimination legislation covering higher education
- Admission rules that are simple, fair and transparent

Measures to widen access to and participation in higher education

- Outreach programs for underrepresented groups as defined nationally
- Flexible delivery of higher education
- Flexible learning paths into and within higher education
- Transparency of qualifications and recognition of prior learning
- Incentives for higher education institutions to take action to widen access and participation

Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience

A, Provision of academic services

- Guidance (academic and careers) and tutoring
- Retention measures (modification of curricula, flexibility of delivery, tracking academic success etc.)
- Working tools and environment (well functioning libraries, lecture halls and seminar rooms, internet access, access to scientific data bases etc.)

B, Provision of social services

- Counselling
- Targeted support for students with special needs and students with children
- Appropriate housing conditions for all students
- Provision of healthcare
- Provision of transportation, student canteens etc.

Student participation in the governance and organisation of higher education

- Legislation or other measures to ensure student participation in higher education governance
- Provisions for the existence of and exercise of influence by student organisations
- Student evaluations of courses, programmes and institutions, including action plans and follow-up of actions taken

Finances in order to start and complete studies

- Financial and legal advice for students
- Appropriate and coordinated national financial support systems that are transparent
- Targeted support for disadvantaged groups as defined nationally
- Support measures for students with children

Monitoring:

The participating countries should establish national measures, in conjunction with student representatives, to monitor and evaluate the impact of their social dimension strategies and action plans.

The above areas have **guided the mapping and collection of data** concerning the social dimension and the discussion on stocktaking in this area. **Employability** is not part of our broad definition of the social dimension in higher education. However, the WG recognises that employability is an important factor for students when choosing their field of studies and when seeking their way into the labour market after graduation. To get an education with labour market relevance, to have contacts with the labour market and possible future employers are important during studies.

II.5 Data on the social dimension

Given the definition of the social dimension, the WG has looked for **data and indicators in the following domains:**

- widening access,
- study framework (study environment and the financial situation of students), and
- completion of studies.

The employability of degree holders has also been under consideration although this item is beyond the definition of the social dimension as put forward by the WG.

To assess the availability of data the subgroup on data collection has included international organisations in its composition (see section I.2 for information on the participants).

To ensure the highest degree of reliability and comparability of the data assessed, the WG has only analysed data collected by international organisations; therefore, national providers have not been included in the analysis.

At the outset, the WG checked the availability of data for the domains defined above. There is no comprehensive survey for the social dimension of education as such, although multi-purpose surveys do exist which could also answer issues in relation to education and specific information is available regarding, for example, financial aid to students. Moreover, more data will become available over the coming years. The ensuing part of the report will therefore endeavour to clarify what data are available, to identify the data gaps in relation to the four domains mentioned above and to suggest developments in the field.

II.5.1 Providers and availability

A. The providers

In the area of educational statistics, Eurostat, which is part of the European Commission services provides comparable statistics and indicators on key aspects of education systems across Europe and on the outcomes of education.

Administrative data cover participation and completion of education programmes, personnel in education and the cost and type of resources dedicated to education. The main source of data is the joint UNESCO Institute of Statistics/OECD/Eurostat (UOE) questionnaires on education statistics, which constitute the core database on education. Countries provide data, which come from administrative records, on the basis of commonly agreed definitions. Data are collected on

- enrolment,
- entrants,
- graduates,
- educational personnel, and
- financing of education.

Specific Eurostat tables also cover regional data, language learning as well as detailed data on the fields of education and the BA/MA structure (to follow-up on the Bologna Process).

Eurostat also collects information on the socio-economic status of households and persons via its specific social surveys. In these surveys, information on students in tertiary education may also be found but it needs specific treatment and analysis (related mainly to the reliability of data). Possible data sources to be explored in this respect are: the EU-Labour Force Survey and the EU-Social Income and Living Conditions Survey. Additionally, in 2009, the EU-LFS ad hoc module on "Entry of the young people into the labour market" will provide more detailed and reliable information on employment related topics (including students at all levels of education).

Eurydice is an institutional network for gathering, monitoring, processing and circulating reliable and readily comparable information on education systems and policies throughout Europe. It has been established by the European Commission and Member States to boost cooperation by improving understanding of systems and policies. Since 1995, Eurydice has also been an integral part of Socrates, the Community action programme in education. It is now part of the new integrated lifelong learning programme (ILLP).

Eurydice has surveyed several aspects of the social dimension of higher education in order to produce with Eurostat the joint publication *Key data on higher education 2007*; in particular, financial support for students and private contributions. The Eurydice network provides contextualised information on educational systems, with the legislative framework , i.e. laws, decrees and regulations, as its main source of information. The joint publication should be available before the London ministerial meeting. Financial contributions to higher education institutions paid by students can be fees, be they administrative fees or tuition fees, or membership of a students' union. Public financial support is divided into:

- Types: to cover student living costs, accommodation, fees;
- Forms: grants, loans, combinations of grants and loans, family allowances, tax relief for dependent students, minimum and maximum amounts established by regulatory framework;
- Conditions of award: civil status, student income, studies undertaken (level, length, specific year of study, successful study), others (fixed number of years, distance criterion).

Eurostudent is a project that aims to provide information that is relevant to education policy, by comparing international social and economic data of student life mainly through student surveys. Since its inception the Eurostudent project has been coordinated by HiS (Hochschul-Informations-System) in Hanover, Germany. Eurostudent focuses on the student body in higher education and especially on their socio-economic living conditions and their international mobility. Eurostudent provides data on:

- access to higher education,
- study financing and its sources,
- income and expenditures,
- housing,
- students' time budgets,
- language proficiency, and
- study-related stays abroad.

Eurostudent is complementary to the Eurydice/Eurostat joint publication (*Key data on higher Education*) mentioned above. Whereas Eurydice is a system descriptor of the normative framework, Eurostudent gives an indication of how the system works. Its data come from national student surveys based on mutually agreed questions and indicators.

EUA Trends series is another relevant survey. It provides the perspectives of the rectors and vice-rectors of European higher education institutions, focusing on the Bologna Process. The latest iteration of the survey, Trends V, was carried out between December 2005 and March 2006. Among other themes, it provides data on:

- access to higher education,
- services provided by higher education institutions to their students,
- promotion of mobility, and
- the importance of employability.

LIS is a research centre that maintains a database consisting of harmonised micro-data from social and economic household surveys from different countries and can thus provide information on the socio-economic background of the student.

B. Availability of data

In spite of the absence of a comprehensive data collection on the social dimension of higher education, the surveys of the above-mentioned **international organisations** can nevertheless deliver valuable information. The various angles from which they view the social dimension can be seen as complementary. However it is essential to bear in mind that the studies work to **different timetables and have a differing coverage of the Bologna countries**.

Coverage varies greatly, with no one body able to provide all its data for all Bologna countries. Eurostat and Eurydice focus on members of the European Union and associated countries. In the last Eurostudent report from 2005 eleven European countries participated. In its current survey Eurostudent will cover over 20 countries from the Bologna region. EUA covers basically all the Bologna countries in its Trends V report, except Albania, Armenia and Lichtenstein, while for Russia and Ukraine the reliability of the data is lower, due to the lower number of HEIs that answered the survey. LIS can provide data for 17 countries, ten of which are also covered by Eurostudent.

Furthermore, the various organisations work according to **different time schedules**. Eurostudent will report with data from 2006/2007 in 2008, LIS has data predominantly for 2004 and Eurydice will report in 2007 with 2006 data. The Eurostat survey is published annually with data published in 2006 predominantly relating to 2003 and 2004. The Trends V report will be presented in 2007 based on data from 2005 and 2006.

As far as the **different perspectives** are concerned, Eurostat collects administrative data to monitor, *inter alia*, the Lisbon Agenda, Eurydice provides contextual information on education systems, Eurostudent is a student survey, Trends surveys institutions' responses to the Bologna Process and LIS is an income study.

It is apparent from the above that there are gaps in the participating countries covered, that the perspective changes according to the initial objective of the international organisation and finally, that there is no common date for publication.

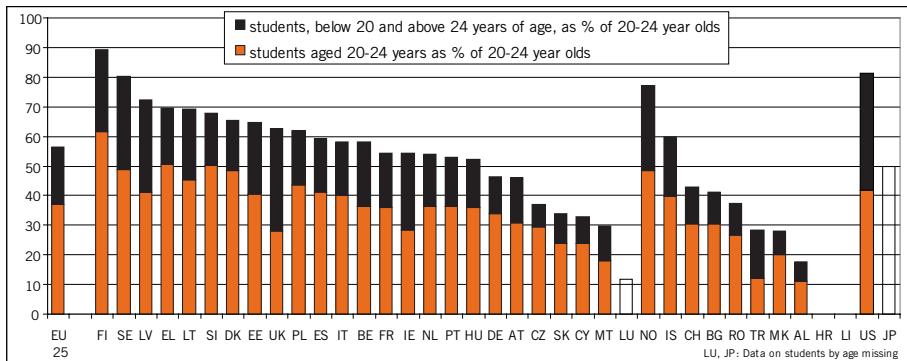
II.5.2 Data on main domains within the social dimension

A. Widening access

According to the rationale for the social dimension higher education systems should provide equitable conditions and relations necessary for the equal and collective realisation of self-development and self-determination of all social groups in higher education.

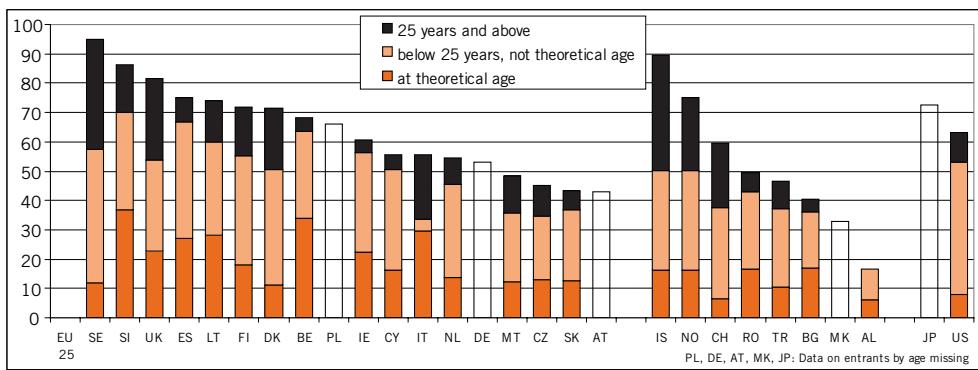
Participation rates shed a light on this dimension. Eurostat provides data on the current participation rate by age, region and sex, as well as on the distribution among the different fields of education by sex. These data show that in the EU 25 close to 17 million students were enrolled in higher education in 2002/03, an increase of 2.5 million or 17 % over a five-year period. The total number of students enrolled depends not only on the entrance rates to higher education but also on the duration of higher education studies (see fig. 1). The entrance rate is calculated as the total number of new entrants relative to the population in the theoretical age group for transition to tertiary education (see fig. 2). This needs to be related to the varying output of secondary education both within Member States and across Europe.

Fig. 1: Students in tertiary education 2002/2003 as a percentage of 20-24 years old in the population



Source: Eurostat, Education Statistics

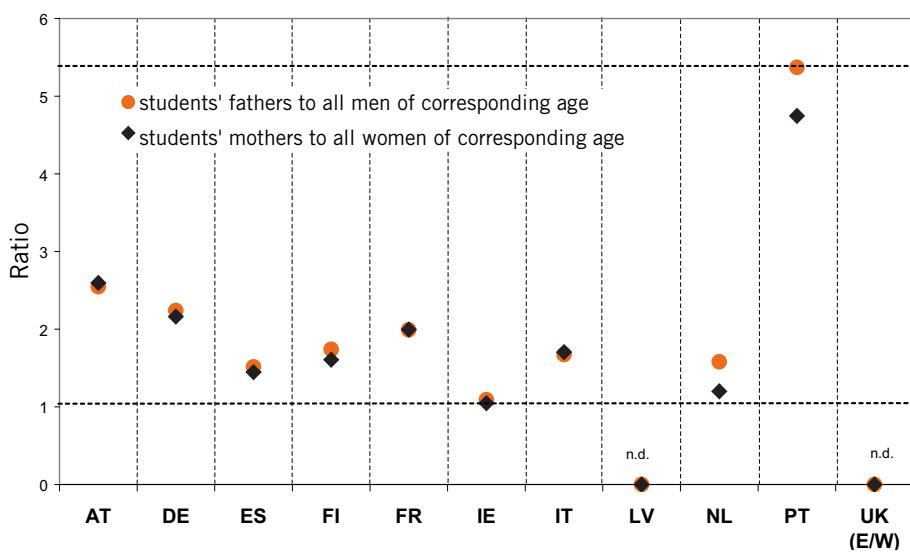
Fig. 2: Entrance rates to tertiary education in 2002/2003 – New entrants as a percentage of population in the theoretical age for entering tertiary education



Source: Eurostat, Education Statistics

A further indicator for a policy of participative equity in higher education is the **social make-up** of the student body. A review of available studies undertaken by the OECD suggests the hypothesis that a significantly higher percentage of children from parents with professional backgrounds undertake tertiary level studies as compared with children of parents with manual backgrounds. Eurostudent and LIS provide relevant data on the socio-economic background of the student population. Eurostudent focuses on students' parents' educational attainment and in part on parents' occupational status as proxy measures for social make-up (see fig. 3).

Fig. 3: Educational background – share of students' parents with higher education to all men/women of corresponding age groups with higher education

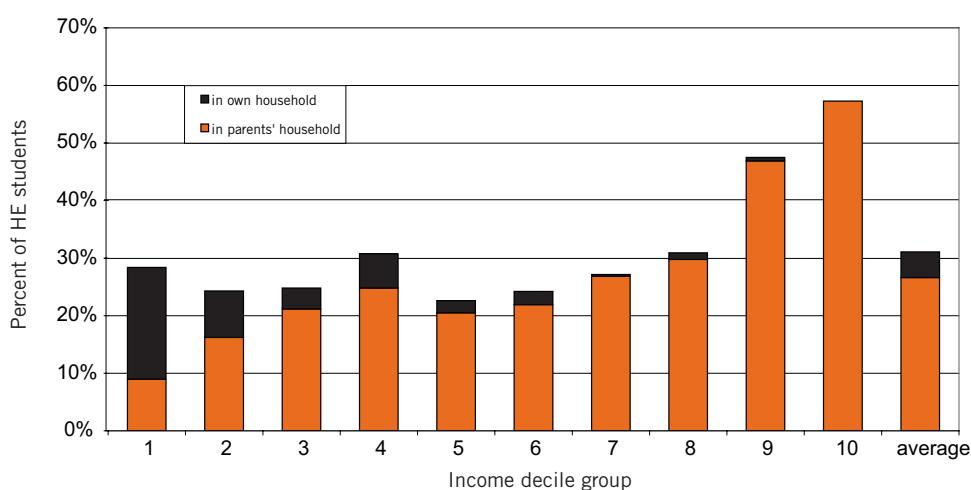


Source: Eurostudent 2005

This graphic shows the relative share of students whose parents have graduated from higher education in comparison to all men/women of corresponding age groups with higher education and, therefore, give an indication of equality in the student population. A ratio of one would signify that the student population was fully representative of the whole population on this measure. Figure 3 shows, however, that this group is overrepresented in the student population in almost all countries by a ratio of near to or above two.

The LIS data is a further source of information on distribution by socio-economic group, mainly by poverty or income distribution deciles, but also by occupation of head of household or skills level (see fig. 4 that shows an example from France).

Fig. 4: Share of higher education students among 18-24 year olds in France, by income decile 2000



Source: Data from the Luxembourg Income Study.

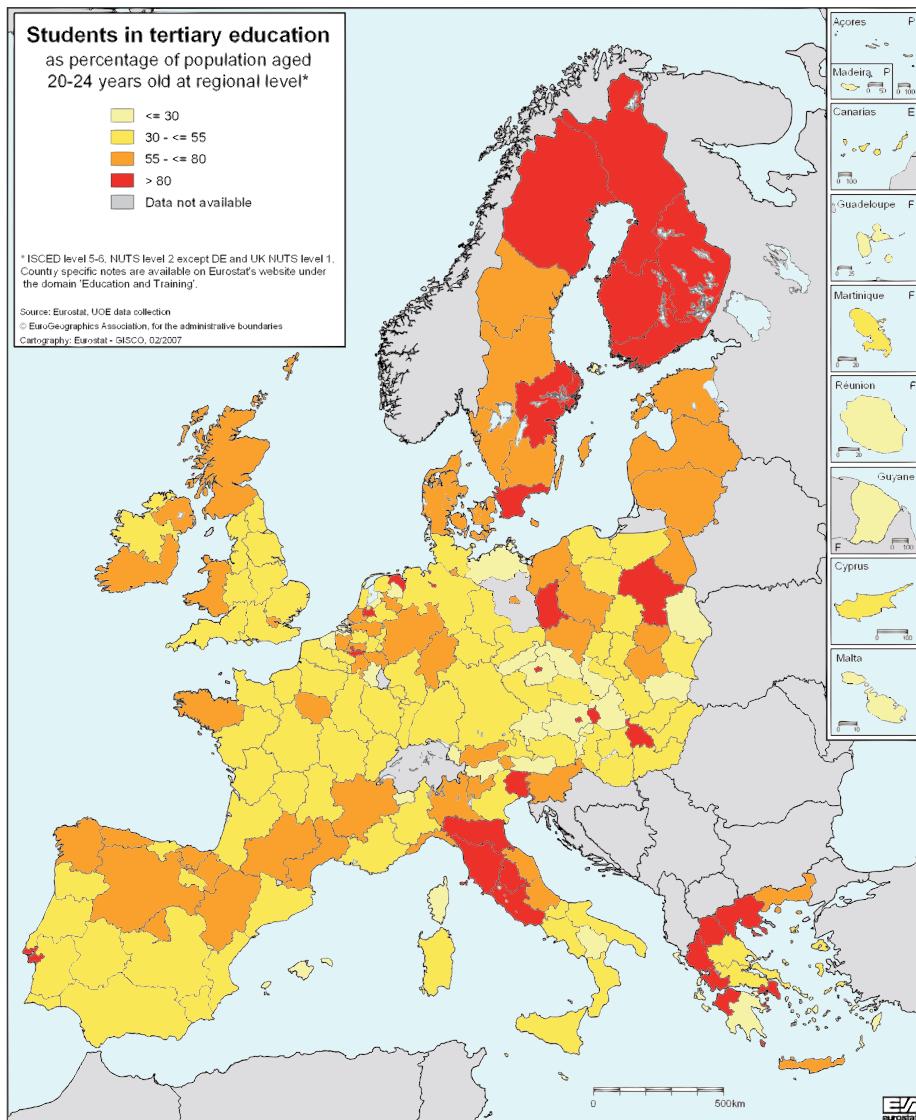
Note: Students temporarily away (for the academic year) are considered as being part of their parents' household.

The chart shows the percentage of students in high education among all persons aged 18 to 24 in France in 2000 by income decile of the household to which there are connected (whereby students forming their own household are separated from those still connected to their parents' household). Participation in higher education increases with the household income for young persons who remain attached to their parents' household (with the participation in the last decile being more than 6 times larger than in the first one).

The LIS data set is available as micro-data and can, therefore, also be used to model participation in higher education in respect of the impact of various demographic and economic characteristics of individuals (such as age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, household composition and income, region). Country level data on institutional factors (as taken from other sources) could also be added to the model to better explain participation into higher education. Such analysis would require a substantial research component and should be focused on a limited number of countries.

Another less frequently cited dimension of participative equity relates to **geography**. In some countries like Norway geographical inequity in tertiary-level access is a policy concern. For potential university students commuting distance to the higher education institution has a significant impact on students with low incomes. However, although data on participation by geographic region are available (see fig. 5), there is limited data which can be differentiated by socio-economic factors.

Fig. 5: Students in tertiary education 2002/2003 as percentage of 20-24 years old in the population at regional level

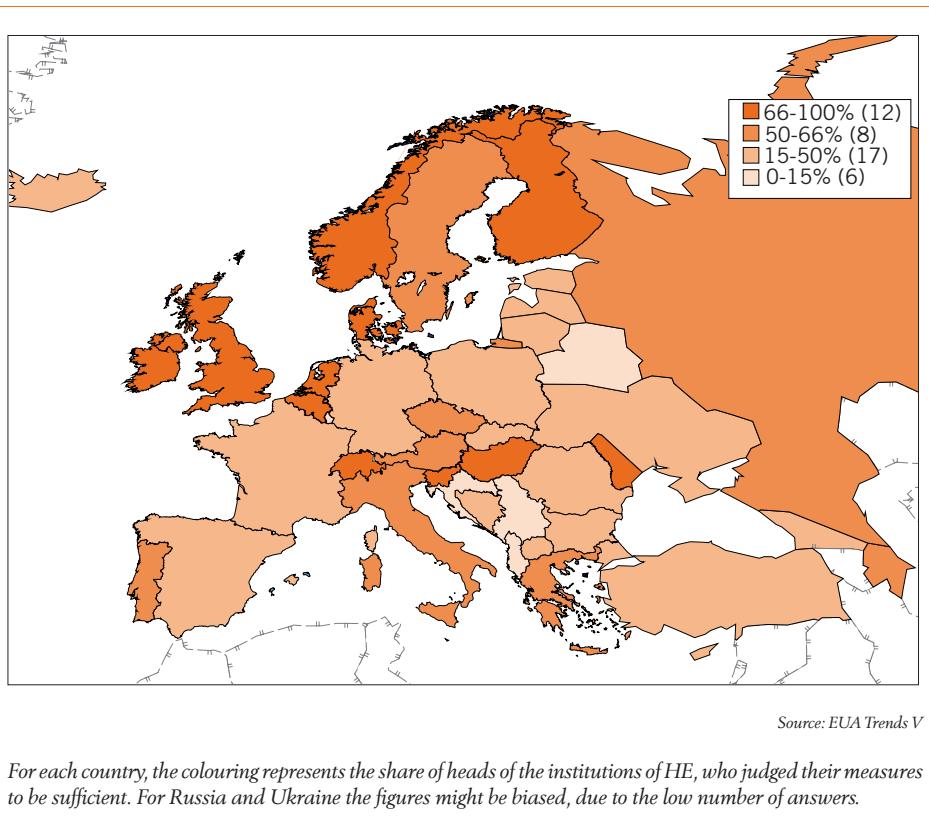


Source: Eurostat, Education statistics

The participation rate is based on the number of students registered in an establishment located in the concerned region and the resident population aged 20-24. It shows both the general national level of participation, and also the concentration of establishments in some regions.

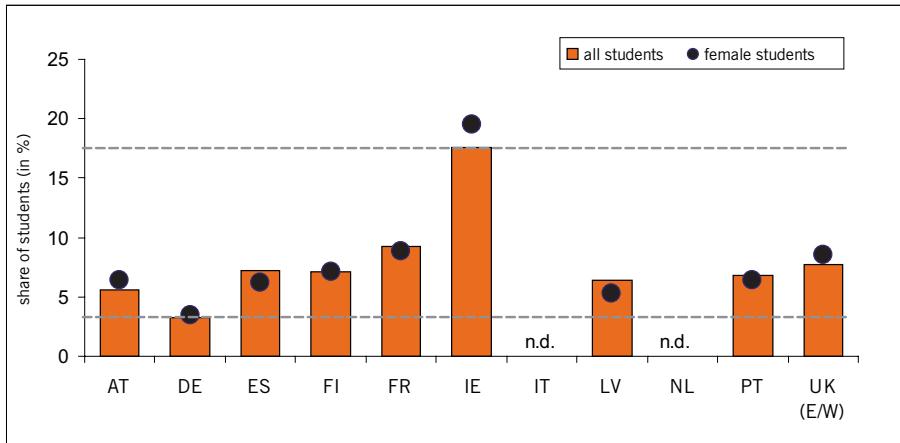
The attainment of the objective of participative equity also needs to be set against other strategies used to promote and widen access. The promotion of positive role models like image campaigns such as girls' day, outreach programmes for under-represented groups feature among them. The EUA Trends Report will touch upon such measures initiated by institutions of higher education (see fig. 6).

Fig. 6: Share of institutions of higher education per country who judge their measures to improve access for disadvantaged students to be sufficient



A specific policy in this area is the **recognition of prior learning** and the existence of **flexible learning paths** into higher education. Eurostudent uses non-traditional routes into higher education as an indicator, leaving it to the countries to define these routes themselves (see fig. 7). Work experience prior to higher education is also reported as an indicator of prior-experience pre-entry into higher education in the Eurostudent survey; work being defined as having been in employment for longer than six months, apprenticeships included and holiday jobs excluded.

Fig. 7: Proportion of students entering higher education via ‘non-traditional’ routes



Source: Eurostudent 2005

This figure shows the proportion of students enrolled in higher education who have entered through “second-chance” or “non-traditional” routes, which are usually part of widening access programmes. According to the two-tier reporting system of Eurostudent, the specific qualifications are reported in the Eurostudent National Profiles for individual countries. For instance, the Irish National Profile reports that whilst most students enter higher education on the basis of traditional upper secondary qualifications (the Leaving Certificate), 9% obtain access on the basis of years (i.e. being over 23 years old), 2% through further education qualifications, 3% through special access programmes and the remainder through other qualifications.

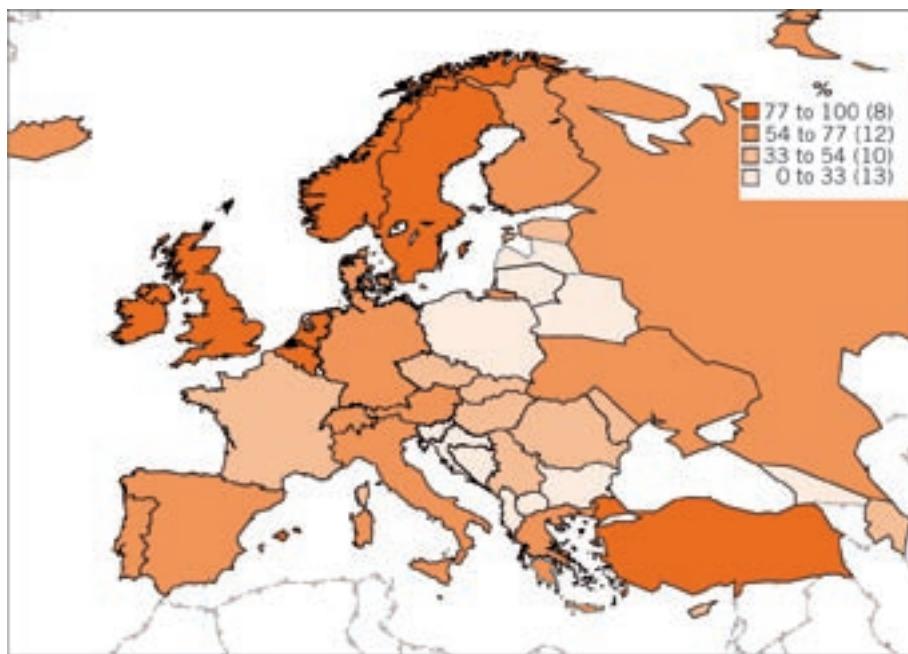
B. The study framework

The study environment

The social dimension is also defined as a study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience.

The study environment includes the provision of academic and social services. The social services include, for example, counselling, health care, childcare, canteens and accommodation, but also transportation. The EUA Trends Report contains information on the provision of counselling at institutional level (see fig. 8), and the *Key data on higher education* (Eurydice/Eurostat joint publication) inform on the number of places available in public halls of residence and on the awarding criteria and the minimum and maximum amount of cost for renting.

Fig. 8: Share of institutions of higher education per country providing counselling services

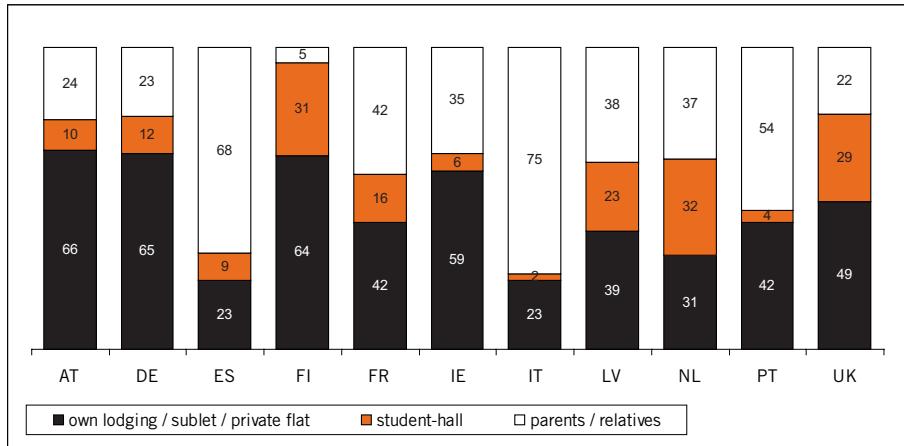


Source: EUA Trends V

For each country, the colouring represents the share of heads of HEIs, who responded that their institutions provide counseling services. For Russia and Ukraine the figures might be biased, due to the low number of answers.

Eurostudent contains information on both the type and the cost of accommodation (fig. 9 and 10). The LIS surveys also provide indicators such as distributions by household composition to get answers on issues like whether students are the head/spouse of a household and if so whether they have children or if they still live with their parents. In both the Eurostudent and LIS reports accommodation is analysed as an indication of different lifestyles, as well as of income/expenses. Accommodation is therefore closely related to the student's financial means and thus also pertains to the overall cost of tertiary education.

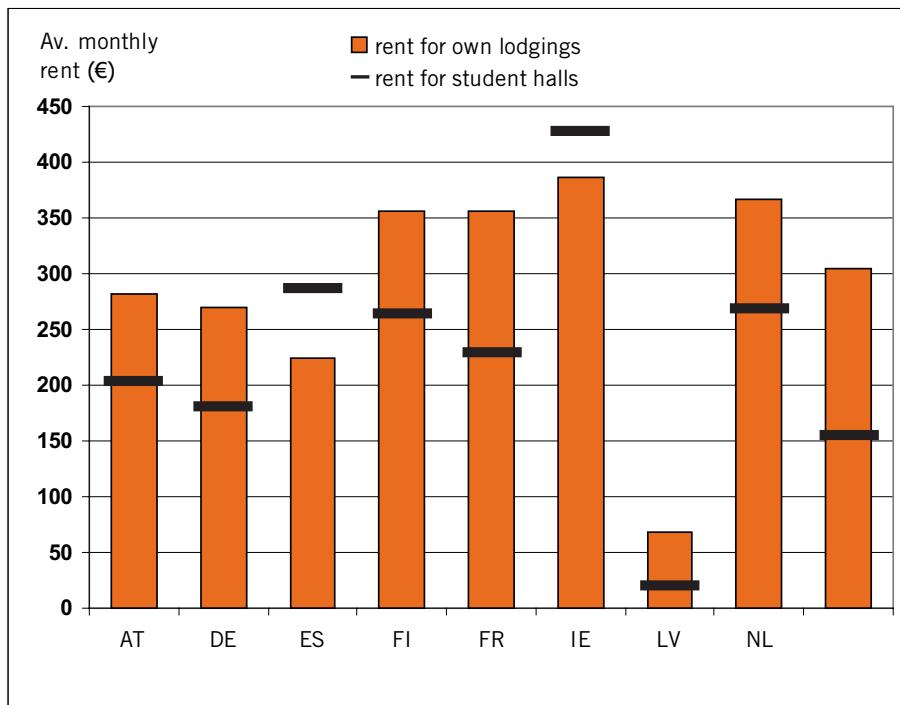
Fig. 9: Share of students living in various forms of accommodation



Source: Eurostudent 2005

In Figure 9 the indicator describes the place of residence and the conditions under which students live during their studies. A comparison of the countries here shows two clear patterns: In some countries the majority of students live in their own lodgings, whilst in others a large share continue to live with their parents. Student halls offer a third form of accommodation. The rent is often subsidised by the state. Analysing these shares by age highlights the fact that the older students are, the more likely they are to live in their own household.

Fig. 10: Comparison of cost of accommodation



Source: Eurostudent 2005

Figure 10 compares the monthly rent for halls of residence to rent for private accommodation (own lodgings). The diagram confirms that in the majority of countries – irrespective of the amount paid for rent – it is cheaper to stay in halls of residence. The exceptions to this situation are Spain and Ireland. However, in these countries less than 10% of students take up this form of residence. The highest shares of students living in halls are to be found in the Netherlands, Finland and UK, where near to a third of all students reside in this form of accommodation.

Finances in order to start and complete studies

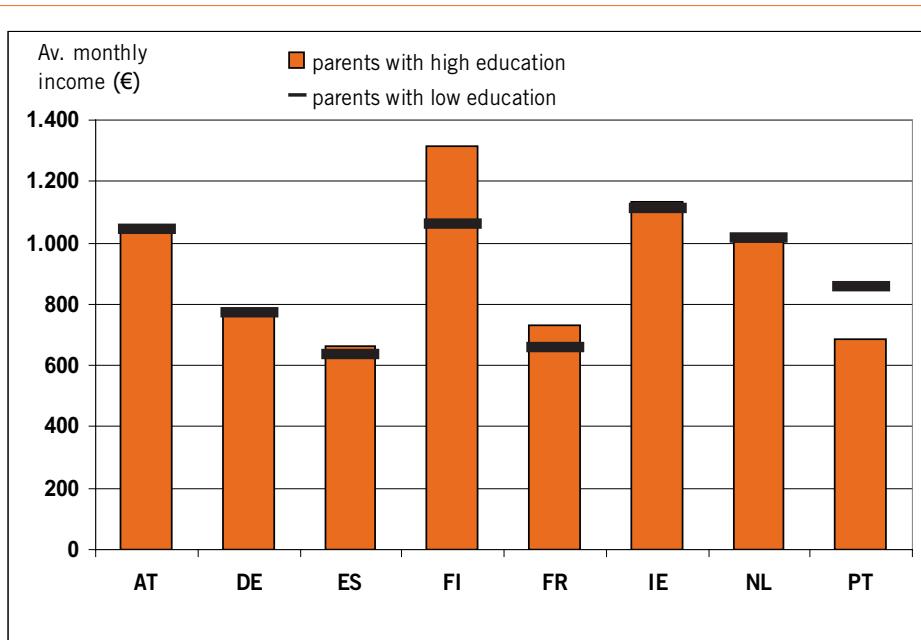
This chapter looks into the availability of data on student income and student expenses. **Student income** is defined by state assistance, employment and family support. State assistance is subdivided into:

- the type of financial support, i.e. what it covers: administration costs, tuition costs, living costs,
- the form of financial support, i.e. grants (non-repayable), loans (repayable) or a combination of grants and loans and
- the conditions of awarding this state assistance.

Eurydice provides information on the regulatory framework for the items above including existence of specific support for students who are parents while Eurostudent defines the student's income both in terms of its composition and its amounts. The Eurostudent study differentiates between students maintaining their own household and students living with their family/relatives. Financial analyses

focus on students maintaining their own households following the assumption that students' assessment of the income-mix is more robust when they are largely responsible for the management of their own finances. Eurostudent correlates the various sources of income by students' socio-economic group using the highest education qualification of students' parents as a proxy (see fig. 11, 12, 13 and 14).

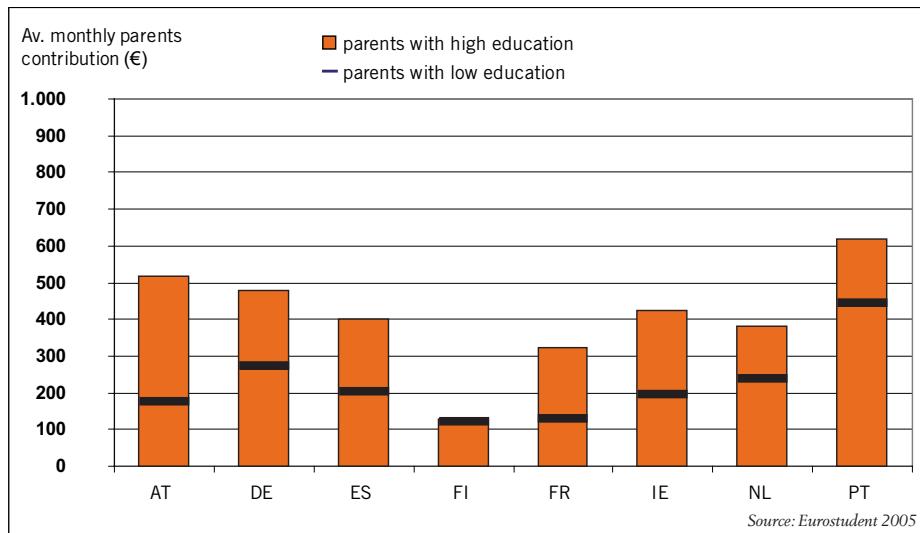
Fig. 11: A comparison of total income (all sources) by parents' education



Source: Eurostudent 2005

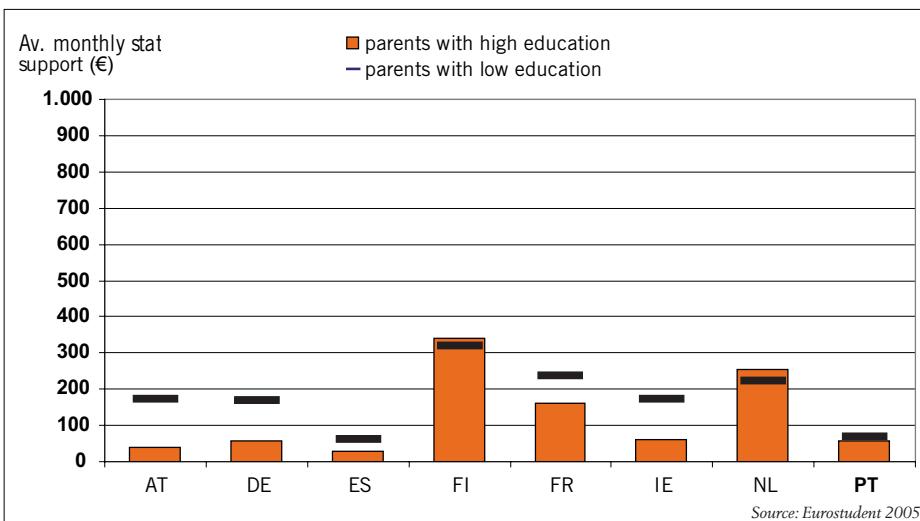
The Eurostudent data presented in figure 11 shows that the majority of countries display only small differences between the sums of total income by socio-economic group. There are, however, large differences in the composition of this income (see below). Differences in a students' total income are also related to obligatory payments, which students in some countries have to make to their higher education institutions (e.g. tuition fees). In 2008 Eurostudent will provide an indicator for this relationship to aid comparisons across countries.

Fig. 12: A comparison of parents' contributions by parents' education



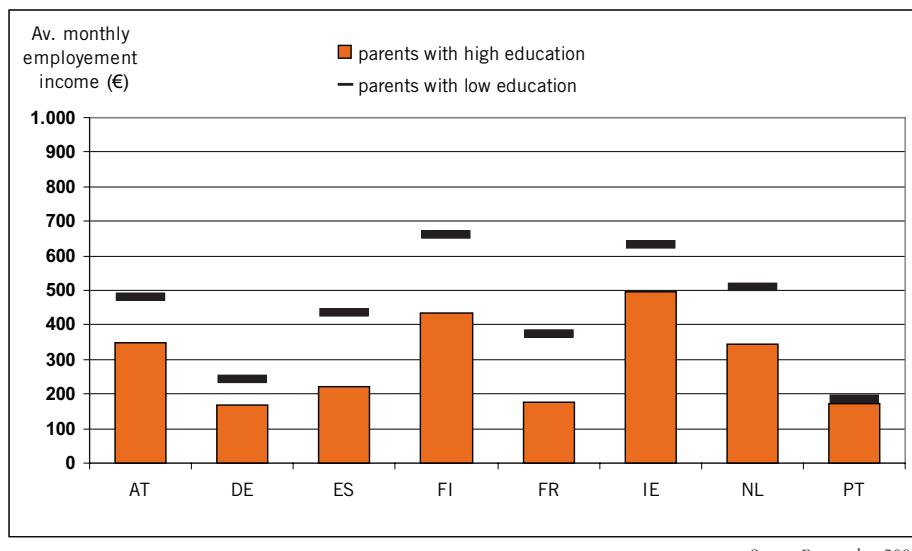
This figure shows that students whose parents have graduated from higher education receive the highest contributions to their income from their parents. In all countries the majority of students receive contributions from their parents ranging from 50% (Finland) to around 90% (Portugal and Germany) making this source central to students' income. In some countries (e.g. Germany) this contribution is part financed by indirect state contributions (in this case child support).

Fig. 13: A comparison of state support by parents' education



This figure shows how state support compensates for the social skew in parental contributions in most countries. The countries which target the low socio-economic group most explicitly are Austria, Germany and Ireland. Students from the low education group in these countries receive between two and four times more support than their national counterparts with high parental education. The share of students receiving support range from 79% (Finland) and 28% (Austria, Germany and Spain). The allocation procedures in Finland and the Netherlands are clearly not related to social background. The data in 2008 will be able to differentiate between state support which is repayable (loan) and support which is non-repayable (grant). This will facilitate a comparison between state support measures.

Fig. 14: A comparison of income from employment by parents' education



Source: Eurostudent 2005

This figure clearly highlights the fact that a social skew remains in the use of employment income to supplement living and study costs. This fact is evident for all countries, although least prominent in this dimension for Portugal. With the exception of Portugal, where only a relatively small share of students receive income through this source (19%), this income source is relevant for between 42% (Spain) and 84% (Austria) of all students.

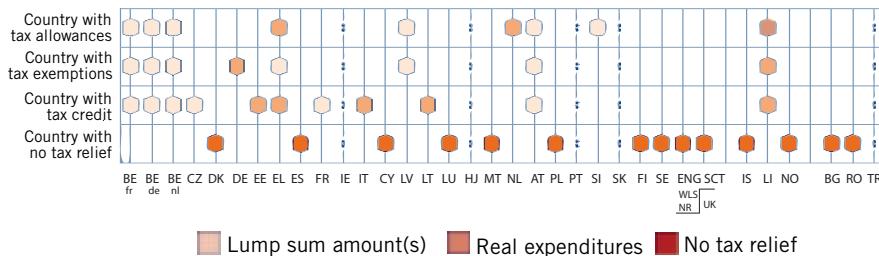
A comprehensive assessment of the contribution of the state to student support is not complete without an analysis of the existence or not of family allowances and tax relief schemes and in how far these are transferred to the student's income. This issue is related to the progressivity or regressivity of the national tax system. In general terms, a tax and expenditure system is more progressive to the extent that it redistributes from those who are better off to those who are worse off. International comparison is underdeveloped in this area; it is also hindered by the complexity of tax systems.

Eurydice provides some contextual information on this issue. Tax relief designed to help parents when funding the tertiary education of their children is analysed in the Eurydice/Eurostat study (*Key data on higher education 2007*). Besides family allowances and financial support for students, which respectively constitute direct funding transfers to the families of students or students themselves, the tax reliefs discussed in the study result in a decrease in the financial transfers from families with dependent students to the public authorities. By definition, it is for the benefit of taxable households. Tax systems may provide for various techniques that can be equated with financial support for the parents of one or more dependent students, namely tax allowances, tax exemption or tax credit.

In all countries providing tax relief, this form of support is exactly the same irrespective of whether students are enrolled in public tertiary education or (where

it exists) government-dependent private tertiary education, as well as for students at ISCED level 6. The fact that tax measures are the same for students at ISCED level 6 should be qualified by the fact that an age limit is often among the stated eligibility criteria (see fig. 15).

Fig. 15: Existence, categories and methods of calculating tax relief for the parents of students, ISCED 5-6, 2005/06 [PROVISIONAL DATA]



Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

Tax relief represents an allowance for a dependent child that may result in the payment of less income tax, either through a decrease in taxable income (tax allowances and exemption) or tax credit.

Tax allowances involve reducing gross income by a certain amount, or increasing by a certain amount the income levels at which the taxpayer passes from one tax rate to another.

Tax exemption is the same operation as in the case of tax allowances except that it affects one or more initial income bands, rather than the highest, without altering the points in the scale of gross income at which there is a transition from one tax rate to the next.

A tax credit is a sum of money that the taxpayer is allowed to deduct from the amount of tax payable. As a rule, this sum is not income dependent. In some cases, where the taxpayer's income is below the tax threshold, or the amount of tax payable is less than that of the credit, a direct cash transfer can be made to the taxpayer. Tax credit is granted to persons who have incurred some form of expenditure, if for example they have a child or dependent person enrolled in higher education.

Lump sum tax relief (in the form of tax allowances, tax exemption or tax credits) consists of statutorily defined amounts considered to be approximately equivalent to the expenses actually incurred by the taxpayer. This involves fixing a sum, which is the same for all taxpayers, whatever their actual expenditure. The amount of this sum may nevertheless vary according to the number of dependants.

Tax relief based on real expenditure involves an obligation on the taxpayer to provide supporting documentation in relation to certain specific expenditure. Here, taxpayers are allowed to deduct from their taxable income, or tax payable, all or part of the expenses necessarily incurred in the education of persons who are their dependants. The amounts deducted will depend on actual expenditure on the basis of receipts supplied as proof of purchases. A maximum amount may be fixed⁶.

⁶ Additional notes

Estonia: Training expenses are certified expenses for tax deduction purposes if incurred in study at a state or local government educational establishment, university in public law, a private school which holds a training licence or has been positively accredited for the study programme concerned, or foreign educational establishment with the same status of any of the foregoing. The same applies to training expenses for studying on fee-charging courses organised by any such educational establishments. The deductions provided for in the Income Tax Act are altogether limited to 100 000 kroons per taxpayer during a period of taxation, and to not more than 50 per cent of the taxpayer's income of the same period of taxation.

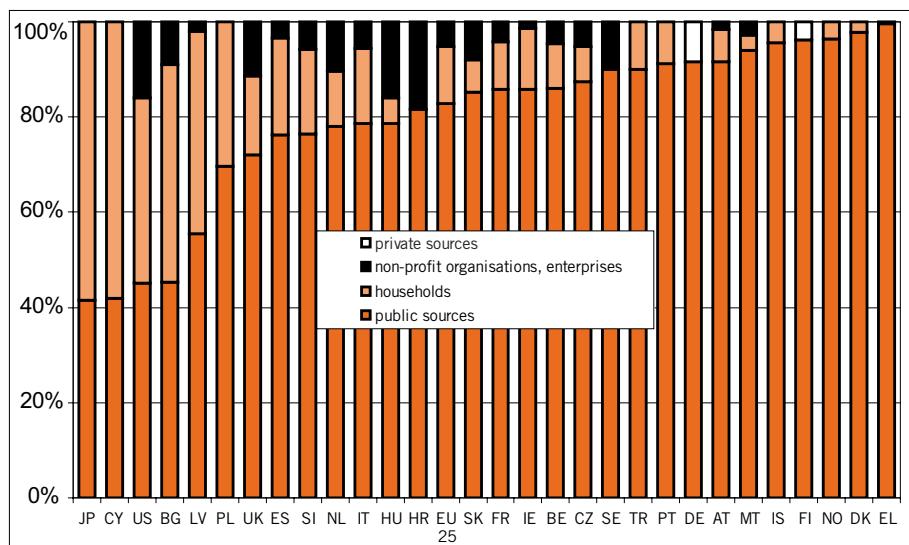
Latvia: The sums spent by a taxable household into order to raise the qualification level of one of its members, or to help a member of the household specialise or acquire training (irrespective of the age of the person concerned) are deducted from annual taxable income.

Netherlands: Financial support for students is taken into account when determining the level of tax allowances.

The LIS data could possibly also be used to estimate the difference in redistribution for households with HE students versus similar households without students, by comparing pre and post tax and transfers.

Student expenses are covered by both Eurostudent and Eurostat. As in student income, the Eurostudent indicator covers composition and amounts of expenses. There are eight categories: living costs (accommodation, food, clothing, transport); study related costs (tuition fees, contribution to student union, social welfare, books), other. Eurostat collates information on the public and private expenditure on institutions of higher education (fig.16).

Fig. 16: Relative proportions of public private spending on educational institutions, at tertiary level of education, 2002



Source: Eurostat, Education statistics

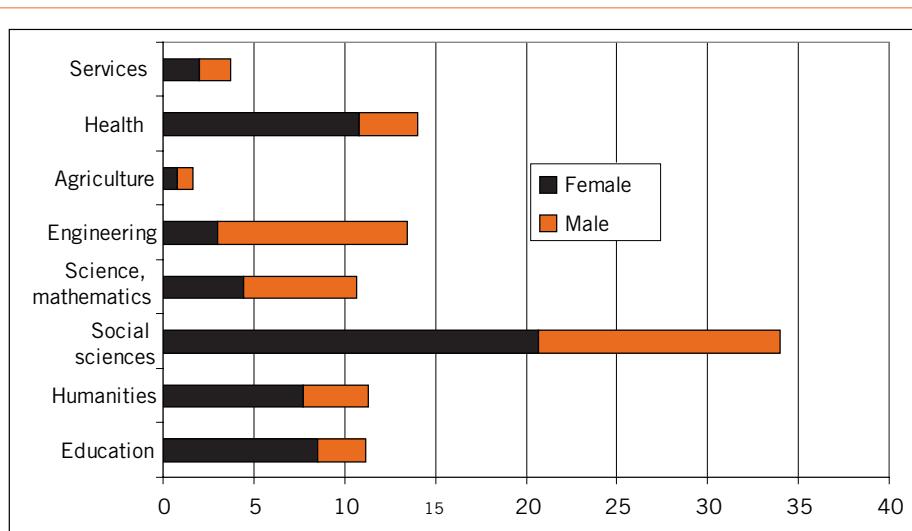
The Eurostat UOE data collection on spending on tertiary education in Europe shows that the amounts paid by students and their families to cover tuition fees and other education related expenditure vary across countries. They account for less than 5% in Denmark, Greece, Malta, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway whilst they exceed 20% in Spain, Cyprus, Latvia, Poland, Bulgaria, Japan and the United States. At the same time in Cyprus, Latvia, the United Kingdom, Japan and the United States, households receive over 15% of total expenditure on education spent by public authorities as financial aid to students.

C. Completion of studies

While data on participation, i.e. entrance and enrolment are available, the same does not apply for **retention rates** especially by socio-economic background. Indeed, such data would necessarily be based on surveying a cohort over a given time period. None of the organisations use this approach.

However, Eurostat provides data on graduation and duration of studies. The duration depends both on the theoretical duration of programmes, which differs between countries, and the actual duration of studies, to graduation or drop-out. Eurostat collected data on drop-outs or duration in 2005 (see fig. 17). Overall, as seen in figure 17, 3.377 million students graduate each year within EU 25. This number is rapidly increasing, especially for females.

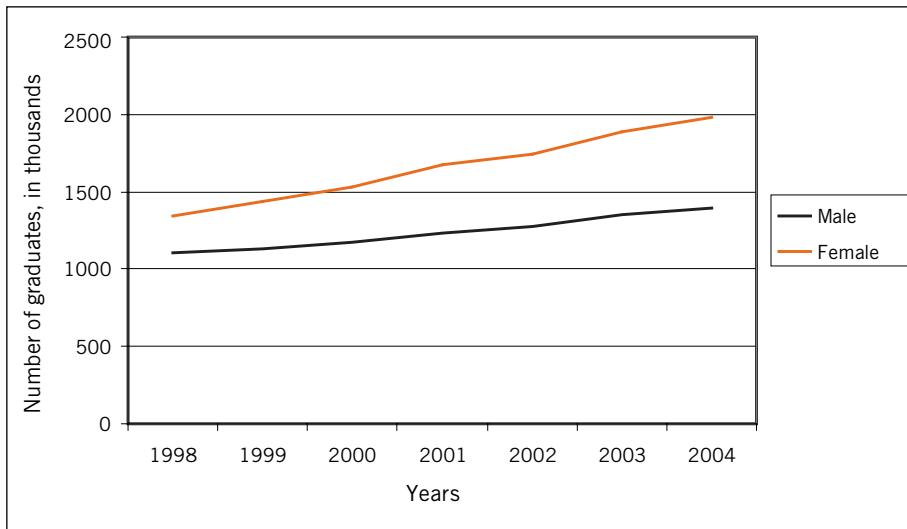
Fig. 17: Graduations by fields of study, EU 25, 2003, in percentage of total graduations



Source: Eurostat, Education Statistics

The figure shows the graduation pattern for the EU countries: Social sciences are by far the main field of graduations. Females are the most represented in the education and health fields, males in engineering.

Fig. 18: Number of graduates, per year and by sex, EU 25, in thousands



Source: Eurostat, Education statistics

Employability

Employability, though not part of the definition of the social dimension, nevertheless should be taken into account if we want complete information on students' biographies, putting them in the larger context of the prospective labour market. It can explain, to a certain extent, choices of fields of study within tertiary education and increases in participation in the areas of education offering more opportunities on the labour market.

The Eurostat Labour Force Survey shows the importance of education in general. University degree holders (ISCED 5A) are more active and have a lower probability of unemployment (fig. 19). Furthermore, this survey provides data on employment rates for graduates entering into the labour market by field of study (fig. 20). More analysis could be done in this respect, e.g. of the need to match skills and jobs among the newcomers to the labour market.

Fig. 19: Employment status by level of education, EU 25, 2005

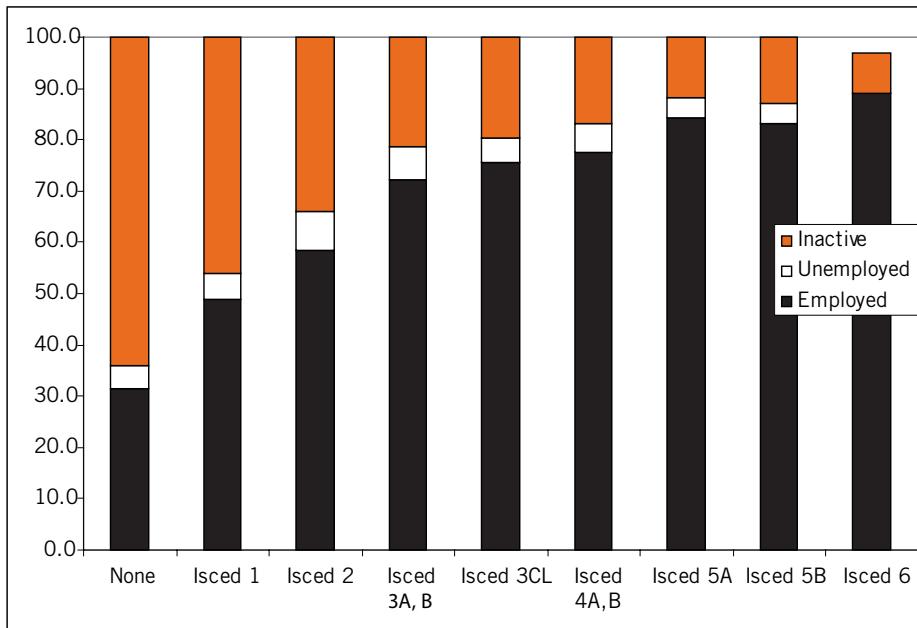
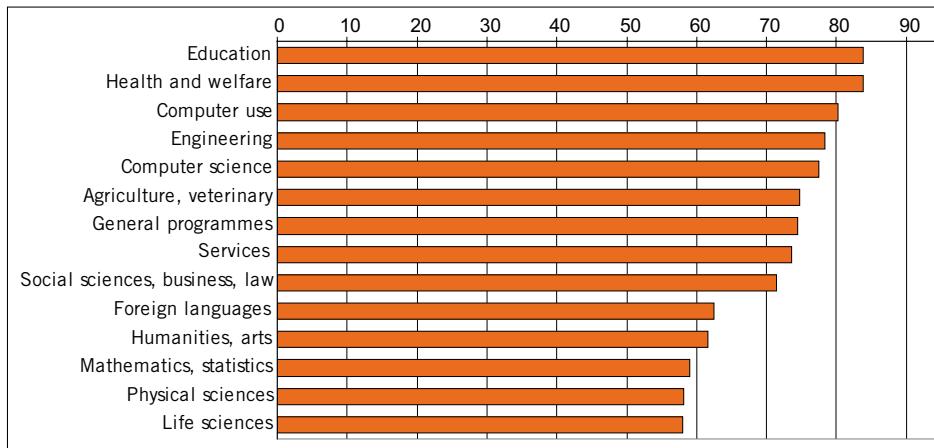


Fig. 20: Employment rate for graduates of tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6), two years after having completed their studies, by field of education, EU-25, 2004



Source: Eurostat, LFS

II.5.3 Synthesis of data on the social dimension

As can be seen from the above analysis, there is **no comprehensive survey** of the social dimension, which covers all the necessary aspects. However, the working group has shown the feasibility of cooperation between different data providers, who – on the basis of their complementary data sources – can provide such a report. In general, data is available and the **two most important data providers** are Eurostat and Eurostudent.

However, challenges and **data gaps** remain:

The first challenge is to **match requirements for indicators with data availability and comparability**. The figure in Annex 5 shows that only few of the available indicators can be provided to the ideal degree of differentiation, which would cover differences by age, gender, socio-economic background and region. Indeed characteristics used to differentiate by socio-economic background need special attention: Eurostudent focuses on educational background of parents to differentiate between student groups as this measure is most robust for student surveys and international comparison. Other data providers (e.g. LIS, Eurostat) may be able to further analyses using other characteristics (parents' income, occupation, cultural characteristics).

The second challenge of bringing together international statistics and the regional procedures, structures and legal frameworks of individual higher educational systems has already been mentioned with regard to different systems of state support for students (fig.15). Indeed **student income and expenditure cannot be determined outside the overall taxation and social security system of the country**: tax relief, child benefits, subsidised housing or transportation need to be taken into account when defining a student's budget. One consequence of this issue is that a clustering of systems on the basis of data analysis is advisable before starting any benchmarking activities.

Thirdly, most of the **currently available data is appropriate for analytical “snapshots” as opposed to analysis of change**. Establishing a monitoring report on the basis of this working group would improve this situation in time. However, one particular issue in relation to measuring retention rate would remain. While Eurostat provides data on the number of new entrants, on enrolment figures and also on educational attainment, there is no indication of who drops out. The methodological difficulty arises out of how to define a cohort of students, how to follow it and generally how to assess whether it is economically feasible to carry out such a study.

Fourthly, **geographical coverage** of all Bologna Process countries remains a challenge. The Trends Report is the only publication that encompasses most of the 45 Bologna countries. Yet, it is essential that progress towards the achievement of the objective as defined above should be measured across the whole spectrum.

In conclusion, the feasibility of a report on the social dimension of higher education in the European Higher Education Area has been demonstrated, but further work is required. The WG therefore recommends that Eurostat and Eustudent be entrusted with a mandate for data collection in order to produce a state of the art report on the social dimension. In particular regard of the challenge of finding the right indicators, this work should be informed and supervised by a Bologna working group.

Fig. 21 : Schematic synthesis of data availability concerning the social dimension – overview

Available?	Parameters of differentiation			
	by age	by gender/sex	by socio-economic background	by region
Key topic: Widening access	Aim: To widen participation and to achieve participative equity			
Key information				
New entrants	●	A	G	
Enrolment	●	A	G	S R
Share of students entering via second chance (non-traditional) routes to HE	●			
Institutions' initiatives to improve access	●			
Key topic: Study framework	Aim: To create study environments which are conducive to successful studies			
Key information				
Accommodation, provision and costs	●	A		
Student counselling and social services	●			
Student income sources and expenditures	●			S
Tuition fees and public support schemes	●			S
Student time budget (workload)	●			
Mix of public and private funding	●			
Key topic: Effective outcomes	Aim: To achieve a high graduate rate and assure the relevance of course provision			
Key information				
Educational attainment	●	A	G	
Educational attainment by field of study	●			
Retention rate				
Institutions' initiatives to assure the relevance of course provision	●			
Employment post-studies	●			

In Annex 5 there is also a schematic synthesis of data availability on the social dimension in relation to the different data providers.

II.5.4 Information from national reports for the London ministerial meeting

An additional source of information is the national reports provided by the Bologna Process countries as a preparation for the London ministerial meeting in May 2007. In the template for the national reports 2005–2007 **several questions relating to the social dimension were included**. The questions were:

1. describe any measures being taken in your country to widen access to quality higher education
2. describe any measures to help students complete their studies without obstacles related to their social or economic background
3. describe the arrangements for involving students (and staff trade unions/representatives bodies) in the governance of higher education institutions

The WG has **summarised the information from the national reports** in order to give some indication of the actions being taken to strengthen the social dimension of higher education.

The Institute for Advanced Studies in Vienna, Austria has made an attempt to categorise the answers to the questions on the social dimension in the national reports according to groups of countries. The Institute came to the conclusion, however, that such an exercise would be of limited use in a report such as this one. The questions put to the countries were very open and the descriptions do not give a complete picture of what the countries do. The questions were also asked before the definition of the social dimension in this report was presented. Several countries may have a particular measure in place, but not all of them might mention this measure since it may have been introduced a very long time ago, it is not considered relevant in this context or for other reasons. The most common measures are mentioned below. Annex 3 shows all the different measures mentioned by the countries in reply to the question on widened access above. The answers to the question on completion are very similar to the answers to the first question and there are often cross-references made between the two answers. The list of measures related to widened access presented in Annex 3 could in the future be used as the basis of a checklist in order to get a more complete picture of measures in place in the future.

The question about **student involvement in the governance of higher education institutions** was not included under the social dimension heading in the national report template. However, the possibility to influence one's own situation as a student is a fundamental part of the social dimension. The WG has therefore chosen to also include a summary of the national reports on student involvement in higher education governance.

1, Measures taken to widen access to quality higher education

The following measures are most common according to the national reports:

- Financial support measures – a range in place
- Grants and loans for students to cover living costs and/or tuition fees
- Scholarships – based on merit or the need for financial assistance, provided by the state, higher education institutions or private foundations
- Assistance with housing, meals, transportation etc.
- Tax exemptions for tuition fees or loans and full/partial exemption from fees
- Incentives for higher education institutions
- Monitoring by or reporting to state
- Premia for the inclusion of underrepresented groups, e.g. disabled students
- Publication of performance indicators
- Targets set (by percentage of the total student cohort)

Other measures, which appear to be less common, include:

- Anti discrimination law in place
- Surveys and research on living or study conditions of students
- Mentoring and support programmes
- Increasing higher education provision, including Open Universities
- Flexible admissions criteria – extra points for underrepresented groups
- Use of recognition of prior learning and recognition of non-formal and informal learning

2, Measures to help students complete their studies without obstacles related to their social or economic background

Generally, efforts presented in the national reports focussed on:

- Provision and enhancement of guidance and counselling services in school and in higher education institutions
- Range of financial support or incentives for students
- Scholarships based on merit
- Access to hardship funds
- Time-limited financial support
- Increasing the level of grants/loans available
- Provision of student welfare services, housing, healthcare, social and sports facilities
- Increasing tutorial and mentoring support, which may include the development of Personal Study Plans
- Allocation of credits for modules, and possibly requiring the student to achieve a set number of credits before being allowed to continue their course
- Improving access to, and information about, the range of courses available, thereby enabling more informed choices

- A number of countries have undertaken monitoring exercises, surveys and research, with dissemination and follow up events being set up to enable higher education institutions to exchange good practice
- A few countries are moving to output based funding
- At least one country cited the introduction of shorter Bachelor courses as a factor in reducing drop-out rates

There is a **growing recognition of the need to address equity issues** according to the national reports from the Bologna countries for the London ministerial meeting. The countries seem to focus primarily on financial measures in order to strengthen the social dimension. A continued focus on financial incentives and measures is needed, but the WG also considers that the **focus needs to be widened** to cover other aspects such as legislative measures, the development of services and outreach programmes, flexible curricula etc. The area of completion of studies was not addressed as systematically as the question about widening access to higher education. There is evidence of work to improve completion rates in the national reports, but the WG wants to stress that countries **need to put equal focus on widening access and achieving retention.**

3, Arrangements for involving students in the governance of higher education institutions
 Almost all countries have **legislation in place to ensure student participation in the governance of higher education institutions**. Many set a ratio for the number of students on the higher education institutions' boards; this ranges from 10 percent to a third. Most also have arrangements in place to involve students in national governing or advisory bodies. Students are also routinely engaged in quality assurance in a number of countries. Despite this high level of involvement, some countries are considering how they might increase student involvement further. At least one country is planning to undertake a formal evaluation of student participation in governing structures in 2009.

In 2003 and 2004 the Council of Europe carried out two separate surveys on the issue of *Student Participation in the Governance of Higher Education and Europe*⁷. The first survey covered 48 countries and the second one was a separate study on seven of the countries. The surveys showed that the formal provisions for student participation were to a large extent already there and the attitude towards increased student influence in higher education governance is very positive. The surveys show, however, that there are a number of **challenges concerning student participation**: the influence at national and department level needs to be developed, the relationship between the formal provisions for student participation and the actual practices at the different governance levels need examination, the role of student organisations needs to be looked into as well as the low participation in the election of student representatives and the dissemination of information about student rights and possibilities to influence decisions.

⁷ *Student Participation in the Governance of Higher Education in Europe*, Council of Europe, 2003 and *Student Participation in the Governance of Higher Education in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine*, Council of Europe, 2004.

II.6 Recommendations from the Working Group

There are considerable differences and challenges in relation to the social dimension of higher education between the participating countries. This needs to be acknowledged and respected in the further development of the social dimension within the Process. The WG has found that it is not appropriate to narrowly define the social dimension or suggest a number of detailed actions that might be unduly difficult or inappropriate to deliver for all countries involved. The social dimension should be seen as a progressive process within the EHEA.

Instead, the WG proposes that an overall objective for the social dimension should be agreed by Ministers. While committing to the same objective, the means for reaching the objective should be adapted to national priorities and circumstances. The overall objective should reflect the importance of equal opportunities for access to and participation in quality higher education as well as of widening access to and participation in quality higher education. It should also reflect the importance of ensuring the successful completion of studies. Furthermore, it should be made clear that equal opportunities should extend to all aspects of higher education and all three cycles. The WG suggests the following overall objective to be agreed by the Ministers:

We strive for the societal goal that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of our populations. We therefore pledge to take action to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity.

The WG also wants to start a process towards achieving this objective and proposes that each country develops its own strategy, including an action plan, for the social dimension. Initially such a strategy will call for the identification of possible underrepresented groups, eg gender, ethnic origin, immigration, socio-economic status and background, disability, geography, within each country. Annex 2 to this report provides some guidance on the development of national strategies and action plans.

The work of the WG has shown that it is difficult – and not yet possible – to find data that are reliable and comparable and that cover the whole EHEA. Concerning data on the social dimension, there is no comprehensive survey, which covers the necessary aspects of the social dimension. The WG has also found that there are several important data gaps and challenges in relation to the social dimension: not all Bologna countries are covered, there is no common deadline for surveys, requirements for indicators need to be matched with data availability and comparability, statistics from different sectors need to be brought together to get a fair picture of the social dimension and most of the currently available data is not appropriate for analysis of change. However, the feasibility of a report on the social dimension in the EHEA has been demonstrated by the WG, but further work is required.

After discussing the task to “prepare proposals as a basis for future stocktaking” the WG has come to the conclusion that the identification and collection of social dimension data needs to go beyond the present Bologna Process stocktaking method. Data on the social dimension should comprise system descriptors as well as information on how these systems work and not be narrowed down to stocktaking indicators. The data gathered must be reliable and comparable. We consider that the development of the social dimension needs to be followed and compared between countries in a more ambitious way than the stocktaking method allows for⁸. The WG therefore recommends that Eurostat and Eurostudent be entrusted with a mandate for data collection in order to produce a state of the art report on the social dimension. In particular regard of the challenge of finding the right indicators, this work should be informed and supervised by a Bologna working group.

The WG has a number of suggestions for measures to support the development towards the overall objective:

Measures at national and institutional level

- By 2009 the countries should report to the BFUG on their national strategies for the social dimension, including action plans and measures to show their impact. All stakeholders should actively participate in and support this work at the national level. The WG suggests an approach to the work on national strategies in Annex 2 to this report.
- Student survey data should be collected with the aim of providing comparable and reliable data concerning the social dimension.

Measures at BFUG level

- The collection of data on the social dimension needs to go beyond the present stocktaking method. The BFUG should entrust Eurostat, in conjunction with Eurostudent, with a mandate to develop more comparable and reliable data to inform progress towards the overall objective for the social dimension in all Bologna countries. Data should cover participative equity in higher education as well as employability for graduates. This task should be overseen by the BFUG and a report should be submitted for the 2009 ministerial meeting.
- To give an overview of the work on strategies and action plans carried out in participating countries in order to exchange experiences.

⁸ For an explanation of the stocktaking method please consult the first stocktaking report at www.bologna-bergen2005.no under the heading "Bergen Ministerial Meeting".

Part III. Mobility

In the terms of reference the WG was given the following tasks in relation to mobility:

- to present comparable data on the mobility of staff and students
- to prepare proposals as a basis for future stocktaking

III.1 Defining mobility

Mobility has many aspects. The purposes of higher education mobility vary. They could be educational, research-related, connected to teaching or other forms of work – but also personal, cultural, social, connected to immigration, linguistic or part of larger ambitions for the quality of higher education and research or other societal goals.

The countries participating in the Bologna Process should **continue to strive for an EHEA where students and staff can be truly mobile**, with mutual benefits for the parties involved. There should be a reasonable balance of mobility flows. This can be achieved by raising the attractiveness of each national system for higher education and by encouraging the development of cross-border cooperation in education and research.

In the report *EURODATA – Student mobility in European higher education* published by the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) in 2006⁹, the authors say that most policy and analytical documents do not present any detailed definition of student mobility, because it can be taken for granted that there is a conventional wisdom of what student mobility means. An internationally mobile student is a student having crossed a national border in order to study or to undertake other study-related activities for at least a certain unit of a study programme or a certain period of time in the country he or she has moved to.

In the report *Constructing Paths to Staff Mobility in the European Higher Education Area: from Individual to Institutional Responsibility* (2007) the author Conor Cradden has categorised the different types of academic staff mobility according to their “institutional anchoring”. Cradden prefers this to defining mobility according to the length of time a member of staff is away from his or her home coun-

⁹ *EURODATA – Student mobility in European higher education* by Maria Kelo, Ulrich Teichler, Bernd Wächter (eds.) published by the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) in 2006, Lemmens Verlag.

try. There are four types of anchoring: visits, exchanges and sabbaticals; grants and fellowships; untenured employment; and tenured employment. In combination with the socio-cultural and labour-market justifications for mobility, Cradden argues that this gives rise to four categories of mobility:

1. traditional academic exchange,
2. early career training and experience,
3. importing cheap academic labour and
4. targeting the international labour market.

In the view of the WG, it is no longer appropriate in our multi-cultural societies to use nationality as a statistical basis. The WG has created a definition of mobility for the purposes of the work within the WG. The WG suggests a **wide definition of mobility** that covers all forms and lengths of mobility within higher education in a global perspective and that is not limited to mobility within the EHEA:

Mobility of students: Refers to a study period in a country other than that of prior permanent residence or prior education (completed or ongoing) for a period of study or a full degree.

Mobility of staff: Refers to a working period in a country other than that of prior permanent residence or prior employment (terminated or ongoing) for a limited or extended period.

III.2 Rationale for mobility

Mobility is at the core of the Bologna Process and a key to enhancing the attractiveness and competitiveness of the European Higher Education Area. Promoting mobility creates opportunities for personal growth, develops international co-operation and understanding between individuals and institutions, enhances the quality of higher education and research, responds to the needs of European societies, and thus gives substance to the European dimension. We want a European Higher Education Area where students and staff can be truly mobile.

Mobility is beneficial for the **mobile individual**, but also for **students and staff at the home institution**. Mobility also has positive consequences for the **quality of higher education and the higher education institutions** as well as for **society** as a whole.

To experience another country and study environment gives the individual a new cultural, social and academic experience and creates opportunities for personal growth. This enhances the employability of the individual and their ability to take part in the international labour market. Mobile students and staff also contribute to an internationalised environment at the host institutions. Staff mobility creates the mutual trust between institutions that is necessary for in-

creased cooperation and recognition of study periods abroad, and it therefore also supports student mobility.

The advantages for an individual can also be transferred to institutional assets. Through mobile individuals, in-coming and outgoing students as well as staff, higher education institutions gain new insights that challenge established traditions and practices. Mobility thereby provides possibilities for the development of academic work through new contacts and ideas as well as an opportunity for comparison and benchmarking between systems. Together with an open-minded atmosphere, it reinforces international cooperation and networking and the development of the quality of higher education and research.

The experiences of mobile individuals are brought into society and contribute to the development of society. Individuals with experience of other countries will also help to reduce prejudice and cultural as well as language barriers between people, countries and cultures. Trans-national exchanges provide both cooperative and competitive advantages for society and will drive change and the improvement of society.

III.3 Commitments already made in the official Bologna documents

One of the **key objectives** when establishing the European Higher Education Area is to increase the opportunities for mobility of both students and staff. Most of the commitments made within the Bologna Process, for example concerning issues related to the three cycle system, recognition and quality assurance, aim at promoting mobility. These are some of the most prominent commitments regarding mobility in the official documents:

1. The Sorbonne declaration of 25th of May 1998 (...) emphasised the creation of the European area of higher education as a key way to promote citizens' mobility and employability and the Continent's overall development.
(Bologna Declaration)
2. Mobility should be promoted by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement with particular attention to:
 - for students, access to study and training opportunities and to related services
 - for teachers, researchers and administrative staff, recognition and valorisation of periods spent in a European context researching, teaching and training, without prejudicing their statutory rights.
(Bologna Declaration)
3. Ministers emphasised the social dimension of mobility.
(Prague Communiqué)

4. Ministers should take measures to facilitate the portability of national loans and grants. (Berlin and Bergen Communiqués)
5. Ministers call for increased mobility at the doctoral and postdoctoral levels and encourage the institutions concerned to increase their cooperation in doctoral studies and the training of young researchers.
(Berlin Communiqué)
6. Ministers shall intensify their efforts to lift obstacles to mobility by facilitating the delivery of visa and work permits and by encouraging participation in mobility programmes. (Bergen Communiqué)

III.4 How to transform political commitments into actions

One of the main aims of the Bologna Process is to promote citizens' mobility. Within the Process the Ministers have agreed to implement a number of actions to facilitate mobility for example the creation of easily readable and comparable degrees through the full use of tools aimed at facilitating recognition, the development of national action plans to improve the quality of the recognition process, the adoption of a system based on three main cycles and an overarching framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, the establishment of a system of credits (eg ECTS) for the transfer and accumulation of credits applied consistently throughout the EHEA, the portability of national loans and grants, the facilitation of the delivery of visa and work permits and the encouragement of increased participation in mobility programmes.

Other commitments within the Process either relate to the promotion of mobility in a less visible way or are expressed in a more general manner such as "overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement" or the emphasis on the social dimension of mobility. Obstacles to mobility vary depending on who you are, what your family situation is, how and where you live, what the purpose of mobility is, different systems for higher education and incentives for promoting mobility periods etc.

The WG has made an attempt to look more closely into **possible actions to promote mobility for both student and staff** that have not yet been as developed as the above-mentioned actions. The actions should be considered a list of possible actions that could be taken in each country. They cover different policy areas, levels and actors.

Information, transparency and preparation (equal opportunities for mobility)

- Easily accessible and transparent information about possibilities to study or teach abroad
- Simple, fair and transparent admission and selection methods
- Actions to reduce language barriers

Active action for widened access to mobility opportunities

- Information on admission rules and application processes in other countries for potential foreign students
- Information on appointment procedures for academic staff in other countries for potential applicants from abroad
- Information on studies and living conditions as well as administrative procedures in other countries for potential foreign students and teachers
- Actions and support targeted at underrepresented groups
- Recognition of study periods abroad by higher education institutions and employers
- Recognition of staff qualifications and working periods abroad by higher education institutions and other employers
- Encouragement of and incentives for mobility by higher education institutions and employers
- Flexible curricula and an educational structure that promotes mobility
- Attention to individual student needs – including students with disabilities

Information, administration and services in the hosting country

- Access to academic and social services in the host country
- Fast and efficient issuing of affordable visas
- Access to student accommodation

Financing mobility

- Information on how to finance mobility periods
- National financial support systems that are portable
- Scholarships/solidarity funds for the mobile students who most need it
- Possibilities for support to cover tuition fees
- Compensation for additional costs in host country and possible loss of earnings
- Considering finance possibilities for students from countries without financial support systems

Welfare systems and labour market regulations

- Possibility to obtain work permits
- Portability of social security and pension rights and other benefits for staff
- Consideration of consequences of staff mobility for employment status, for example for civil servants or employees of institutions, and possibilities for promotion

At numerous meetings and seminars it has been concluded that among the obstacles to mobility, issues related to **visas, immigration, work and residence permits, social security protection for students and staff engaged in mobility, recognition of study and work periods and lack of financial incentives** are some of the most commonly observed problem areas¹⁰.

The application requirements for getting a **visa or a residence permit** can be very detailed and time consuming as well as expensive. To apply for a short stay Schengen area visa costs 35 euros. Within the European Union, two council directives have been issued in order to facilitate and speed up the admission for entry and residence of third-country nationals in the Community for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service (Council Directive 2004/114/EC) and of scientific research (Council Directive 2005/71/EC). These directives need to be properly applied and procedures that facilitate this process further are welcomed. Some countries provide free visas or residence permits for third country nationals who are higher education students, doctoral candidates or researchers and who are travelling for education or scientific research.

As a first step towards liberation of visa regimes it is important that negotiations for the visa agreements¹¹ that have been started in November 2006 between the EU¹² and some non-EU countries¹³, are successfully completed as soon as possible. It is important that these kinds of discussions are carried out also on a bilateral or multilateral basis between non EU countries.

¹⁰ Some recent events include Council of Europe Resolution 1517 (2006), 4th Informal Conference of Ministers of Education from Western Balkan (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", UNMIK, Provisional Institutions of Self Government, Kosovo also participated in the conference) held in Strasbourg in November 2006, Informal Conference of Ministers of Education from the new countries in the Bologna Process (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine), The rectors' and students' conference of South East Europe held in Ljubljana in October 2006 and the official Bologna Process seminar *Making Bologna Reality – Mobility of staff and students* held in London in February 2007.

¹¹ on easier procedures for students, researchers, business people and journalists, multiple entry visas and cutting visa-handling fees.

¹² except UK, Ireland and Denmark.

¹³ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Montenegro and Serbia.

III.5 Data on mobility

III.5.1 Mobility of students

A. Availability and quality of data

The UNESCO *Global Education Digest* (2006) features indicators that track the flow of internationally mobile students from the perspectives of both the sending and receiving (host) countries. Key findings include: Six countries host 67% of the world's foreign or mobile students: with 23% studying in the United States, followed by the United Kingdom (12%), Germany (11%), France (10%), Australia (7%) and Japan (5%). Yet, in spite of these data, one of the most elusive statistics in education today is student mobility. According to the findings of the WG, **current mobility statistics are based on available rather than the most appropriate data**, resulting in the best available mobility index, rather than one that would serve real information needs.

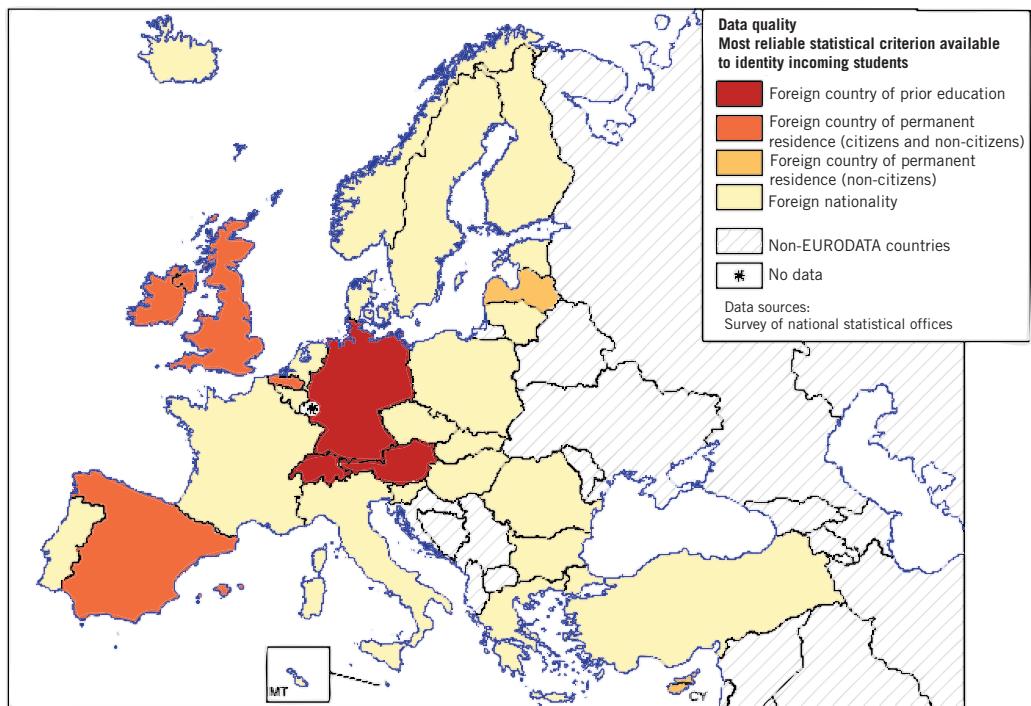
In the report *EURODATA – Student mobility in European higher education* published by the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) in 2006⁹, the authors state that the most comprehensive data base available does **not register genuine mobility, but rather the number of foreign students** and students of a certain nationality that study abroad. ACA defines “genuine mobility” as mobile students either having lived permanently abroad before they enrolled at an institution of tertiary education in their current country of study (data indicator: foreign country of permanent residence) or having been awarded their entry qualification for tertiary education abroad (data indicator: foreign country of prior education). ACA explains that there are a number of problems with using nationality as a basis for mobility statistics. A substantial number of people move to other countries already at an earlier stage and attend both school and universities in a country different from their nationality. Some individuals live abroad and return to their home country for the purpose of study. An increasing number of students also criss-cross various borders in course of their studies. So far, the majority of countries have only data on foreign students, while outwards mobility can only be captured by adding up the nationalities of foreign students in the other countries of the world. Also, students studying abroad for a period up to and including one year are excluded in the most recent international mobility survey.

In the EURODATA-report, international statistical data on foreign students (UOE data) obtained from Eurostat and UNESCO are presented for the so-called EURODATA countries¹⁴. ACA also presents data on genuine mobility into and

¹⁴ All the 25 EU member states, the 4 EFTA-members and Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey.

out of the EURODATA countries from the national statistical offices. However, only 10 of the 32 EURODATA countries provide data on what ACA calls genuine mobility. In the following figure the **quality of data on mobility** in the different EURODATA countries as presented is shown. The most reliable statistical criterion available (according to ACA) to identify incoming students is presented for each country.

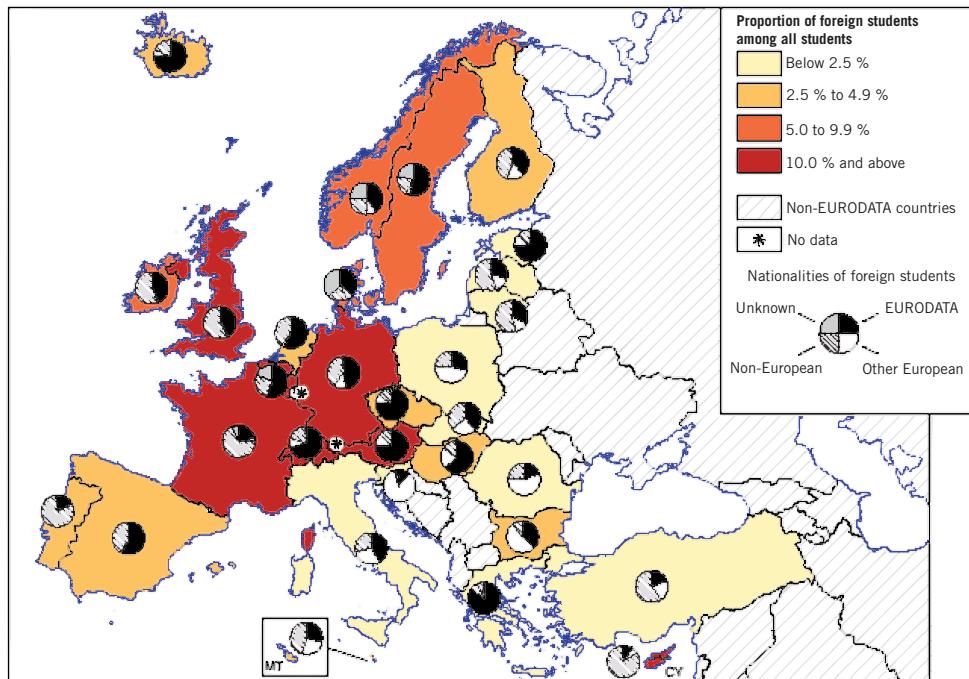
Fig. 22 Data quality – most reliable statistical criterion available to identify inwards mobile students 2002/2003 (from EURODATA report by ACA)



ACA has compared data on foreign students with data on genuine mobility in the nine countries where this is possible. The comparison demonstrates **the strengths of data on genuine mobility** as compared to data based on nationality. It shows that the **foreign student total** corresponds to more than 150 percent of the **genuine mobile student total** reported to Eurostat for the countries that report on genuine mobility as well. To give some of examples, the UK reported 388 400 foreign students among all their tertiary students and 300 000 inwards mobile students, based on prior foreign country of permanent residence. The difference for Spain is 49 200 to 33 600 (based on prior foreign country of permanent residence), but the largest difference in percentage is noted for the Flemish Community of Belgium that reports 8 100 foreign students and 4 500 inwards mobile student (prior foreign country of permanent residence).

The figure below (fig. 23) shows the **proportion of foreign students among all tertiary students** in the different EURODATA countries 2002/2003. Regardless of the problems with this definition of mobility it is the **definition that is currently used by most countries**. The figure also shows the regional distribution of foreign students' nationalities (EURODATA nationalities, other European nationalities, Non-European nationalities or other nationalities) in the countries.

Fig. 23 Foreign students – the proportion of foreign students among all tertiary students and the regional distribution of foreign students' nationalities 2002/2003 (from EURODATA report by ACA)



ACA reports that in 2002/2003, 1.1 million foreign students were enrolled at institutions of tertiary education in the 32 EURODATA countries. This figure corresponds to almost six percent of all tertiary students in the region. The most frequent nationality of foreign students in the EURODATA regions is Chinese, in 2002/2003 more than six percent of foreign students in EURODATA countries were Chinese. The largest communities of foreign students in individual countries are constituted by Chinese students in the United Kingdom and Turkish students in Germany (more than 30 000 and 27 000 students respectively). The United Kingdom, Germany and France host by far the largest absolute numbers of foreign students in EURODATA countries (each of them more than 200 000 students). More than 60 percent of all foreign students in the EURODATA countries study in one of these three countries.

In the UK students from other English-speaking countries (Ireland, the US, India) constitute a considerable part of foreign students next to Chinese, Greek, German and French students. In Germany, apart from Turkish and Chinese students, students from eastern European countries (Poland, the Russian Federation and Bulgaria) constitute large shares of foreign nationals. In France, the foreign student population is dominated by African (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Senegal, Cameroon) and Chinese students. If the **number of foreign students are compared to the largest immigrant groups** in these countries there is generally a direct correspondence. This shows the difficulties with using nationality as a basis for mobility statistics.

ACA emphasises the importance of adapting national data collection to internationally agreed standards of the supranational organisations such as UNESCO, OECD and Eurostat, in order to allow comparability and reliability.

The relative merits of different statistical criteria which might serve as substitutes for foreign citizenship as a criterion to determine the extent of international student flows need to be discussed. The criterion "foreign country of prior education" might prove useful in this context. International student mobility is thus defined as any form of mobility that takes place throughout a student's programme of study in higher education. The length of absence ranges from a short trip to a full-duration programme of study such as a degree. In addition to study at a foreign higher education institutions, mobility can involve a period in a workplace or other non-higher education environments. As suggested in the definition of mobility proposed by the WG, the criterion "country of prior permanent residence" might also need consideration.

Besides shedding light on methodological issues, publications by both the Academic Co-operation Association (ACA) and Erasmus¹⁵ provide a number of insights. Mobile students are essentially of two types: those who go abroad as a compulsory part of their studies and those who choose mobility for a range of personal, educational and professional reasons. Generally speaking, Erasmus students are more likely to be younger, female, white and from families in the higher social classes with usually both parents university educated, when compared to non-mobile students. Besides, most Erasmus students come from a town or a big city.

According to the Erasmus survey, mobile students generally feel very positive about their foreign experience, thinking that it has enhanced their personal development and feeling that it was relevant to the development of an international career. Strict academic benefits are stressed less often in these surveys. Few mobile students encounter major problems while abroad. The most cited problems are finance (22%), with 50% of Erasmus students saying their grant is insufficient, and absence from close friends and relatives.

¹⁵ Erasmus Student Network Survey, 2005, <http://www.esn.org/documents/articles.php>.

However, finance, together with language, is seen as the major barrier to mobility. Other factors, in the eyes of the students, are lack of information (or having information too late), actual or perceived academic/institutional barriers (course structures, credit transfer, worries over grades), and attitudinal factors (fear of the unknown). The next Eurostudent survey, that will be presented in 2008, will come up with data on barriers to mobility. The data is based also on the opinions of student not being mobile.

The institutions' approach also plays an important part in student mobility. Institutional funding in all systems is affected by the number of enrolled or graduating students, and thus promoting outward mobility may be a secondary consideration when there are no financial incentives. Student mobility within the European Union is also governed by anti-discrimination legislation, and by program rules that prevent the charging of tuition fees (eg within Erasmus). If mobility flows are unbalanced, this may result in considerable financial burdens - especially to the more attractive institutions. International or third country mobility is not, however, subject to these regulations, but rather depends on national and/or institutional policy. International student mobility is therefore often perceived to be driven primarily by market concerns, and particularly when public funding is stagnating or diminishing, the recruitment of international fee-paying students may take precedence over mobility that does not generate income for institutions.

The above indications give rise to three main **challenges for future work on mobility and mobility data:**

- Access to mobility should be broadened; at present too many students are "socially excluded" from mobility opportunities because of their financial situation, family and class background, and linguistic limitations.
- There is no common and appropriate definition of mobility for statistical purposes.
- There is a need for complete, comparable and reliable data on student mobility for all Bologna countries. Work needs to be done to try to capture genuine student mobility in all EHEA countries.

B. Information from national reports for the London ministerial meeting

An additional source of information is the national reports from the Bologna countries. In the template for the national reports 2005-2007 **two questions related to student mobility were included**. The questions were:

1. describe any measures being taken to remove obstacles to students' mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.
2. describe whether there are portable loans and grants in your country.

The WG has **summarised the information from the national reports** in order to give some indication of the actions taken to promote student mobility in higher

education. As for the social dimension the Institute for Advanced Studies in Vienna, Austria, has made an attempt to categorise the answers to the questions on mobility in the national reports according to groups of countries. The Institute came to the conclusion that such an exercise would be of limited use also in the case of mobility since the questions put to the countries were very open and the descriptions do not give a complete picture of what the countries do. Below the most common measures are mentioned and in Annex 4 to this report all the different measures mentioned by the countries for student and staff mobility are shown.

1, Measures taken to remove obstacles to student mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes

The measures mentioned in the national reports focus on:

- Participation in Tempus, Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus, Leonardo Programmes, bi-lateral agreements between countries and higher education institutions
- Language courses to assist inward mobility, together with increasing provision in English and other widely used European languages
- Promoting Diploma Supplements and ECTS as tools to enable mobility
- Provision of scholarships for inward and outward mobility
- Provision of housing for mobile students
- Increasing the number of joint degrees and increasing information about, and access to, courses available
- Taking part in Education Fairs and giving information on studies abroad

A smaller number of countries are also taking additional measures, which include:

- Studies on mobility programmes to identify both barriers to participation and ways to overcome them
- Setting targets for inward and outward mobility for higher education institutions
- Supporting short sabbaticals overseas for academic staff
- Setting minimum number of credits that must be obtained outside the home higher education institutions
- Introducing portable grants and loans
- Running an Erasmus Student Prize to publicise the programme and its benefits
- Taking inward and outward mobility into account in funding formulae

A range of measures have been implemented in the Bologna countries to promote inward and outward student mobility according to the national reports, with little variation across the EHEA. The conclusion of the WG is that it is clear that there is **much room for improvement** and that **measures related to the national systems in place need to be considered**. We have noted some positive examples of this, such as taking mobility into account in funding formulae for higher education.

2, Whether there are portable loans and grants

Over 50 percent of Bologna Process countries have some form of portability within their student support system. Sixteen countries took part in the Portability of Grants and Loans Working Group, reflecting a high level of interest in portability amongst the Bologna countries. Twelve countries have stated that they already have fully portable grants or loans in place. A further four are considering introducing fully portable student support systems. More limited portability is in place in a significant number of countries. Typically, portable grants and loans are available for students taking part in exchange programme, such as Erasmus and CEEPUS, or joint programmes. Portable scholarships are also available to third cycle students in some countries, or to first or second cycle students wishing to study programmes not provided in their home country

III.5.2 Mobility of staff

A. Availability of data

The same thing is true about staff mobility as for student mobility – it is fairly easy to agree what it is, but difficult to agree on how to capture it in statistics. As has been shown by Conor Cradden in his report *Constructing Paths to Staff Mobility in the European Higher Education Area: from Individual to Institutional Responsibility* (2007) **any kind of statistics on staff mobility are difficult to come by**, let alone information that would permit comparisons between countries. The Cradden report, prepared for the EI-ESIB-UCU Official Bologna Seminar in London 8-9 February 2007, is the most comprehensive study on staff mobility identified by the WG. The information on staff mobility presented in this section is from the Cradden report.

Cradden says that the basic problem is that national data collection systems tend to focus on those individuals who are currently ‘in the system’, and are unconcerned with where they were before they came into it and where they go when they leave it. Methodological innovation and a willingness to make imaginative use of the available information sources¹⁶ can only partially compensate for the absence of dedicated data collection.

The small amount of research evidence that does exist concentrates on the **mobility of researchers rather than the teachers and teacher-researchers**. One likely reason for this imbalance is the imbalance in mobility itself, mobility for teaching purposes being much less common than mobility for research.

Cradden makes a combination of economic and political indicators for the Bologna Process countries in order to give a very rough indication of the ability of participating states to organise and finance a stable and effective higher edu-

¹⁶ See, for example, Gurney and Adams (2005), who use information on the citation of academic articles to track the careers of certain academics.

tion system that is likely to be attractive to mobile staff and students. Cradden's grouping into four (geographically non-contiguous) zones can be found in the following table.

Fig. 24 Division of countries into zones based on ability to organise and finance a stable and effective higher education system

Zone A	Zone B	Zone C	Zone D
Austria	Bulgaria	Albania	Russian Federation
Belgium	Croatia	Armenia	Ukraine
Denmark	Cyprus	Azerbaijan	
Finland	Czech Republic	Bosnia- Herzegovina	
France	Estonia	Georgia	
Germany	Greece	Serbia & Montenegro	
Ireland	Hungary	FYR Macedonia	
Iceland	Latvia	Republic of Moldova	
Italy	Lithuania	Turkey	
Luxembourg	Malta		
The Netherlands	Poland		
Norway	Portugal		
Spain	Romania		
Sweden	Slovak Republic		
Switzerland	Slovenia		
UK			

In order to arrive at this division into groups, Cradden takes the 2004 figure for GDP per capita, and weighted it according to the average of a series of six quantitative indicators of the quality of democratic governance developed by researchers at the World Bank¹⁷. The Russian Federation and Ukraine ought to be included in Zone C. However, for historical reasons the higher education systems of these two states are very different from those in the other countries of Zone C, particularly in terms of the participation rate and the sheer scale of the systems. For this reason these two states are listed separately as Zone D. The three remaining member states (Andorra, the Holy See and Liechtenstein) have been excluded from the ranking simply on the grounds of the lack of availability of data.

B. Traditional academic exchange

While it is clearly the most common category of staff mobility, traditional academic exchange remains the least-reported and least-monitored. For this reason Cradden has found it **impossible to judge its extent** – this would require a major international survey – and neither is it apparent whether there are any serious inconsistencies in

¹⁷ The indicators are: voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption. See Kaufman et al 2006.

the availability of opportunities to engage in it. There are a very limited number of facts to hand, however.

We know that in 2005 the Tempus programme – an EU scheme to support co-operation between higher education institutions in the EU and those in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and Central Asia – allocated 120 individual mobility grants to staff from Bologna Process member states. Of these, 70% were for re-training and study periods, 18% for preparatory activities for Tempus-funded joint projects and the remaining 12% for participation in conferences and seminars.

We also know the extent and breakdown by country of the EU's Erasmus Teacher Mobility programme, which in the academic year 2004/2005 enabled close to 21,000 staff to depart on visits of an average of 6-7 days¹⁸. Cradden says that we can treat this as representing a kind of sample of the whole population of traditional academic exchanges, although we should be wary that the distribution of grants reflects not just the pattern of "spontaneous" cooperation between academic staff in different countries but also the powerful influence of the European Commission. Nevertheless, looking at the distribution of grantholders by country of origin and destination gives us at some idea of the more general picture.

The statistics suggest that there is a slightly greater tendency for staff from Zone B countries (in this case also including Turkey) to engage in teaching exchange. Almost 35% of grant holders (outgoing staff) were from Zone B countries, whereas this zone only has 31% of the total number of staff in the EHEA. The overall distribution of host institutions, on the other hand, was not significantly different from the distribution of staff. 70% of grant holders were hosted by institutions in Zone A, while 70% of staff worked in HEIs in Zone A. Perhaps not surprisingly, Zone B grant holders showed a greater tendency to seek exchange destinations in Zone A. Almost 80% of Zone B participating staff visited a destination institution in a Zone A country, as opposed to 65% of grant holders from Zone A.

Cradden ranks the higher education systems participating in the Erasmus teacher exchange programme according to the propensity of staff to move, and also according to the propensity of higher education institutions to host grant holders. These propensities can be measured simply by the ratio of each country's percentage share of grant holders departing or grant holders hosted to the country's percentage share of the total number of staff across all the participating higher education systems. If the number of grant holders originating in a higher education system as proportion of the total number of grantholders across all systems is the same as the total number of staff in that system as a proportion of the total number of staff in all systems, this ratio will be 1. A ratio higher than 1 indicates that there is a greater than average propensity to undertake an academic visit or to host visiting staff.

¹⁸ Statistics available at <http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/erasmus/statisti/table5.pdf>.

The top 10 member states in terms of propensity to move and propensity to host are shown in figure 25.

Fig. 25: Top 10 Erasmus teacher mobility movers and hosts by propensity to undertake or host visits 2004/05

Top 10 Movers		Top 10 Hosts	
Malta	5.65	Malta	5.85
Slovenia	4.13	Finland	3.86
Finland	3.15	Slovenia	3.32
Czech Republic	2.94	Cyprus	2.17
Lithuania	2.50	Belgium	1.88
Estonia	2.15	Latvia	1.75
Latvia	2.11	Czech Republic	1.72
Belgium	2.03	Iceland	1.64
Iceland	1.88	Portugal	1.53
Cyprus	1.57	Lithuania	1.52

Source: Cradden's calculations based on EC and UNESCO Figures

The top 10 in terms of absolute numbers of staff sent or hosted are shown in figure 26.

Fig. 26: Top 10 Erasmus teacher mobility movers and hosts by absolute numbers of visits undertaken or hosted 2004/05

Top 10 Movers		Top 10 Hosts	
Germany	2573	Germany	2621
Spain	2109	France	2260
France	2091	Italy	1897
Poland	1394	Spain	1852
United Kingdom	1308	United Kingdom	1339
Czech Republic	1226	Finland	1216
Italy	1086	Poland	1026
Finland	992	Portugal	945
Belgium	884	Belgium	818
Romania	796	Czech Republic	720

Source: EC

Cradden concludes that the two figures suggest that the “prize” for participation in the Erasmus teacher mobility programme should go to Finland, closely followed by the Czech Republic.

C. Indefinite migration (includes all other types of mobility)

Cradden has found that there is **slightly more information available** about the indefinite than the strictly temporary forms of mobility/migration, but this is not to say that it amounts to a great deal. It should be noted here that the categories of staff mobility other than traditional academic exchange is here described as “indefinite” and treated as a single category. The reason for this is that in all cases the member of staff retains no institutional anchoring in his or her home higher education system, there is no guarantee that she or he will return to it, even in the very common case of an initial engagement in the host institution of a limited duration. In any case, in many of the Bologna countries the indefinite forms of mobility are next to impossible to distinguish from each other in statistical terms and must of necessity be treated together.

Evidence from the UK

The UK is an interesting example as it is widely recognised to have one of the most open and transparent recruitment systems in Europe. UK higher education institutions also appear to have the greatest autonomy in recruitment, with the majority of decisions about new appointments being made at faculty level. Generally, no reference even to any institution-level machinery is required, still less any supra-institutional authority. The information about the migration of staff in the UK HE system comes from a series of studies carried out by or on behalf of the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) (Bekhradnia and Sastry 2005; Gurney and Adams 2005; Sastry 2005).

The first and perhaps most important finding is that over the period from 1995/96 to 2002/03, between 60 and 70% of staff who entered or left the UK to take up academic positions were researchers. This is a category of staff which is in the main relatively junior, and employed on fixed-term contracts funded from research grant income. Some of this movement was accounted for by UK nationals, and so around “half of all migrations in both directions are accounted for by non-UK nationals on research grades”(Bekhradnia and Sastry 2005). Sastry comments that “of particular interest are the numbers of foreign nationals amongst emigrants. In the context of overall net immigration, these figures suggest that many of those who leave the UK have previously entered the country in order to take up academic posts” (Sastry 2005).

The number of migrants in established, permanent academic posts was, obviously, considerably lower. Bekhradnia and Sastry estimate that the emigration rate among senior staff was below one percent. The immigration rate was slightly higher and showed more fluctuation, something that the authors suggest may be because of peaks in recruitment activity connected to the UK’s research assessment cycle.

Immigration to the UK was concentrated in research-led institutions. Sastry (2005) reports that in 2002/03, just four institutions were responsible for employing 31% of immigrants, and 12 for recruiting 50%. He also reports that a disproportionate number of migrants in both directions specialised in the biological, mathematical and physical sciences. 37% of immigrants and 41% of emigrants worked in these disciplines as compared to only 19% of staff in the UK academic workforce as a whole. Given the high proportion of researchers among migrants, and the high level of grant funding associated with these disciplines, Sastry suggests that this finding is not surprising.

The other highly relevant finding from this project is that over the period studied, the number of immigrants to the UK higher education system from the (pre-enlargement) EU grew by 20%, while immigrants from the USA fell by 16 %. Bekhradnia and Sastry conclude that "There may be some evidence that researchers from European countries are beginning to treat the UK as UK researchers regard the USA, coming here to begin their career and establish their reputations, and then returning to their home countries to continue their careers" (2005).

Evidence from the rest of Europe

A less reliable but nonetheless interesting part of the Higher Education Policy Institute project also sheds a little light on the situation outside the UK as well as within it. Gurney and Adams' work on tracking highly-cited researchers in the natural sciences was based on cross-referencing citation data with biographical information to track the careers of individual academics. However, apart from the UK, the sample sizes were very small, and the data reported in the work is rather difficult to interpret. Furthermore, as the authors themselves concede, it cannot be taken as given that the mobility patterns of highly-cited researchers are representative of those of the academic population as a whole.

This having been said, the authors' own conclusions about mobility in Europe are worth repeating. They conclude that there are "diverse patterns of mobility ranging from the Swiss, who appear to be extremely mobile, to the French, who are the least mobile. Over 90% of highly cited researchers currently based in Switzerland have had some research training or employment in another country. In addition, most of these researchers were not born in Switzerland though they are predominantly European. Conversely, highly cited researchers based in France, typically, were born there, were awarded a higher degree from a French institution, did postdoctoral research there and have not held tenured research posts elsewhere. The mobility of Italian highly cited researchers is similarly low, though less extreme" (Gurney and Adams 2005).

Fig. 27: Patterns of highly-cited scientific researcher mobility in Europe

	% of highly-cited researchers born in this country and working elsewhere	% of highly-cited researchers working country and born elsewhere	% of highly-cited researchers with any non-home work experience
France	7	18	22
Germany	43	27	53
Italy	19	0	61
Netherlands	10	10	50
Switzerland	0	64	88
UK	9	19	45

Source: Cradden adapted from Gurney and Adams 2005, Tables 3.2 and 3.6

From the limited information that is available, it appears that

- Young researchers are the most mobile category of staff.
- The ‘hard’ sciences account for a greater proportion of mobile staff than their presence in the population as a whole.
- Well-resourced institutions are responsible for the greater part of foreign staff recruitment.
- Temporary mobility for teaching purposes is clearly less ‘market-driven’, with no obvious distinction between the better- and less-well-resourced HE systems in terms of their propensity to participate in exchange.

There are several **important data gaps** identified:

- There is very little data on staff mobility.
- The data that is there is not based on a common definition of staff mobility and not comparable between countries.
- There is very little reporting on traditional academic exchange, apart from the European Union exchange programmes. There is slightly more information on indefinite migration of higher education and research staff.
- The small amount of data on staff mobility concentrates in researcher mobility.

D. Information from national reports for the London ministerial meeting

An additional source of information is the national reports from the Bologna countries. In the template for the national reports 2005–2007 **one question relating to staff mobility was included**. The question was to describe any measures being taken to remove obstacles to staff mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.

The WG has **summarised the information from the national reports** in order to give some indication of the actions being taken to promote staff mobility in higher education (see also Annex 4).

Measures taken to remove obstacles to staff mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes

According to the national reports a number of countries are taking specific measures to increase staff mobility further:

- Participation in exchange programme such as Tempus, Copernicus, CEE-PUS and Erasmus Mundus
- Experience of working in a foreign higher education institutions is taken into account in staff selection and promotion exercises
- Guest lecturers and participation in international conferences
- Participation in international networks and research collaborations
- Bi-lateral and multi-lateral agreements with other higher education institutions

Language is occasionally cited as a barrier to staff mobility. However, language tuition appears to be increasing and should therefore help mitigate this barrier.

Other, more specific, measures include:

- Holding a percentage of staff positions free for visiting professors
- Setting targets at institutional level for staff mobility, as part of a wider internationalisation strategy
- Conducting a study on staff mobility, to disseminate good practice
- Simplifying work permits for researchers
- Asking higher education institutions to prepare measures to increase staff mobility
- Staff development programmes being run in conjunction with neighbouring higher education institutions

Staff mobility **does not appear to be an area of particular concern** according to the national reports. While not complacent, countries were generally positive about the degree of staff mobility within their higher education systems. The WG has, however, concluded that less action is shown in this area than for student mobility. There therefore remains much **room for improvement** for staff mobility and **measures related to the national systems in place need to be considered**. Mobility for researchers seems to pose less problems than teacher mobility, partly because of better funding schemes for trans-national research cooperation. However, the main reason is that everybody agrees that international cooperation is vital for high quality research, whereas there is no such general agreement on the importance of international mobility for the quality of teaching.

III.6 Recommendations from the Working Group

The promotion of mobility of students and staff is at the core of the Bologna Process. The objective should be *an EHEA where students and staff can be truly mobile*. However, the participating countries face challenges both concerning mobility as such and finding comparable and reliable data on mobility. Among the obstacles to mobility, issues related to immigration, social security protection for mobile individuals, recognition of study and work periods abroad and lack of financial incentives feature prominently.

Today data on staff mobility are scarce and those that are there show significant weaknesses in giving a full picture of mobility. First of all, there is no common and appropriate definition of mobility for statistical purposes. Also, there are no data covering all Bologna countries, no comparable and reliable data on genuine student mobility, hardly any data on staff mobility and the staff data that is there is not comparable between countries.

It is important to follow-up the development of mobility for students and staff since it is one of the core elements of the Bologna Process and a measurement of its success. The WG has discussed the task to "prepare proposals as a basis for future stocktaking" and has come to the conclusion that in order to find comparable and reliable mobility data we need to think beyond the present Bologna Process stocktaking method. We need an accurate picture of genuine mobility. We need statistical expertise to gather reliable and comparable data for the whole EHEA before stocktaking could be made. The WG therefore recommends that Eurostat and Eurostudent be entrusted with a mandate to develop mobility data.

To meet these challenges the WG has a number of suggestions for measures to support the development of mobility:

Measures at national and institutional level

- By 2009 the countries should report to the BFUG on actions taken at national level to remove obstacles to and promote the benefits of mobility of students and staff, including measures to assess their impact at a future date.
- Countries should focus on the main national challenges: delivery of visas and work permits, the full implementation of established recognition procedures and creating incentives for mobility for both individuals and higher education institutions.
- To address the institutional attitude towards and responsibility for mobility. This includes making mobility an institutional responsibility.
- To facilitate mobility through strengthening the social dimension of mobile students and staff.
- To support the development of joint programmes as one way of enhancing trust between countries and institutions.

Measures at BFUG level

- The collection of data on mobility of staff and students needs to go beyond the present stocktaking method. The BFUG should entrust Eurostat, in conjunction with Eurostudent, with a mandate to provide comparable and reliable data on actual mobility across the EHEA.
- The BFUG should also consider how best to overcome the many obstacles to mobility of students and staff. Progress in this work should be reported for the ministerial meeting in 2009.

Annex 1 Terms of reference

Working group on Social dimension and data on the mobility of staff and students in participating countries

Mission statement:

- to define the concept of social dimension based on the ministerial communiqués of the Bologna Process
- to present comparable data on the social and economic situation of students in participating countries
- to present comparable data on the mobility of staff and students
- to prepare proposals as a basis for future stocktaking

In the Bergen communiqué it states that the social dimension in the Bologna Process is a constituent part of the EHHA. The Ministers therefore renew their commitments to making quality higher education equally accessible to all, and they stress the need for appropriate conditions for students so that they can complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background. Furthermore it is stated that the dimension includes measures taken by governments to help students in e.g. financial aspects and to provide them with guidance and counselling services with a view to widening access. The Ministers stressed these actions during the Bergen conference.

The collection of data on the social and economic situation of students implies fundamental responsibility that rests with the home country to make sure that there is equitable access to higher education. Data will be collected within in the following domains: access and participation rates, social make-up of student body, student income/living expenses as well as the provision of guidance services, but a few other parameters could be added after the definition of the concept has been determined.

The Bergen communiqué targets two groups for the task of presenting data on mobility, i.e. staff and students. Questions pertaining to the mobility of the former are related to working conditions (terms of employment) pension schemes, access schemes, access to labour markets and are given specific treatment according to whether mobility is short term, medium term or definitive access to long term employment.

The mobility of students is determined by number of factors including the financial support systems of the sending country and is thus related to the issue of portable grants as well as by the conditions (housing among others) of the receiving country. This point relates to the internationalisation of higher education.

The BFUG working group is to define the extent to which existing data are already collected and to identify any gaps as a basis for future stocktaking. This also means that the BFUG working group should prioritise the data that are collected or would require being collected and should endorse a restricted number of key indicators.

It also arises from the above that the working group has three broad missions: to define the concept of social dimension, to collect and explore data and to prepare proposals as a basis for future stocktaking.

Organisation of work

The working group will be led by a steering committee including e.g. Luxembourg, Sweden, ESIB and others established by the BFUG. The work will be organised along three broad projects and with subsequent subgroups working with a) and b) and c) will be the responsibility of the steering committee:

- a. Definition of the social dimension using the previous communiqués as a starting point for discussion.
- b. The collection and exploration of data with three strands: socio- and economic situation of the students based upon the definition, mobility of students and mobility of staff. This group needs support from experts in the field and of statisticians.
- c. Recommendations on the scope of a future stocktaking exercise on the social dimension and on mobility, according to the definition emerging from subgroup (a) and the availability of comparable data as identified by subgroup (b).

Preliminary time schedule to be elaborated into a work plan:

- December 2005: First meeting and establishment of the steering committee and the sub-groups. At this meeting an initial discussion on the definition of the social dimension will take place.
- February 2006: The two sub-groups meet as a working group where the definition of the concept of social dimension will be finalised and for the fine-tuning of data collection.
- February 2007: working group seminar led by the steering committee where the indicators for future stocktaking are defined.

The work should be supported by Eurostudent, OECD, Eurostat and others.

Resources

Considering the tight time schedule and considering the need to cover all the 45 participating countries, it may be necessary to foresee two full-time experts for the duration of the project (November 2005-June 2007). The working groups meetings should be organised and financed by the hosting countries. Socrates funding should be applied for.

Chairs

Sweden is willing to lead the steering committee and subgroup a).
Luxembourg is willing to lead subgroup b).

Proposed membership

Austria

Bosnia and Herzegovina

France

Ireland

Ukraine

UK

EUA

EI – Pan European Structure

ESIB

Eurostudent

OECD

Eurostat

Annex 2 Suggested approach of the work on national strategies on the social dimension

In time for the next ministerial meeting in 2009 the WG suggests that the countries should report to the BFUG on their national strategies for the social dimension, including action plans and measures to show their impact. All stakeholders concerned should actively participate in and support this work at the national level.

The countries should use the overall objective as a starting point for their work and formulate a strategy in line with national priorities:

We strive for the societal goal that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of our populations. We therefore pledge to take action to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity.

The development of a strategy should be followed by a national action plan that includes monitoring mechanisms. Ideally, the strategy and action plan will be based on a national debate on the social dimension and the future priorities of that country depending on the current situation. In order to facilitate a national debate on the social dimension the WG proposes the following structure and topics for such a debate:

- **Measures to promote equal opportunities**

What obstacles are there to equal opportunities within higher education?

What protection is there if a student is discriminated when applying for, being admitted to or carrying out studies? Is there a framework for appeal?

What action would be the most effective to achieve equal opportunities in higher education?

- **Measures to widen access to and participation in higher education for underrepresented groups (gender, ethnic origin, immigration, socio-economic status and background, disability, geography etc.)**

What groups are under represented in your national higher education system today? Is there data to show access to higher education by gender, socio-economic background, disabilities, prior immigration, region etc?

What obstacles to widened access and participation are there within your higher education system? At other education levels?

What actions would be appropriate for the different groups to achieve widened access? Are targeted outreach activities needed?

- **Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience**

A, Provision of academic services

B, Provision of social services

What kind of academic or career guidance is provided for the students in your country? What is the student – staff ratio?

Are there retention measures adapted to different groups or individuals with different needs? Is the academic success of student tracked? What would be/has proven to be the most efficient retention measures?

What kind of study environment is there at the higher education institutions?

Do student have access to information, electronically or by other means?

What is the condition of libraries, lecture halls and seminar rooms?

How do students in your country live? Is housing available, of acceptable standard and affordable?

Is targeted support provided or needed for specific student groups?

Is counselling available if students run in to personal difficulties?

- **Measures to increase formal and actual student influence on and participation in higher education governance and other higher education issues**

Are there formal provisions for student influence and participation at all governance levels, in consultative as well as decision-making bodies? Are there formal provisions for student evaluation of the education?

Are the formal regulations followed-up with actual practices? Are there informal ways of student influence and participation as well?

Do students have an influence on all issues related to higher education?

Are students aware of their rights? Do students have organisations that can organise elections to fill elective posts? Is it possible to find enough candidates to fill the posts available? If not – how could this be improved?

- **Finances in order to start and complete studies**

What kind of information and guidance is provided for students regarding financial issues?

How does the average student make his or her living during studies? What kind of state support is provided? Is it appropriate for all groups and individuals? Do certain groups run the risk of being excluded from, or not able to finish their studies, due to financial reasons? Which are these groups or individuals? What could be done to help them?

Are students informed about possible employment possibilities after finishing their studies? How is the labour-market relevance of the studies secured? Are former graduates tracked to follow-up their employment rates?

- **Monitoring: The participating countries should establish national measures to monitor and evaluate the impact of the national strategy and action plan.**

What monitoring mechanisms would be the most appropriate? How could success in strengthening the social dimension be measured short-term and long-term? What quantitative and qualitative data are needed? How is the responsibility for monitoring and evaluation allocated and divided? Are there student surveys carried out to measure the impact of a social dimension strategy? How can student surveys be used in this work?

- **Stakeholder involvement**

Which stakeholders should be involved in the development of a strategy and an action plan? What should be the responsibility of the different stakeholders when carrying out the agreed strategy and plan?

Annex 3

National reports for the London ministerial meeting:
List of answers to question on measures being taken to widen access to quality higher education:

Financial

- scholarships - means tested
- scholarships - merit based
- research grants
- grants for studying abroad
- grants or loans for (nearly) every student
- unspecified social support system
- free education (at least 1st cycle)
- reimbursement of tuition fees for certain groups
- financial assistance for certain groups/areas
- improved funding systems

Structural

- new /expanded routes of access
- broader teaching or learning strategies
- information and preparation at secondary schools
- increase student places
- indirect aid schemes (tax relief, family allowance)
- subsidised residences/meals/transport/books
- provision of student welfare services (health care, day care centres)
- counselling/guidance services

Certain groups

- measures for ethnic minorities (not financial)
- measures for disabled (not financial)
- measures for disadvantaged groups (not financial)
- allocation of study places to certain groups
- promote access from all national areas

Policy and practice

- explicit widening access policy (devoted funds/units/laws)
- carry out surveys (study & work, disabled students,...)
- evaluations/research of policies and practices
- monitoring access (and retention) by students

Rare answers

- planning to tackle social-background inequalities
- planning to improve the situation of older (>26) students
- enhance relevance of HEIs by increasing research quality
- improving the opportunities for students part time job engagements

Further answers

- reference to legal declaration/laws of unrestricted higher HE access
- description of access
- no complementary measures necessary
- mention of problems, self criticism, justification or commendation
- cross-reference/s to read on

The answers to the question on completion are very similar to the answers to the question on widened access and there are often cross-references made between the two answers. The answers to the question on completion are therefore not presented in this Annex.

Annex 4

National reports for the London ministerial meeting:
List of measures taken to remove obstacles to student and staff mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes

Question:

Describe any measures being taken to remove obstacles to students' mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.

Outward / Inward Mobility	participation in EU or other Exchange Programs participation on Development or LLL Programmes bilateral /multilateral or inter-institutional Agreements joint programmes/degrees are offered/increased explicit widen mobility policy (regulations and funds, networks) simplification of the recognition-procedures, Bologna-conformity establishment and use of the Europass portfolio requirements/incentives to HEIs to encourage mobility surveys, monitoring, evaluations, improvement efforts establish a body to promote/guide mobility/internalisation
Inward Mobility	promotion / (multilingual) Information for foreign students courses/curricula available/possible in foreign languages languages courses or Preparatory Courses, Induction certain national scholarships /loans /grants for foreign students (nearly) the same social conditions like domestic students provision of hostel facilities entrance examinations are being organised abroad possibility to enter without passing national admission exams assistance for incomings, reception, administration easier procedures/regulations for visa, work permit or residence

Outward Mobility	promotion / Information about existing mobility programmes
	guidance/counselling/teaching aids for interested students
	mandatory completion of courses/credits abroad
	portability of grants and loans
	financial assistance for needy students/ recognition of social dimension
	additional grants/scholarships/loans or travel cost support for domestic
	students, participating mobility programmes are available
	mobility scholarships with focus on master, PHDs, staff or merit
	offering work placements, research work, skill upgrading
	improving the legal regulations to enable mobility for certain groups
release of tuition fees at the domestic HEIs	
(legal guarantee of) recognition of credits gained abroad	

Question:

Describe any measures being taken to remove obstacles to **staff** mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.

Outward	possibility of sabbatical leave / flexible configurations on period abroad
	encouragement / better recognition of staff mobility and language skills
	information / assistance for (potential) outgoings
	mobility scholarships for academic staff, or funding of travel costs
Inward	introduction of courses w. internat. dimension / teaching in foreign languages
	recruitment of foreign staff/lecturers is required or obliged
	funding Scheme to attract foreign researchers and scholars/staff
	simplification of labour or residency permits
	information / assistance for (potential) incomings outward and inward
Outward and inward	financial support or funds for staff mobility (govermental)
	bi-/multilateral agreements (with partner institutes)
	joint degree programmes (at least under consideration)
	statistics, monitoring, evaluations or improvement policy
	participation on European mobility programmes
	international contacts and networking
	collaborations concerning visas
Others	laws or requirements (accreditation) for staff mobility others
	cross-reference to read on
	staff mobility policy is seen as responsibility of each HEI
	no measures taken or mentioned

Annex 5

Schematic synthesis of data availability on the social dimension

	Summary of availability and differentiation	Data deliverer (number of countries covered)						Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) (17)	
		Eurydice (31)	Eurostudent (21)	Eurostat (27+)	European University Assoc. (EUA) (44)				
Key topic: Widening access									
<i>Aim:</i> To widen participation and to achieve participative equity									
Key information									
New entrants	● A G S R				● S	● A G R	●	S	
Enrolment	● A G S R		●						
Share of students entering via second chance (non-traditional) routes to HE	●		●						
Institutions' initiatives to improve access	●				●				
Key topic: Study framework									
<i>Aim:</i> To create study environments which are conducive to successful studies									
Key information									
Accommodation, provision and costs	●			● A					
Student counselling and social services	●								
Student income sources and expenditures	●	S		●	S	●			
Tuition fees and public support schemes	●	S		●	S				
Student time budget (workload)	●	●		●					
Mix of public and private funding	●	●							
Key topic: Effective outcomes									
<i>Aim:</i> To achieve a high graduate rate and assure the relevance of course provision									
Key information									
Educational attainment	● A G				● A G				
Educational attainment by field of study	●				●				
Retention rate									
Institutions' initiatives to assure the relevance of course provision			●				●		
Employment post-studies							●		

Legend: ● = data available, A = by age, G = by gender, S = by socio-economic background, R = by regions within countries



Socrates

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Working Group Portability of Grants and Loans

Report to the
Bologna Follow Up Group



Executive summary

The research carried out within the framework of this Working Group confirms that when countries support their students through direct grants and loans, the portability of these or similar grants and loans is necessary if countries have the objective to support their students when going abroad for studies. The implementation of portability of national grants and loans is therefore a desirable provision to facilitate the mobility of students in the European Higher Education Area.

The Working Group also concludes that introducing or expanding the portability of grants and loans is possible and generally within the capacity of individual countries. The Working Group realises that countries might be hesitant about implementing portability because of the possible financial implications, but is confident that the information in this report contains the vital elements to be incorporated in the national support systems to prevent student support becoming an unreasonable burden for individual countries. To this end the use of residence requirements, as part of general eligibility criteria, is particularly recommended.

The Working Group realises that countries only have authority within their own territory. When students are abroad, the country providing the support may lack information on the situation abroad. The extent of this 'information-gap' depends on the nature of the national student support system, and the conditions under which support is granted. Where the fulfilment of these conditions takes place in the country of destination of the student, the supporting country might have no clear view on the situation abroad. The Working Group recommends that countries undertake joint action to identify and address the situations where they can assist each other on the implementation of national systems of portable student support for students studying abroad.

The main recommendation is that the Bologna Partner Countries form a network to assist each other with the implementation of portability of grants and loans. Within the framework of this network the necessary joint actions will be identified and addressed. This report forms the foundation on which the foreseen network can be built.

The Working Group suggests the following text to be incorporated into the London Communiqué to reflect this report:

"Following on the outcome of the working group on portability of grants and loans, which demonstrates the necessity to assist each other with the implementation of portable grants and loans, Ministers agree on the establishment of a network of national experts which will facilitate the portability of grants and loans within the EHEA as well as help to identify and address obstacles, as appropriate."

Contents

Executive summary

Inventory

1. Introduction

2. What has the Working Group done?

2.1. Writing the proposal

2.2. Establishment of the Bologna Working Group on Portability of Grants and Loans

2.3. Organising the Working Group

2.4. Discussing the results

2.5. Finalising the report

2.6. Acceptance by the Bologna Follow Up Group

3. Subgroup Descriptions

3.1. The purpose

3.2. Participating countries

3.3. The research method and results

3.4. Similarities

3.5. Differences

3.6. Concerns and suggested solutions mentioned in the survey

4. Subgroup on Current Practice

4.1. The purpose

4.2. Participating countries

4.3. The research method and results

4.4. Residence requirement

4.5. Variety of possibilities and limited number of eligibility criteria

4.6. Specialization

4.7. Mechanisms for exchange of information

4.8. Arrangements for double claim detection

4.9. Internal arrangements for fraud detection

4.10. ICT facilities

4.11. Additional support

4.12. Concerns and possible future action mentioned in the survey

5. Subgroup on EU Law and other relevant legal issues

5.1. The purpose

5.2. Participating countries

5.3. The research method

5.4. The results

5.4.1. Specific legal instruments on portability

5.4.2. EU Law

5.4.2.1. EU Law directly relating to portability

5.4.2.2. EU Law regulating entitlement to support from the host country

5.4.2.2.1. The position of students that are (family members

of) migrant workers

5.4.2.2.2. Non-discrimination and free movement in the EC-

Treaty and Directive 2004/38/EC

5.4.2.2.3. Bidar ruling

5.4.3. Findings of the EU Commission Legal Expert Group

5.4.4. Regulations concerning EEA nationals

5.4.5. The relations between Switzerland and EU/EEA-countries

5.4.6. The position of students from and in other Bologna Partner Countries

5.4.7. The European Agreement on Continued Payment of Scholarships to

Students Studying Abroad 1969

5.4.8. The European Social Charter of the Council of Europe

5.4.9. Overview of the measures to retrieve loans

5.5. Conclusions from the legal framework

6. Conclusions and recommendations

6.1. Conclusions and recommendations

6.2. The network

7. Progress made by all participating Bologna Partner countries with respect to making grants and loans portable

Appendix A: List of relevant documents

Appendix B: List of legal documents referred to in the report

Appendix C: List of people involved in the Working group

1. Introduction

In the Bergen Communiqué the following text was incorporated:

Mobility

We recognise that mobility of students and staff among all participating countries remains one of the key objectives of the Bologna Process. Aware of the many remaining challenges to be overcome, we reconfirm¹ our commitment to facilitate the portability of grants and loans where appropriate through joint action, with a view to making mobility within the EHEA a reality. We shall intensify our efforts to lift obstacles to mobility by facilitating the delivery of visa and work permits and by encouraging participation in mobility programmes. We urge institutions and students to make full use of mobility programmes, advocating full recognition of study periods abroad within such programmes. (Bergen Communiqué, May 2005)

In the above-quoted paragraph of the Bergen Communiqué it was recognised that mobility of students among all participating countries remains one of the key objectives of the Bologna Process. Though mobility is the desired outcome, portability of grants and loans - although not a panacea – should be seen as a means to that end. For this reason the Ministers have made the commitment to stimulate and facilitate the portability of student grants and loans. The Ministers have also stated that, in order to make portability work, joint action could be an appropriate mechanism. Yet, countries seem hesitant to implement portability. Hence, the objective of the Working Group on Portability of grants and loans was ‘making portability work’. The Working Group believes that its results will assist countries in facilitating mobility by providing practical advice on the implementation of the portability of the available student grants/loans. In principle, the Working Group confined its remit to addressing the issues affecting portability of grants and loans, directly within the remit of Ministers for Education. During the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) meeting in Vienna in April 2006 it was decided that the Group would report its results to the BFUG before the 2007 ministerial conference in London.

Definition of the object of the Working Group

In order to obtain workable results, it is important to specify what the Working Group has been dealing with. And, maybe even more importantly, what the Group has *not* been dealing with. The Working Group has defined the portability of grants and/or loans as a system which assures students the possibility of taking similar grants and/or loans that are available for studying in the home country with them, while going abroad for studies. To be more precise in this context, studying abroad means the student eligible for support in the country of residence, has registered at a higher education institution outside that country. This makes it possible for a student to follow a complete programme to obtain a degree abroad. As the Working Group operates within the Bologna Process, ‘abroad’ is to be understood as one of the Bologna Partner Countries.

¹ ‘Reconfirmed’ because in the Berlin Communiqué the following was incorporated: *With a view to promoting student mobility, Ministers will take the necessary steps to enable the portability of national loans and grants.*

Similar grants and/or loans does not mean that the level of support provided to students studying in the home country and abroad has to be exactly the same in absolute terms. However, great discrepancies may distort student's decisions concerning the country of studies.

Grants and loans: direct support from the state to the student

Also, it should be stipulated that where the object of the Working Group is the portability of *grants and loans*, the focus of the Working Group is on *direct* support and not on indirect ways of supporting students (e.g. through tax reduction, family allowance, etc.). The Working Group recognises that each Bologna Partner Country chooses its own system of supporting students. Indirect support is therefore a national issue that advisably should be taken into consideration when making student support systems portable. If, for example, the main support for students in a country is disbursed in the form of child support for the parents, mobility of the student is facilitated if the parents still receive the allowance when their child is abroad for studies.

The Working Group concentrated its work on contributions from the *State* to the student. Specifically, this means that grants and loans paid to students by private institutions and persons as well as the EU through Socrates or Erasmus programmes are not included in the reported work. It is worth mentioning that the Social Dimension Group looked at the full range of indirect as well as direct support available to a student for instance through the taxation system.

The Working Group realises that, next to the issue of portability, there remain other important issues connected with the mobility of students. The Working Group has *only* focused on issues of portability of grants and loans. In the case of several of the mobility issues some progress has already been made within the framework of the Bologna Process (e.g. facilitation of the delivery of visa, recognition of ECTS). Others are still being examined by some of the Bologna Working Groups (e.g. kinds and levels of support) or would go beyond the scope of the Bologna Process (harmonisation of educational systems).

In its work, the Working Group has concentrated on the portability of grants and loans (also) available for (national) students in the home country. No specific distinction has been made between the different cycles of education². However, since a significant amount of countries do not provide support for the third cycle in the form of grants and/or loans, because participants are not always seen as students but as employees, most obtained information relates to the first and second cycle. On the request of the BFUG-board, the question of whether the third cycle should be more explicitly included was discussed during the meeting in Glasgow in September 2006. However, given the available

² The First, Second and Third cycles correspond respectively to Bachelor, Master and Doctorate degrees.

resources, the remaining time schedule and the complexity of the problem, the Working Group decided to leave the third cycle beyond the terms of reference³.

³ For specific information about the Third cycle, one is referred to the information gathered by Eurydice. Furthermore, EUA has recently devoted great attention to the Doctorate level.

2. What has the Working Group done?

2.1. Writing the proposal

In the period between December 2005 and April 2006 representatives of 11 Bologna Partner Countries participated in drafting a proposal⁴ to establish a Bologna Working Group on Portability of Grants and Loans.

2.2. Establishment of the Bologna Working Group on Portability of Grants and Loans

Establishment of the Bologna Working Group on Portability of Grants and Loans was formally approved by the Bologna Follow Up Group during the meeting in Vienna on 6-7th April 2006.

In their proposal, the 11 aforementioned countries referred to the Bergen Communiqué. In the paragraph concerning the mobility of students, the Ministers of Education from Bologna Partner Countries reconfirmed their commitment to facilitate the portability of grants and loans where appropriate through joint action.

The proposal dealt also with the organisational issues regarding the proposed Working Group such as terms of reference, expected outcomes, composition of the Group and prospective time schedule. Authors of the proposal suggested as well that the prospective Working Group should set up close contacts with the Working Group on Social Dimension and Data on the Mobility of Staff and Students in Participating Countries (Social Dimension Group) so as to assure that the results of these two groups complement each other. In connection with this suggestion at the early stages of their work members of the Working Group on Portability of Grants and Loans were monitoring the outcomes of the Social Dimension Group. They were also providing members of the above-mentioned Group with outcomes of their own work. Moreover, a few members of the Group on Portability of Grants and Loans participated as well in the Social Dimension Group. All these forms of exchanging information led to the conclusion that the terms of reference of both Groups did not overlap and closer cooperation was not necessary.

2.3. Organising the Working Group

After the formal approval of the Group, applications for membership started to be collected. The Bologna Secretariat advice was to limit the number of the members of the Group to 10-12 in order to work efficiently and achieve workable results. However, the number of candidates reached 18 and with a view to assuring broad representation and sustaining the involvement of candidates, all applications were accepted.⁵

During the first official meeting of the Portability of Grants and Loans Working Group in The Hague⁶, June 16th, it was decided that the Group would be split into 3 Sub-groups: EU Law, Current Practices and Description of National Student Support Systems. Moreover, the following time schedule envisaging that the work would be carried out in 3 phases was adopted:

⁴ See appendix A for the proposal

⁵ See appendix C for the list of participants

⁶ See appendix A for the notes

- a) June – September 2006: gathering required information,
- b) September 2006 – January 2007: processing the output of phase 1,
- c) January – March 2007: winding up, reporting to the Ministerial Conference in London.

Before the Group was divided into 3 Sub-groups a number of important general issues were discussed. First of all, the Group undertook the task of defining the term “portability of grants and loans”. It was also agreed that given the tight time schedule and broad representation of Bologna Partner Countries in the Group, the task of gathering information on all of the Bologna Partner Countries was not necessary and would be too time-consuming. Hence, the Group decided that the number of respondents would be limited to the members of the Group.

Afterwards, the Sub-groups started to organise themselves and plan their work. Ultimately, the whole Group approved the Sub-group proposals and agreed that the next meeting would take place in Glasgow 7-8 September.

2.4. Discussing the results

The 2nd formal meeting of the Portability of Grants and Loans Working Group was held in Glasgow, 7-8th September 2006⁷. The meeting marked the completion of Phase 1 of the time schedule which focused mainly on data gathering and the commencement of Phase 2 in which the output of Phase 1 was to be processed.

During the first day of the Glasgow meeting the Sub-groups finalised their work and prepared short presentations to the main Group. During the second day, representatives of the Sub-groups presented summaries of their findings. These short presentations were followed by discussions on the possible ways of making use of Sub-group results.

It was also agreed that in Phase 2 a smaller task force would undertake the task of the formulation of an outline report which was intended to provide recommendations and guidance for the Ministers of Education from the Bologna Partner Countries. More specifically, it was agreed that the report would provide advice on joint actions and examples of good practice as well as information on possible problems and barriers countries might encounter when implementing portability of student grants and loans. According to the Group, the report should also provide advice on measures which could be applied by countries without portable student support systems with the aim of facilitating other countries' portability.

2.5. Finalising the report

At the third formal meeting of the Working Group in Berlin, 15-16 January 2007, a draft version of this report was discussed. Recommendations to be made to the Bologna Follow Up Group were formulated as was a draft text to be incorporated in the London Communiqué.

One of the main recommendations of the Working Group would be the establishment of a network. The format of the network and its mode of operation were discussed in order to develop a clear

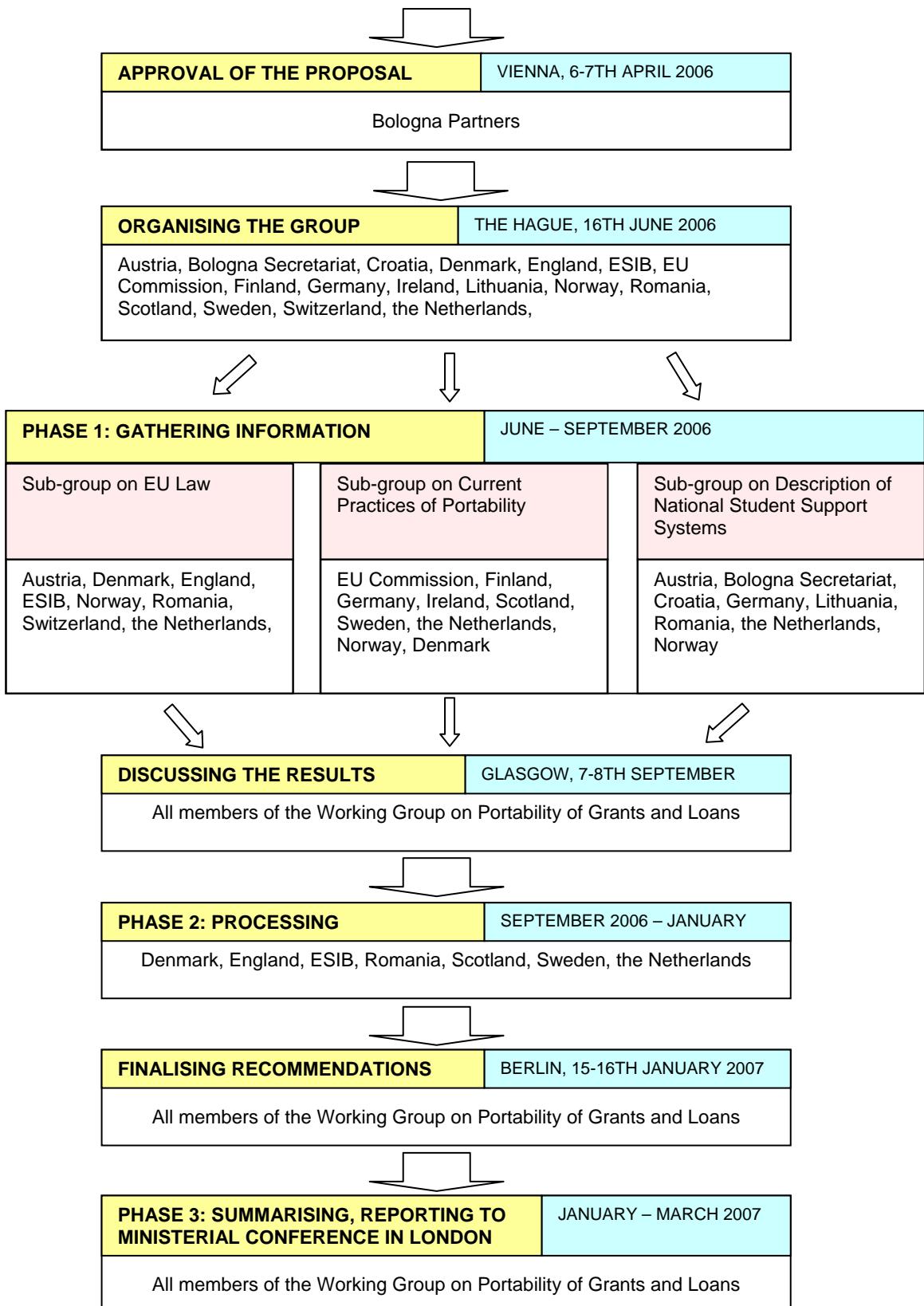
⁷ See appendix A for the notes

understanding of how it would actually contribute to the implementation of portability of grants and loans.

2.6. Acceptance by the Bologna Follow Up Group

The draft report was submitted to the Bologna Follow Up Group and placed on the agenda of its meeting on March 5th and 6th 2007, which was held in Berlin.

After discussion the report was accepted with the addition that working together in the proposed network would not only benefit the participants on portability-issues, but on general student-support-issues as well.



3. Subgroup Descriptions

3.1. The purpose

The goal of the Sub-group on Descriptions was to gain an overall picture of the diversity of national systems of grants and loans, their current portability and restrictions.

3.2. Participating countries

The 13 Bologna Partner Countries that participated in this survey were: Austria, Denmark, England, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Romania, Scotland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway, and Switzerland.

3.3. The research method and results

The research method for this study was a survey based on a questionnaire filled in by representatives of participating countries chosen from brain-trust experts in the field of student support.⁸ The applied research method enabled the Sub-group to gather a wide range of information concerning national systems of grants and loans in terms of the types of grants and loans available in selected European countries, conditions determining eligibility for support, statistical data on the numbers of students entitled to support, forms of support and other relevant aspects. Simultaneously, participating countries gained the opportunity to express their concerns and share their views on the issue of portability.

3.4. Similarities

The results of the aforementioned survey show that many similarities between all systems exist. All systems considered offer at least one financial form of support that is a non-returnable grant or a returnable loan. It is widely accepted that granted or loaned funds are supposed to contribute towards the costs of living, however support for covering other costs e.g. tuition fees is also offered in some countries. The eligibility criteria for student support also overlap. Similar categories of students are eligible to apply for support. In general, full-time bachelor and masters level students can acquire the right to some form of support in almost all countries, although eligibility for support is often restricted. There is also a near general consensus that disabled students or students with dependants should be eligible for higher or additional support. All of the systems of the countries participating in this sub-group offered some level of portability, although potential restrictions varied among countries as well. With the added research done by ESIB in a number of Bologna Countries not represented in the Working Group, the portability varies from ‘not at all’ to fully portable to the whole world.

⁸ See appendix A for the questionnaire and the collected data.

3.5. Differences

Notwithstanding the many similarities, one should be aware of the existence of some significant differences. Principles on which the systems are based are alike, but not identical. Some countries provide all full-time bachelor and masters level students with selected forms of support, other restrict the support to specific groups of full-time bachelor and masters level students, e.g. those with outstanding results or those whose average income per family member is not higher than an established threshold. In some cases eligibility for support is extended to wider groups of students and includes, for example, part-time or post-graduate students. Additional conditions make the systems more complex and expand the scope of required information. The need for gathering information about students is even greater in the case of systems which provide students with repayable forms of support. In some systems repayment of loans depends on academical results, income or other characteristics of graduates. Effective collection of repayments also requires information about graduates' place of residence. As a result, information concerning students' personal and financial situations can be perceived as the most crucial input in all of the systems.

3.6. Concerns and suggested solutions mentioned in the survey

Countries which participated in the survey had the opportunity to express their opinion on the issue of portability of student support. In general, concerns raised by respondents can be divided into three groups as follows:

- a) migration flows,
- b) financial matters,
- c) legal and organisational problems.

Results of the survey reveal the existence of fears of loosing national students in favour of other Bologna Partner Countries. This kind of fear might be especially found in countries where the brain-drain scenario seems to be the most problematic, namely in the countries where the number of outgoing students outweighs the number of incoming ones. Opposite concerns might be observed in countries with considerable migration inflow and a generous student support system. Additionally, there are some fears of abuse of the system by students only passing through a particular country for the sole purpose of obtaining portable support.

The second group of concerns raised by countries participating in the survey comprises possible financial consequences of the introduction and/or expansion of portability. According to some respondents the whole system might prove very expensive particular given the considerable complexity and variety of national student support systems. Possible costs of portability might be even higher in the case of countries where these systems are very well developed or offer additional support to students choosing studies abroad. A majority of countries participating in the survey expressed the opinion that introduction and/or expansion of portability might increase the possibility of "double financing" or "double claiming".

The third group of possible obstacles identified by respondents includes various legal and organisational problems. Some legal systems have to be adjusted for portability. This lack of adjustment is especially apparent in the field of security of personal information. In some cases,

problems result for practical reasons e.g. data concerning enrolled students, their income, place of residence etc. are not collected. In the opinion of some respondents portability would entail restructuring their whole student support system e.g. in some systems grants or loans are defined as a means only for financing the costs of living and do not cover tuition fees. These respondents believe that the goal of encouraging student mobility might be achieved only if tuition fees are calculated, adjusted to actual costs and included in the portable support. Finally, there was a concern that the differences in the costs of living among participating countries may still impede student's mobility.

The responding countries proposed various ways of overcoming the aforementioned obstacles to the introduction and/or expansion of portability:

- a) intensification of the exchange of information about national student support systems,
- b) establishment of arrangements to exchange information about students directly between the national authorities of the countries that have introduced portability,
- c) implementation or expansion of portability in many countries in cooperation with each other,
- d) promotion of mobility among students from participating countries,
- e) creation of a special Bologna fund in order to finance the difference in the costs of living.

4. Subgroup on Current Practice

4.1. The purpose

The Sub-group on Current Practice of Portability undertook the task of collecting and summarising information on administrative and practical arrangements facilitating portability of grants and loans in countries with the most extensive experience in this area. Potential results were to form the basis for a toolkit for introducing portability in Bologna Partner Countries.

4.2. Participating countries

The Nordic countries (Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Norway) as well as Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands participated in the survey.

4.3. The research method and results

The research method applied by the Sub-group on Current Practice of Portability was a survey based on a template sent out among experts in the area of student financing from all participating countries.⁹ The template consisted of three sections:

- a. General Information,
- b. Description of Administration Systems,
- c. Lessons that can be learned from the experience of administering the Portability Model.

The results acquired by the Sub-group on Current Practice of Portability to some extent overlap with the outcomes of the Sub-group Descriptions. Nevertheless, the work of Sub-group on Current Practice of Portability brought additional, thorough information concerning specific solutions applied in the countries which introduced portability of students support. What is more, participating countries also gained the opportunity to express their opinions on the strengths of their systems. On the basis of this information the most advantageous administrative and practical arrangements might be identified

4.4. Residence requirement

In the Nordic countries, that have the longest experience of providing portable grants and loans to their students on a broad scale, the number of students eligible for taking the available support abroad is controlled by residence requirements. This means that a student that is entitled to support, can only take that support abroad if he has lived at least a certain amount of time in the country supplying the support before going abroad. The background of the residence requirement is that a lot of emigrants from the Nordic Countries applied for support from their country of origin, to use in their new home country. Such a residence requirement can also prevent 'U-turns': students only staying in a country

⁹ See appendix A for the questionnaire and the collected data.

for a short period, becoming entitled to support and taking the support abroad to study in another country, which might be their country of origin.¹⁰

4.5. Variety of possibilities and limited number of eligibility criteria

In the opinion of a few respondents a wide variety of choice in geographical terms is one of the strengths of their systems as it can substantially contribute to the intensification of students' mobility. On the other hand, members of the Sub-group concluded that if the number of countries had been restricted it would have been easier to gather all necessary information on courses and educational institutions and simultaneously handle the whole system.

Some of the countries which participated in the survey emphasised that keeping to a minimum the number of additional eligibility criteria (e.g. requirements concerning the educational institution abroad) which students wishing to study abroad must meet, helps to promote mobility.

4.6. Specialisation

Certain participating countries expressed the conviction that specialised or expert authorities responsible for students support are an important strength of their student support systems. These authorities are charged with various information and/or administrative tasks e.g.:

- a) collection and dissemination of information concerning foreign educational systems and institutions,
- b) recognition of academic certificates, scholarships, etc.,
- c) consideration of applications,
- d) disbursement of support,
- e) collection of information about students.

Sweden not only established a specialised authority responsible for student support (the Swedish National Board of Student Aid (CSN)) but it also based the internal organisational structure of this institution on the principle of geographical specialisation. As a result each CSN-official concerned with the portability of student support is specialised and only handles applications concerning specific countries.

The aim of these forms of specialisation is the same. Specialisation facilitates the process of acquisition and accumulation of knowledge.

4.7. Mechanisms for exchange of information

Participating countries introduced several forms of arrangements for the exchange of information.

In the case of Nordic countries these mechanisms are the most advanced and comprise multilateral cooperation at both ministerial and agency level. The cooperation at ministerial level is

¹⁰ For the Legal implications of the residence requirement in the EU Legal framework, one is referred to chapter 5, paragraph 4.2.2.2 and 4.2.2.3.

organised by a working group, within the framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers which exchanges information etc. At agency level the executives meet on a regular basis. Every other year the agencies organise a Nordic student support conference in connection with the executive meeting.

Since the UK is considered as the most popular destination for Irish students, Ireland has developed informal bilateral relationships with the relevant authorities involved. In the Netherlands the Informatie Beheer Groep (institution responsible for disbursement of student support) established direct contacts with selected foreign universities regarding enrolment of Dutch students in academic courses. Germany has not set up an institutionalised network for permanent international cooperation but sporadically cooperates with institutions abroad on a case-by-case basis. However, with regard to its specific system, a cross-government group was established involving officials dealing with student support on the federal and Lander-levels.

4.8. Arrangements for double claim detection

In the case of countries which developed extensive mechanisms for exchange of information (e.g. Nordic countries) the task of double claim prevention is implemented through these contacts. In practice, agencies responsible for student support exchange lists of names of students who receive financial support from the host country. Additionally, a student applying for support in Finland, Norway and Sweden is obliged to state whether he or she receives financial support from other countries.

In Germany there are no specific arrangements to prevent double claims being made by students studying abroad. However, the aforementioned structure of the German administrative system resulted in the establishment of such arrangements at the national level. Double claims are detected by the federal office of administration to which local authorities report the support they have granted.

4.9. Internal arrangements for fraud detection

In general respondents did not report that their countries had established international arrangements for fraud detection. However, such arrangements apply internally. In Germany, for instance, a student lodging an application for support is obliged to declare his income and will be prosecuted in the case of fraud. Additionally, information provided by a student is cross-checked with data collected by the fiscal authorities. Similar arrangements apply also in other countries. Identification of students and detection of fraud is usually facilitated by personal identity numbers.

4.10. ICT facilities

Several respondents highlighted the importance of ICT solutions (e.g. websites, electronic signature) in supporting their systems of student grants and loans. These systems afford students the opportunity to access various services from all over the world. These services include online applications, disbursement of support directly to students' accounts and access to relevant information concerning, for example, payment plans.

4.11. Additional support

Some respondents offer additional forms of support to students studying abroad. This additional support is provided with the aim of covering specific extra costs e.g. travel costs and tuition fees (when they are higher in the country of destination) as well as balancing in general the difference in purchasing power between home and host countries.

4.12. Concerns and possible future action mentioned in the survey

The sub-group on current practice identified a number of concerns and obstacles to portability:

- double claiming issues around comparability of data or information on the identification of individuals between countries arise
- general issues around data exchange and data protection rules should be explored
- difficulty in gaining confirmation of level of qualification in comparison with the home country higher education qualification
- potential lack of capacity of existing bodies like ENIC-NARIC
- difficulty in verifying legitimacy of institutions and courses – in “new” countries or situations
- comparability of home – host nation support and eligibility criteria

The sub-group proposed that ways of overcoming these issues should be considered as part of future action arising from the work of the Working Group.

5. Subgroup on EU Law and other relevant legal issues

5.1. The purpose

The Sub-group on EU Law undertook the task of examining the legal issues of the portability of grants and loans. The group defined two specific goals:

- a) gaining a clear view of the legal position of the students from each of the different kind of Bologna Partner Countries into each of the different kind of Bologna Partner Countries and of the influence of EU Law or other sources of law on these positions,
- b) obtaining an overview of measures provided by EU Law or other sources of law to retrieve loans from persons residing outside their home country.

It might seem curious that a lot of attention is being paid to the entitlement of students to support from the host country, whereas, by definition, portable support is support from the home country of the student. However, as was mentioned in the chapters 3 and 4 of this report, one of the concerns of some Countries is the fact that if too many students can get support from the host country, there is a real danger that by making a u-turn, students from country A will use portable support from country B to study in country C. Further more, by showing whether or not international mobile students are entitled to support from their host country, it becomes clear whether there is a necessity for portable support.

5.2. Participating countries

The sub-group on EU Law included representatives of 7 European countries: 4 EU countries (Austria, Denmark, England and the Netherlands), 1 EEA-Member State (Norway), 1 EU-candidate State (Romania¹¹) and Switzerland. ESIB provided the sub-group with additional information concerning Serbia. A colleague from Denmark had been previously involved in the Legal Expert Group, installed by the European Commission and volunteered to update the Working Group on the findings of the Legal Expert Group.

5.3. The research method

With the aim of reaching above-mentioned results all members of the Sub-group on EU Law agreed to prepare three kinds of analyses from the perspective of their own country:

- a) analysis of the position of students from all kinds of Bologna Partner Countries coming to their country and of the influence of EU Law or other sources of law on this position,
- b) analysis of the presumed position of their students in all other kinds of Bologna Partner Countries,
- c) overview of the known and/or used measures to retrieve loans from persons residing outside their home country.

The sub-group intended to prepare a matrix on the basis of above-mentioned analyses with the aim of comparing views of participating countries on the issue of student support.

¹¹ At the time of the survey, Romania was an EU-candidate Member State.

Colleagues from Denmark were asked to report the findings of the Legal Expert Group which led the European Commission to the conclusion that the decision on implementing portability of student support is at the discretion of each EU Member State.

5.4. The results

As was to be expected, the experts involved were in a position to describe the situation of students coming to their respective countries from all the different kinds of Bologna Partner Countries. However they were much less sure about the presumed position of students going from their own country to the different Bologna Partner Countries. Although this meant that the matrix objective was not reached, it was concluded that the combined knowledge on the position of mobile students and the relevant legal backgrounds shows a thorough overview of the main legal regulations influencing portability of grants and loans as well as measures applied to retrieve loans. All regulations identified are summed up in Appendix B to this report.

5.4.1. Specific legal instruments on portability

It has to be underlined that up to now no specific legal instrument dealing with the topic of portability of student grants and loans has been established with the exception of the European Agreement on Continued Payment of Scholarships to Students Studying Abroad 1969 of the Council of Europe¹². Therefore the legal framework of portable student support has to be derived from other, more general provisions. Often this will result in researching the regulations on the entitlement of students to support from the host country.

5.4.2 EU Law

5.4.2.1. EU Law directly relating to portability

It should be emphasised that with respect to portability up to now neither the Community law nor the European Court of Justice has defined portability or laid down the conditions when students are entitled to grants or loans of their home country when studying abroad. As a result every State can stipulate the specific conditions on which study grants or loans may be portable.¹³

There are some other legal, but not binding instruments that relate to the topic of portability. One example is the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 July 2001 on mobility within the Community for students, persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers¹⁴. This Recommendation, which is based on Articles 149(4) and 150(4) of the Treaty establishing the European Community states that the portability of scholarships and national aids can be promoted.

¹² See paragraph 5.4.7. of this report

¹³ In a pending case (Morgan and Bücher, C-11&12/06) the Court is expected to give a ruling on portability of the German student support. This ruling is expected shortly before the summer of 2007.

¹⁴ OJ L 215, 9.8.2001, p. 30

The “Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on transnational mobility within the Community for education and training purposes: The European Quality Charter for Mobility of 18 December 2006”¹⁵ states that attention should be paid to the issue of the portability of loans, grants and social security benefits. Moreover it points out that adequate logistical support should be provided, which could include the portability of government grants and loans from the country of origin to the host country should be provided.

In the Commission Communication “Delivering on the Modernisation agenda of universities”¹⁶ it is also emphasised that ‘national grants and loans should be fully portable within the EU’.

5.4.2.2. EU law regulating entitlement to support from the host country

There are regulations with reference to obligations of the host country. The situation of the mobile student depends on whether the student is a worker or a family member of a worker who therefore can rely on the Regulation (EEC) No 1612/68 on freedom of movement for workers within the Community¹⁷.

5.4.2.2.1. The position of students that are (family members of) migrant workers

According to Article 7 thereof (Employment and equality of treatment) a worker who is a national of a Member State may not, in the territory of another Member State, be treated differently from national workers by reason of his nationality in respect of any conditions of employment and work, in particular as regards remuneration, dismissal, and should he become unemployed, reinstatement or re-employment.

According to Article 7 par. 2 thereof a worker who is a national of a Member State shall enjoy the same social and tax advantages as national workers. According to settled case-law educational grants and loans are defined as social advantages. Article 7 in conjunction with Article 12 means that the children of a national of a Member State who is or has been employed in the territory of another Member State shall enjoy the same social and tax advantages as national workers. The same, means ‘under the same conditions’.

5.4.2.2.2. Non-discrimination and free movement in the EC-Treaty and Directive 2004/38/EC

If the student cannot rely on Regulation (EEC) No 1612/68 his right to student support from the host country may be derived from Articles 12 and/or 18 of the Treaty establishing the European Community and/or Article 24 of Directive 2004/38/EC¹⁸.

In accordance with Article 12¹⁹ of the Treaty establishing the European Community, any discrimination on grounds of nationality shall be prohibited within the scope of application of the

¹⁵ OJ L 394,30 Dec 2006, p. 5

¹⁶ Brussels 10-5-2006, COM (2006) 208 final

¹⁷ Regulation (EEC)No 1612/68 of the Council of 15 October 1968 on freedom of movement for workers within the Community (OJ L 257, 19.10.1968, p. 2)

¹⁸ OJ L 229, 29/06/2004.

¹⁹ Within the scope of application of this Treaty, and without prejudice to any special provisions contained therein, any discrimination on grounds of nationality shall be prohibited.

Treaty, and taking into account the special provisions in the Treaty. Article 18, paragraph 1²⁰, provides the right of free movement and residence for all European citizens in all Member States of the EU.

Article 24, paragraph 1 of Directive 2004/38/EC, which is based on Article 18 of the Treaty, specifies the position of EU citizens exercising their right of free movement and states that all Union citizens (as well as their family members who have the right of residence or permanent residence) residing in the territory of the host Member State shall enjoy equal treatment with the nationals of that Member State. With regard to access to national educational institutions this rule applies without exceptions. This means that every incoming EU student pays the same tuition fee as the nationals of the hosting EU country²¹ and if the national students are supported to pay the tuition fee, the incoming EU student receives that as well²². The same means ‘under the same conditions’.

The situation is different with regard to maintenance support. In accordance with Article 24, paragraph 2 of Directive 2004/38/EC, a host Member State is not obliged to grant maintenance aid to citizens of other EU Member states before they acquire the right of *permanent* residence in its territory. This provision does not concern workers, self-employed persons, persons who retain such status and members of their families, as was mentioned above. In accordance with Article 16 of Directive 2004/38/EC, EU-citizens who have resided legally for a continuous period of five years in the host Member State are entitled to the right of permanent residence there.

Paragraph 1 of Article 24 of Directive 2004/38/EC in conjunction with paragraph 2 thereof means that host EU Member States are obliged to grant assistance covering maintenance costs only to the following groups of students from other EU Member States:

- a) workers, self-employed persons, persons who retain such status and members of their families,
- b) persons who have resided legally for a continuous period of five years in the host Member State. A Member State might decide to grant maintenance aid sooner than after five years of residence, because the Directive only states that the Member State is not obliged to do so.²³

5.4.2.2.3. Bidar ruling

²⁰ Every citizen of the Union shall have the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States, subject to the limitations and conditions laid down in this Treaty and by the measures adopted to give it effect.

²¹ Case C-293/83 (Gravier)

²² Case C-357/89 (Raulin)

²³ From other sources (Cheps reports under Dutch Presidency of the EU in 2004) it is known that some countries (for example Spain) do provide support to EU-incoming students on the same basis as national students. However, the conditions are such, that only few incoming students actually receive support. Furthermore, this host country approach is seen mostly with countries that provide most of the support through indirect channels. If national students are supported through family allowances paid to the parents, an incoming EU-student can only benefit from that support if he is joined by his parents.

Judgement of the European Court of Justice in the Bidar case²⁴ of 15th March 2005 brought additional developments concerning assistance for students in the form of subsidised loans and related provisions limiting the grant of such loans to students settled in national territory.

The European Court of Justice ruled that it is permissible for an EU-Member State to ensure that the grant to cover the maintenance costs of students from other Member States does not become an unreasonable burden which could have consequences for the overall level of assistance which may be granted by that State. It is thus legitimate for a Member State to grant such assistance only to students who have demonstrated a certain degree of integration into the society of that State. The European Court of Justice observed also that the requirement of previous lawful residence or settlement in the host country may be used to establish the existence of a certain degree of integration.

It should be noted that the English residence requirement applied to all students, whether they have UK nationality or nationality of another EU-Member State. Nevertheless, the Court decided that "the first paragraph of Article 12 EC [prohibition of discrimination on the ground of nationality] must be interpreted as precluding national legislation which grants students the right to assistance covering their maintenance costs only if they are settled in the host Member State, while precluding a national of another Member State from obtaining the status of settled person as a student even if that national is lawfully resident and has received a substantial part of his secondary education in the host Member State and has consequently established a genuine link with the society of that State". This judgment does not exclude the possibility of the Member States to prevent that a student becomes an unreasonable financial burden for the host country, but it specifies a case in which the principle of non-discrimination must be extended. Consequently, a UK regulation has been declared discriminatory, only on the grounds that the concerned person (Mr. Bidar) had been lawfully resident for three years and has received a substantial part of his secondary education in the UK and has consequently established a genuine link with the society of that State.

5.4.3. Findings of the EU Commission Legal Expert Group

In response to concerns regarding the evolution of community law in the area of student support, in October 2004 the EU Commission took steps towards establishing a group of legal experts to deal with legal issues concerning portability of student support.

Particularly, attention was to be given to the following issues:

- a) existing and pending case law on the portability of student grants, taking into consideration different categories of students,
- b) home or host country approach: how to avoid double student support,
- c) possibility of introducing new legal instruments dealing with the issue of portability of grants.

The final conclusion of the EU Commission and the Legal Expert Group was influenced by the above-mentioned ruling of the European Court of Justice in the Bidar case. Since the ruling of the ECJ has not affected the applicability of Directive 2004/38/EC in general, and specifically of its Article 24, paragraph 2 (which enables Member States to apply restrictions to financial assistance to students

²⁴ Case C-209/03 (Bidar).

prior to acquisition of the right of permanent residence), members of the Legal Expert Group agreed that there was no longer an urgent need for action on a Community level. As a result, the official conclusion of the EU Commission in cooperation with the Legal Expert Group was as follows: 'due to the Bidar decision of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) the expert group came to the conclusion that further activities on the EU level are neither necessary nor useful.'²⁵

5.4.4. Regulations concerning EEA nationals

EEA nationals derive their rights to student support when going to another EU/EEA country from Article 31 of the Agreement on the European Economic Area or from Article 7(2) of the Regulations 1612/68 only in their capacity as workers, or as dependant descendant of such a worker.

Directive 2004/38/EC has not yet been incorporated in the EEA Agreement. Consequently, the Directive is not yet applicable for European Union citizens in EEA Member States and vice versa.

As to the Bidar case, the judgement of the Court is based on Article 12 of the EC Treaty – prohibition of discrimination – which falls within the EEA. However, the Court states that the application of the Treaty within the meaning of Article 12, that article must be read in conjunction with the provisions of the Treaty on citizenship of the Union. Citizen of the Union does not fall within the scope of the EEA Agreement.

5.4.5. The relations between Switzerland and EU/EEA-countries

The relations between Switzerland and EU/EEA-countries in the area of student support are regulated on the basis of bilateral agreements. General rules are provided by the Agreement between European Community and its Member States, on the one part, and the Swiss Confederation, on the other, on the free movement of persons (EU-Switzerland agreement)²⁶. Incoming EU and EEA students that are (family members of) migrant workers in Switzerland are entitled to Swiss student support. Swiss students that are (family members of) migrant workers in one of the EU or EEA Countries are entitled to support from the hosting EU/EEA-country.

Directive 2004/38/EC does not apply in relation to Switzerland. Furthermore, there are no intentions to adapt the substance of the Agreement on free movement of persons to the standards of this directive.

On the free movement of persons there is very little reference to Community legislation in the EU-Switzerland agreement. In addition, the EU-Switzerland agreement provides explicitly an exemption from the non-discrimination rules as regards student fees. Thus Swiss universities may charge higher fees from EU-nationals compared to the fees they request from Swiss nationals. The reverse goes for EU-universities.

Concerning student grants and loans the situation is as follows: EU nationals residing for study purposes in Switzerland have no right to receive a Swiss study grant or loan. On the contrary, the lack of own funding could be a reason for withdrawing the residence permit.

²⁵ Quote from the Education Committee meeting 26-27 September 2005.

²⁶ OJ L 114/6 , 30/04/2002.

As regard Swiss students in the EU, Member States are not obliged to treat Swiss students on equal footing with their own nationals.

5.4.6. The position of students from and in other Bologna Partner Countries

The position of students from and in other Bologna Partner Countries is regulated by national law. In general one can conclude that mobile students that have only moved to another country for the purpose of studies are not entitled to the general support available for the national students of the hosting country. From country to country the conditions vary under which persons can apply for a residence permit that entitles them to financial assistance by the hosting state. Usually, this requires some years of residence or special circumstances, such as marriage or adoption.

5.4.7. The European Agreement on Continued Payment of Scholarships to Students Studying Abroad 1969

While the above-mentioned EU legislation provides a legal basis for integration of some students in the support system of the host country, the European Agreement on Continued Payment of Scholarships to Students Studying Abroad 1969²⁷ aims at supporting students studying abroad by their home country. The Agreement applies, as referred to in Article 1 thereof, to all forms of direct financial support granted to students, undergraduate and post graduate, provided by the State or other authority, including grants towards the payment of fees, maintenance awards and study loans. The Agreement does not cover, however, grants for full studies abroad. In accordance with Article 3 thereof, there are three conditions for transferring support abroad:

- a) starting of the study program in the home country,
- b) execution of the study at a recognised foreign educational institution,
- c) recognition of the courses and exams in the home country.

The following countries signed the Agreement: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, The United Kingdom, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Luxemburg, Malta, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland Yugoslavia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

As was mentioned above, binding EU-legislation and the Agreement on Continued Payment of Scholarships to Students Studying Abroad 1969 provide a legal basis for two diverging solutions concerning portability of student support. This situation entails the risk of double-financing.

5.4.8. The European Social Charter of the Council of Europe

Article 10 paragraph 5 of the Revised European Social Charter²⁸ may influence the position of students who are nationals of parties to this Charter. However, the scope of this provision does not influence the portability of student support.

²⁷ European Treaty Series - No. 69.

²⁸ European Treaty Series - No. 163.

5.4.9. Overview of the measures to retrieve loans

The Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund has reported that the legal instrument they use to retrieve loans is the Convention of Lugano of January 3, 1993. England for such purposes applies domestic legislation and, if necessary, Council Regulation (EC) 44/2001 of 22 December 2000 on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgements in civil and commercial matters²⁹.

5.5. Conclusions from the legal framework

There are few regulations on portable grants and loans. This means that Bologna Partner Countries are free to support their students with grants and loans for the purpose of studying abroad under their own conditions.

The regulations on the entitlement of students to support from the hosting country show that, in general, when students are going from one country to another for studies, they are not entitled to the same support as the national students. This stipulates the necessity to support mobile students with portable grants and loans from the home country.

EU Law provides some mobile students from EU/EEA countries and Switzerland going to one of these countries with entitlement to support from the host country. In most cases student derive these entitlements from another status, for example being a migrant worker. Although limited, the fact that some students can get support from the hosting country could result in students receiving double support when they are also entitled to portable support from their home country.

²⁹OJ L 12/1.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

6.1. Conclusions and recommendations

The research being done in the framework of this Working Group confirms that, when countries support their students through direct grants and loans, the portability of these grants and loans is necessary if countries have the objective to support their students when going abroad for studies.

The Working Group also concludes that introducing or expanding the portability of grants and loans is possible and generally within the capacity of individual countries. The Working Group realises that countries might be hesitant to implement portability because of the possible financial implications, but is confident that the information in this report contains the vital elements to be incorporated in the national support systems to prevent student support becoming an unreasonable burden for individual countries. To this end the use of residence requirements, as part of general eligibility criteria, is particularly recommended.

The Working Group realises that countries only have authority within their own territory. When students are abroad, the country providing the support may lack information on the situation abroad. The extent of this ‘information-gap’ depends on the nature of the national student support system and the conditions under which support is granted. Where the fulfilment of these conditions takes place in the country of destination of the student, the supporting country might have no clear view on the situation abroad. The Working Group recommends that countries undertake joint action to identify and address the situations where they can assist each other on the implementation of national systems of portable support for students studying abroad.

The main recommendation is that the Bologna Partner Countries form a network to assist each other with the implementation of portability of grants and loans. The framework of the foreseen network is outlined below.

The Working Group suggests the following text to be incorporated into the London Communiqué to reflect this report:

“Following on the outcome of the working group on portability of grants and loans, which demonstrates the necessity to assist each other with the implementation of portable grants and loans, Ministers agree on the establishment of a network of national experts which will facilitate the portability of grants and loans within the EHEA as well as help to identify and address obstacles, as appropriate.”

6.2. The network

The aim of the network is to facilitate the implementation of portability of grants and loans in order to promote mobility. This will be instrumental for the relevant authorities who deal with student support.

The outcome should make work easier for the national authorities concerned with the disbursing of support abroad.

The participants will be experts on student support systems, both on implementation and execution and on policy. The cooperation of these experts will enable them to learn from each other, as well on portability-issues as on general student-support-issues.

The following tasks are foreseen for the network. The sharing of experience and structuring of information needed for the implementation of portability of grants and loans. The members of the Working Group experienced the value of sharing experiences and collecting the information presented in the report. This will assist countries that did not participate in the Working Group to oversee the implications of the implementation of portable grants and loans.

Provide an electronic platform for (public) information, as part of the Bologna Follow Up Group information infrastructure (not a working group or public service). The day to day management (not policy) of the e-platform could be the responsibility of the Bologna Secretariat 2007-2009.

Reach practical, multilateral, cooperative outcomes on specific issues that have been identified and made concrete by the working group:

- 1) Collect and provide general information on the national student support systems and the educational systems of the Bologna Partner Countries
- 2) Address the issue of data-protection:
 - to prevent double payment of grants and loans (by both the home and the host country)
 - to facilitate the repayment of loans
- 3) Collect and provide statistical data on the international mobility of students in the EHEA (contribute to developments already undertaken, as mentioned by the Social Dimension Working Group)

The following mode of operation is foreseen:

The network:

- should be a long term structure
- will be open to all Bologna partners that wish to participate
- will be chaired and co-ordinated by a joint effort of three countries providing (after London Ministers Conference) the opportunity for all Bologna partners to participate. The joint chair is to stimulate and ensure the tasks identified to be done are carried out, involving regular structures as much as possible, for instance the Bologna structure and the ENIC-NARIC network
- will have a thematic approach: issues identified to be taken up by small groups of countries
- New issues would be taken up after a round of open information on the specific issue and suggestions regarding participants in an ad-hoc group to suggest possible multilateral solutions
- will meet regularly (at least annually) to share experiences and maintain momentum
- will submit a progress report to the Bologna Follow Up Group in 2009

The actual mode of operation is to be decided upon by the participants of the network.

7 Progress made by participating Bologna Partner countries with respect to making grants and loans portable

The following countries reported progress:

Austria: The Austrian student support is partly portable. Students entitled to receive study grants are entitled to an additional support of the studies abroad for a maximum of 20 months. Students at Universities must have completed the first stage of their studies (or 2 semesters in case a study does not consist of stages of a degree program). At the moment there is no intention to change the legal situation concerning portability. But there are considerations to expand the portability.

Denmark: The Danish government (ministry of education, ministry of science, technology and innovation and the ministry of culture) is working on introducing portable support for tuition fees in addition to the existing portable maintenance support. Portable support for tuition will be offered for a maximum of 2 years for study periods abroad as part of a Danish degree as well as for post-graduate programs abroad.

Germany: The German federal government has forwarded a draft law to amend the German BAföG-act especially with respect to portability abroad. It is planned to open student support by BAföG for complete studies abroad within EU-member states and Switzerland, thus offering full portability starting from autumn of this year (2007). The only prerequisite for students being applicable for portable support of more than one year duration is a minimum of three years of residence in Germany prior to the study period abroad. Those who study within Germany or just want to spend a short part of their German study-courses up to one year's duration abroad, don't have to fulfill this additional residence criterion. At the same time the draft law provides for an expansion of the circle of foreigners from outside the EU being applicable for German student support when studying within Germany. Roughly spoken everybody who fulfills the general prerequisites for training assistance will be applicable when legally living in Germany with a long stay perspective and not having come to Germany just for training and educational purposes. If parliament agrees the new law will come into force starting from academic winter term 2007/2008.

Ireland: Student support is fully portable in some cases and partly portable in others. New legislation (the Student Support Bill, 2007) is currently being prepared for introduction to the Irish parliament which will unify and rationalise the various existing student support grant schemes. Although it is proposed to further strengthen the existing residency requirements, the legislation will also legally underpin arrangements for the portability of student support grants.

Lithuania: Recently there were not many changes in the field of loan portability in Lithuania. This is partly because Lithuania is just about to undergo a reform of the whole educational system in the country and therefore, for now, Lithuania is only implementing student exchange (short term) programmes with certain countries.

The Netherlands: A draft law is being discussed in parliament, expanding full portability to all countries in the World. Students that are eligible for full support and have lived in the Netherlands for three out of six years before starting their studies abroad will be allowed to take their support abroad

for full studies. The studies abroad must be at higher education level, according to Dutch/Bologna standards.

Scotland: Scottish Ministers have approved a study on the feasibility of a pilot introducing Portability of higher education student support for students studying in a restricted number of countries. If feasible, the intention is to have a pilot scheme available to students for academic year 2010/11 at the latest.

Sweden: Since Sweden has full portability already, there is nothing new to report.

**Appendix A: List of relevant documents
(the full documents will be placed on a website or links can be offered)**

Terms of reference

Notes from the meetings of the Working group in The Hague

Notes from the meetings of the Working group in Glasgow

Notes from the meetings of the Working group in Berlin

Questionnaires subgroup Descriptions

Questionnaires subgroup Current Practice

Questionnaires subgroup EU-law

Appendix B: List of legal documents referred to in the report

(the full documents will be placed on a website or links can be offered)

European Agreement on Continued Payment of Scholarships to Students Studying Abroad 1969, European Treaty Series - No. 69

Revised European Social Charter, European Treaty Series - No. 163

Treaty establishing the European Community, Articles, 12, 18, 149 and 150

Regulation (EEC)No 1612/68 of the Council of 15 October 1968 on freedom of movement for workers within the Community, OJ L 257, 19.10.1968, p. 2

Convention of Lugano of January 3, 1993

Council Regulation (EC) 44/2001 of 22 December 2000 on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgements in civil and commercial matters, OJ L 12/1

Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 July 2001 on mobility within the Community for students, persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers, OJ L 215, 9.8.2001, p. 30

Agreement between European Community and its Member States, on the one part, and the Swiss Confederation, on the other, on the free movement of persons (EU-Switzerland agreement), OJ L 114/6, 30/04/2002

Directive 2004/38/EC, OJ L 229, 29/06/2004

Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on transnational mobility within the Community for education and training purposes: The European Quality Charter for Mobility of 18 December 2006, OJ L 394, 30 Dec 2006, p. 5

Delivering on the Modernisation agenda of universities, Commission Communication, Brussels 10-5-2006, COM (2006) 208 final

Relevant rulings of the EU Court of Justice

Gravier, C-293/83

Raulin, C-357/89

Bidar, C-209/03

Morgan and Bücher, C-11&12/06

Appendix C

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European Higher Education in a Global Setting. A Strategy for the External Dimension of the Bologna Process.

1. Introduction

The Bologna Declaration (1999) sets out “the objective of increasing the international competitiveness of the European system of higher education” and points out the need “to ensure that the European higher education system acquires a world-wide degree of attraction”, a goal which has been further pursued in the Ministerial Meetings of Prague, Berlin and, in particular, Bergen. This has also been an important issue in a European Union context, as reflected in the European Council Conclusions of Lisbon (2000) and Barcelona (2002). In the Bergen Communiqué (2005), the Ministers described the *European Higher Education Area (EHEA) as a partner to higher education systems in other regions of the world, stimulating balanced student and staff exchange and cooperation between institutions of higher education. They also asked the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) to elaborate and agree on a strategy for the External Dimension of the Bologna Process.

In many parts of the world, ‘the European reform model’ has created considerable interest. It has a strong – and growing – appeal in other parts of the world, as described in Professor Pavel Zgaga’s report on the External Dimension of the Bologna Process. In some countries, it has even been debated if ‘Bologna’ or Bologna-like reforms should be adopted in the context of domestic higher education reform processes, and whether ‘Bologna’ should be used to establish convergence at a regional (supranational) level. The Bologna Process has also stimulated a discussion between European and international partners about mutual recognition of qualifications. All this suggests that the Bologna Process is already helping to enhance the attractiveness of Europe as a destination for students and scholars from other parts of the world.

It is important for Europe to use this momentum and to respond to the global interest in its reforms by formulating and agreeing on a strategy for the External Dimension of the Bologna Process. This reconfirms the timeliness of the Ministers’ request in Bergen for the development of a Strategy for the External Dimension. The present paper is a response to that request. It proposes key elements for a Strategy which takes both competitiveness and cooperation into account, identifying **guiding principles of the Bologna Process** and **five core policy areas**. The idea is that all actors at the European, national and institutional levels need to pursue the strategy together. These policy areas (Improving Information on the EHEA; Promoting European Higher Education to enhance its world-wide attractiveness and competitiveness; Strengthening Cooperation based on Partnership; Intensifying Policy Dialogue; and Furthering Recognition of Qualifications) are described in Section 3 of this document.

As a prerequisite for being an attractive partner world-wide, the European reform process needs to continue a coherent implementation of the Bologna Process. The Internal and External Dimensions are interlinked. The strength of the Bologna Process rests on the voluntary cooperation of 45 countries to create a European Higher Education Area by converging important structural features of their national systems of higher education. For the External Dimension Strategy of the Bologna Process to succeed, and to enhance Europe's attractiveness and competitiveness, it is of the utmost importance that all the objectives and instruments of the EHEA, e.g. the new degree structure and the development of qualifications frameworks, quality assurance, ECTS or the Diploma Supplement, be implemented across all Bologna countries in a coherent and compatible way.

As the term "External Dimension" has been deemed confusing, the title has been changed to a "Strategy for the European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting", and is referred to simply as 'the Strategy'.

2. Guiding principles

As an integral part of the Bologna Process, the Strategy for the European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting shares its key principles, and broader political and cultural context. As for other aspects of the Bologna Process, this strategy relies on a balanced mix of institutional, national and European policies within a common overall framework. This *acquis* should be observed in the implementation of the Strategy. It is enshrined in the following guiding principles.

2.1 European heritage and values

The Bologna Process includes the goal of sustainable innovation for European higher education and contributes to responding to the developmental challenges of the societies in which we live. Innovation and renewal can, however, only be successful if they build on an awareness of traditions and values. Like the European Higher Education Area as a whole, also in its global setting it should build on Europe's heritage, values and achievements, while adapting to changing circumstances across the world.

The Strategy for the European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting reconfirms the centrality of the principles of institutional autonomy and academic freedom. It endorses the principle that, in all matters related to higher education, academic values should prevail. It is built on a firm belief in democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It is based on the ideas of cultural and religious dialogue and tolerance.

2.2 Stakeholder participation

One of the success factors of the Bologna Process so far has been the close cooperation demonstrated by all higher education stakeholders in an atmosphere of trust. One of the greatest strengths of the Bologna Process is that governments have joined forces with institutions of higher education and their national and European associations, as well as with students and staff and international organizations and institutions. A successful

Strategy must rely on the same model and is therefore contingent on full commitment on the part of all stakeholders.

3. Geographical scope

The Strategy does not exclude any region or country of the world. Meanwhile, individual European countries have strong links with specific regions or countries outside Europe, and they may want to develop those links further. The diversity of the international cooperation activities of individual nations and institutions of higher education across the world should be perceived as strength and an asset for the EHEA, rather than as a disadvantage.

Core policy areas

The Strategy for the European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting encompasses the following five core policy areas:

1. Improving Information on the EHEA;
2. Promoting European Higher Education to enhance its world-wide attractiveness and competitiveness;
3. Strengthening Cooperation based on partnership;
4. Intensifying policy dialogue;
5. Furthering recognition of qualifications.

These five core policy areas provide a common strategic framework to which all stakeholders in the Bologna Process can make their full contribution. Every country in the European Higher Education Area should endorse these policy goals and decide on appropriate measures for their implementation, in the light of national priorities.

Therefore, the emphases which a specific country will set might justifiably differ from those of the next. And, evidently, not all measures and initiatives may be suitable and appropriate to implement for all partner countries and regions.

3.1 Improving Information on the EHEA

The Bologna Process has a high degree of visibility outside the EHEA. However, this does not mean that all relevant stakeholders outside of Europe know enough about the key elements of the Bologna Process. In many cases, there are even important misperceptions ('Bologna myths'), which need to be rectified. It is therefore necessary to monitor the global perception and assessment of the Bologna Process and to provide correct information about the EHEA.

3.2 Promoting European Higher Education to enhance its world-wide attractiveness and competitiveness

To increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA, providing information on the Bologna Process will not in itself be sufficient. Europe must also make concerted efforts to increase its international attractiveness to students, teachers and researchers

across the world. To this end, all Bologna countries should designate an organization as having the prime responsibility for coordinating efforts for the international promotion of their higher education systems and institutions.

The goal of a European Higher Education Area in which students, staff and holders of qualifications are able to move freely cannot be reached through measures of higher education policy alone. This important goal equally depends on facilitating the granting of visas and on facilitating social security coverage, as well as on the granting of work permits for staff. While these measures are outside the competence of Ministers responsible for higher education, they are within the competence of the governments of the Bologna countries. All Bologna countries commit themselves to work within their respective governments for decisive progress in this area by 2010.

3.3 Strengthening Cooperation based on partnership

Apart from the above information and promotion activities intended to showcase and strengthen Europe's attractiveness, there is a need for enhanced higher education cooperation with non-EHEA countries in a spirit of partnership and solidarity, aiming at mutual benefit on all levels and covering the full range of higher education programmes, including lifelong learning. This need for cooperation and partnership extends to all regions of the world, covering highly developed, emerging and developing countries alike. However, cooperation with institutions of higher education in developing countries has been and must remain an especially important task of the EHEA countries in order to build capacity in higher education, which is a crucial condition for socio-economic development. Individual EHEA countries are already deeply committed to and engaged in this task. European institutions of higher education should also contribute to their national development strategies, for example, in the context of the Millennium Development Goals. All players should join forces to provide the requisite framework conditions, including balanced exchanges or capacity-building measures to counter-act brain drain.

3.4 Intensifying Policy Dialogue

It would be useful to systematize and broaden the policy dialogue already initiated with non-EHEA country governments and stakeholders regarding the introduction of higher education reform and innovation in order to exchange new ideas and share good practice. The participation of non-EHEA country stakeholders in Bologna seminars is one approach in this respect. Joint conferences and seminars on issues of mutual interest and in different languages are another possibility.

Wherever possible, the policy dialogue should be based on already existing and well-functioning fora. Policies should be tailor-made for each region and take due account of relevant European Union policy.

3.5 Furthering recognition of qualifications

The recognition of qualifications is a key element in facilitating mobility to, from and within the EHEA. Developing policies and practice furthering the fair recognition of qualifications

is therefore a key element of the Strategy for the European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting.

Within the EHEA, the recognition of qualifications is based on the Council of Europe/UNESCO Recognition Convention (1997) and its four subsidiary texts. This legal framework is implemented through policy and practice developed at national level including, from 2007 onwards, national action plans in the Bologna Process and in particular for the ENIC and NARIC Networks, coordinated jointly by the Council of Europe, the European Commission and UNESCO-CEPES. In particular, insofar as the recognition of qualifications for the purpose of further study is concerned, institutions of higher education bear a prime responsibility.

Two important features of the current policy developments are, first, a shift of emphasis from the procedures and formalities of higher education to learning outcomes and, second, the developing of a better common understanding of the concept of ‘substantial differences’, i.e. differences between qualifications that may lead to partial recognition and non-recognition. The recognition of prior learning should also be given increased priority.

4. Conclusion

The success of the Strategy for the European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting is contingent on full commitment on the part of all stakeholders.

Institutions of higher education bear a major responsibility for the implementation and further development of the Strategy. The involvement of students and academic and administrative staff is of crucial importance to this process. Governments have the responsibility to provide the framework conditions as appropriate.

In a document entitled “Elements for possible future actions” possible measures for each of the five core policy areas have been listed. Most of the proposed actions are already undertaken to a certain extent by some of the Bologna stakeholders. For each measure, Bologna stakeholders should - depending on their own priorities - decide if and how they will implement it - individually or jointly with other partners in the process.

Pavel Zgaga

Looking out: The Bologna Process in a Global Setting

On the “External Dimension” of the Bologna Process



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Content

Preface	i
Executive Summary	iii-x
1. Introduction	3
2. The “External Dimension” – what is this?	5
3. The “External Dimension”: Echoes of the Bologna Process from world regions	34
4. Conclusions: the “External Dimension” – does it matter?	97
5. ANEXES	
5.1 Annex 1: The “External Dimension” in a historical perspective	123
5.2 Annex 2: Recommendations from three Bologna Official Seminars on the “External Dimension”	171
5.3 Annex 3: Proposal for a BFUG Working Group on the External Dimension of the Bologna Process	187
6. Bibliography	191
7. Index	219

Preface

The Bologna ministers stated in the Bergen Communiqué in 2005 that the European Higher Education Area should be open and attractive to other parts of the world. In order to share experiences with non-European countries within a satisfactory framework, they asked the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG) to develop a strategy on the so-called “external dimension” of the Bologna Process. A BFUG Working Group with representatives from 11 Bologna states and 8 organisations was set up to prepare a strategy document to the BFUG. The BFUG Working Group is chaired by Norway.

In addition to the discussions and written contributions by the BFUG Working Group, three official Bologna seminars was arranged in 2006; the Vatican Seminar in March/April, the Greek Seminar in Athens in June and the Nordic Seminar in Oslo in September.

Professor Pavel Zgaga at University of Ljubljana was appointed by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research to be rapporteur and to follow the strategy work process. A first draft report was published in advance of the Nordic Seminar. The present report is Professor Zgaga’s final document before the BFUG Working Group makes their proposal for a Strategy document on the external dimension of the Bologna Process. In addition to conclusions and recommendations from the BFUG Working Group and the seminars mentioned above, Professor Zgaga has also contributed with his own analysis and reflections as well as a significant historical background for the Bologna Process.

Oslo, December 2006



Toril Johansson
Director General
Ministry of Education and Research
Norway

Executive summary

This report concerns the elaboration of a strategy for the external dimension as called for by ministers in the Bergen Communiqué (2005).

The report is organised in four chapters that cover:

1. *Introduction* – the mandate to elaborate a strategy on the external dimension and the composition of the Working Group;
2. *The “External Dimension”: what is this?* – roots and historical perspective of the concept, the issue of extending the Process to other parts of the world and the agendas of the “external dimension”;
3. *The “External Dimension”: Echoes of the Bologna Process from world regions* – the nature of echoes; echoes from different world regions and their messages;
4. *Conclusions* – why does the “external dimension” matter, findings from the three Bologna seminars, elements of the External Dimension Strategy.

There are also *three annexes* with related documents (Annex 1, 2, 3)

and an extended *bibliography*, including a list of Bologna, EU and other related international documents as well as Internet links used or referred to in the text.

The ***Introduction*** starts from the Ministerial mandate on elaborating a strategy as defined in the Bergen Communiqué which was considered in detail at the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) meeting in October 2005. The importance of this theme within the BFUG work programme for the period 2005 – 2007 is reflected in the fact that an extended Working Group was established to work on these issues and that, in addition, three

seminars on the subject (in the Vatican, Athens and Oslo) were agreed. At the beginning of its work, the Working Group agreed to prepare two documents: an *analytical report* (this document) and a *draft External Dimension Strategy* (to be ready by late 2006). The report has been prepared in two steps: as a background document to support the drafting process within the Working Group, as well as the Oslo seminar (“Report A”, September 2006), and as a final report (“Report B”, October 2006), revised again after the Helsinki BFUG meeting in October 2006.

Chapter two examines the roots and the nature of the term *external dimension of the Bologna Process*. The genuine aims of the Sorbonne and Bologna Declarations already contain fairly clear statements on raising “the attractive potential of our systems”, increasing “the international competitiveness of the European systems of higher education” and ensuring “a worldwide degree of attraction”. However, considerations on the international or global role and influence of European higher education can be found even earlier, namely in pre-Bologna contexts, e.g. in discussions on European integration and on the role of higher education. The establishment of the EU programmes Erasmus and Tempus, on the one hand, and the signing of the Magna Charta Universitatum and Lisbon Recognition Convention, on the other, characterise these contexts and discussions very well.

The chapter gives an analysis of the context and genesis of what has been named the “external dimension” since shortly after the Prague Ministerial summit in 2001. Yet this issue has not been addressed solely from a European point of view - there has been growing interest also in other world regions. The “opening” of the Bologna Process has led to the question – *could or should the Bologna reforms be extended to other parts of the world?* Thus, horizons for discussing the “external dimension” were moulded and opened. The ongoing discussion on the “external dimension” has shown so far that it is not only about

international competitiveness, attractiveness and recognition but also about partnership and cooperation, policy dialogue and, last but not least, clear information on processes in European higher education.

Chapter three explores echoes of the Bologna Process from world regions. There had been no previous systematic review of this kind; through a survey of a huge amount of heterogeneous documents and information, this chapter tries to outline the main trends and questions that have been arising as the waves of the Bologna Process have been spreading around the globe. The frequency of these echoes is astonishing; yet they differ very much one from another. Bologna reverberates in many ways, depending on “regional points of view”. Countries in transition, for example, warn against a practice of imposition and argue in favour of two-way cooperation. In the same line, it has also been heard from the South Mediterranean that “it takes two to tango”.

Further east, China declares its readiness to “learn the useful foreign experience” but also to “promote the reform and development of our higher education and enhance mutual understanding”. Everywhere, there are many cases of good inter-institutional cooperation which has been importantly enhanced through the European Commission’s – but also “the national” – international agreements and programmes for higher education and research. This can be clearly seen, for instance, in the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries. In Africa, in addition to cooperation with single institutions and organisations, there have been proposals to look at “the big picture”- to build a system approach and to try to “benefit from initiatives outside Africa, avoiding mistakes made by others and building on their gains”.

Francophone and lusophone countries are not geographically homogenous but there are several excellent initiatives to exchange good practices from Europe and to support developments in national higher education systems in different

countries of the world. In Latin America, the example of “the homogenisation of European universities” has not always been welcome due to some – most likely bad – experiences with the commercially-oriented cooperation policy from Europe. Yet, the Tuning project (Tuning Educational Structures in Europe) has been successfully spread all over the continent. Institutional cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, and ministerial cooperation in parts of Asia and Oceania (the Brisbane Communiqué, 2006) seem to be the most interesting parallels to processes in Europe. In a public consultation in the spring of 2006, Australia openly stressed the benefits of “Bologna compatibility” and the risks of “Bologna incompatibility”, but it also doubted “that full compatibility with the Bologna Process is the only option”. In autumn 2005, the U.S. Secretary of State formed the Commission on the Future of Higher Education which deals with similar issues, albeit without referring to European examples. The U.S. are proud of their “share of the world’s best universities” but “a lot of countries have followed our lead”. A major issue with regard to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) seems to be the recognition of new first cycle degrees.

Almost everywhere it was possible to register a fairly significant lack of information on the Bologna Process and on the emerging EHEA. At one recent conference it was warned that systems that develop without due regard to the outside world run a high risk of failure. This refers to Europe in a double regard: there is an obvious need to provide clear and comprehensive information on the Bologna Process and the emerging EHEA for interested audiences worldwide but also to consider seriously world echoes to European reforms and to learn from them.

Chapter four discusses why the “external dimension” really matters; it provides a recapitulation of the three Bologna seminars on this subject and draws some conclusions. In addition to the clear and *direct* echoes in the form of comments and messages about the Bologna Process, tacit, *indirect* echoes

have also been heard. Many issues, which could probably be perceived in the eyes of Europe as “the typical Bologna issues” have been discussed also in other parts of the world, but they could also be addressed without necessarily referring to the Bologna Process. Bologna certainly has its own character and context – higher education policies in other parts of the world likewise. However, there is a “general” higher education modernisation agenda which is common to all world regions and to all countries of today – broadening access, diversifying study programmes, quality enhancement, employability, links to economy, mobility, international students, recognition of study periods and degrees, etc.

Echoes captured and presented in the third chapter prove again that “the external dimension” is far from being a simple phenomenon. In general, there are two main levels at which these echoes appear: at the (national or international) *policy development level* and at the *level of institutions*. In certain environments outside Europe, the Bologna “policy message” has received more attention; in other parts it has been a case of the “cooperation message” from universities and academic institutions taking an active part in the Bologna Process. These two levels are more often than not linked together. The Bologna Process has been developing the virtues of higher education policy development in partnership; this could probably be an important Bologna “message” which may help in linking together both levels in various environments. Who responds to this message – either a policy-maker or an academic institution – is not that important. Either of them alone, but also both of them together would be welcome. Yet it is important for the EHEA to understand that national contexts may differ and that potential echoes will always depend on these differing contexts. Acting upon the principle of higher education policy development in partnership may gradually contribute to more balanced echoes from both target levels.

The national higher education systems within the EHEA are also diverse. Not only should the External Dimension Strategy take into account that the various target world regions and countries, as well as the different target levels in these regions and countries might require specific approaches, but the EHEA as such should also take account of its own existing diversities. The Bologna “philosophy” has always argued in favour of diversity and this attitude should not be forgotten here either. Yet an EHEA “external dimension” strategy is only possible if a “common denominator” is found or established – similarly to the case of searching for an overarching framework for qualifications of the EHEA or in the case of developing standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the EHEA.

Recapitulating recent discussions, but without prejudicing final steps in drafting the External Dimension Strategy, the following themes seem to belong among its key issues:

- *Improving information on the EHEA and promoting its image in a wider world* is urgent! EHEA needs a common information system (e.g. common portal, European higher education fairs, coordinated information campaigns, etc.), which should not be seen in opposition to specific national (institutional) information systems. Guidance for students and staff from other countries (other regions), institutions and institutional frameworks, capacity-building, language policy, etc. are also on this list. There is no need to start from scratch, but to build upon existing information tools and sources.
- *Attractiveness* of the EHEA depends on its distinctiveness from higher education provision in other regions: transparent quality, accessibility, recognition, mobility enhanced by structural (transparency, compatibility, recognition, etc.) and social means (support and scholarship schemes, visa regulations, etc.),

non-exclusiveness, cultural diversity (but without the obstacles of a linguistic Babylon), etc. The promotion of intercultural and inter-religious understanding, traditional values of European universities and higher education institutions in general are of particular importance as well.

- Attractiveness is related to issues of competition and competitiveness in higher education. *Competition* among European countries – and other world countries – as well as among individual higher education institutions is needed to strengthen the quality of higher education, research and teaching potentials in order to broaden access and to promote flexible learning paths, to attract more international students, to make higher education more efficient, etc. Only this kind of competition could lead to an enhanced *competitiveness* of the EHEA as such. On the other hand, highly competitive European higher education could substantially contribute to the competitiveness of the European economy, trade, and centres of excellence as the point where academic, economic and political interests should coincide.
- *Cooperation* aims firstly at the mutual potential benefits of the EHEA and other world regions and should be based on traditions of academic cooperation between Europe and these regions. It is also dependent on promoting the two-way flow of information and knowledge, as well as two-way mobility. It should aim at achieving higher “critical mass” (capacity) through incentives for international research teams and joint study programmes. The improvement of mutual *recognition of qualifications* as well as study and study periods on a global scale, solidarity and support for higher education systems in less developed parts of the world and the political importance of global higher education cooperation (including a strengthened *policy*)

dialogue and an established appropriate global forum) are also high on the cooperation agenda.

In **Annex 1**, fragments of the “external dimension” from various European documents (time span from 1987 to 2006) are presented, drawing the lines from e.g. the decision on establishing the *Erasmus* programme (1987) and *Magna Charta Universitatum* (1988) via the Sorbonne and Bologna Declarations to various relevant documents developed within the Bologna Process, as well as relevant EU documents within the Lisbon strategy. **Annex 2** contains conclusions and recommendations from all three official Bologna seminars on the “external dimension”. **Annex 3** contains a proposal for a BFUG Working Group on the external dimension of the Bologna Process from autumn 2005.

Bibliography includes a list of reference texts on the “external dimension” of the Bologna Process, other relevant papers as well as related official documents (Bologna documents, EU documents, other related European and international documents) and other materials. It also contains a list of institutions, associations, networks, etc., referred to in the report, their abbreviations and Internet websites used in the report.

1. Introduction

1. The Bergen Communiqué (20 May 2005), under the heading “The attractiveness of the EHEA and cooperation with other parts of the world”, included the following two paragraphs:

The European Higher Education Area must be open and should be attractive to other parts of the world. Our contribution to achieving education for all should be based on the principle of sustainable development and be in accordance with the ongoing international work on developing guidelines for quality provision of cross-border higher education. We reiterate that in international academic cooperation, academic values should prevail.

We see the European Higher Education Area as a partner of higher education systems in other regions of the world, stimulating balanced student and staff exchange and cooperation between higher education institutions. We underline the importance of intercultural understanding and respect. We look forward to enhancing the understanding of the Bologna Process in other continents by sharing our experiences of reform processes with neighbouring regions. We stress the need for dialogue on issues of mutual interest. We see the need to identify partner regions and intensify the exchange of ideas and experiences with those regions. We ask the Follow-up Group to elaborate and agree on a strategy for the external dimension.

2. The Ministers’ mandate was considered in detail at the Bologna Follow-up Group meeting on 12-13 October 2005. Proposals for three seminars on this theme were presented: the Holy See seminar foreseen for March/April 2006, Greece

seminar in June 2006 and a seminar arranged by the Nordic countries in September 2006. In the Terms of Reference, prepared by the Nordic countries Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, it was proposed to link all these three seminars to an overarching Working Group with the mandate to elaborate upon a strategy for the external dimension, as asked for by ministers in Bergen.

Seminars were accepted on a list of official Bologna events of the period 2005-2007 and it was also agreed to establish the External Dimension Working Group chaired by Norway. Membership of the working group encompassed the wide range of interests in the external dimension. The Working Group was composed of BFUG-representatives from 11 countries: Norway, Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, The Holy See, Malta, Portugal, Spain and Sweden as well as of 7 consultative members: Academic Cooperation Association (ACA), Council of Europe (CoE), Education International (EI), National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB), European Commission (EC), European University Association (EUA) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO-CEPES). The Working Group was later extended to include a member from the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE).

Permanent members of the Working Group are as follows:

Toril Johansson (Norway) Chair
Barbara Weitgruber (Austria)
Mogens Berg (Denmark)
Eric Froment (France)
Birgit Galler (Germany)
Athanasios Kyriazis (Greece)
Padre Friedrich Bechina (the Holy See)
Joseph Mifsud (Malta)
Pedro Lourtie (Portugal)
Felix Haering Pérez (Spain)

Annika Persson Pontén (Sweden)
Bernd Wächter (ACA)
Sjur Bergan (CoE)
Monique Fouilhoux (EI)
Daithí Mac Síthigh (ESIB)
Anita Līce (ESIB)
Alan Smith (EC)
Peter van der Hijden (EC)
Michael Gaebel (EUA)
Lesley Wilson (EUA)
Stefan Delplace (EURASHE)
Jan Sadlak (UNESCO-CEPES)

Yvonne Clarke joined the group on behalf of the Bologna Secretariat from London and Pavel Zgaga was invited to be the Rapporteur of the group. The Working Group has also been supported by Foteini Asderaki (Greece), Hélène Lagier (France), Søren Nørgaard (EURASHE), Rolf Larsen (Norway) and Alf Rasmussen (Norway).

3. This Report fulfils a part of the mission. It has been prepared in two steps: a preliminary version (“*Report A*”) was presented at the last of three “external dimension” seminars – the one in Oslo (28-29 September 2006) and the revised version (“*Report B*”) was presented at the BFUG meeting in Helsinki (12 October 2006). The final version takes into consideration comments from both events.

At its various stages, the report has been used as a basis for the preparation of the Strategy document. The report also takes into account various readers’ needs from Bologna as well as non-Bologna countries and tries to offer comprehensive references on the so-called “external dimension” in its various aspects (history, overview of echoes from various parts of the world, bibliography, Internet links, etc).

The author would like to sincerely thank the colleagues from the External Dimension Working Group for their essential help in their continuous discussions and comments on the text, as well as to the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research for its support. Special thanks go also to many colleagues from various European and other countries who helped with information or read the drafts and made critical comments and suggestions. Needless to say, any remaining inaccuracies and mistakes are exclusively on the author's account.

2. The “External Dimension” – what is it?

4. What in fact is to be understood under the “external dimension of the Bologna Process”? Is it a clear – and “politically correct” - expression at all?

This question may seem a bit unusual at the beginning of a report which is expected, first and foremost, to give answers. Even though such expectations have been taken into account it is, nevertheless, necessary to start with this basic question.

5. In modern times, we use the word “dimension” quite often in our languages. Yet, it is not always used in a traditional way, e.g. as a size or a measurement of a length, etc. At the very beginning of the Bologna Process we started to talk about the “structural” dimension of European higher education systems and, today, this term denotes not only three cycles, but a whole array of related issues – credit systems, learning outcomes, frameworks of qualification etc. Soon after the Prague meeting, the “Bologna language” continued to differentiate it from the “social” dimension, since it is impossible, in a European context to reduce higher education to either abstract system “architectures” or to a “private good”. A very frequent term, although not born within the Bologna Process but within the much broader European integration processes, is also the “European” dimension (e.g. within national education systems in general) and this is another serious issue. Last but not least, since the Prague Ministerial Summit, the term “external dimension” of the Bologna Process has also entered European higher education vocabularies.

When reflecting on the “Bologna language” (in fact, it could apply to any other similar modern slang as well) it seems that the term “dimension” is used in the same way as in

mathematics: a number of “unknown quantities” contained as “factors in a product” (a product named the Bologna Process). At least, it could be said that there have been a lot of rather similar entities not analysed in the finest detail, and our language has classified them as a cluster, as a “dimension”. Later on, people always come to question what precisely these entities are and if these entities exist – are they really linked together, why do they produce certain paradoxes, etc. One of the results of considering and reflecting on this issue is that a better term should be agreed upon. For this reason, in this text we strictly use the term “external dimension” in inverted commas unless it appears in quotations.

The “external dimension” and its roots

6. Roots of the term *external dimension of the Bologna Process* can be found already in the original Sorbonne and Bologna aims: the Sorbonne Declaration stressed “the international recognition and attractive potential of our systems” while the Bologna Declaration looked “at the objective of increasing the international competitiveness of the European systems of higher education” and claimed to ensure “a world-wide degree of attraction”. However, considerations on the international role and influence of European higher education can be found earlier: in pre-Bologna contexts, e.g. in discussions on European integrations and on the role of higher education. Ann Corbett in her recent study, “both a detective story of the early attempts to Europeanise higher education and an academic study of policy change”, says: “The aims are external to Europe, and internal. The goal is not only to make the European higher education area (EHEA) attractive enough to the rest of the world to draw in more of the best foreign students and scholars, but also to boost quality within Europe itself, as a way of making universities more effective within the knowledge-based economy which the world’s richest nations regard as the sine qua non of economic growth.” (Corbett, 2005, p. xii; 4).

Europe has sentiments about its “attractiveness” and attractiveness is measured most often, of course, in “external mirrors”. However, Europe has also a lot to do with self. This is what produces certain paradoxes, whether the observation is made from outside or inside. Ulrich Teichler justly noted that “[i]n the early 1990s, external observers could come to the conclusion that higher education in Europe ‘Europeanised’ rather than ‘internationalised’. [...] The Bologna Declaration would not have come about if there had not been a reconsideration of the European emphasis of internationalisation. In the mid-1990s, attention shifted towards the relationship between higher education in Europe and higher education in the wider world.” (Teichler; in: Muche, 2005, p. 114).

7. The shift from “the national” to “the European” and a new look at the internationalisation of higher education was a result of a much longer process. In Europe, at least in Europe prior to 1990, internationalisation could refer both to Europeanisation (from outside probably seen as European “internal” internationalisation) as well as internationalisation in “wider” terms. Internationalisation itself could have various meanings,¹ depending first of all on political alignments (e.g. links with previous colonies, limited but existing academic cooperation

¹ On certain horizons, internationalisation of higher education can be understood in Europe differently from e.g. USA. The 2003 Transatlantic Dialogue focused on the theme “Higher Education in a Pluralist World”; it is very interesting to see how participants approached the defining of pluralism. There were strongly shared views as well as some divergences, both related to academic values and contexts that provide values. Understanding pluralism as *openness to different intellectual perspectives* or as *safe space for debate* was common to all. On the other hand, a difference appeared in relation to “an insistence by the Europeans on *internationalization* as a dimension of pluralism. The Bologna process has provided enormous energy and visibility for an agenda that will increase the cultural and linguistic diversity of European higher education institutions by enabling students to move freely among those institutions and bringing students from around the world in Europe.” (Green, Barblan, 2004, p. 6).

over the “iron curtain”, academic cooperation between countries of the “non-alignment movement”² etc.), but also on cultural traditions and linguistic links, on the size of the national higher education system and support institutions, etc. Students and academic staff have always been coming from other countries and continents, but the proportions of students received by the different countries varied widely. At the early stages of internationalisation – as well as “Europeanisation” – “the prime movers of such initiatives in the different countries tended to be mainly individual academics whose enthusiasm and personal commitment sustained and build up the networks” (Eurydice, 2000, p. 160).

A systemic support to gradual internationalisation of higher education was appearing rather slowly and in different ways in different countries. “These disparities in the proportion of students sent and received were reflected by differences in the internationalisation support structures in place in the participating countries and often also by differences in the amount of collaborative international research undertaken. Those countries which had a relatively high level of internationalisation before 1980 (Denmark, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom) primarily had links with non-industrialised, developing countries, often ex-colonies, which were associated with development aid programmes. These links consisted mainly of the reception of students from and the secondment of teaching staff to these countries as well as joint research projects. International links with other industrialised countries were primarily focused on collaborative research and exchanges of academic staff.” (Eurydice, 2000, p. 157).

² For example, former Socialist Federal Yugoslavia had been receiving a lot of students from Africa and Asia during the late 1950s to the 1980s; but after 1990 these traditional streams almost ceased to exist.

In the mid-1980s, European “internal” internationalisation of higher education was strongly encouraged – with the establishment of the European Commission’s action programmes for research and student mobility for the first time in a systemic way. Indirectly, it was important also for “external” internationalisation: Europe was both an “internal” EU and a “larger” Europe, strongly divided during the cold war but coming closer and closer in a period before and after the fall of the Berlin wall. In the west, government initiatives relating to internationalisation entered legislation and policy documents and went further to establish support agencies, special funding for institutions, support measures to promote student exchanges, etc.

After 1990, stimulated first by the European Commission’s *Tempus*³ programme and, for a number of countries, by a wish to join *Erasmus*⁴ programme as soon as possible,⁵ similar changes occurred also in Central and Eastern Europe. The Eurydice study of two decades of reforms in European higher education concludes “that internationalisation has certainly become a component of planning and administration in higher education institutions in all participating countries”. (Eurydice, 2000, p. 168-169). This was an extremely important step

³ See section 15 for some details on the Tempus programme.

⁴ *Erasmus* is the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students, established already in 1987. It contains a wide range of measures designed to support the European activities of higher education institutions and to promote the mobility and exchange of their teaching staff and students. Readopted in 2000 within the Socrates II programme and spanning the period until the end of 2006, its actions are now open to the participation of 31 countries: the 25 Member States of the European Union, the 3 European Economic Area countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) and the 3 candidate countries (Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey). – For details see <http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/erasmus/what_en.html>.

⁵ Many Central and East European countries joined Erasmus already in the second half of the 1990s.

towards understanding the “external dimension” of what happened in European higher education policy debates.

8. These trends were only strengthened by the “globalisation challenges” starting to be discussed in the economy and in politics but later also in higher education during the nineties worldwide. Here we are. At the beginning, four countries, ever followed by new ones to make up a group of 45, agreed to move “the European process”, not only to Europe “of the Euro, of the banks and the economy” but towards “Europe of knowledge” as well: “We must strengthen and build upon the intellectual, cultural, social and technical dimensions of our continent”. (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998). Eight years later we probably understand this message a bit differently, but inherently it was obviously from the beginning a reference to “us” as well as to the “others”.

The very beginning of the Bologna Process was characterised by the belief that changes in the structure of European higher education systems could be the main vehicle for raising attractiveness worldwide. Of course, this sentence could and should be read also in a reverse way: efforts to increase worldwide attractiveness are an important lever to improve European higher education systems “internally”, as well as to establish European higher education as such. Few weeks before Prague, the *Trends II Report* made an interesting note with regard to “indications and directions for the future”: “The marked growth of the attention given to the ‘external’ dimension of the process and to the development of tools/plans to make national higher education more attractive at home, in Europe and in the world should continue. The fact that this process could be made easier and more successful if it had a European dimension has not yet been acknowledged: European degrees will not be generally accepted in the world if they are not generally accepted in Europe.” (Haug and Tauch, 2001, p. 7).

Indeed, Europe still has to agree on so many details; it has to stand up from sharp shards of the past and to grow up as *Europe*. As studies show, the perception of European higher education outside Europe is still very weak: there are rather British, French, German etc. systems and universities and not “European” ones.⁶ The long way from Prague via Berlin to Bergen has led to a growing consensus in a number of issues: an overarching framework for qualifications of the European higher education area (EHEA), standards and guidelines for quality assurance, etc. Parallel to “internal” developments, an awareness of the “external” dimension of the Process increased and concrete issues were raised. Firstly, one of them was a geographical issue: if the “Bologna club” is enlarging what could/should be the limits of membership? What could/should be the confines of the EHEA?

9. In Prague, eligibility for the Bologna Process was still limited to the “countries for which the European Community programmes Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci or Tempus-Cards are open” (Prague Communiqué, 2001). It soon became clear that this is too narrow a definition and at the Berlin Conference it was agreed that “Countries party to the European Cultural Convention shall be eligible for membership of the European Higher Education Area provided that they at the same time declare their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the Bologna Process in their own systems of higher education. Their applications should contain information on how they will implement the principles and objectives of the

⁶ “Overall, Europe is not perceived as a union as regards higher education. There is a perception of Europe as an ‘entity’ in general terms and as an economic union. However, when it comes to cultural aspects and higher education, most students rather saw Europe as a range of very different countries. An important share of Chinese and Indian respondents and of staff members saw large differences between the quality of education provided in individual EU member states. Beyond this, respondents saw the most substantial discrepancies regarding cost-related issues (both tuition fees and living costs) and student support.” (ACA, 2006, p. 10-11).

declaration” (Berlin Communiqué, 2003). While referring to “Countries party to the European Cultural Convention” the “internal” vs. “external” delineation of the emerging Higher Education Area was drawn. Could it be more than delineation? A new border? To whom and why?

Sjur Bergan warned once that “the term ‘the external dimension’ seems to be more concerned with drawing a line between ‘them’ and ‘us’ than with fostering one of the key values of the university heritage – that of true international cooperation” (Bergan; in: Muche, 2005, p. 43). This warning should again be taken seriously.

Should the Bologna reforms be extended to other parts of the world?

10. In May 2002, on the way from Prague and Berlin, the Bologna Follow-up Group “approved that a specific point for debate of the external aspect of the Bologna Process should be added to the agenda of the next meeting”.⁷ A special working group was formed, but it took more time than originally envisaged: the final report was given in June 2003, already close to the Berlin Conference. Contrary to *competitiveness* – a term from the Bologna Declaration – the report outlined *attractiveness, openness* and *cooperation* as three main entities of the “external dimension”. *Attractiveness* “depends on many factors of which the most important are quality, transparency, diversity and visibility”. *Openness* was interpreted on the basis of the principle that “European higher education should be open to students from all over the world”. The working group strongly recommended that existing “scholarship programmes

⁷ See Bologna Follow up Group, *Attractiveness, Openness and Co-operation. The European Higher Education Area and third countries*. Report by the Danish Presidency. 4th draft, Athens, 20 June 2003 (1st draft, Copenhagen, 4 November 2002; 2nd draft, Athens, 18 February 2003).

should be further developed” and that visa and entry requirements and procedures should be simplified.

Finally, when *cooperation* entered the agenda, the working group made the following introductory statement: “Accomplishing the objectives in the Bologna Declaration is a huge task for the signatories. This task should not be complicated further by associating non-European countries to the process at this stage. Instead the Bologna-countries should cooperate in an open way with regions and countries in other parts of the world by promoting the idea and practice of regional cooperation and through practical cooperation and dissemination of experiences.”

The main aims of cooperation between Bologna countries and other regions was focused on promoting the “Bologna idea” and to regional cooperation “à la Bologna” (e.g. strengthening cultural contacts and mutual understanding, enhancing quality in higher education, creating a coherent regional labour market with transparency in qualifications, etc.). Conditions for such cooperation were also discussed; as effective operative ways, the existing cooperative frameworks and contacts to UNESCO regions were mentioned. The Report also tried to identify regions of priority interest for a new type of cooperation and mentioned Middle Eastern and Southern Mediterranean countries, SNG/CIS countries, Caribbean and Latin America as well as South-East Asian countries.

The report on attractiveness, openness and cooperation found a sound echo in the Berlin Communiqué.⁸ Ministers welcomed “the interest shown by other regions of the world in the development of the European Higher Education Area” and agreed that “the attractiveness and openness of the European higher education should be reinforced. They confirm their

⁸ See three paragraphs under the heading “Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area”.

readiness to further develop scholarship programmes for students from other countries". They also declared that "transnational exchanges in higher education should be governed on the basis of academic quality and academic values, and agree to work in all appropriate fora to that end". Last but not least, they encouraged "the cooperation with regions in other parts of the world by opening Bologna seminars and conferences to representatives of these regions" (Berlin Communiqué, 2003).

11. Interestingly, since the Sorbonne meeting in 1998 the "external dimension" has been constantly – implicitly or explicitly – on the Bologna agenda, but there were no focused official seminars or conferences on these issues until recently. The first seriously prepared conference was only in 2004,⁹ but it was not yet on the prioritised list of the so-called Official Bologna Follow-up Seminars. At the conference, Ulrich Teichler made some challenging comments and questions: "The 'Bologna Message' attempts to strike a balance between a worldwide scope and a European scope: the introduction of a stage system of study programmes and degrees. But many observers have concluded that attention is increasingly paid in the Bologna Process to intra-European matters. Lists of objectives pursued in all the activities of establishing a European Higher Education and Research Area become longer, while links to the wider world remain a single item on these lists. Are the students from other parts of the world the 'forgotten half' of the key target population of the Bologna Declaration? Is the Bologna Process overshadowed by Euro-centrism?" (Teichler; in: Muche, 2005, p. 116).

12. After the Berlin Summit, there were more and more warnings and contributions of this kind – not only from Europe,

⁹ *Opening up to the Wider World: the External Dimension of the Bologna Process*. A Conference organised by the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) in collaboration with the University of Hamburg. Hamburg, 18 and 19 October 2004.

but Europe received the first messages on the “external dimension” from “outside”. Thus, at the EUA Glasgow Convention prior to the Bergen Conference,¹⁰ Goolam Mohamedbhai, President of International Association of Universities (IAU), asked “*whether the Bologna Reforms should be applied internationally*”. It is not a purely rhetorical question. On the contrary, it is a far-reaching question. He argued: “I fear that the Bologna reforms could lead to an isolation of HEIs in some parts of the world. With globalisation what is needed is greater international collaboration among universities in different parts of the world, not just among those in one region only. It is international collaboration among universities that can truly bring about inter-cultural dialogue and world understanding and peace. [...] Generally speaking the Bologna reforms (the 2-cycle degree programmes, the establishment of a credit transfer system, the introduction of quality assurance, the introduction of student-centred and problem-based learning) are in line with, for example, the conclusions of the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education. They can bring about important and positive changes in higher education. The question then is: should the Bologna reforms be extended to other parts of the world?” (Mohamedbhai, 2005).

Indeed: *should the Bologna reforms be extended to other parts of the world?*

Probably it is not the right question, but it is provocative and demands that all these issues be addressed seriously and that any Euro-centrism be put aside. The problem could probably be whether the “Bologna reforms” or the “Bologna idea” should be extended to other parts of the world? The “Bologna club” itself has argued firmly and several times in favour of flexibility and respect for (national) differences. If “the Bologna reforms” were

¹⁰ The 3rd EUA Convention. *Strong Universities for Europe*. Glasgow, 31 March – 2 April 2005. Materials from the Convention are available at <<http://www.euaconvention.org/index.asp>>.

understood as recipes, their extension to other parts of the world could be very questionable. However, it could be quite the opposite if the extension was more about ways of thinking, cooperating and performing as developed within European higher education (the “Bologna idea” or “philosophy”). Goolam Mohamedbhai is obviously well aware of the different contexts which could profoundly affect the “extension”: “There has so far been limited organised debate on the effects or the applicability of Bologna reforms on HEIs in other parts of the world. But it is imperative that debate gets properly structured. What is not clear is whether the debate should be national, regional or international. And whether it should be started by universities, by associations of universities or by governments.”¹¹ (Mohamedbhai, 2005).

13. This has been also one of the issues that the present (2005-2006) External Dimension Working Group (WG ED) addressed in discussions at meetings and in ongoing virtual contacts. In these discussions, on the one hand, reactions from “outside” of the Bologna Process and echoes of various kinds were collected and carefully analysed; these are the contents of the next, third chapter. On the other hand, attention was also given to the “history of ideas”; more precisely, to the development of understanding the “external dimension” related to European higher education policy debates within the last fifteen or twenty years. In *Annex 1*,¹² an effort was made to collect relevant quotations from various documents that appeared between 1988 and 2006 and that illustrate this development best. WG ED was convinced that the attempt to draft and agree on the “External Dimension” Strategy should take into account previous

¹¹ See e.g. also L. Rivero’s differentiation between “European” and “Latin American dream”; chapter 3, note 52.

¹² Excerpts from documents are edited chronologically and classified into three categories: relevant *pre-Bologna documents*, genuine “*Bologna documents*” (produced within the Bologna Process) and the *European Union documents*.

developments: either to continue and to expand logic and argumentation elaborated so far or to revise it and to change.

The “external dimension” in a historical perspective: documents 1987 – 2006

14. In *Annex 1*, the historical overview starts with a remarkable *pre-Bologna document* – the *Magna Charta Universitatum* (1988). It is a document which obviously cannot be classified as a proper “Bologna document”. However, the Magna Charta has had a huge influence on European higher education policy debates and this influence has been particularly important when approaching the Bologna Process from an institutional point of view.¹³ It was initiated in 1987 and signed at the meeting of European rectors who met to celebrate the 900th anniversary of the University of Bologna in 1988, that is, “four years before the definitive abolition of boundaries between the countries of the European Community” and, as it can be added today, two years before the fall of the Berlin wall. Among its fundamental principles it inscribed that “[a] university is the trustee of the European humanist tradition” – this is a principle which has been common to the Bologna Process as well. It also referred to “the mutual exchange of information and documentation, and frequent joint projects for the advancement of learning, as essential to the steady progress of knowledge”, and encouraged “mobility among teachers and students; furthermore, they consider a general policy of equivalent status, titles, examinations (without prejudice to national diplomas) and award of scholarships essential to the fulfilment of their mission in the conditions prevailing today” (*Magna Charta Universitatum*, 1991).

Thus, the Magna Charta approached some of the most important Bologna policy objectives already ten years before the Sorbonne

¹³ For details see *Magna Charta Observatory* website <<http://www.magna-charta.org/home.html>>.

Declaration was signed. The Europeanisation and internationalisation of higher education as well as its openness was one of them, observed from an academic values point of view. This is an aspect which has remained important in Bologna discussions until today, and there seems to be no reason why it should not remain so also in the future.

Another document can be also found within the category of pre-Bologna documents that deeply influenced the Bologna Process and its “external dimension” as well. This is the *Lisbon Recognition Convention* (1997). Today, it is sometimes stressed that this is the only *legal* document within the Bologna Process. As this is true, a note is necessary here: it was signed *before* the Sorbonne and Bologna initiatives. Therefore, it could be probably said that the Convention was developed and signed in a similar “spirit of the time” as the Magna Charta – announcing “new times” in the Europeanisation and internationalisation of higher education – but the initiative came this time from international organisations (Council of Europe and UNESCO) and it was signed by government representatives of European as well as some non-European states.¹⁴ A particular feature of contemporary European higher education policy discussions has been that governmental and institutional – as well as student – engagements run more or less in parallel.¹⁵ Last but not least, the composition of the Councils of Europe’s Steering Committee for

¹⁴ The Lisbon Recognition Convention has been signed and/or ratified also by the following “non-Bologna” countries: Australia, Belarus, Canada, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kirghiz Republic and U.S. – For details see <<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=165&CM=8&DF=9/7/2006&CL=ENG>>.

¹⁵ “The university Europe of the Bologna process may be running in parallel with the Lisbon process, at any rate for the governments of the EU member states. But the Bologna process, in working for means of convergence which will allow the creation of a common academic ‘space’, gives universities a political voice. Governmental decisions have been significantly shaped by an academic input. Governments are committed to respecting the fundamental characteristics of universities qua universities and not simply seeing them as economic engines. The Bologna process is explicitly underpinned by a university ‘Magna Carta’, the Magna Charta Universitatum, which combines both aspirations and a process to challenge governments taking action to infringe their autonomy.” (Corbett, 2005, p. xii; 10).

Higher Education and Research (CDESR) reflects this particularity: its members are representatives both from Ministries responsible for higher education and the academic community.

The Convention does not say much about internationalisation in general or about the “external dimension” in particular. Nevertheless, it addresses one of the key issues of higher education policy in a context of internationalisation – *the recognition issue*. This is why this document achieved such an important position after the Bologna Process was launched. In the Preamble, it also stated some important principles which have remained valid and important until today: the Convention considers that “higher education should play a vital role in promoting peace, mutual understanding and tolerance, and in creating mutual confidence among peoples and nations”, it approaches also “other Regions of the world” and stresses “the need for an improved exchange of information between these Regions” (Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications..., 1997). Even without these concrete statements, this is clearly a document which is legitimately built on the foundations of the Bologna Process and its “external dimension”.

15. Another cluster of influential statements on the “external dimension”, which partly precede and partly go in parallel with the “proper” Bologna documents, can be found in policy *documents from the EU institutions*. However, higher education and general education policy had very little to do with these institutions until the late 1980s. During this period, policy and legal responsibilities remained firmly with national country states. Anne Corbett presents the key phases of the transformation of this trend in her – already quoted – excellent study on EU higher education policy 1955-2005:¹⁶ “On the higher education front, the received view is that the Community had nothing to do with universities, or education in general,

¹⁶ *The history of European cooperation in education and training* (see European Commission, 2006-a) gives another excellent insight into higher education policy developments of this period.

before the 1970s. The policy sector was ‘taboo’, according to Guy Neave, author of the earliest account of EC education policy, because national governments had not given the Community competence for education when they signed the Treaties of Rome” (Corbett, 2005, p. 10).

This trend had been gradually changed and “the period from 1985 to 1993 is seen as the period of transformation which put education policy on the road to Maastricht. [...] This led to the formal adoption of a number of EC programmes in the late 1980s and early 1990s [...].¹⁷

The Community’s subsidiary competence in education was defined for the first time by the Treaty of Maastricht in 1991 after which new and reorganised programmes could be developed by the EU institutions. [...].¹⁸ By the 1990s, and in Shaw’s much-cited phrase, education had moved from the margins to the centre of Community policy-making concern.” (Ibid., p. 11).

Some reflections on the “extra-European Community dimension” – a remote predecessor of the “external dimension” – can be found within the popular debates on the “European

¹⁷ Comett (Community Programme for Education and Training in Technology), Erasmus (European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students), Lingua (to fund and promote training and skills in foreign languages), Tempus (Trans-Mobility Programme for University Students) and Jean Monnet (the system of chairs to promote teaching and research on European integration).

¹⁸ See Article 126 of the Maastricht Treaty, e.g.: “1. The Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity. [...] 3. The Community and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the field of education, in particular the Council of Europe.” The emphasis placed on “cooperation with third countries” is particularly important for developing the “external dimension”.

dimension in higher education” at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. The *Erasmus programme (European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students)* has been one of the key results of these discussions, and within its objectives the Council’s Decision of 1987 stated a need “to promote broad and intensive cooperation between universities in all Member States” and “to harness the full intellectual potential of the universities in the Community by means of increased mobility of teaching staff, thereby improving the quality of the education and training provided by the universities with a view to securing the competitiveness of the Community in the world market” (Council..., 1987, Article 2, iii). On the other hand and a few years later, in the *Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community* (1991), it was stated that besides the “European dimension in higher education” there are also “historic linkages and relationships between higher education institutions in the different Member States and various countries of the world” (Commission..., 1991, sec. 35).

It was also said that an enhanced role for education and training in the external relations of the Community is evolving for a number of reasons and that there has always been an “extra-European Community dimension” in the relationships between higher education institutions. The Memorandum brought some important conclusions: ”While it is vital to the future of the Community that the European dimension in higher education be emphasised and strengthened, this extra-EC dimension is of fundamental importance to an open European Community, deriving strength from cooperation and interaction across the world. [...] Europe must not only strengthen its own identity, but it must do so in a political, economic and cultural equilibrium with the rest of the world.“ (Ibid., sec. 148, 149).

Approximately at the same time, the *Tempus programme* (the “Trans-European mobility scheme for university studies”) was launched (Council..., 1990) in an enthusiastic spirit of political

change in Central and East Europe as well as in a readiness to share – at least indirectly – the Erasmus “spirit” with other parts of the “opening” Europe. The Council’s Decision placed at the top of its list the objective “to facilitate the coordination of the provision of assistance to the eligible countries in the field of exchange and mobility, particularly for university students and teachers”. The Decision also stated that “Joint European projects” (JEPs) within Tempus “may be linked, as appropriate, to existing networks, notably those funded in the framework of the Erasmus, Comett and Lingua programmes” and “grants may be awarded for a wide range of activities according to the specific needs of the institutions concerned, including notably for curricular development and overhaul, integrated study courses, development of teaching materials, training and retraining of teachers, particularly in the field of modern European languages, the provision of short, intensive programmes, the development of language and area studies and of distance learning. Support equipment and documentation necessary for the implementation of a joint European project could also be eligible for funding.”(Ibid.).

Tempus has undergone steep development, and today it is the widely-known EU flagship programme for higher education cooperation between Member States and the countries which are its “neighbours”. Over time, the programme’s geographical scope has evolved. Established initially in 1990 following the fall of the Berlin Wall, as a programme for cooperation with Central and East European countries which have subsequently joined the Union, Tempus has been renewed three times (Tempus II, Tempus II-bis and Tempus III for the period 2000 to 2006) and now enables universities from EU Member States to cooperate with those in the Western Balkans, East Europe, Central Asia, and the Mediterranean partner countries.¹⁹ In addition to reforming higher education systems in the partner

¹⁹ For details see
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/tempus/index_en.html.

countries surrounding the EU, Tempus contributes – notably through its mobility activities for teachers, students and faculty – to enhancing understanding between cultures. Its projects fall into three categories: the main type, *Joint European Projects* (JEPs), aim to increase cooperation and network-building between actors in higher education in EU Member States and partner countries. *Structural and Complementary Measures* are short-term interventions designed to support national higher education reforms and strategic policy frameworks; projects within this category address typical Bologna issues such as quality assurance, accreditation systems and good university management practices. *Individual Mobility Grants* help staff in participating partner countries to take part in training and conferences abroad, and assist European teachers deliver training courses in partner countries.

Over time, Tempus has also become the main source of information on Bologna developments in Bologna signatory countries that are outside the EU, but also in neighbouring countries that are not yet formally involved in the Bologna Process. Tempus provides a platform for exchanges and transfer of experiences on issues such as quality control, accreditation, credit system, or mobility issues. In addition to introducing these innovative practices at university and faculty level, most Tempus Partner countries are incorporating the Bologna principles as part of their overall efforts to modernise their higher education systems, and align them with current international developments, in order to become part of a larger higher education community (Smith, Morel and Sammaritano, 2006).

16. The importance of the “extra-European Community dimension” was only enhanced during the 1990s and it found sound echoes also in the Lisbon strategy and related policy documents after 2000. Of course, this is already a period of certain parallelism between the Bologna Process (enlarging from 29 member countries in 1999 to 45 since 2005) and the EU

Lisbon Process (also enlarging from 15 countries in 2000 to 25 since 2004). The famous Lisbon “new strategic goal” contains implicitly the whole array of issues closely connected to higher education and research policy. The Lisbon Strategy explicitly addressed only one, related to the European Research Area – to “take steps to remove obstacles to the mobility of researchers in Europe by 2002 and to attract and retain high-quality research talent in Europe” (Council of the EU, 2000). However, a number of documents which elaborate Lisbon objectives in detail also develop many aspects of the “extra-EU dimension”.

Thus, the Concrete Future Objectives of Education Systems stressed “an openness of spirit towards foreign countries, Europe and the wider world” (Commission..., 2001-a). The Detailed Work Programme made it even more clear, saying that “Europe will be open to cooperation for mutual benefits with all other regions and should be the most-favoured destination of students, scholars and researchers from other world regions” (Council..., 2002-b, 3.2); it put at the top of the agenda that “the highest quality will be achieved in education and training and Europe will be recognised as a world-wide reference for the quality and relevance of its education and training systems and institutions” (*ibid.*).

Approximately at the same time, international cooperation among European universities and encouragement “to integrate new cooperation with third countries into a wider partnership framework” (Commission..., 2001-b) was addressed in a Communication on Strengthening Cooperation with Third Countries in the Field of Higher Education. The document stressed that “[t]his effort is also needed because there is an ever-increasing demand for international education and student mobility” but also noted that students “flock mainly to the US”. It is made clear that “there may be healthy competition between Member States countries to attract international students”; yet, “the role of the EC should be primarily to encourage cooperative approaches so that the benefits can be shared more widely within the EC and partner countries.” The document concludes

that the Community “should ensure that its education activities include the international dimension in a more systematic way” and “should give greater visibility to its action in this field in order to promote Europe as a centre of excellence, and to attract students seeking an international education” (*ibid.*).

17. A soundly echoed step forward in the implementation of the Lisbon strategy in higher education was the launch of the *Erasmus Mundus programme* (Commission..., 2002-b). Its overall aims (“to enhance the quality of European higher education by fostering cooperation with third countries in order to improve the development of human resources and to promote dialogue and understanding between peoples and cultures”) as well as specific objectives (to promote a quality offer in European higher education and attractiveness “both within the European Union and beyond its borders”, “to encourage and enable highly qualified graduates and scholars from all over the world, to obtain qualifications and/or experience in the European Union”, “to improve accessibility and enhance the profile and visibility of higher education” in EU etc.) are highly important for developing the “external dimension” of higher education in EU and broadly in Europe.

The current programme spans the period 2004-2008 with a budget of 230 million Euro, plus considerable complementary funds for additional student grants which are being channelled through Erasmus Mundus with the help of funds from the External relations, Development cooperation and Enlargement budgets of the EU. The Erasmus Mundus programme comprises four concrete actions: Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses (Action 1 of the programme), Erasmus Mundus scholarships (Action 2), Erasmus Mundus Partnerships (Action 3) and support for projects aimed at enhancing the attractiveness and interest in European higher education worldwide (Action 4).²⁰

²⁰ For details see
[<http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/index_en.html>](http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/index_en.html).

By 2008 Erasmus Mundus will be supporting about 100 Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses of outstanding academic quality, providing grants for some 5,000 graduate students from other countries to follow these Masters Courses, and for 4,000 EU graduate students involved in these courses to study in partner countries across the world. The programme will also offer teaching or research scholarships in Europe for over 1,000 incoming academics from other countries of the world and for a similar number of outgoing EU scholars. Close to 100 partnerships will have been developed between European universities and their partners worldwide, and the attractiveness of European higher education will have been promoted through around 40 projects under Erasmus Mundus Action 4. In 2006-2007, an evaluation of the programme will pave the way for planning the future further development of the programme beyond 2008 (Smith, Morel and Sammaritano, 2006). Further developments are already on the way.²¹

18. It is impossible to overlook the role and contribution of individual European countries in developing cooperation in higher education and research with other countries of the world. However, analysing these contributions would be extremely

²¹ In summer 2006, the European Commission published a public open call for tender *Erasmus Mundus Global Promotion Project* (EAC/46/2006). This is a major call for services to assist the European Commission in improving the promotion and marketing of European higher education, to be carried out during the period 2007-2009 and to include five activity blocks: (a) development of a European brand and website and preparation of an inventory of European higher education strengths; (b) studies, analyses and pilot projects related to innovative services for international study (call centre for international students, network of European higher education advisers, feasibility of European higher education offices abroad, trends in transnational and offshore higher education); (c) competence-building workshops for higher education institutions and national higher education promotion organisations; (d) European higher education fairs and (e) media campaign and information materials. See <http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/calls/4606/index_en.html>.

extensive.²² On the other side, Article 149 of the Treaty establishing the European Community provides that “[t]he Community and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the field of education”. Erasmus Mundus is an excellent example of this cooperation. Yet concrete modes of cooperation between higher education institutions in the EU Member States and in countries from other world regions are much more diverse and cannot be reduced to Erasmus Mundus at all. The general framework for strengthening cooperation with other countries in the field of higher education (already mentioned above) and the special framework on education and training in the context of poverty reduction in developing countries²³ include several elements of the “external dimension”.

The Tempus programme – focusing on “neighbourhood” regions as far off as Mongolia – has already been mentioned (see section 15), and the ALFA programme offers a similar framework for cooperation between higher education institutions of the European Union and Latin America (see section 35). There is also extensive support for cooperation with Asian developing countries (see section 41) and plans to create a new Erasmus Mundus “window” for ACP countries (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) are under discussion (see section 32). There is also growing cooperation with industrialised countries. Since 1995 the European Commission has been running joint cooperation programmes in the field of higher education and vocational training with the US and Canada. The overriding idea of the programmes, based on multi-annual agreements with partner countries, is to promote cooperation between equals and enable European institutions to work together on a long-term basis with their peer institutions in highly developed countries so as

²² On bilateral aid from EU Members States to developing countries see e.g. Commission..., 2002-a, Annex 4: Member States policies in the education and training sector.

²³ See <<http://www.europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/s19006.htm>>.

mutually to improve transparency, understanding and the quality of their educational offer. More recently cooperation activities have been extended to other industrialised countries. In 2002 pilot projects were launched with Japan and Australia and in 2004 with New Zealand. A new 8-year agreement (2006-2013) has been signed with the US at the EU-US summit on 21 June 2006 and the new agreement with Canada for the same period will be adopted by the end of 2006.²⁴

The cooperation programmes include three main categories of activities. As the transposition of the “Erasmus” approach to relations with industrialised countries, the so-called *consortia implementation projects* provide support to multilateral partnerships of institutions from several EU member states and from the partner countries for the implementation of joint study programmes and a framework for mobility of students and faculty with full recognition of the study periods spent abroad. *Transatlantic Joint/Double Degrees* activities support a multilateral partnership of EU and US higher education institutions developing and implementing joint study programmes leading to the award of double or joint degrees, students spending at least one year of study on the other side of the Atlantic and receiving a double or joint degree upon successful completion of their studies. *Policy Oriented Measures* support multilateral projects addressing comparative higher education and vocational training issues with particular emphasis on the recognition of qualifications and issues of accreditation. So far the cooperation programmes have funded over 150 projects involving several hundred institutions and some 6,000 exchange students. Approximately two thirds of all the activities concern EU-US cooperation (Smith, Morel and Sammaritano, 2006).

²⁴ For details on cooperation with industrialised countries (USA, Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand) see <http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/eu_others/index_en.html>.

European cooperation programmes with industrialised countries – in addition to helping cement overall relations with the partner countries concerned – have proven to be highly beneficial for the institutions, students and faculty involved. By collaborating on joint innovative study programmes the EU institutions and those from partner countries pull together their best resources, compare and modernise their curricula, improve transparency and portability of credits and qualifications. Faculty and administrators learn from each other, allowing their institutions to improve the overall quality of their academic offer for the benefit of current and future generations of learners. The exchange students improve their educational record, develop their international and cross-cultural skills, and generally become more adaptable, confident and capable of operating successfully in an increasingly global market place.

19. Research is also one of the key issues of the Lisbon strategy and a *Communication on the European Research Area* of 2002 (Commission..., 2002-c) already reported on “several initiatives [...] undertaken to take account of, benefit from and exploit the international dimension of the European Research Area and its openness to the world”. These initiatives were obviously not sufficient, and critical voices and urgencies²⁵ could be heard later. Thus, with regard to research, Wim Kok’s Report ascertained that “[t]he EU needs to draw more of the best and brightest researchers in the world by raising its attractiveness” and recommended that “[f]ast-track work permit and visa procedures should be introduced for researchers and the mutual recognition of professional qualifications must be improved”

²⁵ E.g., while referring to the Lisbon strategy, a Communication on European values in a globalised world (Commission..., 2005-c), prepared for the Hampton Court Meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the EU, stressed: “what is different five years on is the added sense of urgency. Global competition, particularly from Asia, has intensified. Cutting-edge knowledge is no longer confined to Europe or North America. Indian universities are turning out more than a quarter of million engineers every year. Research spending in China is set to catch that in the EU by 2010”.

(Kok, 2004). A Communication on Mobilising the brainpower of Europe noted further on that “[r]aising quality and attractiveness requires major transformation at universities” (Commission..., 2005-b). The document stressed flexibility and “openness to the world in teaching/learning” as important factors to raise attractiveness of European universities.

In more recent debates, the idea of establishing a European Institute of Technology (EIT) raised several questions on the “external dimension” as well: “The EIT must act as a pole of attraction for the best minds from around the world” and “as a model for promoting change across the European Higher Education Area” (Commission..., 2006-b). However, the global attractiveness of the EIT to non-EU students and researchers depends on “the academic credibility of the courses, degrees and research programmes” as well as on “the ease with which it would be possible for foreign Masters or Doctoral candidates and researchers to join the EIT and for the EIT to employ third country citizens in the Knowledge Communities” (*ibid.*). Concrete measures are needed “to simplify and accelerate legal and administrative procedures for the entry of non-EU students and researchers” (Commission..., 2006-a). “Building an attractive image for European universities in the world also calls for a serious effort to make European degrees more easily recognised outside Europe. However, first, cross-recognition has to be fully achieved within the EU itself.” (*Ibid.*) This is a point where the “internal” (“structural”) and “external” dimension cross each other; last but not least, this is a point which is essential for the Bologna Process in general

20. It is time to draw some attention to original Bologna documents from the “external dimension” point of view. As was already briefly mentioned in one of the introductory paragraphs, *recognition* and *attractiveness* – terms discussed at the end of the previous paragraph – were also among the key words of the *Sorbonne Declaration* (1998). A debate on the “external dimension” was actually launched here: “The international

recognition and attractive potential of our systems are directly related to their external and internal readabilities. A system, in which two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate, should be recognised for international comparison and equivalence, seems to emerge". In the same line, the language of the *Bologna Declaration* (1999) added *international competitiveness* as well: "We must in particular look at the objective of increasing the international competitiveness of the European systems of higher education. The vitality and efficiency of any civilisation can be measured by the appeal that its culture has for other countries. We need to ensure that the European higher education system acquires a world-wide degree of attraction equal to our extraordinary cultural and scientific traditions".

In fact, the concept of the "external dimension of the Bologna Process" was not yet born at this time; however, it was certainly conceived. The initial "Bologna push" in combination with discussions that accompanied, on the one hand, the launching of the Lisbon strategy (2000) and, on the other hand, the Salamanca European convention of universities (2001) additionally contributed to the fact that, during their Prague follow-up meeting, "Ministers agreed on the importance of enhancing attractiveness of European higher education to students from Europe and other parts of the world. The readability and comparability of European higher education degrees world-wide should be enhanced by the development of a common framework of qualifications, as well as by coherent quality assurance and accreditation/certification mechanisms and by increased information efforts." (Prague Communiqué, 2001). The next paragraph of the Communiqué added: "Ministers particularly stressed that the quality of higher education and research is and should be an important determinant of Europe's international attractiveness and competitiveness. Ministers agreed that more attention should be paid to the benefit of a European Higher Education Area with institutions and programmes with different profiles. They called for increased collaboration between the European countries

concerning the possible implications and perspectives of transnational education.” (*Ibid.*)

Several horizons of the “external dimension”

21. Thus, horizons for discussing the “external dimension” were moulded and opened. The work of the first Working Group on External Dimension (2002-2003) has already been presented and the relevant parts of both subsequent (Berlin and Bergen) Communiqués have already been quoted as well. Further on, the documents attached into *Annex 1* can speak for themselves. Discussion on the “external dimension” has shown that it is not only about international competitiveness, attractiveness and recognition.

One of the findings of the present/second Working Group on External Dimension (2005-2006) has been that it is not possible to define the “external dimension of the Bologna Process” using a single definition: there are several elements interlinked in this expression. Passing through several discussions, it has identified several horizons, agendas and approaches in which the “external dimension” appears in Bologna documents and which could be synthesised into four main clusters:

- (a) *an information (didactic) approach*, by means of which the EHEA would be correctly presented and explained in other world regions;
- (b) *a competitiveness and attractiveness agenda*, which is to result in an inflow of non-European students and scholars into European higher education; complemented by
- (c) *a partnership and cooperation agenda*, in which collaborative activity will democratically benefit both European and non-European higher education, and from which notably commercial motives should be absent (“academic values”);

(d) *a dialogue approach*, by means of which the EHEA would foster the exchange of experience and ideas on higher education reform issues with representatives of other world regions; and which would develop concrete mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of the “partnership and cooperation agenda” (see b) between the EHEA and the respective country/region.

These horizons can be also perceived while searching for echoes of the Bologna Process from world regions. This is the objective of the next chapter.

3. The “External Dimension”: echoes of the Bologna Process from world regions

22. This chapter is intended to capture and present the main echoes of the Bologna Process from world regions. It was not possible to lean on any previous systematic review of this kind; thus, entering on the issue was possible only through surveying a huge amount of heterogeneous documents and information. In order to reflect developments at the present stage of the Bologna Process, as well as to facilitate preparation of the “external dimension strategy”, such an enterprise seems necessary. Yet, the ambition is not – and cannot be within the limits of a given mandate – to provide a comprehensive, all-embracing review of what has been written, commented or said about the Bologna Process in other world regions, but rather to present the most characteristic facts and events, as well as to outline the main trends and questions that have been arising as the waves of the Bologna have been spreading around the globe.

From today’s point of view it is really curious how deep the “Bologna family” was occupied with itself during its “childhood” years. The “international competitiveness of the European systems of higher education” and “a world-wide degree of attraction equal to our extraordinary cultural and scientific traditions” (Bologna Declaration, 1999) were on the agenda, but it seems that in the given circumstances of European “coming together” of the 1990s there was not much time to enhance “the understanding of the Bologna Process in other continents by sharing our experiences of reform processes with neighbouring regions” (Bergen Communiqué, 2005). However, documents prove that the “external” importance of the Process was perceived among higher education experts in all world regions but it had taken a lot of time, so that information and

communication with representatives of these regions became a matter of organised and systematic work.

The ACA Conference on the “external dimension” (Hamburg, 2004) was one of the early opportunities to articulate this issue: “Speakers from other world regions confirmed that the reform agenda was being perceived outside of Europe, though at different degrees by the different target academic groups. While higher education leaders and managers were probably best informed, there were clear deficiencies on the side of the faculty. The fact that word about the reforms had travelled beyond the confines of Europe does not mean, however, that non-European observers had a detailed knowledge of the aims and the elements of the reform process. There was therefore a clear need for the provision of targeted information on the Bologna Process outside of Europe.” (Recommendations for inclusion..., 2004).

The appeal depends on relations

23. Why is it so important to consider these echoes seriously? Is it just to improve European self-esteem? Are there more substantial reasons?

Yes, there are. It has been stressed several times that structural reforms alone will not suffice to increase the appeal for other countries, if we may paraphrase known words from the Bologna Declaration. The appeal ceases to exist if there is no *relation*: no tension between the “internal” and the “external dimension”. Even Narcissus had his “external” mirror. Yet, to understand the relation – and to avoid either (ego)centrism or autism of any kind – it is necessary to understand *the other*; which is also the best way to understand *oneself*. However, as always in human learning and understanding it takes time to understand. Impatient readers can immediately turn the pages to the end of this chapter and read its very last sentence. But hopefully they will most probably decide to start from the beginning again.

24. The review will run as a “geographical tour” – normally starting from the neighbourhood. Since this is not Marco Polo’s long-lasting expedition but rather an intensive Phileas Fogg’s “*le tour du monde*”, there will be no time to visit just the interesting places and present just the valuable views on the issue. Firstly, it seems that such a tour could be structured only according to world geography; yet, this is not easy, after some consideration. When cultural, political and similar issues are elaborated we often find that there is no clear-cut division between “continents”, “world regions” etc. For example: how to delineate Russia from Kazakhstan, or the north and the south shore of the Mediterranean, when discussing the “geography” of the European Higher Education Area? What “geography” could argue that certain parts of Latin America, Africa and Pacific form a common “region”, namely the “lusophone region”? Are there “trans-regions” etc?

These issues will soon be tackled. Discussions within the External Dimension Working Group have shown that the term (*world*) *region* should be used very carefully and with due respect to cultural and political contexts when referring to the internationalised higher education of today.

Bologna and “countries in transition”

25. Between Berlin and Bergen, the emerging European higher education area expanded even further to the east; after applications from Moldova, Ukraine and three Caucasus countries to join the Bologna Process, interest was noticed also from the Central Asia countries. Eligibility for membership (*the European Cultural Convention*) put these countries in a special position: traditionally they were most closely connected to universities in e.g. Russia or Ukraine, but the Bologna Process put them on its “external” side. Interestingly, the Bologna Process entered also a forum which initially has nothing to do with comprehensive reforms of higher education systems.

It was at the 12th OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) Economic Forum where Per Nyborg, head of the Bologna Secretariat under Norway's coordination (2003-2005), was invited to present the Bologna opportunities to a broad range of countries, broader than the circle of signatories. He stressed at the beginning of his speech that "the principles and objectives of the Bologna Process may be used for reforms in any country and they may be a very good basis for international cooperation in higher educations also outside the European Region" and added: "I shall be very interested in what the next speaker, Rector Kuznetsova from Kazakhstan, is going to say about university reforms in the light of the Bologna Process" (Nyborg, 2004).

The theme of the conference was "New Challenges for Building up Institutional and Human Capacity for Economic Development and Cooperation" and higher education reforms found a sound place on the agenda. As it is recorded in the summary of the conference, the importance of the Bologna Process and the Lisbon Recognition Convention as a framework for educational reform was highlighted, "particularly, but not exclusively, in transition countries". The goal of the reform process is "to promote the achievement of four objectives: employability, competitiveness, mobility, and regional and international cooperation". Speakers presented the reform processes in the field of education in some countries and regions of the OSCE area. "In this vein, Ms. Olga Kuznetsova, Rector of the International Academy of Business in Almaty, also focused her contribution on analysing the context, trends and challenges in educational reform in Kazakhstan, particularly in the field of business education. She drew our attention to the need to strike a balance between standardisation and flexibility when it comes to developing degrees and curricula." (OSCE, 2004, p. 46).

According to the summary of the conference, there was a broad consensus among participants that any reform process in the field of education "is not to be considered as an imposition but

as a two-way cooperation” (*ibid.*, p. 48). The importance of such cooperation was obviously taken into account when recommendations were made. At the top of a long list of recommendations we can find a proposal that “in promoting educational reform, the OSCE can encourage and help in the implementation of the Bologna Process on a voluntary basis” as well as that “the OSCE could assist in facilitating mobility and regional and international co-operation among educational institutions by several means, particularly by backing the establishment of regional and international accreditation centres, and quality evaluation systems” (*ibid.*, p. 49).

A recent Tempus Project “Creating National Information Centres about the Bologna Process in the Kyrgyz Republic” (SCM TO12B04; 2006) is a very good example of interest for the Bologna Process in Central Asia as well as of two-way cooperation. This is a joint project of the University of Pisa (Italy; coordinator), University of Gent (Belgium) and the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic, as well as of 11 Kyrgyz higher education institutions (International University of Kyrgyzstan, Osh Technological University, Kyrgyz National University J. Balasagun, Kyrgyz State Pedagogical University, Issyk-Kul State University, and others). The main aim of the project is to assist Kyrgyz higher education in obtaining detailed information on the Bologna Process in general, but it is also closely connected to the Tuning Project. Within the project, 5 national Tuning groups were formed (Business Management, Economics, Ecology, Mathematics and Tourism) to exercise the Tuning methodology at Kyrgyz higher education institutions.²⁶

²⁶ See <<http://www.bolognakg.net/>>.

Euro-Mediterranean partnership

26. Another “trans-region” with traditional international academic ties is the Mediterranean. Its historical and cultural context enables universities to play a very active role in international cooperation in general. On the one hand, the Mediterranean as such is the meeting point of various world regions, economies and cultural influences; on the other hand, in today’s political circumstances the “European part” of the Mediterranean provides more and more opportunities also to non-Mediterranean European countries to take part in the cooperation activities also with “non-European” Mediterranean countries. Today, this is particularly true in the field of higher education and research.

Most countries of the “European part” of the Mediterranean are today EU Member States and it can be no surprise that the European Union strongly supports several cooperation programmes and promotes various concrete actions. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership²⁷ (“Barcelona Process”: Partnership and Cooperation or Association Agreements; 1995) and the decisions taken by the EuroMed Committee and the Conference of Ministers, along with the Neighbourhood Policy,²⁸ led to a

²⁷ See <http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/euromed/index.htm>.

²⁸ “The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was developed in the context of the EU’s 2004 enlargement, with the objective of avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and our neighbours and instead strengthening stability, security and well-being for all concerned. [...] Originally, the ENP was intended to apply to our immediate neighbours – Algeria, Belarus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine. In 2004, it was extended to also include the countries of the Southern Caucasus with whom the present candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey share either a maritime or land border (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia). Although Russia is also a neighbour of the EU, the mutual relations are instead developed through a Strategic Partnership covering four ‘common spaces’.” – See <http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index_en.htm>

complex programme of Euro-Mediterranean “co-development” in the economic, political, cultural, environmental and security fields.

Two transversal issues are of fundamental importance: to encourage interaction and cooperation between the social agents from the north and the south, and to generate an image of Europe in the Mediterranean that makes it possible, as stated by the Advisory group named by Romano Prodi in 2003, “to construct in the Mediterranean area, and starting from the Mediterranean, a friendly neighbourhood with a human dimension.”²⁹ Today, higher education institutions from most countries around the Mediterranean cooperate also in EU education and training programmes, e.g. Tempus projects covered through Meda Programme,³⁰ similarly as through Cards and Tacis in the Western Balkans, East Europe and Central Asian region.

There have been visible intergovernmental higher education activities in the region. Recently, in January 2006, the Ministers of Education from 12 Mediterranean countries³¹ met in Italy and signed the *Catania Declaration*, further proof of the dissemination of the Bologna spirit. In the preamble, Ministers referred to the Barcelona Declaration of 1995 and to two other conferences held in Catania (2003, 2005) that have set forth the proposal to create a “Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education Area”. Further on they agreed, among others, to “activate a structured cooperation in order to promote the comparability and readability of higher education systems in the Euro-Mediterranean Area, though preserving each country’s

²⁹ See <<http://www.unimedforum.net/index.htm>>.

³⁰ See <http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/euromed/meda.htm>. The MEDA programme is the principal financial instrument of the European Union for the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

³¹ Algeria, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Malta, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey.

individuality”, as well as to “establish common education and training paths based on a system of transferable credits and on easily readable qualifications and exploitable as well by the labour market, by sharing criteria, evaluation methods and quality assurance schemes in order to facilitate the mobility of students, researchers and professors”. As priorities Ministers stressed also the promotion of doctoral programmes and the encouragement of scientific and technical collaboration, the establishment of Centres of Excellence, strengthening distance learning system and developing vocational expertise and diplomas in higher education. Finally they agreed “to meet regularly to assess progress and to promote further collaboration through the establishment of a Follow-up Group, in which each participant Country will be represented, and who will report to the next ministerial meeting to be held in 2008” (Catania Declaration, 2006).

27. Activities have not remained on a political level alone. Recently, an influential higher education action has been launched within this agenda – the *Mediterranean University Forum*, a part of the European Commission's Jean Monnet Project. After careful preparation, at the 2nd Forum, held in Tarragona (Spain) in June 2005, the basic policy document was signed – *the Tarragona Declaration*. So far, 137 signatory universities from 30 countries (out of altogether 35 so-called Euro-Med countries) have joined the initiative. Its main aims are to promote academic thinking about the key elements required to create an open Mediterranean area, to define the role of the university in the social, cultural, economic and scientific aspects of the Mediterranean area and to gradually build a Mediterranean area of higher education and research.

The declaration estimates that “the participation of the universities to the construction of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership appears to be much necessary and urgent, given that the most consistent obstacles encountered for the completion of this process are also of a cultural nature”. It also expressed the

awareness of EU universities “that the Mediterranean issue is one of the priorities in order to define the political and cultural future of Europe. They are interested in developing a dynamic and functional concept of inter-university cooperation that fits the growth of efficiency and competitiveness within the European Higher Education system. They can offer the partner countries a valid contribution to acquire a variety of necessary skills for their economic, social and institutional development. The universities of the partner countries not only expect an improvement of the economic and political relations from the Barcelona Process and its outcome, but also an increase in cultural and technological exchange. They shall contribute to the renewal of the European university system by means of encouraging the great cultural traditions and contributing with academic institutions of great prospective growth” (Tarragona Declaration, 2005).

The declaration identifies several fields in which cooperation is much urgent, and declared “their particular interest in the promotion of the various components of the Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Heritage.” Finally, it ascertains that the time has come “to create a ‘Euro-Mediterranean area of Higher Education and Research’, to contribute to the promotion of a knowledge society, to encourage collaboration and dialogue among the educational institutions, to increase their management efficiency, the quality of teaching and research, a non-discriminatory education and the involvement of civil society in a knowledge society. More specifically, a ‘Higher Education Network’ should be established and made up of universities and research centres in the Mediterranean, supported by the community, national and regional political institutions of the countries involved” (Tarragona Declaration, 2005).

28. The 3rd Forum, held in Malta in June 2006, gathered already more than 300 representatives from universities as well as national and international institutions and organisations from 38 countries. Participants discussed the possibilities and problems

of direct cooperation and exchange between universities in Europe and the whole Mediterranean region. The main objective of the Malta Forum was to create a common platform for the discussion of Euro-Mediterranean issues through an academic approach. In particular, it focused on the development of activities that can set in motion the Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education Area - the development of programmes for staff mobility, the strengthening of joint research structures, the identification of structural needs for specific countries, etc. One of the principal objectives was also to enhance the attractiveness and visibility of European higher education.

In his speech at the Forum, Giuseppe Giliberti from Italy stressed the importance and mutual character of cooperation: “The universities of the EU countries and the associated states – even those geographically distant from the sea – can help the countries of the Eastern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean upgrade the capacity of their scientific and educational system. They are conscious that this is their own interest. The European universities are able to help the countries on the other shore acquire a wide range of competences necessary to development. They can, in their turn, receive significant cultural impulses from them.” (Giliberti, 2006). On the other hand, A. Touhami from Syria addressed the issue of quality assurance and warned about obstacles and special contexts that Europe is not always aware of. “It is needless to say that the higher education system in the South is archaic and it is now in a critical situation, and I cannot exclude those countries in the process of development that have already started the implementation of Bologna process (Tunisia, Morocco³²) since the

³² See, for example, A. Bencherifa speech at the EUA Glasgow Convention (2005): “Degree transparency, the pooling of resources and collaboration instead of stark competition are as much ingredients of the novel university system in Morocco as it is the hallmark of the Bologna recommendations. [...] The on-going European Process of University changes has provided the Moroccan experience with an additional factor of legitimacy. More decisively, however, this process has also established a benchmark along which the long time, French-based, Moroccan University system could adhere to a more Universal academic system.” (Bencherifa, 2005).

outcome is not yet evaluated. For some other countries, reform is mere ink on paper. [...] In a situation such as this, the simple act of concentrating on, or thinking about quality assurance can be difficult." He concluded that the South alone cannot achieve the required quality but "It takes two to tango' as they say, and North-South cooperation is vital." (Touhami, 2006).

The Forum agreed on three priority activities: the development of international cooperation and exchange offices, especially at universities in the Arab countries, to facilitate the mobility of students and staff, the enhancement of North-South and South-South research cooperation and the establishment of a network of networks of Euro-Mediterranean universities. It was also agreed that the next Forum would be held in June 2007 in Alexandria (Egypt), hosted by the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures.³³

29. Looking at the other shore of Mediterranean, one could also find broader academic events presenting higher education developments in North Africa and the Middle East. As an interesting case, we can take the *Academia Conventions*. Since 2003, Academia Conventions hold annual academic conferences in Beirut and Cairo³⁴ on pertinent higher education issues in concurrence with its mission of integrating the regional education market in an increasingly challenging global environment and contributing to building a knowledge society in the Arab World. In last few years, themes like "Access to Knowledge in the 21st Century" and "Quality Management and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions in the Arab World" have been organised. In December 2005, a "Conference on Partnering for Knowledge: Policies of Higher Education

³³ See <<http://www.euromedalex.org>>. The Foundation is the first common institution jointly established and financed by all 35 members of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

³⁴ See <<http://www.academiaegypt.com>> and <<http://www.academialebanon.com>>.

Reform” was organised. The agenda addressed almost all key issues of contemporary higher education policy: Quality Assurance in Higher Education, International Partnerships, Career Development and Lifelong Learning as well as ICT in Education.

The conference officially declared the establishment of the Arab Society for Quality Assurance in Education (ASQAE)³⁵ and this could be particularly interesting for an outside observer. The ASQAE is a product of the recommendations of Academia Egypt 2004 Conference on Quality Management and Accreditation of Higher Education, which called for the creation of a steering committee to work on the regional accreditation project, mandated to prepare the required studies and procedures to create an Arab NGO (Society) for quality assurance in higher education with open membership to experts and organisations from the Arab region.

³⁵ See <<http://fathielnadi.blogspot.com/2005/12/mandate-arab-society-for-quality.html>>.

What could Bologna say to Africa and what could Africa ask of Bologna?

30. Moving further South, the context changes even more. When discussing international cooperation in higher education, Africa today seems to be too much at the margins of interest, if not altogether forgotten.³⁶ Public higher education in Africa still has strong links to European education, but during the era of colonialism the influence of diverse European systems left substantial traces in African systems. This is a legacy of “the past Europe”: today, European systems are coming together and the Bologna Process will soon make old differences and incompatibilities part of history. However, here too Africa still displays inherited divisions from “the past Europe”. There are national higher education systems, in particular in South Africa, or, as just mentioned, there are some countries on the southern shores of the Mediterranean that are implementing important reforms and making progress. However, in general, there are many problems and sometimes even signs of worry.

In a recent study on World Bank policies on higher education in Africa, prepared for the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge, authors openly say: “The past two decades have indeed been difficult for Africa’s universities. Deteriorating economic conditions, pressure from external founders and internal constituencies to reduce costs and redirect resources to basic education, and leaders’ perception that university communities were more a political threat than a development engine combined to undermine higher education. In many countries staff salaries stagnated or declined, requiring second jobs and increasing the attraction of overseas opportunities. Book purchases, journal subscriptions, laboratory equipment, facilities maintenance, and research support also

³⁶ See for example Ulf Lie, *Africa – the forgotten continent?* (In: Muche ed., 2005).

suffered.” (Samoff and Carrol, 2003; Samoff and Carrol, 2004). Authors examine “the pressure of World Bank policies” as one of multiple causes for the distress of African universities. Within the framework of our analysis it is necessary to examine whether European higher education changes could contribute to the multiplicity of these causes or whether they can contribute to a positive future scenario.

31. With regard to this dilemma, Goolam Mohamedbhai, made an interesting point in his (already mentioned)³⁷ speech at the 2005 EUA Glasgow Convention when reflecting “on what could be the effects of the Bologna Process on the rest of the world”. Generally speaking, “there is no doubt that the Bologna reforms will have an effect on higher education in other parts of the world.” Yet, this statement only raises new questions: “It is well known that most of the universities in countries which were former colonies of Europe were patterned on the institutions in the respective colonising country. In Europe these countries are mainly the UK, France, Spain and Portugal. The former colonies, mostly developing countries, are mainly in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Pacific. There has always been very close collaboration in teaching and research between universities in Europe and those in the south.” (Mohamedbhai, 2005).

If a strong European Higher Education Area holds strong promises from a European point of view, it does not mean that it cannot raise concerns when observed from other perspectives. Of course, one potential concern could be more intensive global *competition* in higher education markets. Yet this is not necessarily the only option. There could also be concern about future *cooperation*: “there is the danger that European universities will now prefer to collaborate with their counterparts in Europe rather than with those in the south. This would have a negative impact on the latter” (*ibid.*).

³⁷ See section 12 (Ch. 2).

The consolation that this is purely a subjective view and that now “Bologna is looking out” is obviously not enough. Higher education institutions in Africa, for example, are coping with developmental tensions just like higher education institutions everywhere in the world, but their situation is characterised by a context which makes the problems much more severe – in particular if traditional ties and cooperation paths with institutions from other world regions grow weak. Mohamedbhai says: “I believe that the universities in the south which currently have links with European ones, will be inclined to align themselves with those in the north. In the case of Sub-Saharan Africa, which is the region I know best, this may not be too difficult in Anglophone countries where the 2 cycle degree structure, as proposed under Bologna, is already in use, and most universities now adopt a modular and credit system. But this may not be true for francophone and lusophone countries where the institutions may have to undertake major changes as are taking place in Europe”(Mohamedbhai, 2005).

32. There are some clear signs that the Bologna Process, as an example of good practice in the field of policy development, is now entering Africa. An interesting reference was recently made at the African Union meeting of experts on revitalisation of higher education in Africa.³⁸ Among other issues discussed at the meeting, the importance of system approach in higher education was stressed “as opposed to dealing with single institutions, organisations or even countries. This is important in view of the need for collective responsibility and mutually supportive action, towards the integration agenda of the African Union. We should be looking at ‘the big picture’, to consider how we can benefit from initiatives outside Africa, avoiding mistakes made by others and building on their gains. The

³⁸ Revitalising Higher Education in Africa. Report of First Experts' Meeting. Held on 27th –28th October 2005, Johannesburg.
See <http://www.aau.org/au_experts/docs/midrand_rep.pdf>.

Bologna Process for harmonisation of higher education certificates was cited as an example worth studying”.

Similarly, the *Communiqué* of the International Conference on Accreditation, Quality Assurance and Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education in Africa (February 2006)³⁹ stresses in its preamble the awareness “of the development in Europe of the Bologna process which seeks to harmonise the higher education space in the region thus bringing together such issues as quality assurance, student mobility, recognition of degrees, diplomas and certificates» as well as a conviction »that higher education in Africa will benefit from the adoption of the model of the Bologna process especially in fostering regional collaboration in the three areas of focus of the Conference” (*Communiqué*, 2006).

Further on, in the framework for priority action, the *Communiqué* continues: “On the strength of the merit of the European example of the Bologna process in fostering regional collaboration in quality assurance, accreditation and recognition of qualifications, the model should be recommended for the Africa region. In achieving this goal, a taskforce should be set up with UNESCO and AAU as lead agencies to develop a strategic plan for the consideration of the Conference of African Ministers of Education and the African Union on how Africa can model the Bologna process. Other members of the task force should be drawn from southern Africa, central Africa, west Africa, east Africa and northern Africa. The taskforce should submit its interim report for discussion at a regional meeting on the subject to be convened by UNESCO during the fourth quarter of 2006” (*ibid.*).

³⁹ *Communiqué* (2006). International Conference on Accreditation, Quality Assurance and Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education in Africa. Nairobi, Kenya, 6-8 February 2006. See <<http://www.unesco-nairobi.org/documents/highereducation.pdf>>.

Policy development action plans in combination with systemic possibilities to start concrete cooperation projects at the institutional level could importantly improve the situation and give punctual support to develop these initiatives to sustainable results. There are good prospects that a similar possibility, as has been already made for a large group of other countries, will be soon available also for Africa. In a recent (28 April 2006) proposal for a Council Decision on the position to be adopted by the Community within the ACP [Africa, Caribbean, Pacific] – EC Council of Ministers regarding a decision to reassign part of the reserve of the 9th European Development Fund envelope for long-term development, it is also envisaged to support “the creation of a Erasmus Mundus ‘window’ for the ACP States (about EUR 5 million)⁴⁰. The proposal is currently under discussion between the EU and the African Union for probable implementation in 2007.

The case of francophone and lusophone countries

33. So far, cooperation between countries linked by a language and/or a similar tradition of higher education systems proves an advantage in informing other countries of the world about higher education changes in Europe. This is, for example, the case when higher education in countries of the *Afrique francophone* is discussed. The progress that France achieved in implementing “*architecture du LMD*” facilitated approaching the “spirit” of the Bologna Process in other – not only African – countries. Since 2002, a series of international meetings has been organised that have addressed various aspects of higher education reforms in Africa, enabling an exchange of good practices between universities from different regions and, by avoiding a mere transfer of ready-made recipes from North to South, have stimulated a discussion of possible adaptations of

⁴⁰ See <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0185en01.pdf>.

general principles in a concrete African context. The most recent event in this series was the International colloquium on university reforms in African Countries⁴¹ held in Morocco in May 2006 (*Éducation & Politiques*, 2006).

34. A similar process is characteristic not only for *francophone* but also for *lusophone* countries.⁴² The Community of the Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP),⁴³ established in 1996, constitutes a formal forum with regular meetings of Ministers of Education and also with higher education issues on the agenda. There is also the Association of the Portuguese Speaking Universities (AULP)⁴⁴ with an already well-established tradition

⁴¹ See *Les réformes universitaires dans les pays d'Afrique*. Présentation du colloque international »Les réformes universitaires dans les pays d'Afrique« qui aura lieu à l'Université Chouaïb Doukkali à El Jadida au Maroc du 23 au 25 mai 2006. <http://ep.inrp.fr/EP/r_avenir/colloque_reformes_universitaires_afrique/>.

“Le débat qui s'est par le passé focalisé sur la question des cycles d'études est aujourd'hui confisqué par d'autres sujets épineux. Ceux de la qualité, de l'organisation de diplômes conjoints, des masters recherche et des écoles doctorales, de la gestion des universités et des pôles d'excellence, parmi les plus discutés en Europe, sont de première importance. Des idées ont été émises pour aider les pays d'Afrique à progresser dans ces matières, notamment lors de la rencontre de Marseille (2004) qui visait l'échange de pratiques entre les pays du Nord et du Sud. Suite aux évolutions mondiales, les états d'Afrique francophone ont pris des initiatives importantes dans certains de ces domaines dont la plus forte à ce jour est sans doute l'adoption par les pays de l'UEMOA (Union économique et monétaire Ouest africaine), d'une directive (décembre 2005) qui vise à faciliter la mobilité par l'installation des mêmes droits d'accès à une institution d'enseignement supérieur à tous les étudiants des pays de l'Union.” (*Éducation & Politiques*, 2006).

⁴² The following paragraphs are based mostly on Pedro Lourtie's contribution to the External Dimension Working Group. See Lourtie, 2006.

⁴³ See <<http://www.cplp.org/>>. Its members are Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guiné-Bissao, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe and, since its independence, East Timor.

⁴⁴ See <<http://www.aulp.org/>>.

of cooperation. At the 12th Annual Meeting of the AULP in Luanda (Angola) in 2002, a paper on the Bologna Process was given by Pedro Lourtie and, in conclusion, it was proposed to use the experience of the Bologna Process to develop a special project within the AULP.

Thus, the Lusophone Higher Education Area (ELES – *Espaço Lusófono de Ensino Superior*) has been established. The project involves four clusters of issues: endeavours to establish quality assurance systems that may be mutually recognised, improvement of the mutual recognition of qualifications (an initiative for a recognition convention), development of common principles, taking into account the national legal frameworks, in order to facilitate exchange of students, recognition of qualifications and double degrees and, last but not least, strengthening mobility of students and graduates. The project was presented at the next Annual Meeting of AULP (Macao, 2003); as the actions proposed implied the involvement of the CPLP Governments, these were approached in order to obtain their engagement.

In May 2004, the 5th Meeting of the CPLP Ministers of Education was held in Fortaleza (Brazil). At this meeting, a text for a convention on the recognition of qualifications, prepared by the AULP on the basis of the Lisbon Convention was presented and proposed. The peak point of the meeting was the adoption of a resounding policy document, *Declaração de Fortaleza*. The Declaration aims at building the CPLP Higher Education Area and indicates a number of priorities: (1) “the fostering of the quality of the formations offered in the CPLP and their mutual and international recognition”, (2) “the promotion of the mobility of students and teaching, research and technical staff”, (3) “the cooperation in the field of the structure of higher education formation”, (4) “the incentive to the participation of the institutions of the CPLP in relevant programmes of other communities of countries.” The Declaration also establishes a Follow-up Group, composed of “a

representative of each of the ministries responsible for higher education” and “a representative of the Association of the Portuguese Speaking Universities” (Declaração de Fortaleza, 2004).

On this basis, the Follow-up Group was established and the following Meeting of the Ministers (December 2005) approved a work plan. A two-year plan deals with several topics. The establishment of a network of information centres about higher education systems and the recognition and mobility of students and teaching staff has been proposed, capable of providing relevant, reliable and timely information so as to promote elements of convergence with the European Bologna Process. Cooperation among national systems of evaluation within the framework of the quality of higher education will be encouraged, as will the promotion of inter-institutional cooperation through the development of networks involving activities of teaching and research, including the mobility of students and teaching staff. It is also envisaged that the existing obstacles to the mobility of students and staff will be identified and that proposals to overcome these obstacles will be presented to CPLP Governments (Lourtie, 2006).

The EU-LAC Common Area of Higher Education

35. Over the last decades, bi-regional relations between Europe and Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) have been substantially improved on a political level. EULAC countries (or “EULAC Process”) consist of EU Member States and two Acceding Countries and of 33 countries of LAC. Two main forums for political dialogue exist: a dialogue between the EU and the Rio Group at Foreign Minister level and Summit Meetings of EU and LAC Heads of State and Government. The first Summit was held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1999. The 2002 Madrid Summit accepted a political declaration (the Madrid Commitment). In this document, a commitment was made,

among others, “to create more opportunities in our regions for education, culture and access to knowledge as keys to success in the twenty-first century”.⁴⁵ In the final declaration of the last Summit, which was held in Vienna in May 2006, Heads of State and Government attached “priority to the creation of the EU-LAC Common Area of Higher Education, geared towards mobility and cooperation.”⁴⁶

Strengthened cooperation in higher education between the EU, on the one hand, and LAC on the other, (UEALC) is a particularly good result of this political process. The EULAC higher education framework emanated from the Ministerial Conference held in November 2000 in Paris.⁴⁷ Ministers declared “the need for an action framework for cooperation on specific themes to foster the emergence of a ‘European Union – Latin America – Caribbean Higher Education Area’ (EULAC) as one of the key elements of the strengthening of bilateral and multilateral relations among States, with the mission of facilitating the sharing of knowledge, the transfer of technologies and the mobility of students, teachers, researchers and administrators, while paying particular attention to the links between training, employment and scientific knowledge in the countries concerned”.

The Action Framework for the EULAC Higher Education Area foresees encouragement towards better comparability of degrees and the establishment of compatible credit systems. Priority themes were identified for the first period, and it was agreed to

⁴⁵ The Madrid Commitment. Political Declaration. [Heads of State and Government of the EU and of LAC]. Madrid, 17 May 2002. See <http://ec.europa.eu/comm/world/lac/conc_en/decl.htm>.

⁴⁶ *Declaration of Vienna*. IV EU-LAC Summit. Vienna, Austria, 12 May 2006. See <<http://www.uealc.at/includes/images/EULAC/EU-LACViennaDeclarationEN.pdf>>.

⁴⁷ The European Union - Latin America-Caribbean Ministerial Conference on Higher Education. [Including Declaration of Ministers.] Paris, 3 November 2000. See <<http://www.columbus-web.com/en/partb/archivo/paris.html>>.

redefine them in the future. Main areas include science and technology training, exchanges of successful experience in managing, assessing and administering higher education systems, the information society, competitive growth and environment, sustainable development and urbanisation, cultural heritage and regional integration. The declaration concludes that “the ministers or the authorities responsible for higher education, supported by the higher education institutions, will meet regularly and at least every four years to assess progress made in implementing the objectives”.

36. A plan of action was subsequently established for the period 2002-2004⁴⁸ and later extended until 2008. It also gives an interesting definition of the EULAC common space for higher education which includes quite a number of elements also known from the Bologna Process:

“The construction of a common space for higher education in the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean (EULAC) will allow the building of a framework open to a plurality of cultures, which will offer the chance to train and work in a plurilingual environment governed by an equal opportunities based policy.

The countries in these regions, firm in the belief that higher education is a public asset that falls within the sphere of state responsibility, consider that the said framework can offer an alternative to globalisation, help to overcome North/South differences and develop further collaboration, from the point of view of equality and solidarity. This belief is based on a mutual acknowledgement of the differences and similarities in these regions, in the diversity of languages and the variety of university systems. Therefore, it implies the need to

⁴⁸ Plan of Action Project 2002-2004 to build common ground for higher education in the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean. See <http://www.aneca.es/present/docs/plan_accion_0204_ing.pdf>.

work within a system of collaboration, cooperation, exchanges of good practices and reciprocity.

Lastly, this framework stresses the right for all those who are integrated into the common ground of EULAC higher education to have equal access to information regarding the opportunities that these regions offer them (programmes, regulations of each country, university studies etc). Moreover, the new technologies and distance learning constitute fundamental aspects that should be intrinsic to academic programmes.”

The proposed projects for the period 2002-2004 focused mainly on activities to encourage mobility and assessment of quality. Here, the document set the task “to promote a study on the current accreditation systems or recently drawn up in the regions within the common ground. To achieve this, the Bologna process that is taking place in Europe will be taken into account. To help communication between both processes (Bologna and the EULAC common ground) the EULAC Common Space Follow-up Committee should participate in the preparatory meetings for Berlin 2003”. As it is well known, the Berlin Communiqué recorded the fulfilment of this task: “Ministers welcome the interest shown by other regions of the world in the development of the European Higher Education Area, and welcome in particular the presence of representatives from European countries not yet party to the Bologna Process, as well as from the Follow-up Committee of the European Union, Latin America and Caribbean (EULAC) Common Space for Higher Education as guests at this conference” (Berlin Communiqué).

37. The EULAC Higher Education Area provides a firm political framework to the ongoing concrete cooperation on the institutional level. Here, an important role is played by two academic associations: *Iberoamerican University Council*

(CUIB),⁴⁹ an institutional group of networks of universities in the Iberoamerican countries, and *European University Association* (EUA). CUIB was established in Cartagena (Colombia) in November 2001. It is a non-governmental organisation which operates in the form of a network of networks of Iberoamerican Universities. In an Iberoamerican context, it should be noted that CUIB has a cooperation agreement with the OEI (*Organisation of Iberoamerican States for the Education, Science and Culture*) and is integrated in RIACES (*Iberoamerican Network for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education*). After the XV Summit of Iberoamerican Heads of State and Government, the Iberoamerican General Secretariat, OEI and CUIB were asked to promote the necessary process of political agreement to move forward in the creation of an Iberoamerican Area of Knowledge, Higher Education and Research.

CUIB is made up of national organisations representing universities and other higher education institutions of the Iberoamerican countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Spain, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Uruguay and Venezuela. CUIB has, among others, the objectives of promoting the creation and consolidation of an Iberoamerican Area of Higher Education and Research and fostering cooperation between Iberoamerican universities and universities from other areas of the world.

38. In May 2004, CUIB and EUA signed in Guadalajara (Mexico) a cooperation framework agreement.⁵⁰ Six action lines

⁴⁹ The description of CUIB (*Consejo Universitario Iberoamericano*) is based on Félix Haering Pérez contribution to the External Dimension Working Group. See Pérez (2006).

⁵⁰ *Framework Cooperation agreement* between the Consejo Universitario Iberoamericano (CUIB) and the European University Association (EUA). Guadalajara, Republic of Mexico, 27 May 2004. See <http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/Convenio_CUIB-EUA_EN.1103218276011.pdf>.

are oriented to reinforce cooperation in higher education and research between both regions. The Plenary of CUIB and the Council of the EUA met again in Oviedo (Spain) in April 2006 and reviewed the state of cooperation and proposed new measures in order to revitalise it. The results of the meeting are presented in the final declaration (Asturias Declaration)⁵¹ which sent a message from universities to the EU-LAC Summit that took place in Vienna in May 2006.

The priorities section of the Declaration comprises a paragraph which is particularly important for the “external dimension” of the Bologna Process: “Mutual knowledge and understanding is crucial for building successful partnerships. Thus EUA and CUIB will promote and facilitate information-sharing on convergence processes in Europe, in particular the Bologna reforms, and similar processes underway in Latin American and Caribbean higher education systems” (Asturias Declaration, 2006).

At the end, in the recommendations section, the Declaration stresses the development of joint programmes as a priority area for collaboration, as well as facilitating academic staff, researchers and student exchange. It also addresses Governments, the European Commission and private funding bodies to “allocate increased funding to promote enhanced cooperation in higher education and research as a matter of priority. The European Commission is encouraged to strengthen existing initiatives open to universities in Latin American and Caribbean countries such as Alpha, Alban and Erasmus Mundus – for example through the opening of a Latin-American and Caribbean ‘window’ in Erasmus Mundus along the lines of the recently agreed ‘Asian window’ – in the priority areas identified, as well as to increase opportunities for involvement in the 7th

⁵¹ *Asturias Declaration*. Oviedo, 11 April 2006 [EUA and CUIB]. See <http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/EUA_CUIB_Asturias_Declaration_210406.1146834606320.pdf>.

Framework Programme for Research. All such initiatives should take account of Latin American and Caribbean realities and favour endogenous growth. Governments should ensure that the appropriate legal frameworks are modified to allow LAC countries that are part of the ACP group to participate in all EU-LAC higher education and research initiatives.”

39. Despite significant developments there are many signs that concrete institutional level cooperation is still in an early phase. Last but not least, social and political contexts are quite different.⁵² Information on the developments in European higher education seems to be inadequate, yet questions and dilemmas have also appeared. The ACA Perception Study refers to this situation in the following way: “The Bologna Process and Erasmus Mundus were specifically addressed in Mexico and Brazil. Although they were very interested in European higher education reform and in European programmes, Latin American interviewees (experts and rectors/international officers) had doubts vis-à-vis the potential of the Bologna Process and of Erasmus Mundus to enhance Europe’s attractiveness. However, their doubts concerned not the concepts but the way they were implemented: interviewees feared that cooperation would be unilateral and lacking transparency. Therefore, they recommended that any approach or new programme should be as little bureaucratic and as transparent as possible, and that it

⁵² Luis A. Riveros, Rector of the University of Chile and Executive Vice-president of the Chilean Council of Rectors, made an interesting comment at the EUA Glasgow Convention (2005): “The transformation of European Universities along the lines of the Bologna process has largely depended upon the political will of governments to nurture what it has been called the European dream. This has to do with a common view of the future, the attainment of a regional-based globalisation, and a political will to reach a strong international presence of the region as an entity. We still do not have anything similar in the form of a Latin American dream, and consequently universities do not count on a political mandate to produce changes in the academic structure and on the duration and design of the curricula.” (Riveros, 2005).

should emphasise cooperation and reciprocity.” (ACA, 2006, p.168).

A lack of information is proven also in two ACA Country Reports. Authors of the Brazil Report say that “the homogenisation of European universities is not always welcome either, as important decision makers at the state agencies criticise openly the Bologna Process (due to mixing up the commercial orientated cooperation policy of some countries, e.g. Spain, with the whole EU)” (Brazil, in: ACA 2006, p. 19).

The Mexico Report comes to a similar outcome: “The European programmes Alban, Alfa, Tuning, Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus often are not known, even not among representatives of the exchange bureaucracy and even less within universities. Therefore, there is high interest in receiving information on the Bologna Process and on all usual programmes, as well as specifically on accreditation and recognition of graduate studies. Credit recognition is to a certain degree under way with the start-up meeting of the UEALC project (formation of common academic standards between the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean, which took place in Guadalajara, Mexico, in April 2005)” (Mexico, in ACA 2006, p. 26). The study also ascertains: “Furthermore, it would motivate more students to study in Europe if they would get information on specific details on the effects of the Bologna-Process within Europe and for national education systems in Europe and the advantages of joint degree programs. The promotion of a common European internet platform with national corners could facilitate this information process.” (Ibid., p. 43).

40. There is a resounding case of good practice in this area which deserves to be mentioned here. It is about concrete institutional cooperation in modernising structures, contents and approaches to study. After the progress that the *Tuning project*⁵³

⁵³ Tuning Educational Structures in Europe. See <<http://tuning.unideusto.org/tuningeu/>>.

has made in Europe since 2001 (as one of the most visible Bologna implementation activities running jointly at more than 135 universities and in 9 different study areas) it has been successfully implemented also in the LAC academic environments. Similarly to the “European Tuning”, the ALFA⁵⁴ *Tuning Latin America Project (Tuning América Latina)*⁵⁵ seeks to “fine tune” the educational structures that exist in Latin America, initiating a debate whose aim is to identify and improve co-operation between higher education institutions, so as to develop excellence, effectiveness, and transparency.

The *Tuning Latin America* website gives its short history: “During the 4th follow-up meeting of the UEALC in Cordoba (Spain) in October 2002, the representatives of Latin America who took part, after listening to a presentation of the results of the first phase of Tuning, suggested the possibility of developing a similar project in Latin America. From this moment, the project began to be prepared, and was presented to the European Commission by a group of European and Latin American at the end of October 2003. It can be said that the Tuning proposal for Latin America is an inter-continental idea, a project that has been nurtured by both European and Latin American academic contributions. The search for consensus is inter-continental too, and unique and universal; the things that change are the people involved and the special situations that arise as a result of each new challenge.”

⁵⁴ ALFA (América Latina - Formación Académica) is a programme of cooperation between higher education institutions of the European Union and Latin America. Participant countries are the Member States of the European Union and the following 18 countries of Latin America: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

⁵⁵ See <<http://tuning.unideusto.org/tuningal/>>.

Tuning Latin America is an independent project, promoted and coordinated by universities in many different countries, both Latin American and European. There are 181 LAC universities involved in the project so far, as well as 18 national Tuning Centres. The main work of the project goes on in the twelve subject groups (Architecture, Business, Chemistry, Civil Engineering, Education, Geology, History, Law, Mathematics, Medicine, Nursing and Physics). In June 2006, members from both Tuning projects gathered at a joint conference in Brussels.⁵⁶ Academic colleagues from Europe and from Latin America and the Caribbean presented their work and results so far and had a chance to talk to one another about many details of the modernisation of higher education study today in different contexts. This seems to be the best way to overcome the existing lack of information and to strengthen academic cooperation to mutual satisfaction.

A positive message about EULAC cooperation and the possible impact of the Bologna Process was given by the Rector of the University of Chile Luis Riveros at the EUA Glasgow Convention: “The Bologna process is considered a key conceptual background for the change that it is being implemented in several Latin American traditional universities. The observation of the Bologna process has pointed out the importance of more flexible programmes to foster student mobility both across universities and disciplinary fields. The process is also important to make labour mobility easier in order to adapt to changing market conditions. The occurrence of an ‘undergraduate reform’ in several Latin American institutions has been originated from those issues, as a key instrument to attain more flexible and efficient formative programmes.

⁵⁶ Curricular Reform Taking Shape. Learning outcomes and Competences in Higher Education. Brussels, 16 June 2006
[http://www.tuning.unideusto.org/tuningeu/index.php?option=com_docman&task=view_category&Itemid=59&subcat=12&catid=20&limitstart=0&limit=5>](http://www.tuning.unideusto.org/tuningeu/index.php?option=com_docman&task=view_category&Itemid=59&subcat=12&catid=20&limitstart=0&limit=5).

Bologna has been an intellectual input to it, as well as the Tuning initiative to create a more compatible system of credit assignment across the region.” (Riveros, 2005)

Broad views through “Asia windows”

41. Quite often, “third countries”⁵⁷ – a technical term used frequently in the “Brussels slang” – and other world regions in general are observed from European (only European?) higher education horizons primarily as reservoirs of potential international students. In China, India and the rest of Asia an incredible further growth is expected in the demand of higher education. Australian, North American and European higher education institutions put a lot of attention to recruiting students from various Asian countries and enter various cooperation schemes. In Europe, UK traditionally has had an important share of students from Asia. The Bologna Process now makes also continental Europe more compatible with Anglo-Saxon systems which are characteristic also for India, Pakistan and much of Asia. Yet, it is also broadly known that Europe is not the principal destination of students from Asia; Australia and in particularly the U.S. seem to be still “most interesting”. An important support to probably change these trends has been given by the European Commission.

In 2002, the Commission launched (under the EU budget line for “Political, economic and cultural cooperation with Asian developing countries”) the so-called *Asia link*.⁵⁸ It was set up to promote regional and multilateral networking between higher education institutions in all EU Member States and eligible countries in Asia. Its programme activities include partnership projects that support human resource development, curriculum development activities, and programme support activities

⁵⁷ In this text, we prefer to use the term “other countries”.

⁵⁸ See <http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/asia-link/index_en.htm>.

(capacity-building, studies, European higher education fairs, information etc.). Since 2002, the programme has funded 155 partnerships with over 700 higher education institutions both from Asia and Europe. During the 2006 – 2008 period, the Asia-Link Programme is also financing seven European higher education fairs in Asia. The events – in Thailand, India, Malaysia, China, Vietnam, The Philippines and Indonesia – will provide a platform for European higher education institutions to promote their courses to Asian students, and for a symposium on the EU's higher education cooperation with Asia in general and with the respective countries in particular. Asia-Link does not offer scholarships to individuals, but there are other opportunities such as, for example, through the Erasmus Mundus programme and the so-called Asian Windows within it.⁵⁹

42. At the sub-regional level, interesting higher education initiatives can be found, e.g. in the Southeast Asia. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), established in 1967 to promote co-operation among countries of this region, put co-operation in the fields of higher education and human resource development on its agenda in 1992. The principal idea to strengthen the existing network of universities and higher education institutions was developed into *ASEAN University Network* (AUN), established in 1995. So far, the AUN has noted important developments. In 1998, the creation of AUN-Quality Assurance (AUN-QA) Networking was initiated.⁶⁰ An important step further was achieved at the meeting of Ministers for Education in ASEAN countries held in Bangkok in 2005. An agreement was achieved to establish an ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Education as a new ASEAN mechanism to serve as policy body on education.

⁵⁹ See <<http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/asian.pdf>>.

⁶⁰ See <<http://www.aun.chula.ac.th/Quality%20Assurance.htm>>.

The meeting concluded with important conclusions: “To build a solid ASEAN socio-cultural community and promote ASEAN-ness among ASEAN citizens, cultural diversity as well as multi-cultural and multi-religious understanding was addressed. The strategies of utilising education to foster better understanding, identifying ASEAN's niche and enriching the ASEAN brand for education were also highlighted. Exchanges of teachers, academic staffs and students in the region will also be an integral part of the capacity-building process of the region's human resource development. Preparing our peoples for globalisation and technological advancement was also identified as a top priority for the region”.⁶¹

AUN activities do not focus only to ASEAN countries but also to the ASEAN “dialogue partners” South Korea, Japan, India, China, Russia and EU. Cooperation with EU has been developing within the *ASEAN-EU University Network Programme* (AUNP) which was officially launched with the signing of the Financing Agreement between the European Commission and the AUN in 2000. It aims at enhancing co-operation between higher education institutions in the two regions, to promote regional integration within ASEAN countries, and to strengthen the mutual awareness of European and Asian cultural perspectives. It also aims at strengthening the capacity of universities in Southeast Asian region through the transfer of European expertise and knowledge, to facilitate, through the provision of grants, the joint projects of ASEAN and the European universities in order to strengthen coordinated and sustainable relations in higher education, and to promote academic collaboration between ASEAN and the EU universities through a range of networking activities in the field of higher education.

⁶¹ See a brief report on the Meeting of Ministers for Education in ASEAN countries at the AUN website:

<<http://www.aun.chula.ac.th/The%20Meeting%20of%20Ministers%20for%20Education%20in%20ASEAN%20countries.htm>>.

AUNP is about to terminate in 2006 with obviously fruitful results. The programme supported two major types of activities: the Partnership Projects aimed at improving cooperation between higher education institutions in ASEAN and EU (three components/areas: Human Resource Development, Curriculum Development and Common Applied Research) and the Network Initiatives which aimed at bringing universities together to share experiences. Thus, joint ASEAN-EU Rectors' Conferences have been organised (on Higher Education and Sustainable Development at the University of Malaya in October 2004 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; on Borderless Education in November 2005 at the University of Leuven, Belgium) as well as focused round table meetings on Quality Assurance (2003), on Autonomy in Higher Education (2005) and on Regional Cooperation in a Globalising World (2005). Technical assistance on Quality Assurance and on Credit Transfer System was also assured (2005). These activities indicate that Southeast Asia could be one of those regions where the emerging EHEA could develop successful partnerships.

43. One of ASEAN members, Singapore, has been developing a particularly ambitious policy objective: to make this city-state located at a strategic place of the Southeast Asia “a global Education hub of quality”. Kris Olds, an American analyst of Singapore’s moving towards knowledge based economy, noted “that Singapore has single-mindedly sought to fashion education as a tool for economic development over all other objectives”. From mid-1980s to mid-1990s “the Singaporean higher education system experienced the massification drive that continues to the present. For example, student participation rates in Singaporean universities rose from 5% in 1980 to 21% in 2001 (Lee and Gopinathan, 2004, p. 117). Singaporean universities also initiated the launch of endowment funds, though university governance and financing was still firmly controlled by the Ministry of Education. The era of ‘academic capitalism’ (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004) had yet to seriously emerge” (Olds, 2006, p. 5).

Already in 1998, the Singapore's government launched, through the Economic Development Board (EDB), the World Class University (WCU) programme to attract up to 10 world class institutions to set up a significant presence in Singapore.⁶² These institutions would be centres of excellence in education and research with strong linkages to industries (e.g. business, medicine, logistics, engineering and the sciences). “EDB will now broaden its promotion efforts to develop in Singapore a mix of education and training institutions of good global standing and rich course offerings at all levels of education, targeting the student, corporate and continuing education markets both local and foreign. This will build diversity and create an ecosystem that is anchored by the core of world class universities already in Singapore” (EDB, 2002). Needless to say that majority of attracted universities have been coming from USA. Yet, since 2001, two distinguished European universities also established their institutes in Singapore: Technische Universiteit Eindhoven (Design Technology Institute) and Technische Universität München (German Institute of Science and Technology).

44. Asia as a whole, as well as through its sub-regions is growing into an important provider of international higher education. Parallel to economic development and growth, national higher education systems are expanding. The case of India and China is probably most convincing. Asia Times recently reported not only on “[e]xamples of world-renowned academics choosing China as their new home abound” but also on ambition to attract foreign students: “‘For a world-class university, it's necessary to attract the best students and faculty internationally. Eventually we don't just want the best Chinese students, but the best from around the world,’ said Zhang [assistant president of Beijing University]. As a result, Chinese universities are increasingly offering courses wholly taught in

⁶² See http://www.sedb.com/edb/sg/en_uk/index/news_room/news/2002/economic_development5.html.

English and in collaboration with internationally recognized partners. The Guanghua School of Management offers a dual-degree program in English with the National University of Singapore. In addition, undergraduate courses and an MBA program in English wholly administered by Guanghua are on offer.” (Aiyar, 2006).

There are more and more warnings that traditional exporters of higher education can soon get serious competitors. “As China and India have emerged to be economic powerhouses, they have expanded their higher education offerings. [...] As educational opportunities improve in less-developed countries, they become more attractive to international students, especially given the far lower costs of tuition, room and board.” (Sadat Hussain, 2006). Indeed, these are potential new Higher Education Areas which should be seriously taken into account, not only by the emerging EHEA in Europe, but also by Australia or U.S. Is there any visible influence or impact of the Bologna Process – in terms of policy development, not in terms of student exchange as already mentioned – in these countries?

One would be rather disappointed if searching for this kind of influences and impacts. Knowledge about the Bologna Process as such is probably even less widespread than in Latin America, Australia or U.S. Not only a lack of information; comments can be also found that could make a European confused.⁶³ On the

⁶³ See e.g.: “Another potential threat to the maintenance of Korean studies in Europe is the ‘Bologna Process’, whereby European Union members agreed to set up a common education curriculum and higher education system by 2010. The process includes the integration and abolition of certain academic studies that are regarded as ‘scholastically unpopular.’” (Choi Jie-ho, 2005).

Two comments should be made here. First, the quotation is the best proof that Europe should find better and more effective ways to present what the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area are all about. Secondly, and even more importantly, a serious analysis is needed on the cultural effects of “international concerting” of higher education. Last but not least, respect for cultural identities has several times been confirmed within the Bologna Process as being basic values in higher education. This principle is important also in the light of the “external dimension”.

other side, there are well informed people who send very positive messages, as it was possible to hear at the EUA Glasgow Convention from T.P. Leung, Vice President the Hong Kong Polytechnic University: “Students of Hong Kong and China Mainland would most likely welcome the change of the European tertiary system to ‘3+2’, i.e. 3-year Bachelor Degree plus 2-year Masters Degree, since it would cost them less to study a first degree in Europe. Furthermore Chinese parents like to have their children go home as soon as possible. Students of Hong Kong and China Mainland interested to study first degrees in European countries would benefit from a common European system.” (Leung, 2005).

But there are also other parallels to higher education policy which can be, as in the case of China, very persuasive. An interesting overlapping – no doubt, totally coincidental⁶⁴ – can be found; in mid-June 1999, at the very same time as European Ministers gathered in Bologna to sign the Declaration, more precisely, on “June 15-18, 1999, the Communist Party of China and the State Council of China held the Third National Congress on Education since the open-door policy was carried out” (Li, 2004, p. 16). The main aim of the meeting was to ensure that important policy directives of 1998 (just not to forget: in Europe this was the year of the Sorbonne Declaration) were implemented throughout the nation.

⁶⁴ It is out of the question that there was no “coordination between Beijing and Bologna” in 1999 at all. However, philosophers have shown several times that coincidence is not an easy idea to understand and that the line between coincidence and necessity is a thin one. The 1990s brought in generally and worldwide similar – and obviously unavoidable – challenges (not only) to higher education systems. These challenges have been met in different ways and from different cultural backgrounds, but a common “spirit” – at least the “spirit of time” – could be recognised behind them.

45. The recent developments of Chinese higher education usually make an outside observer sincerely surprised.⁶⁵ This surprise would be even greater if one takes into account the last three or four decades of modern Chinese history. “Chinese economic system used to be very highly centralised. To adapt to that, the former higher education system was also centralised, with education provided by the central and local governments respectively and directly under their administration.” (Higher Education in China [2006]). Only at the end of the 1970s when the Cultural Revolution was over and opening up to the outside world was announced (1978) were the disadvantages of this system seriously addressed. China started to write its modern higher education pages almost from scratch. During the Cultural Revolution, “the numbers of postsecondary students dropped precipitously from 674,400 to 47,800.” (Robinson, 2005) At this time, everywhere in Europe higher education already waded deep into the process of “massification”.

China reached an important turning point in the process of modernisation of the higher education system in 1998.⁶⁶ This is

⁶⁵ “The Chinese education sector is in a state of radical growth and change. China practices a system of 9 years compulsory (basic) education, which has largely been realised. The illiteracy rate is low. There are over 110 million students in primary and secondary education and 11 million in higher education. Around 19% of the age group 18 – 24 years has access to (post-secondary) higher education, which includes both higher vocational and university education. Higher education has been reformed rapidly, with a focus on both an expansion of capacity and improvement of quality. Enrolment of new HE students has increased from approx. 2 million in 2000 to 4.7 million in 2005. These are impressive statistics, but they still reflect under-capacity. Thus Chinese education – which is also very examination driven – and its students are very competitive.” (Country Report China, in: ACA 2006, p. 3).

⁶⁶ “On 29 August, 1998, the 4th conference of the 9th standing committee of National Congress passed the ‘Higher Education Law of People’s Republic of China’ which is implemented from 1 Jan, 1999. Higher Education Law is the first complete higher education legal document in terms of legislature. It is a law, which standardizes the internal and external complicated social relationship of higher education and its own activities.” (Higher Education in China [2006]).

a period “when China faced the challenges of the information technology revolution and the intense competition of economic globalisation of the new century, the situation has changed substantially. China’s higher education appeared so obsolete that some form of ‘major operation’ needed to be immediately performed. Thus, the Zhu Rongji Administration carried out a new round of educational reforms.” (Li, 2004, p. 14). In European eyes one of most fascinating features of these reforms is a strengthened ambition to increase university participation rates and to found world-class universities (so-called *Project 985* of 1999).

46. Important results have been achieved so far. “Firstly, the participation rate of the relevant age cohort in higher education has been raised to 15.0% in 2002. In other words, the goal that was to be realised by 2010 has been achieved 8 years ahead of schedule.” (Li, 2004, p. 18). On the other hand, administrative structures and higher education governance in general have been importantly modernised, primarily through decentralisation, by giving more attention to institutional autonomy but also by considering the issue of critical mass and quality of the sector through merging previously weak institutions into more university-like new institutions.⁶⁷

Today, the Chinese government attaches great importance to international cooperation and exchanges in higher education. In the last ten years international cooperation and exchanges of higher education have increased significantly. As already mentioned, there are many Chinese students in European higher education systems today, and many tools of mutual cooperation

⁶⁷ “According to a summary made on December 20, 2000 by Chen Zhili, Minister of Education of China at that time, 556 HEIs had been merged or adjusted into just 232, and the administration system of 509 HEI had been transformed or adjusted. As a result, the structure, distribution and function of China’s higher education were much improved through ‘joint construction, readjustment, cooperation, and mergers’.” (Li, 2004, p. 16).

have also been established so far. “Most experts agree that educational cooperation between China and Europe will increase in the future. They refer to better acceptance of Chinese degrees at European universities, better connections between the Chinese and European education and degree systems, more transparency in European higher education as a result of Lisbon and Bologna and lower risk for brain drain as important drivers of this trend.” (Country Report China, in: ACA 2006, p. 29).

However, in a brief statement of the Chinese Ministry of Education we can find an element which is even more important for the future, in particularly from the point of view of the “external dimension”: “By opening to the outside world, we broadly learn the useful foreign experience, promote the reform and development of our higher education and enhance mutual understanding and friendship between China and other countries.”⁶⁸ (Higher Education in China [2006]).

Yet, we should make it clear that this sentence does not refer to Europe alone!

“The Bologna Process and Australia: Next Steps”

47. Another important initiative has been recently launched in Australia which could be of particular interest for European higher education and for the Bologna Process as a whole. In the spring, Australia hosted the International Education Forum, attended by delegates from around the world, and parallel to it, on 3-4 April 2006, altogether 27 Ministers from across the Asia-

⁶⁸ “Hosted by the Chinese Government and Ministry of Education, this most recent EU-China Forum on higher education policy took place in Beijing from 28 November – 1 December 2005. The Forum brought together experts from government and academia from both Europe and Asia and focused on four main themes: the Bologna Process and the interface with Chinese higher education; the internationalisation of research; quality assurance, regulation and accountability; and the socio-economic role of higher education.” – See <http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/client/item_view.jsp?type_id=1&item_id=2962>.

Pacific region met in Brisbane, chaired by the Australian Education Minister Ms. Julie Bishop. The main theme of the ministers' discussion was: What actions on education and training can be agreed that will strengthen good relations in the region and underpin its social and economic development, through the international mobility of students and research collaboration?

The political result of the ministerial meeting is the *Brisbane communiqué*. In this document, they "recognised the diversity of economies, resources, political structures and socio-cultural context, as well as significant differences in education systems" and "agreed that internationalisation is a necessary and critical element for all education systems within the region". They also "agreed on the common goal of increasing greater student and academic mobility and transferability of qualifications, and greater integration or exchangeability of education frameworks". Mobility and exchange "are seen to provide the basis for friendship, mutual respect and understanding, just as education is the key to prosperity, security and peace in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond". In technical terms, the Ministers agreed to collaborate on quality assurance frameworks, recognition of qualifications, common competency-based standards for teachers, and the development of common recognition of technical skills. At the end, "the Ministers agreed to continue the Asia-Pacific Education Ministers' Meeting as a biennial meeting that will become a new forum to consider common education issues at ministerial level, throughout this extended region". They established an Officials' Working Group⁶⁹ which will provide an interim report to the Ministers in twelve months. "Ministers also agreed to invite other nations from the Asia-Pacific region that have expressed interest in the work

⁶⁹ "The Officials' Working Group will maintain cognisance of future possibilities for compatibility with initiatives already in development such as the European Bologna and Copenhagen processes." (*Brisbane communiqué*, 2006).

programme but were unable to attend this meeting to join the working group” (*Brisbane communiqué*, 2006).

It is obvious that the *Brisbane communiqué* is an important document for signatory countries but it is also important for the “external dimension” of the Bologna Process. Ministers met to discuss how to respond to the Bologna challenge and create stronger regional links. The method used reminds a little of the early days of the “Bologna Club” and there are some clear ties between this group⁷⁰ and the EHEA: for example, Turkey is a member of the Bologna Process (since 2001) and Australia signed the Lisbon Recognition Convention (in 2000; ratification in 2002). Yet, the context is different. The host Minister referred to global changes affecting “Australia's fourth biggest export industry”, international education. The economic development of India and China, the increase of students, the expansion of education systems, and a growing trend for universities everywhere to teach in English bring new dimensions into discussions.

48. At the same time, there was another, even more important event – important in particular in the “external dimension” perspective. Parallel to the International Education Forum in Brisbane, the Australian Minister released a discussion paper prepared by the Australian federal Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) and entitled *The Bologna Process and Australia: Next Steps* (Australian Government, 2006). *The Australian* reported on 5 April 2006 that “Minister Julie Bishop warns that if Australia does not align itself with the changes taking place in 45 European countries under the Bologna Agreement, it will be left out of the tent” (Illing, 2006).

Indeed, the Minister begins her *Preface* with the following sentence: “The Bologna Process, whereby a significant number

⁷⁰ “This was the inaugural meeting of this group, with representatives from Turkey through to the Pacific Islands.” (*Ibid.*)

of European countries are working towards greater consistency and portability across their higher education systems, is likely to influence developments in higher education in many parts of the world including our region. It will have important implications for Australian higher education providers as we work to enhance our existing success and reputation as a provider of world-class education to both domestic and international students.” Then she continues: “The purpose of the paper which I am releasing today is to initiate discussion on the significance of Bologna for Australia and possible Australian responses. The issues must be considered in a broader context – the long-term vision for higher education in Australia.” The Bologna Process⁷¹ “is an important process that is receiving considerable attention, not only within Europe, but from a range of other countries. It presents challenges to, and opportunities for Australia’s relationship with Europe as well as Asia and raises the importance of developing effective multilateral dialogue with Australia’s key Asian education partners about future directions in higher education”. She concludes: “Developing an effective Australian response to the Bologna Process requires a national dialogue to develop a degree of common understanding of the key benefits and outcomes Australia seeks through alignment with Bologna initiatives.” (Australian Government, 2006, p. 1-2).

49. The 15-page discussion paper aims to stimulate debate within the Australian Higher Education sector about the Bologna Process “which is driving reform within and between the 45 European signatory countries” (*ibid.*, 3). The document says that “Australian institutions already have a range of relationships with European universities, including joint programmes. While students and academics move between

⁷¹ “The Bologna Process provides a series of opportunities and challenges, and is an opportunity for Australia to better align its frameworks with international standards and benchmarks. The challenge is how to achieve this and retain an Australian higher education sector that meets both domestic and international expectations of quality.” (*Ibid.*, p. 2).

Australian and European universities, and Australian qualifications are recognised in Europe, impediments resulting from differences in systems and basic structures still exist. [...] Bologna compatibility would closely align key features of the Australian higher education system with the university systems of 45 European countries and would allow broader cooperation, facilitate the movement of students between Australian and European higher education institutions and aid recognition”. The document informs that there are currently some 32,000 European enrolments in Australia and anticipates that the adoption of credit transfer systems and a diploma supplement will be “as valuable to Australian students seeking to study in Europe as it will be for European and other students seeking to study in Australia” (*ibid.*, p. 7).

Besides stressing the benefits of the “Bologna compatibility” it also warns about the risks of “Bologna incompatibility”. It stresses that other countries or regions already follow the Bologna route. “The Latin American countries, for example, have expressed interest in emulating the Bologna Process and had observers at both the Berlin and Bergen meetings and [...] there has also been interest in the process in Asian countries.” The authors estimate that Europe will become a more attractive destination for overseas students at the expense of Australia and foresee that “post-Bologna European higher education may offer a very attractive package for many foreign students, particularly those in traditionally strong markets for Australia”. Finally, they see Europe as focusing on Europe: “Issues of European integration may as a result loom far larger in European eyes than those of cooperation with non-European countries”. However, “the Bergen ministerial meeting made specific acknowledgement of the need for European higher education to look outward, not only inward. There were views articulated about the importance of engaging in constructive cooperation with other regions of the world, but much of any external focus will be on the position of the EHEA relative to the USA, emerging competitors such as China, and the impact of the

reforms on less-developed countries such as those in Africa” (*ibid.* 9-10). The discussion paper ends with a series of questions for discussion and with an invitation for submissions and responses (to be sent to the DEST by the end of April 2006).

50. As far as we can see from the European perspective, the debate on the important issues outlined in the discussion paper was very lively and is still ongoing. Until the summer of 2006, the Working Group on External Dimension collected extensive documentation with responses (submissions) to the Australian DEST from important academic organisations and associations as well as from individual universities.⁷² A thorough analysis of these documents would demand much more time and space than available here. In the continuation, we shall limit ourselves to only a few of them.

51. In its response, *Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee* (AVVC) focuses “around the issues and opportunities presented in the paper”. In the introduction, it comments critically: “Whilst the paper focuses on aspects such as the ‘benefits of Bologna compatibility’ and ‘risks of Bologna incompatibility,’ it does not examine the possible risks of Bologna compatibility”, concluding that “[i]t is acknowledged that the Australian international education industry must understand the changes occurring in Europe and engage in a dialogue about its implications for Australia. But it is equally important that Australia does not assume that full compatibility with the Bologna Process is the only option. Any engagement by Australia with Europe through the Bologna Process must not

⁷² Documents were received from DDOGS – Australian Council of Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies; ACED – Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations; Australian Council of Engineering Deans; Australian Technology Network of Universities; IRU – Innovative Research Universities Australia; the University of Adelaide, Deakin University, Edith Cowan University, the University of Melbourne, the University of New England, University of Tasmania, Victoria University, Australian Catholic University and the Australian National University.

result in a diminution of the diversity of the Australian university system nor in its collaboration and cooperation with countries around the world especially those in the Asia-Pacific region, nor in any approximation to a one-size fits all approach” (AVVC, 2006, p. 1). In European eyes, in particularly from an academic point of view, this is a perfect “Bologna” statement.

There are many interesting comments in the AVVC Response. One of the key concerns seems to remain the same as during the early stages of Bologna debates in Europe – uneasiness with any kind of standardisation in higher education as a result of international alignments: “The AVVC propose that the meaning given to alignment is *comparability*. This will ensure that the diversity of the Australian education system will be able to be maintained and does not infer standardisation which is clearly an element implicit in harmonisation.” On the other hand, “Australia should examine the global compatibility and all aspects of portability and recognition of the Australian Qualifications Framework using Bologna as a reference point to drive regional discussions about an Asia Pacific Higher Education space.” Analysing future demographics, “harmonisation within the Asian region may be much more important than with Europe.” The AVVC recommends, among others, to “review the implications of Australia’s engagement with the Bologna process from a regional perspective” (*ibid*, p. 2, 3).

AVVC made a series of other recommendations which can be very interesting from a European point of view. Any engagement with the Bologna Process should be based “on the precepts of university autonomy, flexibility, distinctive nature and diversity”; “a risk analysis of the risk from losing European market share as well as the risk associated with aligning Australia closely with European systems in the context of the Asia Pacific region and North American markets” is proposed, as well as to “consider the repercussion on resources, professional courses, research and the Australian Qualifications

Framework of engagement with Bologna”, to “undertake a survey of European country compliance with Bologna” and to “undertake discussions with the United Kingdom and Asia-Pacific Governments to determine if these countries are looking at implementing the Bologna structure, or if they intend adopting a model more aligned with the USA/Canadian model”. The AVCC also recommends “that DEST liaise with all relevant stakeholders including employers, business, the AVCC and higher education providers regarding developments in and implications of the Bologna Process, taking into account timelines for consultation, an appropriate communication strategy, and risk and mapping exercises” (*ibid*, p. 3, 4, 5, 7).

52. Another important higher education stakeholder, *National Union of Students* (NUS), also welcomed the opportunity to discuss possible implications of Australian compliance with the Bologna Process but also noted that it was “a little surprised that a DEST discussion paper would come out looking towards a unified, mainly social democratic Europe for inspiration. The Commonwealth Government over the last decade has generally been looking to America for its reform agenda to replace the traditional English-Scottish models. However, with Asia, South America and North America watching the Bologna process carefully the government is perhaps worried that Australia will be left behind what could become the global model for degree structure. Another factor that could be driving this debate is the University of Melbourne and University of Western Australia graduate school proposals where some Australian universities are already moving towards a degree of Bologna compliance.” (NUS, 2006, p. 2) Similarly as ESIB in Europe (it is obvious that NUS and ESIB have developed good communication), NUS is also pointing out the issues of “the globalisation of education as a commodity” (and a set of questions on the social dimension) as well as “pedagogical issues rising from a squeeze on bachelor courses creating questions as to whether they are sufficient for initial professional qualification” (*ibid*, p. 2-3).

Answering the question of what are the implications for the autonomy of Australian institutions and the diversity of the sector in becoming Bologna compatible, NUS provisionally estimates “that a minimalist approach to Bologna-compliance would not have a large negative impact on the autonomy and horizontal diversity of Australian higher education. [...] However, a move to the 3+2 graduate school model could lead to quite profound changes to the vertical diversity, and because of the peculiar demand saturation features of many prestigious fee markets, could lead to a narrowing of horizontal diversity.” (Ibid., p. 7) Among other issues, NUS also stresses the importance of stakeholders’ involvement in a policy debate (as a characteristic “Bologna feature”): “As the Bologna process has itself shown it is important that the voices of those who do the teaching/research and those who are being taught or trained are heard through the inclusion of bodies like NUS, CAPA and the NTEU in the Australia’s discussion of Bologna implications. [...] European student organisations have played a critical role in the development of the Bologna proposal, and NUS hopes that the Australian government will similarly recognise the importance of student input into the development and implementation process.” (Ibid., p. 9).

53. Last but not least, the response from *National Tertiary Education Industry Union* (NTEU), the *Education International* affiliate in Australia, could probably summarise the different views of stakeholders. The NTEU, representing the professional and industrial issues of over 28,000 staff employed at Australian universities, is “very supportive of the overall objectives of increasing staff and student mobility and increasing transparency in relation to degree structures as well as quality assurance in the higher education sector both in Australia and internationally” and agrees with the Government discussion paper “that many of the changes proposed for the Bologna process have already been implemented to varying degrees within Australia”. As an important (past) development NTEU stresses “Australia’s signing of the Lisbon Convention on

recognition of qualifications within Europe.” Yet, there is also “a second, and highly influential, development” namely “the degree to which China (and other important markets in Asia) have become interested in aligning with developments in Europe. China is the number one market for Australian, European, and North American transnational education initiatives, and if China chooses the Bologna roadmap, then the chief exporting nations such as Australia will want to align themselves with these developments.” (NTEU, 2006, 2-3).

NTEU is not without concerns about imposing the Bologna three-degree cycle structure in Australia and the first concern relates to relative cost-benefits of developing and implementing such a radically new structure. A number of major issues of concern has been identified in the document, including “the potential impact on institutional autonomy and academic freedom”, “student access and government support for students wishing to enrol in Masters degree programs”, “the role and function of the Honours year”, “the transition from existing degree structures to the new structure”, and “the role of research and research education under the new degree structure” (*ibid.*, 10). NTEU would also oppose (again in the eyes of Europe, in a good “Bologna spirit”) any initiative “to impose common curricula, assessment or grading or marking standards across the higher education sector, as these would be seen as a direct infringement on institutional autonomy and academic freedom” (*ibid.*, p. 5). On the other hand, NTEU is aware of the benefits that arise from further international integration and “strongly supports Australia playing an active role”. At the same time it stresses that “the Bologna Process has been a very resource-intensive exercise” and adds: “If Australia is to play a leading role, then it is important that there is extensive consultation among the academic community and other relevant stakeholders on how we would proceed to embrace elements of the Bologna process.” (*Ibid.*, p. 8-9). Here, a critical remark on stakeholders’ representation cannot be overlooked - the DEST discussion paper “fails to acknowledge that staff organisations are also

formally involved in the [Bologna] process. Education International (EI) has ‘consultative member’ status and is currently actively involved in three separate working parties addressing issues of mobility, external dimensions and qualifications. The NTEU has also been monitoring the development and implementation of the Bologna process through our involvement with EI.” (*Ibid.*, p. 3).

Is there a European challenge to USA?

54. It will be very interesting to follow future debates initiated by the Australian federal Department of Education, Science and Training - not only for Australians and not only for the partners from the new “Asia-Pacific Higher Education Area”. These debates are of extreme importance for the debates on the “internal” as well as “external” dimensions of the European Higher Education Area as well. Australia is often taken as the second largest competitor in global higher education market, but what is the situation for the largest one,⁷³ the U.S.?

Higher education in the U.S. is a special issue in many respects - also from the perspective of the “external dimension” of the Bologna Process. It is a large, diverse and decentralised system with many characteristics very different from European national higher education systems. “As with the U.S. higher education system in general, the international component of postsecondary education in the United States is large, diverse, decentralised and competitive. The recent decline in foreign student enrolments has stimulated academic institutions, higher education groups and the U.S. Government to take pro-active steps to reverse the decline and to ensure that the United States retains its position as a destination of choice for internationally mobile students.” (Country Report USA, in: ACA, 2006).

⁷³ “Of the nation’s nearly 14 million undergraduates, more than four in 10 attend two-year community colleges. Nearly one third are older than 24 years old. Forty percent are enrolled part-time.” (Draft Commission Report, 2006, p. 2-3)

Of course, in various ways, global challenges to higher education knock on all doors today – and also that of the U.S. Secretary of State. The federal Government is engaged in many activities related to promoting U.S. higher education abroad but, from point of view of this report, systemic policy developments are more interesting. Thus, in September 2005, U.S. Secretary of State Margaret Spellings announced the formation of the *Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education*. As we can read on the Commission's official website, it “is charged with developing a comprehensive national strategy for postsecondary education that will meet the needs of America’s diverse population and also address the economic and workforce needs of the country’s future. [...] Through public hearings to be held around the country, the Commission will attempt to answer questions as: What skills will students need to succeed in the 21st century? How can we make sure America stays the world’s leader in academic research? And, how can we make sure opportunities for quality higher education and best jobs are open to all students?”⁷⁴

55. The main task of the Commission is to develop “a comprehensive national strategy”. Its work is not about the “external dimension”, yet developing a national strategy today, even in the U.S, it is not possible to ignore the “external dimension”. It should be borne in mind that governmental responsibilities for higher education in the U.S. differ substantially from European traditions. Nevertheless, it is interesting to check what position the federal Government takes against present challenges of internationalisation of higher education. In the Secretary’s speech at the meeting of the Commission in September 2005, there is only one, yet interesting sentence on this issue: “The good news is that we still have the finest system of higher education in the world. But we’re at a crossroads. The world is catching up. In 1970,

⁷⁴ See

<<http://www.ed.gov/print/news/pressreleases/2005/09/09192005.html>>.

America produced more than 50 percent of the world's science and engineering doctorates. But if current trends continue, by 2010, we will produce only around 15 percent.”⁷⁵ In fact, the discourse used in this sentence is not that far from what we heard from Brisbane and, last but not least, what we used in our own European discussions, namely how to position the further (future) development of higher education in the fast-changing circumstances of today?

In the summer 2006, the Commission published its Draft Report (8/9/06 Draft). Surprisingly, from a European perspective, and probably from a non-American perspective in general, the document does not make any detailed reference to the issue of internationalisation and globalisation of higher education, which is high on agendas in other world regions! There is a notion – but only very general and similar to what the Secretary of State already stated – that there are other higher education systems in the world and that global competition is increasing: “We may still have more than our share of the world’s best universities. But a lot of countries have followed our lead, and *they are now educating more of their citizens to more advanced levels than we are.* Worse, they are passing us by a time when education is more important to our collective prosperity than ever.” (Draft Commission Report, 2006, p. 1).

Later in the draft document, summing up findings regarding the issue of innovation, we can find another interesting – and slightly more detailed – sentence: “It is fundamental to U.S. economic interests to provide world-class education while simultaneously providing an efficient immigration system that welcomes highly educated individuals to our nation. Foreign-born students represent about half of all graduate students in computer sciences, and over half of the doctorate degrees awarded in engineering. Almost 30 percent of the actively employed science and engineering doctorate holders in the U.S.

⁷⁵ See <<http://www.ed.gov/print/news/speeches/2005/09/09192005.html>>.

are foreign-born. However, current limits on employer-sponsored visas preclude many U.S. businesses from hiring many of these graduates, which may discourage some talented students from attending our universities.” (*Ibid.*, p. 17).

56. There are 9 pages of recommendations in the document and the last one (the sixth) is clearly oriented to the questions we are searching for: “The United States must ensure the capacity of its universities to achieve global leadership in key strategic areas such as science, engineering, medicine, and other knowledge-intensive professions. We recommend increased federal investment in areas critical to our nation’s global competitiveness and a renewed commitment to attract the best and brightest minds from across the nation and around the world to lead the next wave of American innovation.” It continues: “The need to produce a globally literate citizenry is critical to the nation’s continued success in the global economy. The federal government has recently embarked on an initiative to dramatically increase the number of Americans learning critically needed foreign languages from kindergarten through postsecondary education and into the workforce. Higher education, too, must put greater emphasis on international education, including foreign language instruction and study abroad, in order to ensure that graduates have the skills necessary to function effectively in the global workforce.” In addition to competitiveness trends, the Commission draws attention to “capable students from diverse populations” and to low-income and minority students, and then addresses an important “external dimension” issue: “In an effort to retain the best and brightest students and professionals from around the world, the federal government must address immigration policies specifically aimed at international students. [...] The Commission also recommends eliminating the requirement that in order to receive a student visa, all students must prove that they have no intent to remain in the United States after graduating. After all, talented graduates with sought-after

advanced training represent precisely the kind of intellectual capital our nation needs.” (*Ibid.*, p. 25).

57. This is more or less all what the document says about issues reviewed in our paper. The Commission presented its final report with findings and recommendations to Secretary Spellings on 19 September 2006 (A Test of Leadership..., 2006). It is an important strategic document; an example to be studied. However, compared with the draft it does not bring any essential change in this regard: the “external dimension” of the foreseen reforms has not been seriously considered. One might probably just ask why there is no *direct* reference to the emerging European Higher Education Area and to the Bologna Process? Why such a huge difference in this regard between Australian and American strategic documents? Americans as well could ask these questions. Catharine R. Stimpson from the New York University’s Graduate School of Arts and Science began her contribution to the ACA Hamburg Conference on the external dimension of the Bologna Process (2004) with a provoking statement: “Ignorance is always dangerous, but the United States ignorance of the Bologna Process – outside of some educational experts – may be particularly dangerous” (Stimpson, in: Muche, 2005, p. 79).

However, this sentence should be understood primarily as a warning. On the one hand, it is true that the Bologna Process is well known only to interested circles of educational experts,⁷⁶ on the other hand, the challenges of globalisation of higher education are seriously considered by American higher education institutions⁷⁷ and partner organisations.⁷⁸ Last but not

⁷⁶ “Thirty percent of the admissions professionals at American and Canadian higher education institutions are not familiar with the Bologna Process; another 35 percent have heard about it but do not know exactly what it is about. This is one of the outcomes of a survey on the admission of European students at U.S. and Canadian institutions conducted by Educational Credential Evaluators and the Institute of International Education. From a European point of view, this is a problem. For, when European Ministers of Education convened in Bologna in May 1999 and decided to create a single European Higher Education Area by 2010, one of their major motivations was to enhance the attractiveness of Europe's universities and colleges on a global scale.” (Wächter and Muche, 2004). – See also Schatzman, 2005: “34% of respondents are familiar with the Bologna Declaration and understand its general goals. Another 35% have heard of it, but do not know much about it. The remaining 30% are not familiar with the Bologna Declaration.” The survey was completed in spring 2004.

⁷⁷ See David Ward speech at the EUA Glasgow Convention (2005): “The Bologna process has not attracted great interest in the United States until quite recently. As you move forward to the maturing of this process, there will be an increasing interest on the part of the higher education community in the United States. I think there is also a growing admiration for the amount of progress that has been made in something which we thought initially would be a heavy handed government directed process. The EUA has provided effective bottom-up institutional responses and I have witnessed healthy discussions of the role of governments and the role of institutions in the delivery of higher education.” (Ward, 2005)

⁷⁸ NAFSA (Association of International Educators), an organisation promoting international education and providing professional development opportunities to the field, has established a Task Force on the Bologna Process to assist international education professionals who are looking for information on changes in European education. The purpose of the Task Force is to respond to NAFSA members' needs for more information on the Bologna Declaration and the resulting changes that will impact transatlantic exchange. In addition to developing plans for collecting and sharing information on the Bologna Process, the Task Force has been charged with promoting dialog between the US and the European exchange communities. See NAFSA Task Force website <<http://www.nafsa.org/practices/bologna/bologna-taskforce.htm>>. See also Schatzman, 2005.

least, transatlantic cooperation – including reflections on this cooperation (see e.g. Green, Eckel, Barblan, 2002; Green, Barblan, 2004; Weber and Duderstadt, 2004) – is increasing and brings new incentives.⁷⁹

58. Specialised American media have been informing about the development of the Bologna Process continuously. For example, *World Education News and Reviews* (WENR; a highly specialised media source focusing on issues related to academic credential recognition)⁸⁰ brought several analytical articles on the Bologna Process starting from 1999. It is interesting to follow them and to track the logics of their presentation. In January 1999, WENR published information on the implementation of ECTS at a selection of European universities, and in January 2000 Robert Sedgwick, the editor, wrote a comprehensive report on the Bologna Declaration. “On one hand, the Bologna Declaration is part and parcel of the ongoing

⁷⁹ There has been a long-standing cooperation programme in higher education between the EU and US. At the EU-US summit in Vienna in June 2006, a new eight-year (2006 – 2013) education agreement was signed. The new agreement will promote further exchanges of students, teachers and researchers, strengthen the Schuman-Fulbright Programme and encourage greater institutional collaboration. It also includes innovative *Transatlantic Degree programmes* which could be a particularly important incentive for growing institutional cooperation in future years: “The idea of the new Transatlantic Degree Programme is to stimulate the creation of truly joint or double degrees by providing support to multilateral consortia with a minimum configuration of 2 EU higher education institutions located in different Member States and 1 US institution. The partner institutions will have to create an integrated joint study programme, with students from the two sides spending a period of study both in the EU and in the US institutions and getting either a joint degree (issued jointly by two institutions) or a double degree (two degrees, one from an EU institution, the other from the US institution) encompassing the whole period of study. At the core of the programme is the enhancement of student mobility, innovation and joint curriculum development and academic recognition between the EU and the US.” For details see <http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/eu-usa/index_en.html>.

⁸⁰ See <<http://www.wes.org/ewenr/>>.

trend to achieve greater cultural and economic unity in the region. At the same time, however, there is a tangible need to redesign and harmonise academic programmes to better prepare students for emerging regional and international labour markets. [...] In addition, the signatories of the Bologna Declaration expressed the need to enhance international competitiveness in the overseas student market through the creation of a more viable and unified European system of higher education. [...] The trend towards globalisation, the utilisation of new technologies in distance learning programmes, the predominance of English as the world's lingua franca and intensified competition for international students all represent formidable challenges to European systems of higher education." (Sedgwick, 2000).

59. From the perspective of early 2000, Sedgwick establishes that "Europe is attempting to meet these challenges through concerted efforts aimed at recruiting more international students, while expanding campuses and programmes to other parts of the world. Many European countries are already offering academic programmes in English to attract foreign consumers of higher education, particularly from Asia. But while Europeans need to consolidate their diverse systems of higher education and become more like the rest of the world in terms of curricula and degree structures, the real challenge will be whether or not Europe can adapt to the changes engendered by globalisation without losing its identity" (*ibid.*). A year later, he didn't hide a bit of surprise: "Only two years later and many countries have already implemented groundbreaking reforms that not long ago would have met with severe opposition from governments and universities alike. Indeed, the breakneck speed at which some of these educational changes are occurring has taken many observers and especially sceptics by complete surprise." (Sedgwick, 2001).

Then he asks an important question: "Why, after years of intransigence, have Europeans suddenly agreed to unify their

diverse systems of higher education?” A part of his answer is also marked by the “external dimension”: “Although the unified system of higher education proposed under the Bologna Declaration is mainly intended to benefit European students, increased competition in the international student market is also pushing Europeans towards convergence. Countries that used to send large numbers of students to Europe are now sending them elsewhere to earn degrees. [...] Moreover, by the early 1990s it was revealed that for the first time ever there were more Europeans studying in the United States than there were Americans studying in Europe. [...] Hence, Europeans see in the Bologna Declaration not only an opportunity to increase the region's share of the international student market, but also a chance to make higher education more attractive to their own students.” (*Ibid.*)

60. Immediately after the Berlin conference, the WENR editor commented the development of events again: “The reforms, known collectively as the Bologna Process, will no doubt impact Europe in many ways, but they also hold significant implications for international educational exchanges in the United States. [...] If Europe wants to attract more students from abroad it must offer degrees and programmes that are compatible with international structures. Newly reformed higher education in the EHEA, along with relatively low tuition fees, will hopefully make Europe a viable option for many international students who cannot or will not pay the high cost of education in North America or Australia.” (Sedgwick, 2003). This of course opens several questions on how the existing relations in international higher education could change in future. “For the United States the effects of the Bologna Process are difficult to predict, but a few things are clear. At the moment, the biggest challengers to the U.S. in the international student market are Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom. In the future, with its transparent and flexible higher education system, Europe will offer an attractive alternative. The EHEA may end up challenging American dominance in international

higher education, in much the same way that the European Union has become a counterweight in international trade vis-à-vis the U.S. and Japan.” (Ibid.)

Yet, the whole future scenario could not be about *competition* alone. Sedgwick makes clear that these developments provide a chance also for renewed and enhanced *cooperation*. “There will also be greater convergence between the U.S. and Europe as European higher education adopts aspects of the American system. There is a long tradition of academic exchange programmes between European and American institutions of higher education. A more transparent and flexible European higher education system will undoubtedly enhance the number of student exchanges between the two continents. This is important for both sides. There are currently 64,811 European students studying in the US -14 percent of the total international enrolment. Germany, the U.K., France, Spain and Greece are the top sending countries, but the number of students from the former eastern bloc countries like Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary is on the rise.”⁸¹ (Ibid.)

Finally, Sedgwick says that “Europe and the United States are not the only actors here”. At least after the Berlin conference it has become clear that the discussion is far from being solely

⁸¹ Similar thoughts were presented again in one of 2005 WENR issues: “Although this trend can be seen to represent a challenge to U.S. institutions of higher education in terms of international student recruitment, the Bologna Process also presents future recruitment opportunities. A recent report by GMAC (Graduate Management Admission Council), a global business school association, assessed the possible implications of the structural changes of the Bologna Process in the context of graduate management education. The report concluded, in part, that the reforms will result in a huge increase in the number of post-Bologna bachelor graduates, many of whom will be seeking entry to master's-level programmes. If the findings of the report can be extended beyond the domain of management education to all fields of study, then, from the perspective of U.S. universities and colleges this newly enlarged pool of European bachelor graduates can be seen as a possible boon to recruitment opportunities.” (Clark, 2005).

“transatlantic” – it is definitely a global one. “While the reforms are being implemented within the signatory countries, the planners of the EHEA are beginning to look beyond Europe. At the last follow-up meeting held in Berlin (Sept. 2003), the Ministers of Education advocated the need to encourage cooperation with other parts of the world, and to open up future Bologna events to representatives of non-European countries. In particular, they declared the necessity to actively promote the new EHEA abroad to attract students and researchers from non-participating countries.” (Ibid.)

61. Early in 2004, when the first new Bologna graduates were already expected in Europe, WENR asked a very concrete question which has most probably remained the central question of the Bologna Process in the U.S: “How will the Bologna bachelor's degree be viewed on this side of the Atlantic?” (Assefa and Sedgwick, 2004-a). This question⁸² produced a lot of uneasiness that has yet to subside.⁸³ Already the following WENR issue brought an analytical article on evaluating the Bologna Degree in the U.S. written jointly by the editor

⁸² This issue was reported also by other specialised media, e.g. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*: “Europe's grand plan to harmonize the continent's disparate systems of higher education is coming up against an unexpected obstacle: Many American graduate schools say they won't accept Europe's new three-year undergraduate degree.” (Bollag, 2004). “American graduate programs remain divided over how to evaluate applicants from European universities who hold the three-year bachelor's degrees that are the new standard on that side of the Atlantic, according to a survey by the Council of Graduate Schools.” (Aronauer, 2005).

⁸³ According to the already quoted survey from spring 2004, “the new three-year bachelor's degree was greeted with greater caution. While some indicated that the three-year degree would be readily accepted for admission to graduate programmes, many more expressed reservations. Tentative approaches and temporary solutions were mentioned, including experimenting with test cases, considering secondary education credentials when evaluating three-year degrees, handling students presenting the new degrees on a case-by-case basis, and having discussions with colleagues about how to evaluate these credentials.” (Schatzman, 2005).

Sedgwick and Mariam Assefa, the Executive Director of the World Education Services (WES). The key question of the article was: “How then does this new degree compare with the traditional American bachelor’s degree?” The authors give the following introductory statement: “Even though the Bologna Process has resulted in shorter degree programmes that are defined in terms of required credits and introduced a two-tiered (undergraduate/graduate) system, the new European bachelor’s is still quite distinct from its U.S. counterpart. Based on the sample ‘Bologna’ bachelor’s degrees we examined from Austria and Italy (see previous issue of *WENR*), it is apparent that the European degrees are more heavily concentrated in the major – or specialisation – and that the general education component which is so crucial to U.S. undergraduate education is absent. The new degrees, awarded by traditional European institutions, are undeniably European in character. [...] The main differences between the two programmes – the number of years of study, the amount of coursework devoted to the major, and the absence of general education from the Italian curriculum – reflect the distinct characteristics of each educational system.” (Assefa and Sedgwick, 2004-b).

Taking into account previous case analyses and credential evaluation criteria (and asking primarily whether the new “Bologna Bachelor” constitutes sufficient preparation for graduate admission in the U.S.) and referring also to the Lisbon Recognition Convention and to the category of “substantial differences”,⁸⁴ authors say very clearly that

⁸⁴ “Academic credentials serve as recorded proof of an individual’s itinerary and accomplishments within a coherent and unified system of education. Credential evaluation exists first and foremost to facilitate the international mobility of students, scholars and professionals. This ideal is codified in the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region, adopted in 1997 [i.e. the Lisbon Convention] and signed by 41 countries including the United States. The Convention calls on member states to promote, encourage and facilitate the recognition of credentials earned outside of their borders to encourage the mobility of students and professionals. It also specifies that ‘Each country shall recognise qualifications as similar to the corresponding qualifications in its own system unless it can be shown that there are substantial differences.’” (Ibid.)

“WES regards the new three-year Italian *laurea* as functionally equivalent to a U.S. bachelor's degree.” They add: “The number of years of study is merely one of the elements that define the structure of a programme. In this particular case, the discrepancy in the number of years between the Italian and U.S. bachelor's degrees is outweighed by the similarities between the two programmes.”⁸⁵ (*Ibid.*)

“Systems that develop without due regard to the outside world run a risk of failure”

62. This question was discussed in quite some detail also at the ACA Hamburg conference (October 2004). Sjur Bergan approached this issue very closely and argued in the following manner: “The underlying assumption seems to be that qualifications that require a similar duration of three or four years of study, as is generally the case for the first degree, are also similar in level, quality, workload – and ultimately in value. In one way, this assumption takes us back to where recognition specialists were ten years ago or more, where the counting of years of study took on great importance. Today, the recognition community is rapidly moving toward a much more sophisticated view of qualifications, in which the main parameter is not how much time a student has spent pursuing a given qualification, but how that time has been spent. The emphasis is, in other words, shifting toward what a graduate knows and is able to do

⁸⁵ Authors make also a warning, addressed in particular to the American public but not less interesting to hear on the other side of the ocean: “Failure to recognise the Bologna bachelor's degree solely because it is a three-year qualification would leave U.S. graduate schools no choice but to reject candidates who apply for admission using these degrees, even when their records demonstrate that they have completed more than enough subjects in their discipline, have achieved the same skills and level of knowledge as their U.S. counterparts, and would very likely succeed at the graduate level. Such decisions would not only lack any academic merit, but they would also have profound and negative implications for international academic mobility.” (*Ibid.*)

with a qualification rather than the procedure through which the qualification was earned.”⁸⁶ (Bergan, in: Muche, 2005, p. 45).

Actually, this discussion is important not only for the “external dimension” but also to resolve dilemmas and settle internal European disputes. Bergan recommends what seems to be a most important direction for the “external” as well as for the “structural” dimension of the Bologna Process, a view that is shared also by some American authors: “One of the main challenges for Europeans is therefore to go beyond the discussion of 180 or 240 credits and to help develop a more sophisticated discussion about qualifications in all parts of the world.” Further discussions should help “to reach agreement that the recognition of qualifications is far more than counting years, and that learning outcomes are more important than learning procedures” (*ibid.*, p. 51).

63. The Bologna Process has so far offered methods as well as concrete tools to facilitate a change of paradigm – and this is an important aspect of how it impacts international and global developments in higher education. In this context we can understand Nick Clark when he says that “the Bologna Process is impacting the way in which U.S. admissions offices evaluate European credentials. Their work, however, is being made much easier by the abundance of information that is being made available as European nations increase the attractiveness and transparency of their tertiary-level credentials. Furthermore, the speed with which information is being made available both online and in hard copy means that the evaluator in the United States more than ever has the tools necessary to make informed

⁸⁶ Within this context, it is impossible to overlook his brief comment: “As Europeans we may regret that US higher education institutions seem to have problems with recognizing first degrees of 180 ECTS credits from continental Europe, but seem to be less severe if the qualification in question is a three-year Bachelor’s degree from a United Kingdom university.” (*Ibid.*, p. 51).

decisions when assessing the new European degrees.” (Clark, 2005).

These discussions are still far from firm conclusions. New questions are constantly cropping up⁸⁷ and time is needed to make them clear and to answer them. But one thing is certain - if we address these questions in a broad international arena and if we draw upon the best practice of so-called “international concerting” we will come much closer to productive results. “The ‘external dimension’ of the Bologna Process is therefore of key importance to its overall success, and now is the time to address it.” And we should not forget: “Systems that develop without due regard to the outside world run a high risk of failure.” (Bergan, in: Muche, 2005, p. 51).

⁸⁷ E.g.: “If the aim of Bologna is to standardise European higher education, then the expectations will be that all degrees at the same level are equal, and we, in the U.S., will be pressured to respond accordingly. One wonders if the U.S. joined the spirit of Bologna, and changed all its bachelor degree programmes to three years, how the Europeans might respond. [...] If we say, for example, that general education (to whatever extent) is required for a U.S. degree and, therefore, any degree that does not offer this cannot be equivalent, we’ve lost most of the world. What, then, are our basic standards? Are we able to articulate them in terms sufficiently inclusive that we don’t eliminate well-qualified international students because we are engendering agoraphobia as we fear moving from one safe niche to a more global perspective?” (Margolis, 2006, p. 21).

4. Conclusions: the “External Dimension” – does it matter?

64. Considerations on the roots and the essence of the “external dimension” of the Bologna Process from the second chapter and the overview of “echoes” given in the third chapter have shown that the Bologna Process has been building on a bunch of ideas and concepts about relations to “non-Bologna countries” and that it has reverberated with numerous echoes from various parts of the world. Many of them, unfortunately, had to remain outside the scope of this report. Nevertheless, the question from the beginning of the second chapter (*What in fact is to be understood under the “external dimension of the Bologna Process?*) is now – hopefully – partly answered. Before concluding, it is time to raise yet another question: *the “external dimension” – does it matter and why does it matter?*

The “external dimension” matters: it matters “externally” as well as “internally”

65. Indeed, many messages have been received through echoes presented in the previous chapter. Countries in transition warn against a practice of imposition and argue in favour of two-way cooperation. It has also been heard from the Mediterranean that “it takes two to tango”. China declares readiness to “learn the useful foreign experience” and to “promote the reform and development of our higher education and enhance mutual understanding”. Everywhere, there are many cases of good inter-institutional cooperation which has been importantly enhanced through the European Commission’s international agreements and programmes for higher education as well as through national bilateral agreements and activities conducted by most of the Bologna countries. This can be clearly seen, for instance, in the ASEAN countries. In Africa, in addition to cooperation with single institutions and organisations, it has been proposed to

look at “the big picture”: to build a system approach and to try to “benefit from initiatives outside Africa, avoiding mistakes made by others and building on their gains”. Francophone and lusophone countries are not geographically homogenous but there are several excellent initiatives to exchange good practices from Europe and to support developments in national higher education systems in different countries of the world. In Latin America, “the homogenisation of European universities” has not always been welcome due to some – likely bad – experiences with the commercially oriented cooperation policy from Europe. Yet, the Tuning project has been successfully spread all over the continent. In a recent public consultation, Australia openly stressed the benefits of “Bologna compatibility” and the risks of “Bologna incompatibility”, but it also doubted “that full compatibility with the Bologna Process is the only option”. Last autumn, the U.S. Secretary of State formed the Commission on the Future of Higher Education which deals with similar issues, albeit without referring to European examples. The US are proud of their “share of the world’s best universities” but “a lot of countries have followed our lead”. A major issue with regard to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) seems to be the recognition of new first cycle degrees.

There have been clear and *direct* echoes, comments and messages to the Bologna Process but also tacit and *indirect* ones. Many issues, which could be probably perceived in European eyes as “the typical Bologna issues” have been discussed also in other parts of the world, but they could also be addressed without a necessary reference to the Bologna Process. Bologna certainly has its own character and context - higher education policies in other parts of the world likewise. However, there is a “general” higher education modernisation agenda which is common to all world regions and to all countries of today - broadening access, diversifying study programmes, quality enhancement, employability, links to economy, mobility, international students, recognition of study periods and degrees, etc.

When dealing with these issues today and in the near future, Bologna can be an interesting case for other world regions, but also experiences – problems as well as solutions – from other world regions can be interesting for the EHEA (even if there is no reference to Bologna as such). Therefore, the emerging European Higher Education Area, preparing its External Dimension Strategy, should not only seek *direct* echoes (not only to improve self-esteem but to verify if its claimed “readability” and “transparability” works outside the EHEA, if its “international competitiveness” and “degree of attraction” are really on the rise and if EHEA degrees are recognised abroad) but should consider these experiences as potential *indirect* responses to what Europe is actually doing or what it is planning to do in the near future. There can be no doubt that *the “external dimension” does really matter*. It matters directly and indirectly; “externally” as well as “internally”.

66. Differing and heterogeneous echoes captured and presented in the third chapter prove again that “the external dimension” is far from being a simple phenomenon – as it was already stated in the second chapter when dealing with contexts, roots and concepts. They primarily appear at two distinctive levels: at the national or international *policy development level* and at the *level of institutions* (and/or their associations). In certain environments outside Europe, the Bologna “policy message” has received more attention; in other parts it has been a case of the “cooperation message” from universities and academic institutions taking an active part in the Bologna Process. The “policy message” can be, on the one hand, more interesting and useful for ministries of education, for governments and public policy-makers in general. Academic institutions within the same national environment do not necessarily always have to share this interest; contexts can differ widely. However, it is also possible to discern that interest in the Bologna issues of academic institutions sometimes considerably precedes that of ministerial or governmental policy makers. So far, the Australian ongoing public discussion on the Bologna benefits

and risks and the future of the national higher education seems to establish the most balanced relationship between these two levels.

Europe of the last fifteen years – and particularly the Bologna Process – has been developing *the virtues of higher education policy development in partnership*. This partnership has been motivated – not only but also – by a common desire to promote the attractiveness and competitive capacity of European universities. However, it should not be immediately taken for granted; at least not if reflecting on the long and winding history of Europe. It takes a long time for occasional virtues to transform into traditional values. Nevertheless, this could probably be an important Bologna “message” which may help in linking together both levels mentioned above. It is not that important who responds to this message – *policy-makers* or *academic institutions* from other parts of the world. Either of them alone but also both of them together would be welcome. Yet, it is for the EHEA to understand that national contexts may differ and that potential echoes will always depend on these differing contexts. Acting upon the principle of higher education policy development in partnership may gradually contribute to more balanced echoes from both target levels. The EHEA should raise its awareness that, while building its relationships with other parts of the world upon the Bologna partnership principle, it can strengthen this important virtue for itself and enhance its transformation into one of the traditional academic values.

Finally, at this point one should not overlook the fact that national contexts differ, not only “externally” but also “internally”. It is well-known that the national higher education systems within the EHEA are diverse: their traditions, to some degree their organisation (still), their size, etc. Of course, the “internationalisation needs” of the countries of the Bologna Process are equally diverse. It is necessary here to remind again that the European Union Member States (EU-25) do not overlap

with countries of the Bologna Process (EU-45). Hence, there would be certain differences between the EU “external dimension” strategy and the Bologna one. Not only should the (Bologna) External Dimension Strategy take into account that the various target world regions and countries, as well as the different target levels in these regions and countries might require specific approaches, but the EHEA as such should also take account of its own existing diversities. Last but not least, the Bologna “philosophy” has always argued in favour of diversity and this attitude should not be forgotten here either. However, an EHEA “external dimension” Strategy is only possible if a “common denominator” is found or established – similarly as in the case of searching for an overarching framework for qualifications of the EHEA or in the case of developing standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the EHEA (Bologna Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks, 2005; ENQA, 2005).

Most probably, no such common denominator may be established to *substitute* national internationalisation agendas – their needs are simply too diverse – but to “*tune*” them according to certain common principles and to *enhance* them in doing so could be an alternative. These principles can lead the EHEA approaches to “external” world higher education areas in the future, but they can also strengthen the “internal” dimension of the Bologna Process. In June of this year, during one of the External Dimension Working Group in-depth debates, Eric Froment formulated an important dilemma: “opening up the process or building a European strategy for internationalisation?” He sharpened it into “the central question – can we discuss the external dimension without being sure that governments agree on the internal dimension of the Bologna Process, i.e. on the core element of Bologna?” (Froment, 2006). Considerations related to this question have been very helpful to subsequent work. Clarifying this and other possible dilemmas and open questions is a necessary part of drafting a strategy.

Some of issues discussed in this section have been openly and systematically addressed through the “external dimension” official Bologna follow-up seminars; it is time to focus briefly also on them.

Messages from the Bologna seminars on the “external dimension”

67. As already mentioned in the introduction, BFUG placed on the list of official Bologna Follow-up Seminars for the period between Bergen and London three “external dimension” seminars. All of them have already been held: the Holy See seminar at the end of March and beginning of April,⁸⁸ the Greece seminar in June⁸⁹ and the Nordic countries seminar at the end September 2006.⁹⁰ The conclusions and recommendations from the three seminars can be found in *Annex 2*.

⁸⁸ The Bologna Process Official Seminar. “The Cultural Heritage and Academic Values of the European University and the Attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area”. Organised by the Holy See in collaboration with: Rectors’ Conference of Pontifical Universities, Pontifical Academies of Sciences, UNESCO-CEPES, Council of Europe. Under the patronage of the European Commission. New Synod Hall, Vatican City, 30 March – 1 April 2006. – Papers and interventions presented during the meeting will be published in a special issue of *Higher Education in Europe*.

⁸⁹ Bologna Process Official Seminar. The External Dimension of the Bologna Process. “Putting European Higher Education Area on the Map: Developing Strategies for Attractiveness”. Organised by Hellenic Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs and Managing Authority of the Operational Programme for Education and Initial Vocational Training. With the collaboration of the Academic Cooperation Association and Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency. Athens, 24 – 26 June 2006.

⁹⁰ The Nordic Bologna Process Official Seminar. “Looking out! Bologna in a global setting”. The External Dimension of the Bologna Process. Organised by the Nordic Countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden in collaboration with the Nordic Council of Ministers. University of Oslo, Georg Sverdrups hus. Oslo, 28 – 29 September 2006

68. The seminar on cultural heritage and academic values focused mainly on the issue of the *attractiveness of the EHEA* and, at least partly, it exceeded the “external dimension” in the strict sense of the term by addressing such important issues as e.g. the identity of European university, cultural heritage, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, understanding and respect etc. Around 200 participants from almost all Bologna countries as well as from some other parts of the world participated at this event, offering a rainbow of views and arguments. Two keynote addresses on European cultural heritage opened perspectives from historical, philosophical and cultural perspectives, while a panel of experts focused on the actualisation of the academic values of European Universities. Further on, in five discussion groups participants discussed the following issues: basic values and academic freedom, foundations of interdisciplinary dialogue, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue and scientific research and ethical responsibility.

With regard to issues followed within this review, the seminar clearly showed and confirmed that the *attractiveness of the EHEA* – a frequently emphasised “external dimension” aspect – is not separable from the rich European cultural and academic heritage and values. Archbishop J. Michael Miller, the rapporteur of the seminar, synthesised this aspect in his final summary in the following way: “This particular Bologna Follow-up Seminar was planned in light of the recognition that the process of globalisation entails ever more competition, interconnection and interdependence. Europe cannot turn in on itself if it wishes to play a leading role in the world of higher education in the future. From the outset, European universities were ‘international’ institutions to which students from various nations went to study and academics travelled widely to pursue their scholarship. But today new challenges face the European university: the integration of the world economy, open market competition, mass culture, the desire for life-long education, and advanced technology – to name just a few. To ensure that

European universities maintain their competitive advantage, many speakers pointed to their distinctive, if not unique, qualities. This led to some discussion on the ‘essence’ of the European university – its identity as an institution which embodies the ‘memory’ of a continent and its curiosity. It also led some to express concern about how the university can find new ways to transmit the core of this heritage, a patrimony which is a living tradition.” (Miller, 2006, p. 3).

Some discussants stressed that now is the time to make cultural heritage and academic values more visible on the Bologna agenda. Until Bergen, they argued, structural issues and the “Bologna tools” (qualification frameworks, credits system, Diploma Supplement, etc.) have been mostly finalised; now, after Bergen, we should focus more on the “Bologna values”. If we did not know who we are, what particular identities we share etc., we cannot explain what is meant by “the attractiveness of European higher education for the wider world”. Today, nobody disagrees on the highest importance of academic values. Yet the real question is the implementation of honest aims and principles. The Bologna Process should also contribute to answering this question. At this point, participants expressed a conviction that the European university is in a position to offer an original contribution to the future. At the very beginning of the recommendations from the seminar the following statement can be read: “The participants in this Seminar are convinced that the commitment of the Bologna Process to strengthening the external dimension of European higher education depends in large measure on reaffirming the relationship between Europe's cultural heritage and its universities and on fostering its common academic values”.⁹¹

These views were accentuated also in a special address by His Excellency Francis Campbell, H.M. Ambassador of the United Kingdom to the Holy See, at the conclusion of the seminar. He

⁹¹ For details and for the final recommendations see Annex 2, cha. 5.2.

argued that “the challenge for today’s higher education is both functional and moral.” The Bologna Process addressed this challenge as a voluntary action of European countries and their achievements are primarily based on learning from one another. “This learning from one another cannot be confined to Europe; it must also look outside. By looking to the outside we can not only learn, but we also show a responsiveness to the needs of the rest of the world.” (Campbell, 2006, p. 7, 4).

69. *Post festum* discussions in the External Dimension Working Group confirmed the importance of the values aspect of the External Dimension Strategy. Academic values as developed throughout the history of the university have been taken over as the underlying principles of European higher education policy discussions. The *Magna Charta Universitatum* of 1988 stressed this aspect in relation to the changed social and political environment and ever progressive internationalisation of higher education; it has remained an important document until today. Besides the traditional set of values as e.g. institutional autonomy, freedom of teaching and research, service to society etc., new values have also been emerging, e.g. equity in higher education, inclusiveness, partnership in policy and governance (mentioned above), etc. It is possible to trace the values’ aspect in the Bologna documents edited so far; however, as has already been argued, the real question is the implementation of these honest aims.

Therefore, this could be an important integral fibre of the External Dimension Strategy, but the implementation issue cannot be reduced to this dimension alone. Certainly, some of the values issues should be approached precisely from the point of view of the “external dimension”, as for example the potential tension between the potentially “egoistic” and “cooperative”

agendas of internationalisation.⁹² Thus, Peter Scott noted very clearly at the ACA conference on the “external dimension” that in today’s circumstances, “it is necessary to be more generous and open-minded and – perhaps – less certain about the superiority of Western values. Here, universities and higher education have a very special role to play. They are both the most important carriers of modern values, values of ‘objectivity’, of science, of secularism; they are also mediators and translators, institutions with open frontiers that can transcend their own cultures, contexts and environments, and engage creatively with those of others (without demonising them as the ‘other’).” (Scott, in: Muche, 2005, p. 22).

70. The second (Athens) seminar on the “external dimension” approached the developing of strategies for attractiveness from a different angle and again, in a very international audience. The Greek Ministry of National Education as the main organiser effectively made use of the presence of delegates from the OECD conference, which started when the Bologna seminar ended. Thus participants from a wider world joined over one hundred participants from most of the Bologna countries. At the first plenary session, there were, on the one hand, presentations focusing on information about the Bologna Process, its

⁹² In recent years, these two agendas have often been presented against a backdrop of tension between globalisation and internationalisation. It is very important to make this relationship more clear. “Globalisation and internationalisation are distinct phenomena. One view is to regard the former, globalisation, as simply an extended and more intensive form of the latter, internationalisation; in other words the two concepts have a linear relationship. Another view is to align globalisation with the ‘market’ and to regard internationalisation as an essentially ‘public’ phenomenon (whether linked to the diplomatic objectives, both cultural and economic, of states or the academic objectives of universities, in terms of the internationalisation of the curriculum, the diversification of the student body and/or research collaboration); in other words the two concepts have a dialectical relationship. In my view the latter provides a more satisfactory account than the former – but it is also important to recognise that globalisation is not simply a ‘market’ phenomenon.” (Scott, 2005).

achievements and potentials to make links and interaction with other regions of the world, and, on the other, the perception of speakers coming from these regions of the EHEA. The second plenary focused exclusively on the issues of quality assurance, international trends and European responses. There was also a plenary on the strategic management of higher education internationalisation and, last but not least, several workshops addressing the questions of what national practices can teach us in a global context and how higher education institutions can develop strategies and policies to attract international students.

Participants at this seminar were fully aware of the complexity of the “external dimension”. Evidence was given that the existing national “external dimension” strategies can promote – and in certain cases do already promote – the attractiveness of the emerging common European Higher Education Area. However, “external dimension” strategies at a national level and at a common EHEA level cannot be the same. An understanding was shared that the Bologna Process needs a common strategy on the external dimension on top of national “external dimension” strategies. Nevertheless, certain hesitation was expressed among some participants that a common EHEA “centre” and/or a common internet portal could widen the already existing gap between countries that are already close to the final goal and those just started on the Bologna road.

On the other side, it was stressed that “internal dimension” and “external dimension” agendas should not be divided, in particular not mechanically. Developing an “external dimension” strategy should not be a simple repainting of a façade; this would definitively turn foreign students and academics away and jeopardise the “internal dimension” as well. For that reason, reinforcing the “internal dimension” (e.g. “transparability”, compatibility, quality, recognition etc.) of the Bologna Process is the best approach to strengthen the attractiveness of European higher education and its “external dimension” as a whole. Parallels were made also between the

Bologna Process and the Lisbon Strategy – not always without polemic elements – that crossed in various issues dealing with modernisation of European universities and problems of their (under)performance.

Quality issues were not at the very forefront of the Bologna Process during its first years but after the Berlin conference, they have deserved continuously increasing attention. It is interesting to note that in 2005, two important documents were agreed: one within the Bologna Process and the other in OECD/UNESCO cooperation. Both documents were discussed at the seminar and, in addition, some aspects from the US Accreditation System were also presented. Several parallels were made between the *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (adopted in Bergen) and the *OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education*. These parallels are particularly visible if they are observed in the light of the “external dimension”. Neither document is binding; both aim at voluntary implementation and both have been developed by the educational community. Yet, it is particularly important that similar trends that have led individual European national higher education systems towards adopting common “Bologna” standards and guidelines characterise global higher education context as well.

The seminar considered the “external dimension” also in relation to the role of universities and other institutions as well as students. Fast internationalisation of European universities has brought many new opportunities as well as responsibilities. Thus, international strategies have entered also institutional agendas. To respond to new opportunities, institutions should define strategies that correspond to their specific roles, profiles, ambitions and environments. There is broad consensus among universities that international cooperation brings, first of all, an increased opportunity for mobile students but also benefits for all students studying now in a more international environment.

Also here, it is evident that promotion and attractiveness of an individual institution depends mostly on an efficient implementation of the “internal dimension”: e.g. quality, transparency, autonomy and funding. In addition, European students – very active at this seminar again – stressed also the specific values of internationalisation like multicultural experience and more reach learning and research environments “affected” by international students, teachers and researchers.

As was stated in the *Berlin communiqué*, “the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself”. It could be also argued on the basis of this discussion that the primary responsibility for attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area lies with higher education institutions themselves. However, it is far better if they act as academic networks and not alone – fragmented and separated. Of course, systemic (e.g. legislative) and financial support within national environments is decisive for their success. Yet, there are also other important levers of a successful promotion in a global arena who presented themselves at the seminar: these are students and their associations (e.g. ESIB, AEGEE, ESN, etc.)⁹³ as well as international associations (e.g. EAIE, ACA, NAFSA, thematic networks etc.). As was argued, their potential is not fully used yet and the foreseen Strategy should take this aspect into account as well.

The seminar agreed on a list of conclusions and recommendations that are included in the *Annex 2* (see Ch. 5.2).

71. The third and concluding Nordic seminar on the “external dimension” of the BFUG working plan 2005–2007 put “Bologna in a global setting”. Similarly to the previous two seminars, it attracted a very international audience. In Oslo,

⁹³ For an extended list of international organisations and associations as well as their websites see *Bibliography* (*F. Links used or referred to in the text*).

about 150 participants from 24 countries of the Bologna Process, representing ministries as well as universities and other institutions and organisations, welcomed guests coming from a further 15 countries of the world: Australia, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Costa Rica, Ghana, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Mozambique, Pakistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda and South Africa. This has been the most “internationalised” official Bologna follow-up seminar so far.

The seminar consisted of an introductory plenary, of discussions in six smaller working groups and a concluding plenary. The introductory speech was given by the Norwegian Minister Øystein Djupedal and the concluding one by the Swedish Minister Leif Pagrotsky. Participants acquainted themselves with the first report on the “external dimension” (Zgaga, 2006-b) during the first plenary and followed an interesting panel discussion with speakers from two European countries and seven countries from various parts of the world, chaired by Markku Mattila (Finland, EU Presidency). Working groups dealt with the key issues of the “external dimension” agenda: conditions for institutional cooperation between European and non-European higher education institutions, international mobility vs. transparency and recognition, recognition of different study programme structures, strategy for international cooperation, relations between attractiveness vs. competitiveness and brain drain vs. capacity building and, last but not least, tried to answer the question – what makes the EHEA attractive. Reports by rapporteurs from the working groups were presented in the final plenary. On this basis, final conclusions and recommendations from the seminar were made (included in the *Annex 2*; see Ch. 5.3).⁹⁴

⁹⁴ The Nordic Seminar Website has been set up with main information, including presentations, reports and conclusions and recommendations: <<http://www.bolognaoslo.com>>.

In his welcoming speech, Minister Djupedal welcomed the interest from countries outside Europe for the Process. Its “external dimension” should be about openness and attractiveness, he said, and repeated a statement from Berlin that “in international academic cooperation and exchanges, academic values should prevail” (Berlin Communiqué, 2003). He stressed the progress achieved within the Bologna Process in the last few years and its importance for European countries. He also said: “Through the Norwegian Quality Reform, Norway has become a leading country in Europe when it comes to fulfil the Bologna goals. The most important now is to contribute to find the best possible models for cooperation with the non-Bologna countries/areas. In order to do so, Norway wants to give input for a balanced strategy when it comes to competitiveness, attractiveness, cooperation and capacity building. A Strategy must be seen in relation to which area of the world Europe is approaching.” (Djupedal, 2006).

Indeed, the seminar focused on many aspects of possible cooperation with non-Bologna countries and areas. European participants were particularly interested on what colleagues from non-Bologna countries had to say. In the panel as well as in the working groups, they had ample opportunity to learn about the various perceptions of the Bologna Process worldwide. John Mallea presented Canadian – and in particular Quebec – perceptions. Canada signed the Lisbon Convention on Recognition already in 1997. On the other hand, today the EU-Canadian cooperation framework in higher education helps to increase concrete institutional cooperation. In general, awareness of the Bologna Process exists but a full understanding of its details is still limited. Sometimes it is seen as an administrative burden to higher education institutions. The undergraduate Bologna is not a real issue of discussion but the three years doctoral programmes provoked several doubts at universities. Keiko Momii reported on Japanese perceptions and underlined that a broader discussion on the internationalisation of higher education is still limited mainly to cross-border

provision from some countries. Yet another question was raised as to how to use emerging “international vibrations” on higher education issues. A certain confidence that has been built within Europe ensures that a sound minimum quality is guaranteed. For this reason, the Bologna Process is seen as important, but there is an obvious lack of information. Major national higher education systems in Europe are rather well known, but information from most other countries is missing.

Penina Mlama (Tanzania; FAWE – Forum for African Women Educationalists) stressed principles like partnership, respect and dialogue and addressed the historical disadvantages of Africa in relation to cooperation agendas which are now on the increase. In this respect, the Bologna Process offers another opportunity for cooperation – in particular as a platform for dialogue between Europe and Africa. There is broad scope for such a dialogue: the Bologna Process and current challenges to African higher education, including the role of higher education in democratisation processes, cross-border provision in higher education and responding to globalisation challenges, financing higher education, enhancing institutional cooperation, brain-drain issues, gender equality in higher education, etc. Piniti Ratananukul (Thailand; ASEAN University Network) presented a case of good regional cooperation in higher education in South East Asia as well as the importance of the ASEAN-EU University Network programme⁹⁵ for increasing inter-institutional cooperation. He stressed human resource development as the key issue and the importance of technical support from the EU for further developments within the University Network. Yorleni Aguilar Castillo (University of Costa Rica) made an effective contribution to the issue of attractiveness, information and the importance of two-way cooperation while asking how many seminar participants know details about Costa Rican higher education. Within this context,

⁹⁵ See also Ch. 3, section 42.

her reporting that the Bologna Process is not much known in Costa Rica acquired a quite different accent. Nevertheless, she also stressed well-established traditions of cooperation with Europe and positive recent sounds of the Tuning project. On this basis, Bologna could be important for institutions in Costa Rica as well.

Australian echoes of the Bologna Process attracted a lot of attention at the seminar. Colin Walters from the Australian Department of Education, Science and Training presented recent consultations on the Bologna process in Australia and reported on responses obtained that indicate a number of attractions, chiefly in relation to increased mobility. In particular, he mentioned the progress of the Australia Diploma Supplement, a potential to refine credit transfer systems to ensure ease of translation between countries and institutions and, last but not least, opportunities for further cooperation in quality assurance. However, there are many open issues like e.g. in regard to credit transfer that raise a number of difficulties (some Australian respondents thought that ECTS is not the preferred model) or in regard to degree structures where differing interpretations are given and where the role of international professional associations should be made clear (e.g. related drive to masters level for professional entry). In general, the main focus of the global cooperation should be on students and staff, and research collaboration should also be placed at the forefront.

The seminar was an excellent occasion for European participants to round up the discussions on the “external dimension” while reflecting simultaneously on the comments from colleagues from non-Bologna countries. Several statements from previous meetings were confirmed again and, on some points, new details were developed. Some previous dilemmas turned to shared answers but some questions remained – or were raised anew – that will be requiring further work. As a “*file rouge*”, strategies and conditions for future international cooperation at the regional, national and institutional levels prevail as the main

topic of discussions. The need for a common strategy on the “external dimension” was expressed again, but its specific features were made even more concrete than at previous seminars. What could/should be the main aim of a common EHEA strategy in this field? It was argued that the EHEA can only issue recommendations, e.g. to signatory countries, organisations and institutions, but the Bologna “*acquis*” must be clear and information widely available. Opinions were also expressed that cooperation within the EHEA itself requires some form of permanent organisation as well as that Ministers could recommend to the parties to the EHEA to include the Bologna “*acquis*” as an issue in their cooperation networks. Yet, it was confirmed again that approaches to different partnerships always depend on the partners.

At the conclusion of the Nordic seminar, Minister Pagrotsky made several reflections on the progress of the Bologna Process, in particular after the Bergen Conference, including the first assessment of the seminar work: “This seminar has shown that we are all equally committed to eliminate obstacles to academic cross-border cooperation and mobility, and to safeguard the values of higher education. In order to ensure their competitiveness and attractiveness, the Bologna countries also have a joint interest in improving the legal and social framework conditions for international scholars and students before, during and after their stay in Europe and to respond to their specific information needs. A prerequisite of the success of the Bologna Process is that the conditions that will make it easy for students to come to the decision to study abroad are in place.” In his last words, he admonished that the time is now approaching “when we should become ready to make up our minds when it comes to some important policy choices. We should choose the policy that maximises the opportunities for our students. We should choose the policy that stimulates quality in our universities. We should choose the policy that strengthens our links with other parts of the world.” (Pagrotsky, 2006).

Not much could be added to these three synthetic sentences. Yet, there was another issue raised during this seminar – the issue of a suitable name to be used when the “attractiveness / competitiveness / cooperation dimension” is being discussed. It was obvious that many participants find the term “invented” at early stages of this discussion – “the external dimension” – inadequate. It is noted in the final Conclusions and Recommendations of the seminar (see Ch. 5.3) that “[a]s the discussion on the ‘external dimension’ is advancing, it seems that the Bologna Process is in need of a better term to describe relations between attractiveness, competitiveness and cooperation. [...] There was no final agreement on this issue at the seminar but some concrete proposals which need more time to be considered were formulated, e.g. to move from the ‘external’ to the ‘global dimension’ or to the ‘dimension of global cooperation’”.⁹⁶ Within the process of drafting starting points for the London communiqué, the BFUG and its working bodies could consider this issue and make an appropriate decision.

Towards the elements of the External Dimension Strategy

72. All three Bologna seminars but also other conferences⁹⁷ on the “external dimension” and/or related issues prove that this term cannot be reduced to one key word only. Nevertheless, the most frequent key word used in discussions on the “external dimension” has undoubtedly been – *attractiveness*. As already mentioned, the Sorbonne Declaration referred to the “attractive potential of our systems” and the Bologna Declaration even

⁹⁶ The “Bologna global interface strategy” was mentioned in follow-up discussions as well.

⁹⁷ The ACA 2004 Conference in Hamburg has been already mentioned. The ACA 2006 conference “Destination Europe? Players, goals and strategies in enhancing the attractiveness of European universities” (Bergen, 20 June 2006) addressed the attractiveness of European higher education on a global scale as well. For details see <http://www.aca-secretariat.be/04news/SingleNewsletterDetail.asp?c_year=2006&c_month=06&news_id=537>

stressed “the appeal that its [European] culture has for other countries” and aimed at “a world-wide degree of attraction” for the European higher education systems. Since that time, the frequency of reference to attractiveness has increased very rapidly.

As in similar cases, it is very important to differentiate between “honest aims” and the so-called “constraints of reality”, as well as the implementation of these aims. One of the first insights into the issue was given just before the Berlin Summit in 2003. The *Trends III* survey contained for the first time a section on the *attractiveness of the EHEA to the rest of the world*. Among its key findings it was stated that “[e]nhancing the attractiveness of the European systems of higher education in the rest of the world is a driving force of the Bologna Process, ranked third after improving academic quality and preparing graduates for a European labour market”. Interestingly, respondents from different parts of Europe attached high priority to the attractiveness of their – national and/or institutional – higher education provision mainly to attract Europeans! “The EU is by far the highest priority area for most institutions (mentioned by 92%)”. Then come other world regions: “The second priority is Eastern Europe (62%), followed by US/Canada (57%), Asia (40%), Latin America (32%), Africa and Australia (24% and 23%) and the Arab World (16%).”⁹⁸ (Reichert and Tauch, 2003, p. 39).

Despite stressing attractiveness as the driving force of change, “[o]nly 30% of HEIs mention the use of targeted marketing for recruiting students, the notable exceptions being Ireland and the UK where more than 80% of universities conduct targeted

⁹⁸ On the other hand, “about 40 percent of the foreign students from outside the EURODATA region have an Asian nationality, about 31 percent of them have an African nationality, 15 percent have another European nationality, eight percent have a Latin American nationality, and only six percent have a northern American nationality.” (Kelo, Teichler, Wächtter, eds., 2006, p. 7).

marketing” (*ibid*). As it is possible to learn from an excellent recent study on student mobility in European higher education,⁹⁹ there are huge differences between countries: “A close look, however, reveals that for the majority of individual EURODATA countries, many of them small countries, the number of national students enrolled abroad exceeds the number of foreign students at institutions of tertiary education at home.” (Kelo, Teichler, Wächter, eds., 2006, p. 11). The attractiveness of the EHEA could not be related only to its “external dimension”; on the contrary, it is also its serious “internal” issue.

73. Obviously, the European countries alone as well as their emerging EHEA need to establish concrete action plans to move from “honest aims” to effective coping with the “constraints of reality”. Yet, and as already said, attractiveness is not the only horizon where such coping should take place. *Attractiveness* is often understood in a dual relationship to *competitiveness* and *cooperation*. What could enhanced attractiveness be good for? On the one hand, it can strengthen international – but also national – *competitiveness*: higher education systems in general and institutions in particular should perform better in terms of mobile as well as international students, teacher and researchers, programmes obtained, etc. This issue is, first of all, related to quality assurance and quality enhancement aspects. Alan Smith said so very clearly at the ACA 2006 conference in Bergen: “The attractiveness agenda must, to be successful, also be an agenda for genuine improvement” (Smith, 2006) and admonished that it is a double task: improving the quality of European higher education as such, as well as the quality of the international dimension of European higher education. In this latter sense – the quality of the international dimension – much should be done to improve information on European higher education in general and the EHEA in particular.

⁹⁹ 32 countries of the so-called EURODATA region are only included and not all 45 Bologna countries.

On the other hand, enhanced attractiveness can also strengthen international *cooperation* in higher education. This issue is closely related to the promotion of partnerships in higher education – nationally and internationally, in particular close relationships that could be built through joint programmes of teaching and/or research among institutions with a strong mobility aspect, but also through dialogue and mutual learning from good practices. In this sense, cooperation can also increase competitiveness but by diminishing the strict “egoistic” character mentioned above. As there is no one sole key word on the “external dimension” agenda but rather a list of them, all these aspects are somehow related to one another and linked together. As a cross-cutting issue, a need for enhanced *information* has been clearly identified in findings and discussions so far. After early years of fast developments and the winding Bologna “search for its own identity”, websites have been developed and books published where more and more condensed and systemised information can be found.¹⁰⁰

74. A possible External Dimension Strategy should be developed integrally from the four horizons briefly mentioned already in the second chapter (see section 21). These horizons require concrete actions. They should be taken by all key Bologna partners: at the institutional level, by universities and other higher education institutions as well as student organisations, at the national level, by national governments and in particular responsible ministries, and at all relevant European levels, that is, by “‘Europe’, however defined” (Smith, 2006).

Yet, why do we need a common strategy? Discussions within the External Dimension Working Group showed that a common strategy on the external dimension of the EHEA can be justified

¹⁰⁰ The Bologna Secretariat websites (Berlin, Bergen and London) provide excellent insights into developments of the last seven or eight years; on the other hand, the recent EUA *Bologna Handbook* (Froment, Kohler, Purser, Wilson, 2006) is a good example of a “Bologna Encyclopedia” (see <http://www.bologna-handbook.com/>).

where and when it can provide 'value-added', that is, where and when, by acting together in the Bologna Process, the participating countries and consultative members the Bologna Process can achieve more than if they were to act alone. It is important to take into account in what ways the *participating countries* and *consultative members* of the Bologna Process have already been developing their own (national, institutional, etc.) "external dimension strategies". On the other hand, intergovernmental and other international organisations have been already contributing to "external dimension strategies" that exceed the "narrow horizons" of an individual country or institution.

75. A long list of possible concrete targets has been discussed at the "external dimension" seminars and within the External Dimension Working Group. Until early October 2006, the Group had already drafted initial variants of a strategy document.

So far, there has been broad consensus that a Strategy document should be concrete, specific and ambitious. It should be based on the key principles that have been developed within the Bologna process so far. It should also include measures to be taken in e.g. the next two to three years (e.g. improving accessibility of the EHEA, including such issues as visa regulation, work permits, etc.), primarily at the national level, as well as a limited number of clear benchmarks (e.g. "every country should have designated by 2008 an organisation as having responsibility nationally for the coordinating the promotion of the country's higher education across the world") to make it possible to check progress in this field. Certainly, these measures should be made realistic and feasible; they should be implemented in a rather short remaining period of time until 2010. Last but not least, different contexts and aspects should be taken into account, as argued already above, and recommendations to the different Bologna partners and stakeholders are also a necessary part of such a document.

The foreseen Strategy would form a part of the Bologna higher education policy; therefore, *policy implementation* – an implementation *in partnership* – will be a crucial issue in the following years. It is important to consider that higher education policy influences other policy measures and that the implementation of the External Dimension Strategy will demand the close cooperation of not only Bologna partners and stakeholders but also within national governments (not only education ministries but also others, e.g. ministries of foreign affairs and interior ministries when visa regulations and immigration issues are treated, etc.), intergovernmental organisations as well as international non-governmental organisations. Some demanding issues have also been opened that should not remain unanswered if the Strategy is really intended to be implemented – increasing the attractiveness of the EHEA is not possible without *funding*. There was a lot of debate on this issue within the Working Group and despite certain dilemmas the Group always came to the conclusion that this issue deserves appropriate attention in the further process of drafting the Strategy.

In addition to all that has already been said and without prejudicing further steps in drafting the External Dimension Strategy, the following themes seem to belong among its key issues:

- *Improving information on the EHEA and promoting its image in a wider world* is urgent! EHEA needs a common information system (e.g. common portal, European higher education fairs, coordinated information campaigns, etc.), which should not be seen in opposition to specific national (institutional) information systems. Guidance for students and staff from other countries (other regions), institutions and institutional frameworks, capacity-building, language policy, etc. are also on this list. There is no need to start

from scratch, but to build upon existing information tools and sources.

- *Attractiveness* of the EHEA depends on its distinctiveness from higher education provision in other regions: transparent quality, accessibility, recognition, mobility enhanced by structural (transparency, compatibility, recognition, etc.) and social means (support and scholarship schemes, visa regulations, etc.), non-exclusiveness, cultural diversity (but without the obstacles of a linguistic Babylon), etc. The promotion of intercultural and inter-religious understanding, traditional values of European universities and higher education institutions in general are of particular importance as well.
- Attractiveness is related to issues of competition and competitiveness in higher education. *Competition* among European countries – and other world countries – as well as among individual higher education institutions is needed to strengthen the quality of higher education, research and teaching potentials in order to broaden access and to promote flexible learning paths, to attract more international students, to make higher education more efficient, etc. Only this kind of competition could lead to an enhanced *competitiveness* of the EHEA as such. On the other hand, highly competitive European higher education could substantially contribute to the competitiveness of the European economy, trade, and centres of excellence as the point where academic, economic and political interests should coincide.
- *Cooperation* aims firstly at the mutual potential benefits of the EHEA and other world regions and should be based on traditions of academic cooperation between Europe and these regions. It is also dependent on promoting the two-way flow of information and

knowledge, as well as two-way mobility. It should aim at achieving higher “critical mass” (capacity) through incentives for international research teams and joint study programmes. The improvement of mutual *recognition of qualifications* as well as study and study periods on a global scale, solidarity and support for higher education systems in less developed parts of the world and the political importance of global higher education cooperation (including a strengthened *policy dialogue* and an established appropriate global forum) are also high on the cooperation agenda.

76. A number of far-reaching statements on the end goal of the External Dimension Strategy have been collected while compiling this report. Let us conclude it with just one of them:

“This must be our ambition for the European Higher Education Area: free movement of students, graduates, and staff that will not have to leave any of their real qualifications at the border between education systems because of unreasonable or protectionist recognition procedures and practices. For this ambition to become reality, we need further policy development, and we need to do so, not with a view to the ‘external dimension’, but in a dialogue and cooperation with partners – and competitors – on all continents.” (Bergan; in Muche, eds., 2005, p. 52).

5.3 ANNEX 1

The “External Dimension” in a historical perspective

A selection of pages on the “External Dimension” from documents 1987-2006

Excerpts from documents are edited chronologically and classified into three categories: relevant pre-Bologna documents (see light blue shadowed headings), documents produced within the Bologna Process (see light yellow shadowed headings with a Bologna logo) and the European Union documents (see headings with a European flag). Short bibliographical references are added. – See also Chapter 1, sections 14. - 20.

1. Magna Charta Universitatum, 1987 – 1988

Magna Charta Universitatum. Bologna, 18 settembre 1988. Roma: [Università di Bologna], 1991.

Fundamental Principles

[...] 4. A university is the trustee of the European humanist tradition; its constant care is to attain universal knowledge; to fulfil its vocation it transcends geographical and political frontiers, and affirms the vital need for different cultures to know and influence each other.

[...]

The Means

[...] 4. Universities – particularly in Europe – regard the mutual exchange of information and documentation, and frequent joint projects for the advancement of learning, as essential to the steady

progress of knowledge. Therefore, as in the earliest years of their history, they encourage mobility among teachers and students; furthermore, they consider a general policy of equivalent status, titles, examinations (without prejudice to national diplomas) and award of scholarships essential to the fulfilment of their mission in the conditions prevailing today.

2. Erasmus programme, 1987



Council of the European Communities. Council Decision of 15 June 1987 adopting the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (Erasmus). Official Journal L 166, 25/06/1987 P. 0020 – 0024 (87/327/EEC)

Article 1

1. This Decision hereby establishes the programme for the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (ERASMUS) in order to increase significantly such mobility in the Community and to promote greater cooperation between universities.
[...]

Article 2

The objectives of the ERASMUS programme shall be as follows:

(i) to achieve a significant increase in the number of students from universities as defined in Article 1 (2) spending an integrated period of study in another Member State, in order that the Community may draw upon an adequate pool of manpower with first hand experience of economic and social aspects of other Member States, while ensuring equality of opportunity for male and female students as regards participation in such mobility;

(ii) to promote broad and intensive cooperation between universities in all Member States;

- (iii) to harness the full intellectual potential of the universities in the Community by means of increased mobility of teaching staff, thereby improving the quality of the education and training provided by the universities with a view to securing the competitiveness of the Community in the world market;
- (iv) to strengthen the interaction between citizens in different Member States with a view to consolidating the concept of a People's Europe;
- (v) to ensure the development of a pool of graduates with direct experience of intra-Community cooperation, thereby creating the basis upon which intensified cooperation in the economic and social sectors can develop at Community level.

3. Tempus programme, 1990



Council of the European Communities. Council Decision of 7 May 1990 establishing a trans-European mobility scheme for university studies (Tempus). Official Journal L 131, 23/05/1990 P. 0021 – 0026 (90/233/EEC)

The objectives of Tempus are the following:

- (a) to facilitate the coordination of the provision of assistance to the eligible countries in the field of exchange and mobility, particularly for university students and teachers, whether such assistance is provided by the Community, its Member States or the third countries referred to in Article 9;
- (b) to contribute to the improvement of training in the eligible countries, and to encourage their cooperation with partners in the Community, taking into account the need to ensure the widest possible participation of all the regions of the Community in such actions;

- (c) to increase opportunities for the teaching and learning in the eligible countries of those languages used in the Community and covered by the Lingua programme, and vice versa;
- (d) to enable students from the eligible countries to spend a specific period of study at university or to undertake industry placements within the Member States of the Community, while ensuring equality of opportunity for male and female students as regards participation in such mobility;
- (e) to enable students from the Community to spend a similar type of period of study or placement in an eligible country;
- (f) to promote increased exchanges and mobility of teaching staff and trainers as part of the cooperation process.

<p>4. Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community, 1991</p>	
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Commission of the European Communities. *Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community*. Brussels: Commission of European Communities, December 1991.

Higher Education and External Relations

35 There are historic linkages and relationships between higher education institutions in the different Member States and various countries of the world. These relationships are reflected in student and staff exchanges, joint projects with counterpart institutions, the enrolment of foreign students and the participation of the European higher education sector in the provision of technical assistance to projects in many developing countries. In a number of European institutions there are departments devoted to the special study of languages, cultures, economies, political systems and developmental needs of third countries. *These historic relationships provide an excellent basis through which the Community can build its relationships with the countries concerned.* There is also a growing

interest in European studies courses in institutions outside the Community. [...]

37 An enhanced role for education and training in the external relations of the Community is evolving for a number of reasons:

- *education and training, through interactive exchanges at staff and student level and through study abroad schemes, help to cultivate the mutual understanding, respect and knowledge on which successful political and trading relationships can be based;*
- *education and training provide an instrument for wider dissemination of knowledge concerning the European Community and its institutions and policies and help therefore in defining its position on the world scene;*
- *education and training must provide the skills that are necessary for economic development and for political and social progress;*
- *no nation, or group of nations, has a monopoly of ideas and knowledge and learning from and drawing comparisons with other countries is an important component of the Community's own development and that of its Member States;*
- *educational institutions of the Member States of the Community are the custodians of much that is valuable in European culture and civilization and they can become, therefore, the instruments of cultural exchange on a global basis.*

[...]

The International Role of Higher Education

148 [...] There has always been an extra-European Community dimension in the relationships between higher education institutions. An illustration of the scale of this relationship may be gleaned from the fact that in all Member States (Luxemburg excluded) the percentage of extra-Community foreign students enrolled for full courses of higher education is greater than that of other EC nationals and in some cases many times greater. Evidence of these relationships is also found in the substantial movement of students to the United

States for postgraduate studies. *While it is vital to the future of the Community that the European dimension in higher education be emphasised and strengthened, this extra-EC dimension is of fundamental importance to an open European Community, deriving strength from cooperation and interaction across the world.* It is necessary, too, to consider its importance in the overall interests of higher education.

149 In the field of higher education and training *European expertise is widely recognised and appreciated and this is an asset which can and should be used to support the growing world role of the Community.* European culture is highly valued throughout the world and the institutions of higher education should be deeply involved in programmes of cultural exchange with extra-Community countries. Europe's global role and the necessity for the European economy to interact with the world economy requires a two-way flow of information and knowledge. *Europe must not only strengthen its own identity, but it must do so in a political, economic and cultural equilibrium with the rest of the world.*

5. Lisbon Recognition Convention, 1997

Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region [Lisbon Recognition Convention] (11 April 1997).

The Parties to this Convention,

[...]

- Considering that higher education should play a vital role in promoting peace, mutual understanding and tolerance, and in creating mutual confidence among peoples and nations; [...]
- Having regard also to the International Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Arab and European States bordering on the Mediterranean (1976), adopted within the framework of

Unesco and partially covering academic recognition in Europe;

- Mindful that this Convention should also be considered in the context of the Unesco conventions and the international recommendation covering other Regions of the world, and of the need for an improved exchange of information between these Regions [etc.].



6. Sorbonne Joint Declaration, 1998

Harmonisation of the architecture of the European higher education system. Joint declaration of four ministers in charge of higher education in Germany, France, Italy and United Kingdom on the occasion of the 800th anniversary of the University of Paris [Sorbonne Declaration]. Paris, Sorbonne, 25 May 1998.

The international recognition and attractive potential of our systems are directly related to their external and internal readabilities. A system, in which two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate, should be recognized for international comparison and equivalence, seems to emerge. [...]

Most countries, not only within Europe, have become fully conscious of the need to foster such evolution. The conferences of European rectors, University presidents, and groups of experts and academics in our respective countries have engaged in widespread thinking along these lines.

A convention, recognising higher education qualifications in the academic field within Europe, was agreed on last year in Lisbon. The convention set a number of basic requirements and acknowledged that individual countries could engage in an even more constructive scheme. Standing by these conclusions, one can build on them and go further.”

7. Bologna Declaration, 1999



The European Higher Education Area. Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education. [Bologna Declaration.] Convened in Bologna on the 19th of June 1999.

The European process, thanks to the extraordinary achievements of the last few years, has become an increasingly concrete and relevant reality for the Union and its citizens. Enlargement prospects together with deepening relations with other European countries, provide even wider dimensions to that reality. Meanwhile, we are witnessing a growing awareness in large parts of the political and academic world and in public opinion of the need to establish a more complete and far-reaching Europe, in particular building upon and strengthening its intellectual, cultural, social and scientific and technological dimensions. [...]

The Sorbonne Declaration of 25th of May 1998, which was underpinned by these considerations, stressed the Universities' central role in developing European cultural dimensions. It emphasised the creation of European area of higher education as a key way to promote the citizens' mobility and employability and the Continent's overall development. [...]

European higher education institutions, for their part, have accepted the challenge and taken up a main role in constructing the European area of higher education, also in the wake of the fundamental principles laid down in the Bologna Magna Charta Universitatum of 1988. This is of the highest importance, given that Universities' independence and autonomy ensure that higher education and research systems continuously adapt to changing needs, society's demands and advances in scientific knowledge. [...]

We must in particular look at the objective of increasing the international competitiveness of the European systems of higher education. The vitality and efficiency of any civilisation can be measured by the appeal that its culture has for other countries. We need to ensure that the European higher education system acquires a world-wide degree of attraction equal to our extraordinary cultural and scientific traditions.

8. Towards a European Research Area, 2000



Commission of the European Communities. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

Towards a European research area. Brussels, 18 January 2000

COM(2000) 6 final

Even more so than the century that has just finished the XXI st century we are now entering will be the century of science and technology. More than ever, investing in research and technological development offers the most promise for the future.

In Europe, however, the situation concerning research is worrying. Without concerted action to rectify this the current trend could lead to a loss of growth and competitiveness in an increasingly global economy. The leeway to be made up on the other technological powers in the world will grow still further. And Europe might not successfully achieve the transition to a knowledge-based economy. [...]

It cannot be said that there is today a European policy on research. National research policies and Union policy overlap without forming a coherent whole. If more progress is to be made a broader approach is needed than the one adopted to date. The forthcoming enlargement of the Union will only increase this need. It opens the prospect of a Europe of 25 or 30 countries which will not be able to operate with the methods used so far. [...]

6.3. Making Europe attractive to researchers from the rest of the world

Research institutes do not have the same magnetic attraction on researchers from all over the world that American laboratories, companies and universities do. Europe does not offer researchers from third countries particularly advantageous (material and administrative) conditions.

The formalities to be completed are generally unwieldy. The regulations and languages also vary from one country to another. And the "brain drain", which some have claimed is being held in check, has not stopped. Between 1988 and 1995, 8760 Europeans students took a doctorate in the United States. Five years after obtaining their diplomas about half of them were still in the United States.

To attract the best researchers from all over the world to European laboratories a European system of grants for scientists from third countries might be set up. National and European research programmes could also be more open to researchers and teams from countries outside the Union.

In the case of developing countries, to guarantee the development of local research potential, this system should be such as to encourage the beneficiaries to return to their countries in order to take advantage of their experience and to spread the knowledge they have acquired.

Measures should be taken at national and European level to encourage the return to European laboratories of researchers who have left to complete their training or pursue their careers in the United States.

The possibilities provided by the science and technology cooperation agreements between the Union and a number of third countries should be maximised in these respects.

Finally, it is especially necessary to improve appreciably the environment provided for researchers in Europe. An effort should be made in particular to simplify and harmonise regulations and administrative conditions more. Rules have recently been adopted in France, for example, to shorten the procedures for granting visas to researchers from third countries.

9. Lisbon Strategy, 2000



9.1 Council of the European Union. *Presidency Conclusions. Council of European Union, Lisbon, 23-24 March 2000.*

5. The Union has today set itself a ***new strategic goal*** for the next decade: *to become 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. [...]*

13. The European Council asks the Council and the Commission, together with the Member States where appropriate, to take the necessary steps as part of the establishment of a European Research Area to: [...]

- take steps to remove obstacles to the mobility of researchers in Europe by 2002 and to attract and retain high-quality research talent in Europe.

9.2 Commission of the European Communities (2001). *Report from the Commission. Concrete Future Objectives of Education Systems. Brussels: Commission of European Communities, 31 Jan. 2001.*

4.4. Openness

Most Member States stress the need for schools, training centres and universities to be open to the world: to increase their links with the local environment (with businesses and employers in particular, so as to increase their understanding of the needs of employers and thus to increase the employability of learners); to ensure an openness of spirit towards foreign countries, Europe and the wider world (e.g. through foreign language learning and mobility).

9.3 Council of the European Union. *Detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of educational and training systems in Europe.*
Brussels, 20 February 2002.

3. Pursuing ambitious but realistic goals

3.1 Beyond answering the invitation of the European Council to work on common objectives for education and training systems and to present a joint detailed work programme, the Council and the Commission are determined to take all initiatives required for a comprehensive response to the challenges of the knowledge society and globalisation, as well as of EU enlargement.

3.2 The Council and the Commission therefore set themselves ambitious but realistic goals which should also be shared by the countries joining the EU in the coming years. For the benefit of citizens and the Union as a whole the following should be achieved in education and training by 2010:

- 1) the highest quality will be achieved in education and training and Europe will be recognised as a world-wide reference for the quality and relevance of its education and training systems and institutions;*
- 2) education and training systems in Europe will be compatible enough to allow citizens to move between them and take advantage of their diversity;*
- 3) holders of qualifications, knowledge and skills acquired anywhere in the EU will be able to get them effectively validated throughout the Union for the purpose of career and further learning;*
- 4) Europeans, at all ages, will have access to lifelong learning;*
- 5) Europe will be open to cooperation for mutual benefits with all other regions and should be the most-favoured destination of students, scholars and researchers from other world regions.*

10. Strengthening cooperation with third countries in the field of higher education, 2001

Commission of the European Communities. *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on Strengthening Co-operation with Third Countries in the Field of Higher Education. Brussels: Commission of European Communities, 18 July 2001. COM(2001) 385*

5. Community programmes in education, and particularly ERASMUS, have had a substantial impact in boosting the capacity for international co-operation among European universities. In addition to changes in the design of education programmes and new possibilities offered for study in other Member States, many universities have set up or reinforced their offices for international relations. To a large extent this is a response to the increased volume of international activities that has resulted from their involvement in Community programmes. A further effort is required at EC level, to encourage institutions systematically to integrate new co-operation with third countries into a wider partnership framework.

6. This effort is also needed because there is an ever-increasing demand for international education and student mobility. The number of international exchange students has never been greater; but they flock mainly to the US (over 500,000 international students in 1999/2000). Over 3/4 of the approximately 400,000 students from non-European countries studying in the EC go to the UK, France and Germany.

7. While there may be healthy competition between Member States countries to attract international students, the role of the EC should be primarily to encourage co-operative approaches so that the benefits can be shared more widely within the EC and partner countries. In doing so, the EC must acknowledge that Europe's status as a centre of excellence in learning is not always appreciated or understood by third country universities, or by students looking for an international education.

8. [...] Increasing the attractiveness of our universities requires an assurance of quality that is widely understood in the world. The absence of such an assurance means that Europe will not perform as well as the other leading providers of education services. From another angle, Europe's political and commercial success in the world is dependent on future decision-makers in third countries having a better understanding of, and closer ties with, Europe.

9. Many third countries see potential benefits in systematic co-operation with European higher education institutions, especially within multilateral networks involving institutions from more than one Member State. Such co-operation enhances the value of bilateral education arrangements with individual Member States. This is the reason why in almost all agreements between the EC and third countries, education is mentioned as a field for potential co-operation. In practice the follow-up to these commitments is contingent on availability of resources.

10. The following conclusions can be drawn:

- * The Community should ensure that its education activities include the international dimension in a more systematic way;
- * The Community should give greater visibility to its action in this field in order to promote Europe as a centre of excellence, and to attract students seeking an international education.

<p>11. Education and training in the context of poverty reduction in developing countries, 2002</p>	
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Commission of the European Communities. *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on Education and Training in the Context of Poverty Reduction in Developing Countries.* Brussels: Commission of European Communities, 6 March 2002. COM(2002) 116

1. Education and training play an essential role in reducing poverty and in development. This is borne out by a series of undertakings made by the international community.

The Dakar Forum ("Education for All") in April 2000 reaffirmed and broadened the international community's commitment to compulsory primary education for all by 2015.

Under the Millennium development objectives for education, all children (boys and girls) should complete at least primary education by 2015.

In their Joint Statement of November 2000, the Commission and the Council affirmed that the main objective of Community development policy must be to reduce and, eventually, to eradicate poverty. The Commission and the Council noted, in this context, that the promotion of equitable access to social services, i.e. health and education services, is a vital dimension of poverty reduction.

2. The purpose of this Communication is therefore to present a new framework of guidelines for the Community which specifies the role that support for education [...] and training can play in combating poverty in the developing countries. [...]

3. Higher education

a) Support for higher education is a key component of the "Education for All" strategy. Teachers and planners are trained in higher education institutions which are also centres for educational research. Support for higher academic, technical and vocational education is just as necessary as support for primary education.

Support for higher education is also necessary for countries' institutional development. Institutional capacity-building is an essential component of programmes in all sectors of development cooperation.

In this context, information and communication technologies can improve the management, implementation, content and quality of education services throughout the world. These technologies - which are a tool and not a priority in themselves – can help greatly to improve the organisation of education systems, access to these systems (support for teacher training, access to foreign languages, overseas training, etc.) and quality (access to a wider range of

knowledge, inter-institutional network assistance). This applies, for instance, to distance learning methods for teacher training.

b) Cooperation in the area of higher education between European and third-country institutions seems to be a useful way of supporting higher education in these countries. This cooperation is to be promoted at the regional level in particular.

c) The Community must be more vigilant in regard to the impact on these countries of a brain drain to the developed countries and must ensure greater taking into account of other Community policies. It must also ensure that development cooperation policies do not unfairly limit the ability of these countries to provide for their own development at a time when the brain drain from the south to the north has reached unprecedented levels.

The Commission will also ensure coherence between other Community policies and development cooperation.

d) It sees its own measures in this field as a necessary contribution to institutional and administrative capacity-building in recipient countries. The Commission's Common Cooperation Framework for Higher Education places this approach on a practical footing (Annex 7). [...]

Annex 7 – Common Framework for Cooperation with third countries on higher education

The Common Framework defines the main guidelines for establishing a frame of reference for cooperation in the field of higher education between the European Community and developing countries, as well as with emerging economies and countries in transition. It proposes harmonising the methods of implementing Commission programmes/projects with a view to improving the effectiveness and impact of existing cooperation in the field as part of a strategy to focus efforts.

The Common Framework rests on the following principles:

- * Support for institutionalised networks, based on structured and sustainable cooperation between countries/regions and designed to contribute to the development of local capacity through the transfer of know-how. The Common Framework also recognises the importance of projects to encourage mobility, both for students and teachers.
- * A flexible approach that respects the priorities set for each country/region and the differences between them in terms of cooperation policy. Projects/programmes defined on the basis of the Common Framework will include features specific to the regions/countries concerned: for example, priority thematic areas for cooperation, eligible establishments, network membership and financing levels. Flexibility in the cooperation objectives pursued will ensure the consistency of these actions with the two Communications mentioned above.
- * Use of the existing legal basis for each geographical area (for example, the Cotonou Agreement, budget headings, and so forth). Financial resources will be allocated by the DG's responsible for programming, on the basis of the priorities laid down and following standard programming procedures.

The typology of actions covered by the Common Framework may cover various aspects, such as:

- * updating of administrative and academic management (management of academic and administrative staff, management and development of curricula, management and development of university teaching careers, etc.);
- * developing human capital by means of training and mobility (training and mobility schemes for university students and professional managers, training and mobility for university teachers and instructors, networking of high-level experts);
- * financial and technical assistance for institution-building.

The Common Framework envisages the setting up of a regular system of "calls for proposals" by region or country. These calls for proposals will be intended for final beneficiaries, i.e. higher education, research and vocational training establishments recognised by the respective authorities, organised in networks around a joint project. Other partner institutions (public or private institutions/organisations, companies, associations and organisations representative of civil society) will be able to form part of the networks by participating in the preparation and implementation of projects. High level teachers and instructors, students and administrators of the beneficiary establishments are the final recipients of the projects resulting from the Common Framework.

12. Message from Salamanca, 2001



Message from the Salamanca Convention on European Higher Education Institutions. Shaping the European Higher Education Area. Salamanca, 29-30 March 2001.

Attractiveness

European higher education institutions want to be in a position to attract talent from all over the world. This requires action at the institutional, national and European level. Specific measures include the adaptation of curricula, degrees readable inside and outside Europe, credible quality assurance measures, programmes taught in major world languages, adequate information and marketing, welcoming services for foreign students and scholars, and strategic networking. Success also depends on the speedy removal of prohibitive immigration and labour market regulations.

European higher education institutions recognise that their students need and demand qualifications which they can effectively use for the purpose of study and career all over Europe. The institutions and their networks and organisations acknowledge their role and responsibility in this regard and confirm their willingness to organise themselves accordingly within the framework of autonomy.

Higher education institutions call on governments, in their national and European contexts, to facilitate and encourage change and to provide a framework for co-ordination and guidance towards convergence, and affirm their capacity and willingness to initiate and support progress within a joint endeavour

- to redefine higher education and research for the whole of Europe;
- to reform and rejuvenate curricula and higher education as a whole;
- to enhance and build on the research dimension in higher education;
- to adopt mutually acceptable mechanisms for the evaluation, assurance and certification of quality;
- to build on common denominators with a European dimension and ensure compatibility between diverse institutions, curricula and degrees;
- to promote the mobility of students and staff and the employability of graduates in Europe;
- to support the modernisation efforts of universities in countries where the challenges of the European Higher Education Area are greatest;
- to meet the challenges of being readable, attractive and competitive at home, in Europe and in the world; and
- to keep considering higher education as an essential public responsibility.

13. Prague Communiqué, 2001



Towards the European Higher Education Area. Communiqué of the meeting of European Ministers in charge of Higher Education [Prague Communiqué]. Prague, May 19th 2001.

Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area

Ministers agreed on the importance of enhancing attractiveness of European higher education to students from Europe and other parts of the world. The readability and comparability of European higher education degrees world-wide should be enhanced by the development of a common framework of qualifications, as well as by coherent quality assurance and accreditation/certification mechanisms and by increased information efforts.

Ministers particularly stressed that the quality of higher education and research is and should be an important determinant of Europe's international attractiveness and competitiveness. Ministers agreed that more attention should be paid to the benefit of a European Higher Education Area with institutions and programmes with different profiles. They called for increased collaboration between the European countries concerning the possible implications and perspectives of transnational education.

14. Towards European Research Area, 2002**14.1 Commission of the European Communities. Communication from the Commission. *More Research for Europe. Towards 3% of GDP.* Brussels, 11.9.2002. COM(2002) 499 final**

The analyses contained in this communication confirm that it is necessary not only to improve the effectiveness of the European R&D and innovation system, but also to address the EU's under-investment in R&D. The current trends in R&D investment must be reversed urgently in order to approach 3 % of GDP by 2010, with an increased share of business funding that should reach two thirds of total R&D expenditure. Such a change is essential to reach the Lisbon objective of making Europe the leading knowledge economy in the world. It

will require joint efforts involving the European institutions, all Member States and the Candidate Countries, as well as the enterprise sector.

14.2 Commission of the European Communities. Communication from the Commission. *The European Research Area: Providing New Momentum. Strengthening - Reorienting - Opening up new perspectives.* Brussels, 16 October 2002 COM(2002) 565 final

4.9. The international dimension of the European Research Area¹⁰¹

Following on from the Commission Communication on this topic, several initiatives had been undertaken to take account of, benefit from and exploit the international dimension of the European Research Area and its openness to the world.

Developments in this field include in particular:

- In the Sixth Framework Programme, the unrestricted opening up of the "thematic" part to all third countries, with possible access to the relevant funding in some cases, the introduction of a double fellowship scheme for researchers coming from third countries to the EU and for EU researchers going to third countries, and the redefinition of EU research activities in the field of nuclear fusion on the basis of full EU participation in the ITER (International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor) project;
- The creation of an electronic information system on entry and residence requirements for researchers from third countries going to Member States;
- In addition to the integrated action concerning co-operation with Russia, undertaken in the framework of the INTAS association and the international ISTC¹⁰² initiative, the development of concerted and coordinated approaches between the Community and the Member States in the EU's scientific and technological dialogue with the major regional groupings of

¹⁰¹ European Commission, Communication entitled "The international dimension of the European Research Area", COM(2001) 346, 25.6.2001.

¹⁰² International Science and Technology Centre.

third countries: Mediterranean countries, Latin American countries and ASEAN countries;

- Closer ties between the EU and the ACP countries in the field of research, with an ACP-EU Forum on research into sustainable development held in Cape Town in July 2002.

Actions planned or for consideration

- The setting up, based on the model of the European Forum on Infrastructures, of a Concertation Forum on international scientific cooperation, which will make it possible to strengthen the coherence and coordination of Member State participation in international cooperation initiatives at world level: international programmes on global change and to support the Kyoto agreements; actions undertaken in the framework of the G8; international initiatives on ethical matters.

- Putting in place more powerful mechanisms for the exchange of information and concertation on international scientific cooperation policies, e.g. networks linking scientific and technological attachés posted to Member State (or, where appropriate, EU) representations in third countries, drawing on the model of the initiatives taken in some third-country capitals, such as the FEAST Forum in Australia.¹⁰³

- Exploration of the scope for the combined use of national and EU financial support schemes for the mobility of researchers from third countries coming to the EU: one possibility could be the payment of an extra EU grant to top up national fellowships for a period of attachment to laboratories in several EU countries, for example, making it possible to attract particularly high-calibre researchers while strengthening the ties between the laboratories concerned.

¹⁰³ Forum for European-Australian Science and Technology Cooperation.

14.3 Commission of the European Communities. Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. More Research and Innovation - Investing for Growth and Employment: A Common Approach. Brussels, xxx COM(2005) 488 final{SEC(2005) 1253}

World-wide competition to attract research and innovation investment is growing. In addition to attractive locations such as the US and Japan, new competitors have emerged, such as China, India and Brazil. For the EU to remain competitive and sustain its model of society, far-reaching reforms are needed urgently. Moreover, the scale of competition is such that no Member State can succeed in isolation. Transnational synergies should be fully exploited. This is the only way to boost research and innovation performance and to turn it effectively into more growth and jobs in the EU. A high level of R&D spending and a good innovation performance contribute to more and better jobs. In addition research and innovation are needed to make the EU economy more sustainable, by finding win-win solutions for economic growth, social development and environmental protection.

15. ESIB and the Bologna Process, 2003



[ESIB]. **ESIB and the Bologna Process – Creating a European Higher Education Area for and with students. Berlin, 18-19 September 2003.**

8. Promoting the Attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area

ESIB believes that the shift of focus towards attractiveness is a positive development, as the term competitiveness can have a very negative meaning, especially when it comes to competing at all costs, which undermines academic values such as co-operation.

ESIB further believes that attractiveness can best be reached by a high quality of education and research and by a good international network of co-operation with various partner institutions around the globe.

When discussing the attractiveness of the EHEA, the problems of brain drain need to be tackled and resolved. Although ESIB believes in the freedom of each student, researcher and member of teaching staff to choose their place of study, work and life, special attention must be paid to the following points. Making Europe one of the most attractive higher education areas, countries have to act responsibly in relation to the problem of brain drain, both between Bologna signatory countries and outside. Since a lot of talented students, researchers and teaching staff in developing countries and countries in transition are emigrating, the creation of a cohesive higher education area is endangered, as is the economic and social development of the countries encountering brain drain. Signatory countries should respond to the fact that the process of brain drain also has highly negative implications for the development and quality of higher education and research. Guaranteeing safe employment and working conditions for students, staff and researchers in the qualification phase can reduce the problem of brain drain and enhance the attractiveness of the EHEA. This also means that PhD candidates should be employed by the universities, and enough full time jobs have to be provided for young researchers to make the academic workplace an attractive option for them.

With regards to the GATS, ESIB reaffirms its strong opposition against making any further commitments in education. ESIB calls upon governments to not make further commitments in education while at the same time reviewing existing commitments and legally assessing their impact on the public system. ESIB further calls upon governments to engage in a constructive dialogue with teachers, students and universities about the issues surrounding trade in education services, as the existing trade in the framework of TNE arrangements has to be steered to make it beneficial. Generally, ESIB reaffirms its commitment to education as a public good not a tradable commodity.

**16. BFUG Working Group
on the External Dimension,
2003**



**Bologna Follow up Group. Attractiveness, Openness and Co-operation.
The European Higher Education Area and third countries. Report by the
Danish Presidency. 4th draft, Athens, 20 June 2003.**

The idea of regional cooperation in higher education “a la Bologna” should be promoted to other parts of the world. It is the European experience or conviction that quality in higher education can be enhanced through regional cooperation. Higher education systems in other parts of the world should have the same opportunity to make the same experience. For Europe this means stronger partners.

It has to be said that not all regions in the world may be prepared for this kind of cooperation.

In the first place the countries in the region should have an interest in the benefits of regional cooperation “a la Bologna”:

- Mobility for cultural contact, mutual understanding and confidence building
- Mobility for enhancing quality in higher education
- Creation of a coherent regional labour market with transparency in qualifications

In the second place such cooperation can only be established under certain conditions:

- Possibility for peaceful governmental cooperation in the region
- Existence of a civil society with free associations of students and academics
- Autonomous institutions of higher education (in line with the European Magna Carta Universitatum of 1988)
- Acceptance of a lingua franca, existence of a common language or a common ability to work in several languages
- Commitment of governments and institutions to reform

There are of course many ways to promote the Bologna idea and they should all be used.

- Existing cooperative frameworks whether they are regional organisations as such or partnerships between Europe and the region
- Contact to UNESCO regions
- Inviting a leading country as promoter in the regions
- Organising regional conferences about the Bologna Process
- General information in publications and on the internet [...]

Conclusions

The Berlin communiqué should contain the following elements:

- Ministers agree that the attractiveness and openness of the European higher education should be reinforced through cooperation with regions in other parts of the world.
- They confirm their readiness to further develop scholarship programmes for students from third countries.
- They undertake to win acceptance, within the relevant frameworks, for the need to base all international cooperation as any trade in higher education on academic values and on clear and transparent standards for quality.
- They encourage the promotion of the idea and the good practice of the Bologna Process by inviting representatives of other regions of the world to Bologna seminars and conferences.

17. Berlin Communiqué, 2003



***Realising the European Higher Education Area. [Berlin Communiqué].
Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Higher
Education in Berlin on 19 September 2003.***

Ministers welcome the interest shown by other regions of the world in the development of the European Higher Education Area, and

welcome in particular the presence of representatives from European countries not yet party to the Bologna Process as well as from the Follow-up Committee of the European Union, Latin America and Caribbean (EULAC) Common Space for Higher Education as guests at this conference. [...]

Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area

Ministers agree that the attractiveness and openness of the European higher education should be reinforced. They confirm their readiness to further develop scholarship programmes for students from third countries.

Ministers declare that transnational exchanges in higher education should be governed on the basis of academic quality and academic values, and agree to work in all appropriate fora to that end. In all appropriate circumstances such fora should include the social and economic partners.

They encourage the co-operation with regions in other parts of the world by opening Bologna seminars and conferences to representatives of these regions.”

18. Erasmus Mundus Programme (2003)	
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Decision No 2317/2003/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 December 2003 establishing a programme for the enhancement of quality in higher education and the promotion of intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries (Erasmus Mundus) (2004 to 2008), OJ L345/1 of 31 December 2003.

Objectives of the programme

1. The programme's overall aim is to enhance the quality of European higher education by fostering cooperation with third countries in order to improve the development of human resources and to promote dialogue and understanding between peoples and cultures.

2. The programme's specific objectives are:

- (a) to promote a quality offer in higher education with a distinct European added value, attractive both within the European Union and beyond its borders;
- (b) to encourage and enable highly qualified graduates and scholars from all over the world, to obtain qualifications and/or experience in the European Union;
- (c) to develop more structured cooperation between European Union and third-country institutions and greater European Union outgoing mobility as part of European study programmes;
- (d) to improve accessibility and enhance the profile and visibility of higher education in the European Union.

**19. ACA Conference:
Opening up to the Wider
World (2004)**



Recommendations for inclusion in the Bergen Communiqué. Opening up to the Wider World? The External Dimension of the Bologna Process. ACA Conference, Hamburg, Germany, 17 to 19 October 2004.

The conference “Opening up to the Wider World: The External Dimension of the Bologna Process” took place in Hamburg, Germany from 17 to 19 October 2004. The event was organised by the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA), in cooperation with the University of Hamburg, and supported by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the European Commission. The conference was guided by the overarching question if and in which way exactly the Bologna reforms would help to improve the reputation and attractiveness of European higher education in the world. The impact of the Bologna reforms on cooperation and competition between Europe and other world regions was addressed and investigated by both European and non-European experts. The conference attracted about 200 participants from higher education institutions, governments, and associations active in the field of internationalisation of education and training.

What are the outcomes of the conference?

Speakers and participants confirmed that the Bologna reforms were a step in the right direction. But they also underlined that structural reforms were not enough for the continent's ambitions to become a worldwide reference in higher education. True excellence in teaching and research was at least as much, if not more, dependent on the presence and commitment of high-quality teachers and researchers. Europe's ability to attract or to keep these high achievers critically depended on whether or not it was able to provide them with the resources and working conditions they needed.

Speakers from other world regions confirmed that the reform agenda was being perceived outside of Europe, though at different degrees by the different target academic groups. While higher education leaders and managers were probably best informed, there were clear deficiencies on the side of the faculty. The fact that word about the reforms had travelled beyond the confines of Europe does not mean, however, that non-European observers had a detailed knowledge of the aims and the elements of the reform process. There was therefore a clear need for the provision of targeted information on the Bologna Process outside of Europe.

Recommendations to the Bergen Ministerial Meeting:

- *Ministers should encourage the provision of better and more comprehensive information about the Bologna Process to the relevant academic stakeholders outside Europe.*
- *Structural reforms alone will not suffice to make Europe a global higher education leader. Ministers should therefore ensure adequate resources and working conditions, in order to keep or attract high-quality teachers and researchers.*

20. Mobilising the brainpower of Europe (2004-2005)	
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20.1 Kok, Wim (2004). *Facing the Challenge. The Lisbon Strategy for growth and employment. Report from the High Level Group chaired by Wim Kok. November 2004 [pp. 20-21].*

Attracting and retaining world-class researchers

Europe needs to dramatically improve its attractiveness to researchers, as too many young scientists continue to leave Europe on graduating, notably for the US. Too few of the brightest and best from elsewhere in the world choose to live and work in Europe.

Further developing a system of mutual validation of national quality assurance and accreditation processes would be an important step in the right direction. It would reduce the administrative obstacles to mobility within the EU that European researchers continue to face. Obstacles relate to social security entitlements and the recognition of qualifications. More also needs to be done to facilitate the entry of researchers and their dependants from outside the EU through simplified, fast-track work permit and visa procedures.

In order to increase attractiveness, there are also financial questions requiring attention. Member States need to urgently address the problem of funding for universities. If Europe wants to attract more of the world's best researchers, the question of improving their research environment and remuneration needs to be addressed now.

Creative interaction between universities, scientists and researchers on the one hand and industry and commerce on the other, which drives technology transfer and innovation, is necessarily rooted in the close physical location of universities and companies. There is already ample evidence around the world that high-tech clusters are built on this interaction, but 'ideopolises' – for example, Helsinki, Munich and Cambridge – go further. They have an array of other supporting factors – notably a sophisticated communications and transport

infrastructure, financial institutions willing to provide the necessary risk capital to entrepreneurs and specialists in technology transfer, supportive public authorities that facilitate the network structures driving creative interaction – and are attractive environments for knowledge workers. ‘Ideopolises’ are emerging as the cities at the heart of dynamic, high-growth knowledge-based regions.

Key recommendations

The EU needs to draw more of the best and brightest researchers in the world by raising its attractiveness. Therefore, the 2005 Spring European Council should agree to prepare an action plan to reduce the administrative obstacles for moving to and within the EU for world-class scientists and researchers and their dependants.

This action plan should be implemented by spring 2006.

Fast-track work permit and visa procedures should be introduced for researchers and the mutual recognition of professional qualifications must be improved.

20.2 Commission of the European Communities (2005b).

Communication from the Commission. *Mobilising the brainpower of Europe: enabling universities to make their full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy.* SEC(2005)518. Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 20 April 2005.

3.1. Attractiveness: the imperative of quality and excellence

Raising quality and attractiveness requires major transformations at universities. Those who drive these transformations within universities require specific support (including funding) from their environment. Universities failing to undertake these changes - for want of drive, power to act or available resources – will create a growing handicap for themselves, their graduates and their countries. [...]

3.1.2. Factors to raise attractiveness to learners

More flexibility and openness to the world in teaching/learning

If universities are to become more attractive locally and globally, profound curricular revision is required - not just to ensure the highest level of academic content, but also to respond to the changing needs of labour markets. The integration of graduates into professional life, and hence into society, is a major social responsibility of higher education. Learning needs to encompass transversal skills (such as teamwork and entrepreneurship) in addition to specialist knowledge. European and interdisciplinary aspects need to be strengthened. The potential of ICT should be fully exploited in teaching/learning, including for lifelong learning. The bachelor-master divide allows more diverse programme profiles and learning methods (e.g. research-based learning and ICT delivery).

Broader access

With new types of learners, greater programme diversity and more mobility across Europe, improved guidance and counselling (before and during higher education), flexible admission policies and customised learning paths are of growing importance. They are key determinants for broadening access, supporting student commitment and increasing success and efficiency -whether admission is competitive or not. Grant/loan systems, affordable accommodation and part-time work or assistantships are also important for universities to be attractive and accessible to a suitably wide range of learners – thus breaking the link between social origin and educational attainment.

Better communication

While academia tends to assume that good quality is its own advertisement, attractiveness is about perceptions. The development of a coherent structure of degrees, ECTS credits, the Diploma Supplement and trustworthy quality seals will enhance the recognition of European degrees. But it will not suffice: universities need better to communicate with society about the value of what they produce, and to invest more in their presence and marketing at home and abroad. Not all are well prepared for this. [...]

Annex

54. The comparative analysis of higher education has shown that the EU is a world quality reference as concerns total number of PhD graduates as well as number of graduates in mathematics, science and technology. It also performs well as regards public investment in higher education.

55. However, the analysis also shows that the EU needs to improve access to higher education, to increase higher education attainment levels, and increase total investment in higher education.

21. A Framework for qualifications of the EHEA, 2005



A Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.
Copenhagen: Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, 2005.

There are significant direct and indirect connections between the full Bologna agenda and the creation of effective systems for the description and location of qualifications in Europe. The overarching framework for qualifications should play a vital role in the EHEA. The majority of the ten action lines identified in the policy documents of the Bologna Process will be affected fundamentally and positively by the development of clear, outcomes-focussed qualifications frameworks that share common methodological descriptors. The adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, that aids recognition, requires these common and clear descriptors. Links to the action lines are provided through:

[...]

> Promoting the attractiveness of the European higher education area would be made easier as the transparency and comparability of European higher education degrees is made real by the development of a common framework of qualifications. Refining of ways to

describe degrees and levels in higher education is fundamental to the Bologna Process.

> A transparent and well-articulated overarching framework, supported by national frameworks, will also be of considerable importance to the recognition, in other parts of the world, of qualifications resulting from the Bologna reforms.

The development of conceptual approaches for describing qualifications is currently an important priority for many countries as they undertake educational reforms in the light of the Bologna process. These developments are not restricted to Europe, or indeed to higher education, and can be seen in other areas of education and training and in other parts of the world as shown by the experiences in, for example, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Unfortunately, the situation is complicated by the existence of several alternative and competing approaches. Some stakeholders in the European higher education sector have been aware of the problems associated with the current situation and there are a number of ongoing national and international attempts designed to resolve these problems and move towards a more common understanding.

22. Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA, 2005



Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. Helsinki: European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Quality assurance in higher education is by no means only a European concern. All over the world there is an increasing interest in quality and standards, reflecting both the rapid growth of higher education and its cost to the public and the private purse. Accordingly, if Europe is to achieve its aspiration to be the most dynamic and knowledge-based economy in the world (Lisbon Strategy), then European higher education will need to demonstrate that it takes the quality of its programmes and awards seriously and is willing to put into place the means of assuring and demonstrating that quality. The initiatives and

demands, which are springing up both inside and outside Europe in the face of this internationalisation of higher education, demand a response. The commitment of all those involved in the production of these proposals augurs well for the fulfilment of a truly European dimension to quality assurance with which to reinforce the attractiveness of the EHEA's higher education offering.

The proposals contained in this report are underpinned by a number of principles which are described in more detail in the two chapters which cover the two parts of the Berlin mandate. However, some fundamental principles should permeate the whole work:

- the interests of students as well as employers and the society more generally in good quality higher education;
- the central importance of institutional autonomy, tempered by a recognition that this brings with it heavy responsibilities;
- the need for external quality assurance to be fit for its purpose and to place only an appropriate and necessary burden on institutions for the achievement of its objectives.

The EHEA with its 40 states is characterised by its diversity of political systems, higher education systems, socio-cultural and educational traditions, languages, aspirations and expectations. This makes a single monolithic approach to quality, standards and quality assurance in higher education inappropriate. In the light of this diversity and variety, generally acknowledged as being one of the glories of Europe, the report sets its face against a narrow, prescriptive and highly formulated approach to standards. In both the standards and the guidelines, the report prefers the generic principle to the specific requirement. It does this because it believes that this approach is more likely to lead to broad acceptance in the first instance and because it will provide a more robust basis for the coming together of the different higher education communities across the EHEA. The generic standards ought to find a general resonance at the national level of most signatory states. However, one consequence of the generic principle is that the standards and guidelines focus more on what should be done than how they should be achieved. Thus, the report does include procedural matters, but it has given a priority to standards and guidelines, especially in Chapter 2.

**23. Bergen Communiqué,
2005**



The European Higher Education Area – Achieving the Goals. [Bergen Communiqué]. Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, Bergen, 19-20 May 2005.

The attractiveness of the EHEA and cooperation with other parts of the world

The European Higher Education Area must be open and should be attractive to other parts of the world. Our contribution to achieving education for all should be based on the principle of sustainable development and be in accordance with the ongoing international work on developing guidelines for quality provision of cross-border higher education. We reiterate that in international academic cooperation, academic values should prevail.

We see the European Higher Education Area as a partner of higher education systems in other regions of the world, stimulating balanced student and staff exchange and cooperation between higher education institutions. We underline the importance of intercultural understanding and respect. We look forward to enhancing the understanding of the Bologna Process in other continents by sharing our experiences of reform processes with neighbouring regions. We stress the need for dialogue on issues of mutual interest. We see the need to identify partner regions and intensify the exchange of ideas and experiences with those regions. We ask the Follow-up Group to elaborate and agree on a strategy for the external dimension. [...]

Preparing for 2010

Building on the achievements so far in the Bologna Process, we wish to establish a European Higher Education Area based on the principles of quality and transparency. We must cherish our rich heritage and cultural diversity in contributing to a knowledge-based society. We commit ourselves to upholding the principle of public responsibility for higher education in the context of complex modern societies. As higher education is situated at the crossroads of research, education

and innovation, it is also the key to Europe's competitiveness. As we move closer to 2010, we undertake to ensure that higher education institutions enjoy the necessary autonomy to implement the agreed reforms, and we recognise the need for sustainable funding of institutions.

24. European Institute of Technology, 2006



22.1 Commission of the European Communities. Commission Staff Working Document. Annex to the Communication from the Commission to the European Council Implementing the renewed partnership for growth and jobs. Developing a knowledge flagship: the European Institute of Technology. Results of the Public Consultation on a Concept of a European Institute of Technology. Brussels, 13.3.2006. SEC(2006) 368

The idea of establishing a European Institute of Technology (EIT) was put forward by the Commission in its Mid-Term Review of the Lisbon Strategy. Subsequently, the March 2005 European Council asked the Commission to explore the idea further. To support this process, a public consultation was held from 15 September to 15 November 2005. The questionnaire, which did not directly address the relevance of an EIT, comprised four questions on what the mission, added value, structure and priorities of the EIT should be.

22.2 Commission of the European Communities. Communication from the Commission to the European Council. The European Institute of Technology: further steps towards its creation. Brussels, 8.6.2006 COM(2006) 276 final

Further to a first Communication on the European Institute of Technology (EIT) adopted on February 22, 2006, the March 2006 European Council recognised that the European Institute of Technology will be an important step to fill the existing gap between

higher education, research and innovation, and invited the Commission to submit by mid June 2006 a proposal on further steps to undertake.

As a European organization able to promote excellence, to attract talent globally, and to provide a European working environment to students, researchers and innovation managers, the EIT will constitute a European symbol of a renewed effort towards the creation of a competitive, knowledge based society. [...]

1. Introduction

The Commission first drew attention to the need for a European Institute of Technology in its Spring Report 2005. The European Council took note, and the Commission launched a process of reflection and consultation, which resulted in its presenting on 22 February 2006 a first Communication on the European Institute of Technology (EIT).

The conclusions of the March 2006 European Council state that:

“The European Council notes the significance of the Commission's communication on the European Institute for Technology and will further examine the ideas in order to enhance together with other actions networking and synergies between excellent research and innovation communities in Europe. The European Council recognises that a European Institute for Technology – based on top-class networks open to all Member States – will be an important step to fill the existing gap between higher education, research and innovation, together with other actions that enhance networking and synergies between excellent research and innovation communities in Europe. The European Research Council should have a guiding role in this context. The European Council invites the Commission to submit a proposal on further steps by mid June 2006.”¹⁰⁴ [...]

¹⁰⁴ Presidency conclusions, par. 25.

4. Degrees

The EIT should be able to award degrees and diplomas. They would constitute a visible manifestation of the EIT brand and an incentive to attract students and researchers to participate in its programmes. The EIT must act as a pole of attraction for the best minds from around the world. Awarding high quality degrees would strengthen its identity and help it to become widely recognized, and thus to act as a model for promoting change across the European Higher Education Area. [...]

7. Global Attractiveness

One objective of the EIT is to be attractive to students and researchers worldwide. Only by establishing a global reputation will it attract students and researchers from across Europe and act as a flagship for change. Experience also shows that institutions with a global reputation can attract a significant proportion of students and researchers from outside the EU. This would be both a measure of success and a chance for the EU to benefit from the skills which non-EU citizens bring with them – in much the way that the US has done. However, the EIT should be conscious of the need to avoid triggering a brain drain from less developed countries and aim instead to promote research and innovation in third countries through appropriate links.

Two main issues would drive the global attractiveness of the EIT to non-EU students and researchers at all stages of their careers. The first is the academic credibility of the courses, degrees and research programmes. The way its degrees are recognised internationally, the quality of the research, outcomes and the innovation developed would be major elements to attract students and researchers from abroad. The second is the ease with which it would be possible for foreign Masters or Doctoral candidates and researchers to join the EIT and for the EIT to employ third country citizens in the Knowledge Communities. Accelerated and simplified national admission and visa procedure for non-EU students and researchers have been agreed¹⁰⁵ and should be

¹⁰⁵ The directive on specific procedures for admitting third country nationals for the purpose of scientific research (Directive 2005/71/CE, 12 October

rapidly transposed. Special visa agreements might also be needed. Providing financial support for non-EU students and researchers would reinforce the global attractiveness of the EIT. The EIT Governing Board should consider the issue of bursaries and research grants to outstanding students and researchers from abroad. The criterion, as always for the EIT, should be the excellence of outcome.

25. Modernisation agenda for universities (2005, 2006)	
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25.1 Commission of the European Communities. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

European values in the globalised world. Contribution of the Commission to the October Meeting of Heads of State and Government. Brussels, 03.11.2005 COM(2005) 525 final/2

Europe must reform and modernise its policies to preserve its values. Modernisation is essential to continue keep Europe's historically high levels of prosperity, social cohesion, environmental protection and quality of life.

The need for change is widely recognised; for example in the reform process launched in Lisbon in March 2000. But this analysis has not yet been fully translated into action. Europe can no longer afford to wait; because what is different five years on is the added sense of urgency. Global competition, particularly from Asia, has intensified. Cutting-edge knowledge is no longer confined to Europe or North America. Indian universities are turning out more than a quarter of million engineers every year. Research spending in China is set to catch that in the EU by 2010.

2005) and the two recommendations on short-stay visas and on admission of researchers from third countries traveling within the community for the purpose of carrying out scientific research (Recommendations 2005/761/CE and 2005/762/CE) were published in OJ L 289 of 3 November 2005.

25.2 Commission of the European Communities. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. *Interim report on the follow up to the informal meeting of Heads of State and Government at Hampton Court*. Brussels, 7.12.2005 COM(2005) 645 final

1. Introduction

At Hampton Court on 27 October 2005 the Heads of State and Government of the European Union had a fruitful discussion on Europe's response to globalisation. The Communication of the Commission 'European values in the globalised world' helped to focus the discussion on the challenges and opportunities ahead of us. All agreed that Europe needs economic reforms and social modernisation to safeguard its values. At the end of the informal meeting the Commission was asked to take the lead in further work on research and development, universities, demographic challenges, energy, migration and security. It was agreed that this work will not lead to new processes or structures but will be mainstreamed into existing channels. President Barosso announced that he will present a concept paper on the external projection of the European Union in the world. Swift and firm efforts in all these areas are essential to boost Europe's response to globalisation. [...]

PART 2

1. The Hampton Court work streams

Building on the information already provided in the Information Note of 9 November, the following paragraphs describe the state of play regarding the main issues to be addressed in every Hampton Court work stream. They list the main initiatives at European level recently tabled or planned for 2006.

2. Research and Development

A new impetus is needed to increase significantly Europe's research and development and innovative capacity. It is especially important to have more leading companies working in areas like ICT, space, biotechnology, and nanotechnology. A major impetus will be given if we have agreements on the 7th Research Framework Programme and the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme. However, more needs to be done if Europe is to become a more attractive place to invest in research and development. It is crucial to get the financing for small high-potential companies right and to address the brain drain of Europe's best and brightest.

The Commission is working on a number of initiatives which are directly relevant to the above issues. Building on the 7th Framework Programme, the communication on state aid, i2010, the strategic guidelines for cohesion policy, etc., the Commission will table a communication in the first quarter of 2006 identifying priority actions to increase investment in R&D financing, to create attractive markets and to contribute to growth of European innovative firms, in particular SME's. The Commission will try to specify concrete examples of public R&D funding where it has been possible to facilitate access to finance, to remove obstacles to cross-border investments, to increase the leverage effect on private sector R&D financing and to foster public-private partnerships. In this respect, the Commission will look into aspects of the application of state aid legislation and competition rules in order to facilitate R&D and innovation. The Commission will also present a Communication on defence industries and markets, aiming to encourage the competitiveness of the European defence sector through appropriate market legislation and R&D programmes.

3. Universities

Universities are the locus where education, research and innovation meet. The conditions must be put in place to enable them to maximise their potential. This means addressing questions on funding levels and sources, on regulatory frameworks and management systems, on ensuring access to higher education and, crucially, on how universities transfer innovation and skills to the market. Universities now operate in a global market for higher education and research. European universities stand a good chance to benefit from the opportunities this market offers, for example through partnerships with higher education and research centres in third countries as well as with business. European universities could reinforce their position if they can attract and keep the best brains – in terms of teachers, students and researchers – and better exploit the knowledge they generate. Specifically, more needs to be done to improve the training of post-graduates. Also, better and more diversified funding and closer university/business cooperation is needed.

Building on the work done so far, the Commission will seek the views of experts on the concrete steps that must now be taken.

In this context, the Commission intends to come forward with a Communication on European higher education systems and in particular universities. It will look into ways of enhancing the research and innovation performance of European Universities. Further to its recent public consultation, the Commission will table a proposal in the first quarter of 2006 to establish a European Institute for Technology with the aim of enhancing Europe's top-rank university capacity.

25.3 Commission of the European Communities. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. *Delivering on the Modernisation Agenda for Universities: Education, Research and Innovation*. Brussels, 10.5.2006 COM(2006) 208 final

Introduction

Modernisation of Europe's universities, involving their interlinked roles of education, research and innovation, has been acknowledged not only as a core condition for the success of the broader Lisbon Strategy, but as part of the wider move towards an increasingly global and knowledge-based economy. The main items on the agenda for change have been identified and given added momentum by the European Council: at the informal meeting at Hampton Court in October 2005, R&D and universities were acknowledged as foundations of European competitiveness; the 2006 Spring European Council agreed on stronger action at European level to drive forward this agenda in universities and research, which should be implemented by the end of 2007 in the context of the renewed partnership for growth and employment. In the National Reform Programmes based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, Member States refer generally to these issues, but few address them as a national priority. Yet these changes are necessary to regenerate Europe's own approach, not to replicate any imported model. They are equally necessary in order to reinforce the societal roles of universities in a culturally and linguistically diverse Europe. [...]

9. Make the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area more visible and attractive in the world

The development of extensive cooperation, mobility and networks between European universities over the past decades has created the right conditions for broader internationalisation. Most universities now have experience with multilateral consortia and many are involved in joint courses or double degree arrangements. The Erasmus Mundus Masters have demonstrated the relevance of these initiatives - which are unique to Europe - in the global arena. Continuing globalisation means that the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area must be fully open to the world and become worldwide competitive players.

This will, however, only be possible if Europe makes a serious effort to promote the quality of its universities, and to increase their attractiveness and visibility worldwide.

One possibility, at European and Member State level, would be to develop more structured international cooperation, supported by the necessary financial means, with the EU's neighbouring countries and worldwide, through bilateral/multilateral agreements. This also entails that Member States, acting within the EU's commitment not to promote brain drain, should open up their funding schemes to non-Europeans and provide opportunities for interuniversity staff exchanges as well as opportunities for non-European researcher and academic staff to carry out professional activities. "Brain circulation" should also be promoted for European students, teachers and researchers who have decided to spend part of their working life outside Europe.¹⁰⁶ People undertaking a temporary assignment abroad are both an asset for the sending and/or hosting country as they constitute a reserve of professional contacts abroad, acting as bridgeheads for sharing knowledge. This in turn, will increase Europe's visibility in education and research and as a reliable partner in the development of third countries' human capital.

One fundamental point is to simplify and accelerate legal and administrative procedures for the entry of non-EU students and researchers. Concerning admission and residence of third country researchers, the "researchers' visa" package – a directive and two recommendations on the admission of third-country nationals to carry out scientific research in the European Community¹⁰⁷ was adopted in 2005 and will have to be transposed into national law during 2007.

Building an attractive image for European universities in the world also calls for a serious effort to make European degrees more easily recognised outside Europe. However, first, cross-recognition has to be fully achieved within the EU itself; the recent Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications has already made it simpler for professional purposes. More effort is still necessary as far as

¹⁰⁶ See European Researchers Abroad (ERA-Link) pilot initiative, <<http://www.eurunion.org/legislat/ste/eralink.htm>>.

¹⁰⁷ The three instruments were published on 3 November 2005 in the Official Journal O.J. L 289 of 3 November 2005. The two recommendations immediately entered into force, while the Member States will have two years (e.g. by November 2007) to implement the directive as well as Council Directive 2004/114/EC of 13 December 2004 (OJ L 375, 23.12.2004).

academic recognition is concerned. The coherent framework of qualifications and of compatible quality assurance systems currently under development¹⁰⁸ will contribute to this. The existence of more “European” courses, offered jointly by consortia of universities and leading to joint or double degrees at Master or Doctorate level, would also help to make Europe more attractive to students, teachers and researchers from the rest of the world. [...]

Universities are key players in Europe’s future and for the successful transition to a knowledge-based economy and society. However, this crucial sector of the economy and of society needs in-depth restructuring and modernisation if Europe is not to lose out in the global competition in education, research and innovation. [...]

The Hampdon Court meeting also called for urgent action to promote excellence in both research and education, particularly world-class universities with adequate funding streams and closer links with business. (Moving up a gear; 2006, p. 9 – point 3.1).

26. Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education, 2005

Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education. Paris: OECD 2005; UNESCO 2006.

The Guidelines aim to support and encourage international cooperation and enhance the understanding of the importance of quality provision in cross-border higher education. The purposes of the Guidelines are to protect students and other stakeholders from low-quality provision and disreputable providers as well as to encourage the development of quality cross-border higher education that meets human, social, economic and cultural needs. [...]

¹⁰⁸ For example, through the recent European Parliament and Council Recommendation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (OJ L64 of 4.3.2006) and through the consultations on a European Qualifications Framework.

The challenge faced by current quality assurance and accreditation systems is to develop appropriate procedures and systems to cover foreign providers and programmes (in addition to national providers and programmes) in order to maximise the benefits and limit the potential drawbacks of the internationalisation of higher education. At the same time, the increase in cross-border student, academic staff, researcher and professional mobility has put the issue of the recognition of academic and professional qualifications high on the international cooperation agenda. [...]

The quality of a country's higher education sector and its assessment and monitoring is not only key to its social and economic well-being, it is also a determining factor affecting the status of that higher education system at the international level. The establishment of quality assurance systems has become a necessity, not only for monitoring quality in higher education delivered within the country, but also for engaging in delivery of higher education internationally. As a consequence, there has been an impressive rise in the number of quality assurance and accreditation bodies for higher education in the past two decades. However, existing national quality assurance capacity often focuses exclusively on domestic delivery by domestic institutions.

The increased cross-border mobility of students, academic staff, professionals, programmes and providers presents challenges for existing national quality assurance and accreditation frameworks and bodies as well as for the systems for recognising foreign qualifications. Some of these challenges are described below:

- a) National capacity for quality assurance and accreditation often does not cover cross-border higher education. This increases the risk of students falling victim to misleading guidance and information and disreputable providers, dubious quality assurance and accreditation bodies and low-quality provision, leading to qualifications of limited validity.
- b) National systems and bodies for the recognition of qualifications may have limited knowledge and experience in dealing with cross-border higher education. In some cases, the challenge becomes more complicated as cross-border higher education providers may deliver

qualifications that are not of comparable quality to those which they offer in their home country.

c) The increasing need to obtain national recognition of foreign qualifications has posed challenges to national recognition bodies. This in turn, at times, leads to administrative and legal problems for the individuals concerned.

d) The professions depend on trustworthy, high-quality qualifications. It is essential that users of professional services including employers have full confidence in the skills of qualified professionals. The increasing possibility of obtaining low-quality qualifications could harm the professions themselves, and might in the long run undermine confidence in professional qualifications.

5.2. ANNEX 2

Recommendations from the Bologna Official Seminars on the “External Dimension”

Vatican seminar (Vatican City, 30 March – 1 April 2006)

The Cultural Heritage and Academic Values of the European University and the Attractiveness of the Higher Education Area

From Archbishop J. Michael Miller’s *Summary and Synthesis of the seminar*; Synod Hall, Vatican, 1 April 2006

II. Recommendations of Discussion Groups

The participants in this Seminar are convinced that the commitment of the Bologna Process to strengthening the external dimension of European higher education depends in large measure on reaffirming the relationship between Europe's cultural heritage and its universities and on fostering its common academic values.

Now is the time to hear directly from the discussion groups which met yesterday morning. The reporters of the various discussion groups will read a summary of their conclusions and recommendations. All of these suggestions will be integrated into a few specific recommendations to be handed over, as the fruit of our labours, to those preparing for the Ministerial Meeting in London in May of next year. Before each of the four topics, I will make a few observations drawn from our general discussion.

1. Basic Values of Academic Freedom

The theme treated in the first two discussion groups was academic freedom. Proper to a university's institutional autonomy is the guarantee of academic freedom that it offers its members. In the great European tradition, freedom in research and teaching have been recognized and respected according to the principles and methods of each discipline. Academic freedom guarantees that scholars may search for the truth wherever analysis and evidence lead them.

Moreover, it ensures that they may teach and publish the results of this research, keeping in mind the need to safeguard the common good of the community. It is not only *freedom from* undue constraint and interference, but *freedom for* service to society. The European university should ensure that all teachers are accorded a lawful freedom of inquiry and of thought, and of freedom to express their minds humbly and courageously about those matters in which they enjoy competence.

In the past, this value was often threatened by totalitarian regimes of left and right. Sadly, the European university itself has, at times, complied with such bullying and compromised its institutional autonomy and thus the academic freedom of the professoriate. As was noted by more than one intervention, today there are still threats to the university's autonomy but they usually come from other quarters, such market and technological forces or the widespread cultural presupposition which regard teachers and researchers as "producers" and students as "consumers."

I would now ask each of the groups, in turn, to present their recommendations to the assembly. [...]

2. Foundations for Interdisciplinary Dialogue

The second theme dealt with in the Seminar's discussion groups was that of interdisciplinary dialogue. In his introduction to the second session, Dr. Jan Sadlak spoke about the vocation of the European university to be a kind of open forum - an *agora* - where scholars from all disciplines "can actively meet and match their ideas against one another." While honouring the integrity and method of each academic discipline, interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary conversations based on a common search of truth enrich the Academy, enabling it to become a community of wisdom rather than a cacophony of competing individual voices.

One practical consequence of insisting on interdisciplinary dialogue is the space it creates within the university community to meet the challenges posed by increasing fragmentation and specialization. In many instances we have a high level of compartmentalized information but little capacity for synthesis.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, we now face the possibility that the university will be reduced to a complex group of academic areas that produce only

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Congregation for Catholic Education, Pontifical Council for the Laity, and Pontifical Council for Culture, *The Presence of the Church in the University and in University Culture* (1994), I: 2, 8.

factual results which in the end are unrelated. Whenever this is the case, then the university will be able to offer an adequate professional formation, but will no longer be able to attain the purposes of a rich and full human formation.¹¹⁰

According to several of our speakers, Europe's universities, in line with their origins and heritage, are called to meet the challenge of integrating knowledge. This is an ever more difficult process given contemporary scepticism about the possibility of such an undertaking, coupled with the explosion of information now made available to anyone connected to the internet. Nonetheless, the university has the task of fostering a synthesis of knowledge, resisting the fragmentation of knowledge into merely quantifiable and commodifiable information.

To this "horizontal" inter-disciplinarity, which relates the various disciplines, the European university will promote what might be called a "vertical" inter-disciplinarity. Such verticality asks that the academic community be engaged in a constant effort to determine the relative place and meaning of each of the various disciplines within the context of a vision of the human person and the world inspired by transcendent values. An organic vision of reality, a higher synthesis of knowledge, is what is proposed.

I now ask the second discussion to present us their conclusions and recommendations as ways to foster the "external dimension" of the Bologna Process. [...]

3. Inter-cultural and inter-religious Dialogue

As we heard in this Hall, the increasing pluralism of European societies and globalization has brought intercultural and inter-religious dialogue to the fore as topics of concern to institutions of higher learning. Such topics are no longer taboo. Indeed, it was asserted from this podium that the ability of Europe's universities to attract students and professors in the future will depend to no small extent on how well they foster such dialogue within their communities and in society at large. It is an intrinsic value, an essential factor of Europe's heritage that the university aims, as John Henry Newman wrote, "to effect the

¹¹⁰ Cf. John Paul II, Address to the Third International Meeting of Catholic Universities and Institutions of Higher Learning (25 April 1989), 4.

intercommunion of one and all."¹¹¹

By its very nature, the European university develops culture through its research, helps to transmit its local culture to each succeeding generation through its teaching, and fosters cultural activities in diverse ways. As a learning community, the university is open to all human experience and is always ready to dialogue with, and learn from, any culture.¹¹² Given today's circumstances, the European university must become more attentive to different cultures, especially to the various cultural traditions within Europe, so that it can promote a profitable dialogue within modern society, and receive those from other cultures who wish to study and carry out research in the various countries which adhere to the Bologna Process.

In the climate of increased cultural and religious pluralism which increasingly marks Europe at the beginning of the 21st century, it is clear that this dialogue will be especially important in establishing a sure basis for stability and warding off the dread spectre of those wars of religion which, in the past, have stained the continent's history.¹¹³ It was observed that the university, precisely as a community of scholars, cannot remain on the sidelines of such dialogue. A university's identity, whatever its particular inspiration, is *strengthened* when it fosters inter-religious dialogue by introducing students to knowledge of religious traditions unfamiliar to them and by encouraging research in this field. The way of dialogue is the way of the European university.

Respectful conversation and cooperation enables the academic community to be enriched by the insights of others, challenged by their questions, and impelled to deepen their knowledge of their own convictions truth. Within Europe's universities such dialogue involves concern, respect, and hospitality toward those of other religions. Every university, which receives students of all faiths, should honour their identity, modes of expression, and values.

In order to strengthen the attractiveness of the European university,

¹¹¹ John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University* (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1931), 457.

¹¹² Cf. John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, 43.

¹¹³ Cf. John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 55.

two groups discussed both intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, reached the following conclusions and made the recommendations which we shall now hear. [...]

4. Scientific Research and Ethical Responsibility

The last discussion group dealt with the pressing question of scientific research and ethical responsibility. Unfortunately, as Peter Scott recently remarked - and this was echoed in different ways by many of our Seminar participants - "ethical issues are in danger of becoming second-order issues in the modern university - or, to be more accurate, ethical issues have tended to be redefined essentially procedural issues rather than as fundamental issues directly connected to the core mission of the university. This shift can easily be observed in the context of research. Research ethics are no longer debated in terms of the morality of military or commercial sponsorship of research programmes; [...] Instead research ethics concentrate on much narrower, often technical, issues such as exposing research malpractice and upholding the rigour of research methodologies (including the need to avoid exploitation of, or unnecessary intrusion into the lives of, research subjects)."¹¹⁴

The participants in this discussion group, however, were convinced that scientific research in the European university should always be carried out with a concern for the ethical and moral implications of its methods and its discoveries. In reaching this conclusion they affirmed, perhaps unknowingly, what Pope John II said in an address to UNESCO in 1980: "It is essential that we be convinced of the priority of the ethical over the technical, of the primacy of the person over things, of the superiority of the spirit over matter. The cause of the human person will only be served if knowledge is joined to conscience. Men and women of science will truly aid humanity only if they preserve 'the sense of the transcendence of the human person over the world and of God over the human person'".¹¹⁵

The flourishing of the European university will depend on its ability to reclaim the ethical high ground in its research and programmes. We

¹¹⁴ Peter Scott, "Ethics 'in' and 'for' Higher Education," *Higher Education in Europe* 29:4 (December 2004), 439-440.

¹¹⁵ John Paul II, Address at UNESCO (2 June 1980), 22: *AAS* 72 (1980), 750.

hope that we will not be accused of "knowing the price of everything and the value of nothing."

The recorder of the last discussion group will now present their conclusions and recommendations about how the ethical responsibility entailed in scientific research can promote the attractiveness of the European university. [...]

Final Recommendations

Convinced as we are that the external dimension of the Bologna Process must take seriously its responsibility to make the European university attractive to its own nations as well as the rest of the world, we suggest that intelligent marketing strategies be adopted to ensure that this take place.

This Seminar, therefore, would like to propose that, in creating the European Higher Education Area as a driving force in making Europe strong, stable and sustainable and taking a leading role in the *world* of higher education, the Ministers at the 2007 London meeting affirm:

1. the indispensable and irreplaceable role played by the European university, despite the increasing presence of other instruments of education, in contributing to the integration of Europe and the formation of a wisdom society;
2. their commitment to the cultural heritage of Europe as a living and expanding tradition which the university receives, enriches and transmits to succeeding generations; moreover, this tradition is rich in humanistic values that go together with, and do not contradict, the scientific and technological demands of advanced democratic societies;
3. the need to foster increased accessibility in order to increase capacity, without sacrificing excellence, especially in research, an excellence proper to not just a few elite institutions but distributed in numerous centres of excellence in different areas of study and research;
4. the core values of institutional autonomy, academic freedom, collegiality/community and cooperation among institutions as necessary components of the European university's competitive advantage in the global marketplace and thus instruments at the service of society;

5. the positive value of unity and diversity and diversity in unity - the humus of the European university - as a way to foster interaction and dialogue among different cultural and religious traditions;
6. due recognition be given to the fact that religious faith marks the various ' national cultures of Europe in their literature, architecture, approach to human rights and other crucial matters, and that questions of meaning and ultimate significance should be recognized within the university's programs and research projects;

I would like to add one personal recommendation: that every Minister and staff member entrusted with developing and implementing the strategies for creating the EHEA purchase and read John Henry Newman's *Idea of University!*

Such affirmations will enable the EHEA to make a significant impact on the world of higher education on this continent and around the world.

Athens seminar (Athens, 24-26 June 2006)
Putting European Higher Education Area on the Map:
Developing Strategies for Attractiveness

From Pavel Zgaga's *Report* on the seminar;
Athens, 26 June 2006

Conclusions and Recommendations of the Seminar

On bases of reach plenary discussions and reports from working groups (these reports include an even more extended list of proposals and recommendations), the following conclusions and recommendations were synthesized:

A) The possible contents of the *external dimension strategy* (in 7 points), drafted by the Working Group on the External Dimension of the Bologna Process and presented to participants of the Seminar, is seen as a very good basis for elaboration of “the external strategy for the EHEA”.

B) Further on, BFUG and the Working Group on the External Dimension of the Bologna Process are asked to consider the following recommendations and to include them into working documents for the London ministerial conference in 2007:

1. *At the competitiveness and attractiveness horizon*, actions should be taken to improve the performance of European higher education. Competitiveness in higher education aims at developing diverse, quality, efficient and well performing universities; only such universities can really attract European and international students. Competition should not be necessarily seen in opposition to cooperation: a firm academic cooperation, e.g. through quality networks and projects that strengthen critical mass of higher education institutions, can importantly increase the competitiveness of European higher education as a whole. On the other side, competition in a global context should be also seen as an incentive to strengthen institutional cooperation further.

Concrete measures should be taken to attract international students as for example to organise European higher education fairs and media campaigns on one side as well as to create European study centres and centres of excellence on the other. Good practice from some countries suggests that extra budget provided for international students' scholarships as well as for accommodation of international students and researchers could slightly improve the existing situation. On the systemic side, a European standard of acceptance for international students should be developed and a code of good conduct for dealing with visa problems. Europe also needs to strengthen its alumni-networks worldwide. Last but not least, a network of ambassadors of European higher education or »Europe promoters« in major third countries could be established.

2. At the partnership and cooperation horizon, different aspects and approaches – also the regional ones – have to be developed and supported because Europe is not a homogenous whole and it can't be understood as such in other world regions. Approaches with the developed world have to differ from approaches to the developing countries. Cooperation with the developing world regions should be based on partnership and solidarity and be considered in particular with the goal of sustainability.

European universities have a long tradition of partnership and cooperation with universities in other parts of the world; today, the European Commission's programmes (e.g. Erasmus Mundus, Jean Monnet etc.) along the existing national schemes enable universities to open new pages in the history of their international cooperation. Existing networks should be used to connect European Higher education Area and higher education areas in other parts of the world. The creation of consortia of universities and higher education stakeholder organizations in the EHEA and third countries for systematic and integrated cooperation activity would be an important improvement of existing practices. Activity to take place inside such consortia could be the joint delivery of graduate-level study programmes with integrated mobility phases of study in the other continent (joint and double degrees, etc.), measures aiming at institutional development and capacity building, human resource development, and curriculum development. Joint research activities should be an integral part of this agenda. Last but not least: the

complex area of mutual recognition of higher education qualifications within a global context should be also addressed within this horizon.

3. *At the dialogue horizon*, countries of the Bologna Process can share their practice and experiences with other regions of the world which encounter similar challenges and tendencies in the development of higher education systems. Interested countries and/or organizations from abroad should have possibility to join Bologna events and to use European good practices as well as to share their comments as well as their own good practices in a common global forum. Enhanced cooperation with other world regions can be a new stimulus for a greater integration.

Wherever possible, the policy dialogue should be based on existing fora, such as the EU-LAC Follow-up Committee or the EU-China Policy Dialogue. Policies should be tailor-made for each region and take due account of relevant EU policy (for example the EU Neighbourhood Policy). In addition, new concrete measures can be taken to open further possibilities, e.g. to create a “Bologna Visitor Programme” (to fund participation in selected Bologna-related conferences and seminars in Europe) or a higher education policy forum, involving representatives of European and third-country governments and higher education stakeholders; etc.

4. Last but not least, *at the information horizon*, the establishment of a comprehensive EHEA portal is unanimously recommended, under certain rules and conditions which should be carefully considered and developed. The content should be general and easy to understand. Different target groups (students, academics, policy makers, other higher education stakeholders) should be addressed in different ways. Working Group on the External Dimension could make a first investigation on this issue. Greece, through the Minister of Education Marietta Giannakou, has already expressed its willingness to host such a portal. In addition, a concise description of the Bologna Process for other parts of the world is needed (prepared by the BFUG) as well as a set of Bologna information points could be established worldwide.

Oslo seminar (Oslo, 28-29 September 2006)
“*Looking out! Bologna in a global setting*”
The external dimension of the Bologna Process

Conclusions and recommendations by Pavel Zgaga
 Oslo, 29 September 2006

Presentations and discussions at the seminar in general, but in particular at a panel discussion with speakers from two European and seven countries from various parts of the world, followed by intensive discussions in six parallel working groups, resulted in a number of statements, conclusions and recommendations related, in a direct or indirect way, to the foreseen strategy on the “external dimension”. Presentations, discussions and conclusions from working groups have been presented in greater detail in the reports by rapporteurs (available at the seminar website)¹¹⁶. On this basis, the next paragraphs aim at presenting a recapitulation of the seminar in a form of synthesized conclusions and recommendations.

1. Discussing a range of issues on a possible strategy for EHEA international cooperation, the elementary but fundamental fact that *cooperation presupposes at least two willing partners* was stressed several times. The “external dimension” cannot be carried out by Europeans alone, and this requires consultations with partners from all other parts of the world. However, there are still a vast number of issues which should be agreed, elaborated and solved within the Bologna Process.

1.2 The seminar dealt at length with the questions *by whom* and *toward whom* a strategy should be developed. On the one hand, there was a consensus that strategies may be elaborated for several actors, from institutions through national public authorities to the European level. Yet, it was also made clear that institutions are not all alike and countries are not all in the same position. A differentiation of their needs is a fact and any strategy should strictly avoid a one-size-fits-all approach. Discussing a strategy at

¹¹⁶ See <<http://www.bolognaoslo.com>>.

European level opens also the question of “what Europe”? It is not always easy to delineate between “EU-25” and “EU-45”, but to make EHEA cooperation strategy really work, it is necessary to ensure that there will be no “A group” and “B group” within the Bologna Process.

- 1.2 Regarding the question *toward whom* a strategy should be developed, it was agreed that stimulating “Bologna-like” developments in other areas seems to be the most realistic scenario. It could improve compatibility of higher education systems and policies and could also be a valuable exercise in capacity-building.
- 1.3 A further question was also raised at the seminar about whether the *organisational model of the Bologna Process* is fit to *promote* the EHEA after 2010 and to *stimulate* broad cooperation with other parts of the world. A warning against institutionalising an informal process so far was opposed by advocating the necessity of a firmer, more permanent organisational structure. While this structure should be as light as possible, some kind of funding and organisational structure would be necessary. Therefore, the organisation of the EHEA after 2010 must be placed on the agenda as a matter of urgency – also from the “external dimension” point of view.
- 1.4 The EHEA must provide *a framework that facilitates inter-institutional cooperation*. For that purpose *information* on the EHEA, linked to information on national systems and institutors, is necessary. There is a growing consensus on the need to establish an EHEA portal, providing clear information on the EHEA and providing links to sites of both national public authorities and individual institutions. However, there are a number of details which still remain to be settled.
- 1.5 Global cooperation in higher education, partnership agreements between higher education institutions from different part of the world and mobility of students and staff depend to a large degree on recognition matters. For that reason, UNESCO should be encouraged to continue its work on revising its *regional conventions on the recognition of qualifications*. These issues are also closely related to quality assurance provision in various countries and to transnational higher education provision. It is a

vital interest of the EHEA that these issues are openly discussed between partners in higher education cooperation worldwide.

- 1.6 As a particularly good case of international cooperation, the seminar pointed out *Lusophone* cooperation and *Francophonie*, encompassing both members and non-members of the Bologna Process and illustrating the great potential for cooperation between groups of countries. In higher education, this cooperation should be placed within the overall *acquis* and strategy of the EHEA.
2. Considerations on *conditions for inter-institutional cooperation* between the EHEA and other parts of the world – in particular with regard to complex relations between *mobility, transparency and recognition* – as a particularly necessary element of an “external dimension” strategy have demonstrated that improving the quality of mobility and reducing barriers is what is most required. Looking either from an institutional or national point of view, cooperation with the outside world in higher education and research is, first of all, linked to enhancing quality development: mobility, internationalisation and the “external dimension” are means; quality education and research are ends in all systems. This position presumes the following focuses, actions and measures:
 - 2.1 All EHEA partners at all levels need to *improve information flows and dissemination*. The proper involvement and consultation of the stakeholders in order to be able to cope with mobility and internationalisation (e.g. student unions that need to deal with management and support of mobile students) should be ensured. Visibility of national assessments regarding the quality of higher education as well as general decisions regarding recognition are needed, as are their availability in more than one language. There is also a need to be clear concerning the terminology used. The lack of appropriate informational, linguistic and cultural preparation for mobile students and staff should also be addressed.
 - 2.2 It is also necessary to promote further and better *understanding and use of existing recognition and transparency tools* within the EHEA as well as in relation to the rest of the world, as it will also benefit international exchange and mobility (e.g., the use of frameworks improving compatibility of higher education systems and regulating recognition; exchange of good and bad practices;

working towards the recognition of each others' recognition decisions, etc.). On the other hand, multilateral and bilateral agreements should stimulate the growth of inter-institutional frameworks and partnership agreements that make institutions committed to recognising periods of study abroad for mobile students as well as degrees awarded abroad.

- 2.3 Strengthening mobility and removing obstacles should not be regarded as "purely higher education issues" but efforts should be increased so that *all relevant national ministries and other responsible authorities* (especially immigration authorities) are cooperating in solving them. Increased efforts are particularly necessary to solve visa issues and work permits for students and staff.
 - 2.4 In developing international exchanges, the EHEA institutions as well as authorities in regions and countries might also consider having *special policies for developing countries* and projects for developing regions, in addition to special information campaigns. Institutional capacity-building activities are a particularly important area of international cooperation within such networks.
 - 2.5 In most of these issues, there is no clear divide between the EHEA and non-EHEA countries and institutions. Hence, conditions for international cooperation should be improved outside as well as within the EHEA.
- 3.** Considerations on the envisaged strategy for EHEA international cooperation may open partly differing perspectives depending on general (systemic) or institutional points of view, but it is clear that cooperation should be among its key elements. However, discussions at two previous as well as at the present "external dimension" seminar have proved that *cooperation* should be carefully considered together with two other important "key elements" – namely *attractiveness* and *competitiveness*.
- 3.1 The seminar confirmed and underlined that there is no inherent contradiction between *cooperation and competition*: they coexist in the academic world, where institutions must cooperate to be competitive, but they must also be attractive to find cooperation partners. *Attractiveness* is a broader concept than *competitiveness*, since it extends to non-economic aspects as well.

3.2 *The value of higher education and values in higher education* are an important aspect of the “external dimension”; technical cooperation totally divorced from values could easily lead the EHEA astray. A technically perfect solution might be counterproductive if the solution does not enhance genuine higher education values and purposes. There is broad consensus within the Bologna Process that cooperation aims and strategies should be adapted to prospective partners. Nevertheless, there should be a minimum of core values – like academic freedom and institutional autonomy – that should be maintained to make cooperation “Bologna-compatible”. Of course, other modes of (technical) cooperation are also possible, but “external” to the Bologna Process in terms of objectives and values and not in terms of geography.

3.3 The member countries of the Bologna Process need to agree upon a set of *principles and concrete actions to enhance the EHEA’s attractiveness and competitiveness* as well as to strengthen mutual cooperation, e.g.:

- existing national and European schemes for students and staff mobility should be further developed;
- more educational programmes are needed in international languages;
- the awareness of the importance of investment in higher education and the social dimension through improved access and participation should be increased; the use of development funds (0.8%) for broad educational reforms, including capacity-building in HEIs, is strongly recommended;
- capacity-building through the education of teachers can be particularly effective;
- different policies are needed for different regions and sectors and all types of higher education should be included in the planned activities (diversity);
- measures to stimulate continuous partnerships and networks in research and education as well as in capacity-building should be prepared at national and European level;
- special attention should be given to countries with one-way (either predominantly in-coming or predominantly outgoing) mobility and measures should be agreed to minimise the risk of brain-drain (internally within the EHEA as well as externally - in

particular in relation to developing countries) and to maximise sustainability.

- 3.4 The discussion on *what makes the EHEA attractive* has only started; it is necessary for this discussion to continue, also in the period after the London conference. A proper response to the question of what makes the EHEA attractive depends to a large extent on a common and clear picture of what the Bologna aims really mean to its actors. On the other hand, attractiveness requires making substantial progress in quality assurance and recognition issues. It also requires communicating on the Bologna “philosophy” and content and making it clear that its aims are not limited to formal changes of structures. Yet, it is very important that this message matches with what is being done in all Bologna countries.
4. Finally, it is necessary to mention the topic – at first sight only marginal – that was also discussed at the Nordic seminar on the “external dimension”. It is about terminology and, as always in such cases, about meaning and understanding. As the discussion on the “external dimension” is advancing, it seems that the Bologna Process is in need of a better term to describe relations between attractiveness, competitiveness and cooperation.

In one of the working groups it was stressed that the “external dimensions” is certainly about how European higher education is perceived by the rest of the world, but it is in equal measure about how we, as Europeans, perceive the rest of the world. Only if we include how we view the Other as an element of the “external dimension” of the Bologna Process as well as how the Other views us, can we move beyond the “external dimension” of interaction between “them” and “us” to the global dimension – to how we can work together in a healthy interaction of cooperation and competition.

There was no final agreement on this issue at the seminar but some concrete proposals which need more time to be considered were formulated, e.g. to move from the “external” to the “global dimension” or to the “dimension of global cooperation”.

5.3 ANNEX 3

PROPOSAL FOR A BFUG WORKING GROUP ON THE EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

A. Bergen Communiqué

In the Bergen communiqué the following is said on the external dimension under the headline “*The attractiveness of the EHEA and cooperation with other parts of the world*”:

“The European Higher Education Area must be open and should be attractive to other parts of the world. Our contribution to achieving education for all should be based on the principle of sustainable development and be in accordance with the ongoing international work on developing guidelines for quality provision of cross-border higher education. We reiterate that in international academic cooperation, academic values should prevail.

We see the European Higher Education Area as a partner of higher education systems in other regions of the world, stimulating balanced student and staff exchange and cooperation between higher education institutions. We underline the importance of intercultural understanding and respect. We look forward to enhancing the understanding of the Bologna Process in other continents by sharing our experiences of reform processes with neighbouring regions. We stress the need for dialogue on issues of mutual interest. We see the need to identify partner regions and intensify the exchange of ideas and experiences with those regions. We ask the Follow-up Group to elaborate and agree on a strategy for the external dimension.”

There are proposals for three seminars on this theme in the period Bergen – London: The Holy See seminar in April 2006, Greece in June 2006 and seminar arranged by the Nordic countries in September 2006 (see separate documents). In *this* document, the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), propose to link these three seminars to **an overarching Working Group** with the mandate to elaborate upon a strategy for the external dimension, as asked for by ministers in Bergen.

B. Terms of Reference

The Working Group are responsible for developing a strategy document on the external dimension of the Bologna Process. To be in a best possible position to do so, three seminars will be arranged during 2006 in order to give significant input to their work.

1. A seminar in April 2006 with focus on attractiveness, hosted by the Holy See
2. A seminar in June 2006 with focus on information, hosted by Greece
3. A seminar in September 2006, discussing the draft report, with emphasis on areas that has not been focused on in the previous seminars, e.g. competitiveness and capacity building. The seminar is hosted by the Nordic countries.

An expert will, in collaboration with the Working Group, prepare a report to the Nordic seminar in September. This report must be available to the seminar participants in August 2006 at the latest. The outline of the report is proposed to be as follows:

- A. European students into the world**
- B. Competitiveness/attractiveness of European Higher Education**
- C. Capacity building**
- D. Cross border provisions**
- E. Bologna Process as such**
- F. Role of EU**
- G. Role of other international organisations (CoE, OECD, UNESCO)**

(for more details, see Annex 1 [see p. 91])

Together with the outcomes from the three seminars, the report will found the basis for the strategy work of the Working Group.

The Working Group will report regularly to the Bologna Follow Up Group. Before it finalises its work, a draft strategy document shall be discussed in a full BFUG-meeting.

The Working Group will be provided with secretarial assistance from the Bologna secretariat and from the country chairing the group.

C. Members of the Working Group

The Bologna Follow Up Group are invited to approve the establishment of a working group to develop and report on a strategy for the external dimension of the Bologna process.

Members of the Working Group are BFUG-representatives from the following countries:

1. Norway (chair)
2. Denmark
3. Sweden
4. The Holy See
5. Greece
6. Germany
7. Portugal
8. France
9. Spain
10. Malta
11. Austria

Consultative members:

1. EUA
2. EU
3. ESIB
4. UNESCO
5. The Council of Europe
6. ACA

The Working Group will submit progress reports to BFUG and a final proposal for a strategy on the external dimension of the Bologna process to the London Conference through BFUG.

Annex 1: Working Group on the External Dimension: The outline of the discussion paper in more detail:

H. European students into the world

- a) Transparency
- b) Recognition abroad

I. Competitiveness/attractiveness of European Higher Education

- a) High quality
- b) Transparency, understanding and information
- c) Diversity
- d) Scholarship schemes

J. Capacity building

- a) Information
- b) Recognition
- c) Quality
- d) Competences

K. Cross border provisions

- a) Sustainability
- b) Public responsibility
- c) Academic values
- d) European HE outside Europe

L. Bologna Process as such

- a) Promoting the idea of regional cooperation
- b) Collaboration between regions
- c) Information

M. Role of EU

- a) Erasmus Mundus
- b) Interregional agreements

N. Role of other international organisations (CoE, OECD, UNESCO)

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AC21 – The Academic Consortium 21

<http://www.ac21.org/Portal/>

Established June 2002 at the first International Forum at Nagoya University, the Academic Consortium 21 (AC21) plans active exchanges of students, faculty members and administrative staff, provides shared access to information on research interests and academic activities, develops cooperative education programs and supports international exchange of culture between local communities.

AC21 – International Forum 2006: Global Education Universities in the 21st Century

<http://www.warwick.ac.uk/go/globaled/>

An international platform for discussion and debate on some of the most challenging issues facing universities across the world.

ACA – Academic Co-operation Association

<http://www.aca-secretariat.be/>

The Academic Co-operation Association (ACA) is an independent European organisation dedicated to the management, analysis and improvement of education and training co-operation within Europe and between Europe and other parts of the world. Its main focus is on higher education, but it also covers other education sectors and training.

ARWU – Academic Ranking of World Universities

<http://ed.sjtu.edu.cn/ranking.htm>

The Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) has been published by the Institute of Higher Education, Shanghai Jiao Tong University (IHE-SJTU).

The ASEAN University Network (AUN)

<http://www.aun.chula.ac.th/home.htm>

AUN was established in November 1995 under the mandate of *Association of Southeast Asian Nations* (ASEAN) Ministers responsible for higher education; it operates under the umbrella of ASEAN, as a mechanism to help promote human resource development in the region.

ASEAN-EU University Network Programme

<http://www.deltha.cec.eu.int/aunp/>

The ASEAN-EU University Network Programme (AUNP) is a higher education co-operation programme, jointly financed and implemented by the *ASEAN University Network* (AUN) and the European Commission

ASEF Asia-Europe Foundation

<http://www.asef.org/>

The Asia-Europe Foundation was launched in February 1997 for the purpose of promoting better understanding between the peoples of Asia and Europe.

Asia-Link (European Commission)

http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/asia-link/index_en.htm

The Asia-Link Programme is an initiative by the European Commission to promote regional and multilateral networking between

higher education institutions in Europe and developing countries in Asia.

AULP – Associação das Universidade de Língua Portuguesa
<http://www.aulp.org/>

The Association of the Portuguese Speaking Universities.

AVVC – Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee
<http://www.avcc.edu.au/>

The Council of Australia's University Presidents

Barents Education Network
<http://www.arcticcentre.org/?deptid=19576>
 Barents Region Higher Education network.

Bologna Process Kyrgyz Republic
<http://www.bolognakg.net/>

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The Bologna Process Secretariat
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<http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/>
 Bergen to London (2005 – 2007)
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna/>

CA ECN – Central Asian Education Cooperation Network
<http://www.educasia.net/en/>

The Mission of CA ECN is to promote developments in education in Central Asia that lead to achieving international goals in the field of assuring quality basic education for all, raising the quality of education throughout the system to meet global standards and enhancing transparency and effective governance in education.

CEPES – The European Centre for Higher Education
<http://www.cepes.ro/>
 CEPES was established in 1972 with a view to promoting co-operation in higher education among Member States of the UNESCO Europe Region (the countries of Europe, North America, and Israel).

Council of Europe – Higher Education and Research
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/Default_en.asp

The work of the Council of Europe in the field of higher education and research focuses on issues related to the recognition of qualifications, public responsibility for higher education and research, higher education governance and other fields relevant for the establishment of the European Higher Education Area by 2010.

CPLP – Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa

<http://www.cplp.org/>

The Community of the Portuguese Speaking Countries, established in 1996; its members being Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guiné-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe and, since its independence, East Timor.

CUIB – Iberoamerican University Council

<http://www.cuib.org/>

CUIB is an institutional group of networks of universities in the Iberoamerican countries.

La documentation Française

<http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/rapports/actualite/etudiants-etrangers.shtml>

L'accueil des étudiants étrangers en France : la sélection de la Bibliothèque des rapports publics.

EAIE – European Association for International Education

<http://www.eaie.org/>

The EAIE is a non-profit organisation whose main aim is the stimulation and facilitation of the internationalisation of higher education in Europe and around the world, and to meet the professional needs of individuals active in international education.

EDB – The Economic Development Board

http://www.sedb.com/edb/sg/en_uk/index/about_us.html

The EDB is Singapore's lead agency responsible for planning and executing strategies to sustain Singapore's position as a compelling global hub for business and investment.

EHEF – European Higher Education Fairs

<http://www.ehefs.org/>

Implemented by EduFrance, DAAD, Nuffic and British Council; funded by the European Commission's Asia-Link Programme.

EI – Education International

<http://www.ei-ie.org/>

Education International represents more than 29 million teachers and education workers; 348 member organisations operate in 166 countries, from pre-school to university.

Education New Zealand

<http://educationnz.org.nz/>

The site for the NZ Export Education Industry

Éducation & Politiques

http://ep.inrp.fr/EP/r_a_venir/colloque_reformes_universitaires_afrique/

L'Unité Mixte de Recherche "Éducation & Politiques" rassemble des chercheurs de l'Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique et des chercheurs de l'Université Lumière Lyon2. Elle travaille dans le domaine de la recherche en éducation et formation, avec une perspective de sociologie politique.

ENQA – the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

<http://www.enqa.eu/>

ENQA disseminates information, experiences and good practices in the field of quality assurance (QA) in higher education to European QA agencies, public authorities and higher education institutions.

Erasmus Mundus Alumni

<http://www.erasmusmundus-alumni.eu/>

Erasmus Mundus Alumni pages are intended for all Erasmus Mundus students and graduates. This website has been launched recently and is work in process. The aim of the preliminary version is to provide Erasmus Mundus students and graduates with a forum to keep in touch and share their views on the future Erasmus Mundus Association.

ESIB – the National Unions of Students in Europe

<http://www.esib.org/>

ESIB is the umbrella organisation of 44 national unions of students from 34 countries and through these members represent over 10 million students.

EUA – The European University Association

<http://www.eua.be/>

The European University Association, as the representative organisation of both the European universities and the national rectors' conferences, is the main voice of the higher education community in Europe.

EURASHE – The European Association of Institutions in Higher Education

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

Members of EURASHE are national and professional associations of colleges and polytechnics and individual institutions.

Eurocadres – Council of European Professional and Managerial Staff

<http://www.eurocadres.org/>

Eurocadres is a recognised and active social partner uniting more than 5 million professional and managerial staff in Europe.

EUROMED, Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures <http://www.euromedalex.org>

The Foundation, based in Alexandria, Egypt, is the first common institution jointly established and financed by all 35 members of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

Europe – Gateway to the European Union

http://europa.eu/index_en.htm

EC – European Commission

http://ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm

EC – Education and Training

http://ec.europa.eu/education/index_en.html

EC – Research

http://ec.europa.eu/education/index_en.html

European Neighbourhood Policy

http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index_en.htm

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was developed in the context of the EU's 2004 enlargement, with the objective of avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbours.

ERASMUS-MUNDUS

http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/index_en.html

The Erasmus Mundus programme is a co-operation and mobility programme in the field of higher education which promotes the

European Union as a centre of excellence in learning around the world.

TEMPUS

http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/tempus/index_en.html

The trans-European mobility scheme for university studies enables universities from EU Member States to cooperate with those in Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and the Mediterranean partner countries in higher education modernisation projects.

EURYDICE – The Information Network on Education in Europe

<http://www.eurydice.org/>

Eurydice has since 1980 been one of the strategic mechanisms established by the European Commission and Member States to boost cooperation, by improving understanding of systems and policies.

FAWE – the Forum for African Women Educationalists

<http://www.fawe.org/about/about.fawe.asp>

FAWE was formed in 1992 and registered in Kenya as a pan-African NGO (32 countries); it supports women and girls' education for development as a direct response to the declaration on Education for All as articulated at the 1990 United Nations sponsored meeting in Jomtien in Thailand.

GMAC® Bologna Project Blog. Looking at progress towards the Bologna Accord

<http://www.gmacbolognaproject.com/>

In 2003, GMAC (the Graduate Management Admission Council) established a task force of education and business leaders to study the potential effects of the Bologna Accord on European graduate management education.

IAU – International Association of Universities

<http://www.unesco.org/iau/>

UNESCO-affiliated organization which was formally established in 1950 to encourage links between universities throughout the world.

IHEC – International Higher Education Clearinghouse

http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe/ihec/

IHEC provides scholars and practitioners with sources of current online resources and research in the field of international higher education.

IIE – Institute of International Education

<http://www.iie.org/>

An independent non-profit founded in 1919, IIE is among the world's largest and most experienced international education and training organizations. See also:

<http://atlas.iienetwork.org/> - Atlas of Student Mobility. It tracks migration trends of the millions of students who pursue education outside of their home countries each year. Data are collected on global student mobility patterns, country of origin, as well as leading destination for trans-national higher education.

INHEA – International Network for Higher Education in Africa

http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe/inhea/

The purpose of this Network is to strengthen and foster interest in African higher education through information sharing.

The Magna Charta Observatory

<http://www.magna-chartha.org/home.html>

The Magna Charta Observatory of Fundamental University Values and Rights is a non-profit organisation based in Bologna, founded by the University of Bologna and the European University Association (EUA).

Mercosur Educativo

<http://sicmercosul.mec.gov.br/>

Mercosur higher education network; the initial phase of this concept foresees the establishment of a higher education institutions network in the border regions of Brazil and Argentina. The next step would be to transfer the idea to Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela.

moveonnet - the European Forum for International Relations Offices

<http://www.moveonnet.eu/>

moveonnet aims to supply useful information in the area of internationalisation and simplify the exchange of information among International Relations Offices throughout Europe.

NAFSA Bologna Web Site

<http://www.nafsa.org/practiceres/bologna/bologna-Background.htm>

NAFSA Bologna Process Task Force

<http://www.nafsa.org/practiceres/bologna/bologna-taskforce.htm>

NTEU – National Tertiary Education Industry Union (Australia)

<http://www.nteu.org.au/home>

NTEU is a specialist national union solely representing staff in tertiary education.

NUS – National Union of Students (Australia)

<http://www.unistudent.com.au/>

The National Union of Students (NUS) is the peak body for higher education students in Australia.

OSCE – The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

<http://www.osce.org>

The OSCE is the world's largest regional security organization whose 56 participating States span the geographical area from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

El Proyecto 6x4 UEALC / The 6x4 EULAC project

<http://www.6x4uealc.org/english/index.htm>

The 6x4 EULAC Project is a specific project that seeks to analyze six professions in four axes with the goal of suggesting operative conditions that foster a stronger compatibility and convergence of the higher education systems in Latin America and the Caribbean and their comparison and closer relationship to those in the European Union.

SEE ECN – South-east European Educational Cooperation Network / Bologna pages

http://www.see-educoop.net/portal/id_bologna.htm

Facilitating the flow of information and establishing links between grass roots initiatives, HEIs, NGOs, regional education policy-makers and European and International institutions.

TUNING – Tuning Educational Structures in Europe

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

The project Tuning Educational Structures in Europe is at the heart of the Bologna Process. It is one of most influential projects in Europe that actually links the political objectives set in the Bologna Declaration of 1999 to the higher education sector. Tuning is a project developed by and meant for higher education institutions.

*Tuning Latin America Project / Projeto Tuning América Latina /
Proyecto Tuning América Latina
<http://tuning.unideusto.org/tuninal/>*

<Http://www.tuning.unideusto.org/tuninal/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=1&Itemid=2>he ALFA Tuning Latin America Project seeks to 'fine tune' the educational structures that exist in Latin America, initiating a debate whose aim is to identify and improve co-operation between higher education institutions, so as to develop excellence, effectiveness, and transparency. It is an independent project, promoted and co-ordinated by universities in many different countries, both Latin American and European.

*UNICE – Union des Industries de la Communauté européenne
<http://www.unice.org/>*

In 2006 there are 39 members from 33 countries, including the EU countries, the European Economic Area countries, and some central and Eastern European countries.

*Universitas 21 – The International Network of Higher Education
<http://www.universitas21.com/>*

Universitas 21, established in 1997, is an international network of 20 leading research-intensive universities in eleven countries.

The U.S. Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education

<http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/index.html>

The new commission (formed on September 19, 2005) is charged with developing a comprehensive national strategy for postsecondary education that will meet the needs of America's diverse population and also address the economic and workforce needs of the country's future.

*WUN – Worldwide Universities Network; the global research alliance
<http://www.wun.ac.uk/>*

WUN is an international alliance of leading higher-education institutions.

Index

* = footnote

A

- Academic community 19, 81, 173, 174
- Academic Cooperation ix, 1, 7, 8, 62, 111, 121, 158, 178, 187
- Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) 2, 14*, 102, 150
- Accreditation 23, 28, 31, 38, 44, 45, 49, 49*, 56, 57, 60, 108, 142, 152, 169
- Africa v, 8*, 27, 36, 44, 46-51, 46*, 48*, 49*, 51*, 77, 97, 98, 110, 112, 116, 116*, 156
 - African Union 48-50
 - Sub-Saharan A. 48
- Aiyar, Pallavi 68
- Alban 58, 60
- Alexandria 44
- Alpha 58
- Algeria 39*, 40*
- Almaty 37
- America 79, 83, 84
 - North A. 29*, 79, 90, 162
 - Latin A.; *see* Latin America
 - South A. 79
- Anglophone countries 48
- Angola 51*, 52
- Anna Lindh Foundation 44
- Arab countries (region, world, etc.) 44, 45, 116, 128
- Argentina 57, 61*

Armenia 39*

Aronauer, Rebecca 92*

Asderaki, Foteini 3

Asia vi, 8*, 29*, 47, 63, 64, 67,

72*, 75, 79, 81, 89, 116, 162

- Central A. 22, 36, 38

- South-East A. 64, 66, 112

- Asia-Pacific region 71-73, 78, 79, 82

Assefa, Mariam 92, 93

Athens I, iv, 12*, 102*, 106, 147, 178

Attractiveness v, viii, ix, 1, 7, 10,

12, 13, 13*, 25, 26, 29-32, 43,

59, 87*, 95, 100, 102*, 103, 104,

106, 107, 109-112, 114-118,

115*, 120, 121, 136, 140, 142,

145-150, 152-155, 157, 158, 161,

162, 166, 171, 174, 176, 178, 184-

188, 190

Australia vi, 18*, 28, 28*, 63, 68,

72-82, 75*, 77*, 86, 90, 98, 99,

110, 113, 116, 144, 156

Austria 2, 54, 93, 189

Autonomy 18*, 66, 71, 78, 80, 81,

105, 109, 130, 140, 157, 159, 171,

172, 176, 185

Azerbaijan 39*

B

Babylon ix, 121

Balkans 22, 40

Bangkok 64

Barblan, Andris 7*, 88

Barcelona 39, 40, 42

Barroso, José Manuel 163

Bechina, Padre Friedrich 2

Beijing 67, 69*, 72*

Beirut 44

Belarus 18*, 39*

Bencherifa, Abdellatif 43*

Berg, Mogens 2

Bergan, Sjur 3, 12, 94-96, 112

Bergen i, iii, 1, 2, 11, 15, 32, 34, 36, 76, 102, 104, 108, 114, 115*, 117, 118*, 150, 151, 158, 187, 188

Berlin 9, 11-14, 17, 22, 32, 36, 56, 76, 90-92, 108, 109, 111, 116, 118*, 145, 148, 157

Bishop, Julie 73, 74

Bolivia 57, 61*

Bollag, Burton 92*

Bologna

- B. *acquis* 114

- B. *agenda* 14, 104, 155

- B. *aims* 6, 96*, 186

- B. *bachelor (degree)* 91*, 92, 93, 94*

- B. *club (family)* 11, 15, 34, 74

- B. *challenge* 74

- B. *countries (states, members)* i, 2, 13, 23, 97, 101, 103, 106, 110, 114, 117*, 146, 180, 183, 185, 186

- B. *Declaration* iv, x, 6, 7, 12-14, 31, 34, 35, 87*, 88-90, 115, 130
- B. *discussion (debate)* 18, 78
- B. *documents* iii, x, 16*, 17-19, 30, 32, 105
- B. *event(s)* 2, 92, 180
- B. *goals* 111
- B. *idea* 13, 15, 16, 148
- B. *(in)compatibility* vi, 76, 77, 80, 98, 185
- B. *language* 5
- B. *message* vii, 14, 98-100
- B. *opportunities* 37, 75*
- B. *philosophy* viii, 16, 101, 186
- B. *principle(s)* 23, 100
- B. *push* 31
- B. *reforms* iv, 12, 15, 16, 47, 58, 150, 151, 156
- B. *Secretariat* 2, 37, 119*, 189
- B. *seminar(s)* i, iii, vi, x, 14, 102, 102*, 103, 106, 110, 115, 148, 149, 171, 178, 180, 181
- B. *spirit* 40, 50, 81, 96*
- B. *tools* 104
- non-B. *countries* 2, 18, 97, 111, 113, 183
- post-B 76, 91
- pre-B. 6, 16*, 17, 123
- Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) iii, 1, 12, 12*, 147, 189
- Bologna Process
- echoes of the B.P. 33, 34, 98, 113
- effects of the B.P. 47, 60
- “external dimension” of the B.P. iii, iv, x, 5, 6, 14*, 19, 31, 32, 58, 74, 82, 86, 95-97, 101, 102*,

150, 173, 176, 178, 186, 188, 189
 - impact of the B.P. 62, 68
 - implementation of the B.P. 38, 43, 61, 79
 - information on the B.P. vi, 35, 38, 60, 87*, 106, 151, 180
 - “internal dimension of the B.P. 101
 - objectives of the B.P. 11, 17, 37
 - potential of the B.P. 59
 Brazil 51*, 52, 57, 59, 60, 61*, 110, 145
 Brisbane vi, 73, 73*, 74, 84
 Brussels 62, 63, 126, 131, 133-136, 142, 143, 145, 153, 159, 162, 163, 166
 Bulgaria 9*, 39*, 91

C

Cairo 44
 Cambridge 152
 Cameroon 110
 Campbell, Francis 104, 105
 Canada 18*, 27, 28, 28*, 90, 110, 111, 116,
 Cape Town 144
 Cape Verde 51*
 Caribbean 54-56, 54*, 55*, 58-60, 62, 149
 Cards 11, 40
 Carroll, Bidemi 47
 Cartagena 57
 Castillo, Yorleni Aguliar 112
 Catania 40, 41
 Caucasus 36, 39*

Chile 57, 59*, 61*
 China v, 29*, 63-65, 67-72, 70*, 71*, 72*, 74, 76, 81, 97, 145, 162, 180
 Choi, Jie-ho 68*
 Clark, Nick 91*, 95, 96
 Clarke, Yvonne 3
 Colombia 57, 61*
 Colonies 7, 8, 47
 Comett 20*, 22
 Competences 43, 62*, 190
 Competition ix, 24, 29*, 43*, 47, 71, 84, 89-91, 103, 121, 135, 145, 150, 162, 164, 168, 178, 184, 186
 Competitiveness iv, v, ix, 6, 12, 21, 31, 32, 34, 37, 42, 85, 89, 99, 110, 111, 114, 115, 117, 118, 121, 125, 130, 131, 142, 145, 159, 164, 166, 178, 184-186, 188, 190
 Concerting 68*, 96
 Convergence 18*, 53, 58, 90, 91, 141
 Cooperation
 - academic c.; *see Academic cooperation*
 - c. in higher education
 (institutional c.; university c.) ix, 1, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 37, 42, 43, 61*, 65, 66, 71, 88*, 97, 99, 110-112, 122, 124, 147, 158, 176, 178, 179, 182, 183, 187
 - North-South c. 44
 - two-way c. v, 38, 97, 112
 Copenhagen 12*, 73*, 155
 Corbett, Ann 6, 18*, 19, 20
 Cordoba 61
 Costa Rica 61*, 110, 112, 113

Council of Europe (CoE) 2, 3, 18, 20*, 102* 133, 188, 189
 Credit system 5, 23, 48, 54
 Cuba 61*
 Culture(s) (*see* Inter-cultural) 23, 25, 31, 44, 54, 55, 57, 103, 106, 116, 123, 126-128, 130, 149, 172*, 174, 177
 - cultural contacts (cooperation etc.) 8, 13, 39, 41-43, 63, 147
 - cultural context 36, 39, 73
 - cultural diversity ix, 7*, 20*, 65, 121, 158, 166
 - cultural heritage 42, 55, 102*, 103, 104, 171, 176

D

Dakar 137
 Delplace, Stefan 3
 Degree(s) vi, vii, 10, 14, 15, 30, 31, 35, 37, 43*, 48, 49, 54, 60, 69, 72, 79-81, 84, 88*, 89, 90, 92-94, 92*, 95, 95*, 96, 96*, 98, 99, 113, 128, 140-142, 151, 154-156, 161, 167, 184
 - Joint (Double) d. 28, 52, 60, 68, 88*, 166, 168, 179
 Denmark 2, 8, 102*, 188, 189
 Dialogue 1, 25, 33, 42, 53, 65, 75, 77, 112, 118, 122, 143, 146, 149, 158, 174, 177, 180, 187
 - cultural d. 15, 44, 103, 173, 175
 - interdisciplinary d. 103, 172
 - inter-religious d. 103, 173-175
 - policy d. v, ix-x, 122, 180

- political d. 53
 - transatlantic d. 7*
 Dimension
 - European d. 5, 10, 21, 128, 141, 157
 - external d. iii, iv, vi, vii, x, 1-6, 10-20, 25, 27, 30, 32, 34, 35, 68*, 72, 74, 83, 85, 86, 90, 95, 97, 99, 101-118, 122, 123, 147, 150, 158, 171, 173, 176, 178, 180-190
 - international d. 25, 29, 117, 136, 143
 - social d. 5, 79 185
 - structural d. 5, 95
 Diploma Supplement 76, 104, 113, 154
 Diversity (*see also* cultural d.) viii, 12, 55, 67, 73, 78, 80, 101, 134, 154, 157, 177, 185, 190
 Djupedal, Øystein 110, 111
 Doctorate; doctoral 30, 41, 51*, 84, 111, 132, 161, 168
 Dominican Republic 57
 Duderstadt, James J. 88

E

East Timor 51*
 Eckel, Peter 88
 Economy vii, ix, 10, 85, 98, 103, 121, 128, 131, 145, 168
 - knowledge-based e. 6, 66, 131, 133, 142, 156, 166, 168
 Education International (EI) 2, 3, 80, 82
 Egypt 39*, 40*, 44, 45

- Employability vii, 37, 98, 130, 133, 141
- Ecuador 57, 61*
- El Salvador 57, 61*
- Erasmus iv, x, 9*, 20*, 21, 22, 25, 28, 60, 124, 135
- Erasmus-Mundus 25-27, 50, 58-60, 64, 149, 168, 179, 190
- ESIB, *see* National Unions of Students in Europe
- Euro-centrism 14-15
 - Central E. 9, 9*, 22
 - East E. 9, 9*, 22, 40
 - extra-European dimension 20, 21, 23, 127
 - intra-European 15
 - non-European i, 13, 18, 32, 35, 39, 76, 92, 111, 136, 150, 151, 167
- European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) 2, 3
- European Commission (EC) 2, 19*, 26*, 27, 58, 61, 63, 65, 102*, 143*, 150
- European Community 9*, 11, 17, 20*, 27, 124, 126-128, 138, 167
- European Cultural Convention 11, 12, 36
- European Higher Education Area (EHEA) i, vi-ix, 1, 6, 11, 32, 33, 66, 68, 74, 76, 90, 92, 98-103, 107, 110, 114, 116-121, 146, 155-158, 177-186
- European Institute of Technology (EIT) 30, 159-162
- European Research Area (ERA) 24, 29, 131, 133, 142, 143, 166
- European Union (EU) 9*, 16*, 25, 27, 39, 40*, 54-56, 60, 61*, 68*, 91, 100, 123, 133, 134, 149, 150, 163
- Europeanisation 7, 8, 18
- Eurydice 8, 9
- Excellence ix, 25, 41, 61, 67, 121, 135, 136, 151, 153, 160, 162, 168, 176, 179
- F**
- Fee; tuition fees 11*, 90
- Finland 2, 102*, 110, 188
- Flexibility 15, 30, 37, 78, 139, 153
- Fogg, Phileas 36
- Fortaleza 53, 54
- Fouilhoux, Monique 3
- Framework Programme for Research 59
- Francophone (countries) v, 48, 50, 51, 98
- Froment, Eric 2, 101, 118*
- France 2, 3, 8, 40*, 47, 50, 91, 129, 132, 135, 189
- G**
- Gaebel, Michael 3
- Geller, Birgit 3
- Georgia 39*
- Germany 2, 8, 91, 129, 137, 150, 189
- Ghana 110

- Giannakou, Marietta 180
 Giliberti, Giuseppe 43
 Glasgow convention 15, 43, 47, 59*, 62, 69, 87*
 Globalisation 10, 15, 55, 59*, 65, 71, 79, 84, 87, 80, 103, 106*, 112, 134, 163, 166
 Greece 1-3, 40*, 91, 102, 180, 188, 189
 Green, Madeleine 7*, 88
 Guadalajara 57, 60
 Guatemala 57, 61*
 Guiné-Bissao 51*

H

- Hampton Court 29*, 163, 164, 166
 Harmonisation 49, 78, 129
 Haug, Guy 10
 Helsinki iv, 3, 152, 156
Higher education (see also cooperation in h. e.)
 - Anglo-Saxon systems (of h.e.) 63
 - cross-border h. e. 108, 112, 114, 158, 168, 169, 187
 - h.e. fairs viii, 26*, 64, 120, 179
Higher Education Area; see also European Higher Education Area (EHEA)
 - Asia-Pacific H.E.A. 82
 - EULAC H.E.A. 54-56, 149
 - Euro-Mediterranean H.E.A. 40, 42, 43
 - Iberoamerican H.E.A. 57
 - Lusophone H.E.A. 52
Higher education institutions (see also University)

- Guanghua School of Management 68
- International Academy of Business in Almaty 37
- Holy See 12, 102, 104, 188, 189
- Homogenisation vi, 60, 98
- Honduras 57, 61*
- Humanist (tradition, values) 17, 123, 176
- Hungary 91

I

- Iberoamerican 57
 Iceland 2, 9*, 102*, 174
 Identity (vs. university) 103, 104, 174
 Illing, Dorothy 74
 India 11*, 29*, 63-65, 67, 68, 74, 145, 162
 Indonesia 64
 Industrialised
 - i. countries 8, 27-29
 - non-i. countries 8
 Inter-cultural / inter-religious dialogue *see Dialogue*
 Internationalisation 7-9, 18, 19, 72*, 73, 83, 84, 100, 101, 105-109, 106*, 111, 150, 157, 166, 169, 183
 International Association of Universities (IAU) 15
 Israel 19*, 39*
 Italia 93, 94

J

- Japan 28, 28*, 65, 91, 110, 111, 145
 Johannesburg 48*
 Johansson, Toril i, 2
 John Paul II. 173*, 174*, 175*
 Joint (double) degree(s) *see* Degrees
 Joint programmes 58, 75, 118
 Jordan 39*, 40*

K

- Kazakhstan 18*, 36, 37
 Kelo, Maria 116*, 117
 Kenya 49*, 110
 Knowledge ix, 17, 29*, 35, 46, 54, 57, 58, 65, 68, 85, 94*, 122-124, 127, 128, 130, 132, 134, 138, 151, 153, 154, 159, 162, 165, 167, 169, 173-175
 - Europe of k. 10
 - k.-based economy *see* economy
 - k.-based regions 153
 - k. Communities 30, 161
 - k. society 42, 44, 134, 158, 160
 Kohler, Jürgen 118*
 Kok, Wim 29, 30, 152
 Kuala Lumpur 66
 Kuznetsova, Olga 37
 Kyrgyz Republic 38
 Kyriazis, Athanasios 2

L

- Labour market 13, 41, 116, 140, 147, 154
 Lagier, Hélène 3
 Larsen, Rolf 3
 Latin America 76, 98, 116, 144, 149
 Learning 15, 17, 30, 35, 95, 105, 109, 118, 123, 126, 127, 135, 153, 154, 174
 - distance l. 22, 41, 56, 89, 138
 - flexible l. ix, 121
 - further l. 134
 - language l. 133
 - l. outcomes 5, 62*, 95
 - lifelong l. 45, 134, 154
 Lebanon 39*
 Leonardo da Vinci 11
 Leung, Tin Pui 69
 Li, Lixu 69, 71
 Libya 39*
 Līce, Anita 3
 Lie, Ulf 46*
 Liechtenstein 9*
 Lingua 20*, 22, 126
 Lisbon 72, 129
 - L. process (strategy) x, 18, 23-25, 29, 31, 108, 137, 142, 145, 152, 153, 156, 160, 162, 166
 London 3, 102, 115, 118*, 171, 176, 178, 186, 188, 189
 Lourtie, Pedro 2, 51*, 52, 53
 Luanda 52
 Lusophone countries (region) v, 36, 48, 50-52, 98, 183
 Luxemburg 127

M

- Maastricht 20
 Macao 52
 Mac Síthigh, Daith 3
 Madrid 53, 54
 Magna Charta iv, x, 17, 18, 105, 123, 130
 Malaysia 64, 66
 Mallea, John 111
 Malta 2, 40*, 42, 43, 189
 Margolis, Alan 96*
 Marseille 51*
 Mattila, Markku 110
 Meda Programme 40, 40*
 Mediterranean v, 13, 22, 36, 39, 40-44, 46, 97, 128, 144
 - M. University Forum 41
 Mexico 57, 59-61, 110
 Mifsud, Joseph 2
 Middle East 44
 Miller, J. Michael 103, 104
 Mlama, Penina 112
 Mobility vii-ix, 9, 17, 20*, 21-24, 28, 37, 38, 41, 43, 44, 49, 52-54, 56, 62, 73, 80, 82, 88*, 93*, 94*, 98, 110, 113, 114, 117, 118, 121, 122, 124-126, 130, 133, 135, 139, 141, 144, 147, 150, 152, 154, 166, 169, 179, 182-185
 Mohamedbhai, Goolam 15, 16, 47
 Moldova 36, 39*
 Momii, Keiko 111
 Mongolia 27
 Monnet, Jean 20*, 41, 179
 Morocco 39*, 43, 43*, 51

- Mozambique 51*, 110
 Muche, Francisca 7, 12, 14, 46*, 86, 87*, 95, 96, 106, 122
 Munich 152

N

- Nairobi 49*
 Narcissus 35
 National Union of Students (NUS) 79, 80
 National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB) 2, 3, 79, 109, 145, 146, 189
 Neave, Guy 20
 the Netherlands 8
 New Zealand 28, 156
 Newman, John Henry 173, 174, 177
 Nicaragua 57, 61*
 Nordic countries 2, 102, 188
 Nørgaard, Søren 3
 Norway i, 2, 3, 9*, 37, 102*, 111, 188, 189
 Nyborg, Per 37

O

- Oceania vi
 OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) 106, 108, 168, 188, 190
 Olds, Kris 66
 OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) 37, 38
 Oslo i, iv, 3, 102*, 109, 181
 Oviedo 58

P

- Pacific 27, 36, 47, 50, 73, 74, 78, 79, 82
 Pagrotsky, Leif 110, 114
 Pakistan 63, 110
 the Palestinian Authority 39*
 Panama 57, 61*
 Paraguay 57, 61*
 Paris 54, 129, 168
 Pérez, Felix Haering 2, 57*
 Persson Pontén, Annika 3
 Peru 57, 61*
 Philippines 64
 Poland 91
 Polo, Marco 36
 Portugal 2, 47, 51*, 57, 189
 Prague iv, 5, 10-12, 31, 141
 Prodi, Romano 40
 Purser, Lewis 118*

Q

- Qualification; framework of q. 31, 142, 155, 168
 Quality; q. assurance 11, 15, 23, 31, 41, 43-45, 49, 52, 57, 64, 66, 72*, 73, 80, 101, 102*, 107-109, 113, 117, 140, 142, 152, 156, 157, 168, 169, 182, 186
 Quebec 111

R

- Rasmussen, Alf 3
 Ratananukul, Piniti 112

- Recognition v-ix, 6, 19, 28-32, 49, 52, 53, 60, 73, 76, 78, 81, 88, 88*, 93*, 94, 95, 98, 103, 107, 110, 121, 122, 129, 152-157, 167-170, 177, 180, 182-186, 190
 - Lisbon Recognition Convention iv, 18, 18*, 19, 37, 52, 74, 80, 93, 111, 128
 Reichert, Sybille 116
 Rio de Janeiro 53
 Riveros, Luis A. 59, 62, 63
 Robinson, Susan Porter 70
 Romania 9*, 39*, 91
 Rome 20
 Russia 36, 39*, 65, 143

S

- Sadat Hussain, Sakina 68
 Sadlak, Jan 3, 172
 Salamanca 31, 140
 Samoff, Joel 47
 São Tomé and Príncipe 51*
 Schatzman, Margit A. 87*, 92*
 Schuman-Fulbright Programme 88*
 Scott, Peter 106, 175
 Sedgwick, Robert 88-93
 Shaw, Jo 20
 Singapore 66-68
 Slovenia 40*
 SNG/CIS countries 13
 Smith, Alan 3, 23, 26, 28, 117, 118
 Socrates 9*, 11
 Solidarity ix, 55, 122, 179
 Sorbonne (Declaration) iv, x, 6, 10, 14, 17, 18, 30, 69, 115, 129, 130

South Africa 46, 110, 156
 South Korea 65
 Spain 2, 40*, 41, 47, 57, 58, 60, 61, 91, 189
 Spellings, Margaret 83, 86
 Standardisation 37, 78
 Stimpson, Catharine R. 86
 Strategy for the external dimension iii, iv, viii, 1-3, 16, 34, 99, 101, 105, 107, 109, 111, 114, 115, 118-122, 158, 178, 181-184, 187-190
 Sweden 2, 3, 8, 102*, 188, 189
 Syria 39*, 43

T

Tacis 40
 Tanzania 110, 112
 Tarragona 41, 42
 Tauch, Christian 10, 116
 Teichler, Ulrich 7, 14, 116*, 117
 Tempus iv, 9*, 11, 20*, 21-23, 27, 38, 40, 125
 Thailand 64, 110, 112
 Touhami, A. 43, 44
 Transatlantic 7*, 28, 87*, 88, 92
 Transition
 - countries in t. v, 36, 37, 97, 138, 146
 Tuning Project vi, 38, 60-63, 98, 113
 Tunisia 39*, 40*, 43
 Turkey 9*, 39*, 40*, 74, 74*

U

Uganda 110
 Ukraine 36, 39*
 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 13, 15, 18, 46, 49, 108, 129, 148, 168, 175, 182, 188-190
 - UNESCO-CEPES 3, 102
 United Kingdom (UK) 8, 47, 63, 79, 90, 95, 104, 129, 135
 Universities
 - African u. 47
 - EU u. 42, 65, 112
 - European u. vi, ix, 24, 26, 30, 42, 43, 47, 59*, 60, 65, 67, 72, 75, 76, 88, 92, 98, 100, 102-104, 108, 115*, 121, 135, 165-167, 171-179
 - Iberoamerican u. 56, 57
 - Portuguese speaking u. 51, 53
 - world class u. 67, 71, 168
 University (*see also* Higher education institutions)
 - Australian Catholic U. 77*
 - Australian National U. 77*
 - Beijing U. 67
 - Deakin U. 77*
 - Edith Cowan U. 77*
 - International U. of Kyrgyzstan 38
 - Issyk-Kul State U. 38
 - Kyrgyz National U. J. Balasagun 38
 - Kyrgyz State Pedagogical U. 38
 - National U. of Singapore 68
 - New York U. 86

- Osh Technological U. 38
 - Technische Universiteit Eindhoven 67
 - Technische Universität München 67
 - U. Chouaib Doukkali, El Jadida 51*
 - U. of Adelaide 77*
 - U. of Chile 59*, 62
 - U. of Ghent 38
 - U. of Hamburg 14*, 150
 - U. of Leuven 66
 - U. of Ljubljana i
 - U. of Malaya 66
 - U. of Melbourne 77*
 - U. of New England 77*
 - U. of Oslo 102*
 - U. of Paris 129
 - U. of Pisa 38
 - U. of Tasmania 77*
 - U. of Western Australia 77*
 - Victoria U. 77*
 - University Association
 - ASEAN U. Network 64, 65, 112
 - European U. A. (EUA) 2, 3, 15, 43*, 47, 57-59, 62, 69, 87*, 118*, 189
 - Iberoamerican U. Council (CUIB) 56-58
 - Uruguay 57, 61*
 - United States (USA) 7*, 28*, 67, 76, 79, 82, 85, 86, 87*, 90, 91, 91*, 93*, 95, 132
- V**
- Values ix, 7*, 12, 29*, 68*, 100, 103-106, 109, 114, 121, 162, 163, 171, 173, 174, 176, 185

- academic v. 1, 7*, 14, 18, 32, 100, 102*, 103-105, 111, 145, 148, 149, 158, 171, 187, 190
- van der Hijden, Peter 3
- Vatican City i, iv, 102*, 171
- Venezuela 57, 61*
- Vienna 54, 54*, 58, 88*
- Vietnam 64
- Visa(s) viii, 13, 29, 85, 119-121, 132, 152, 153, 161, 162, 162*, 167, 179, 184

Z

- Zhang, Weiying 67
- Zhili, Chen 71*
- Zhu Rongji Administration 71
- Zgaga, Pavel i, 3, 110, 178, 181

Y

- Yugoslavia 8*

W

- Walters, Colin 113
- Ward, David 87*
- Wächter, Bernd 3, 87*, 116*, 117
- Weber, Luc E. 88
- Weitgruber, Barbara 2
- Wilson, Lesley 3, 118*
- Working Group on External Dimension i, iii, iv, x, 2-4, 16, 32, 36, 51*, 57*, 77, 101, 105, 118-120, 147, 178, 180, 187-190