



1999 – 2010
Achievements,
Challenges
and Perspectives



EUROPEAN
Higher Education Area

B O L O G N A

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Foreword from Spain

Presidency of the EU and Chair of the Bologna Process

W

hen rereading the few pages of the Bologna Declaration of 1999 and looking at the results of the Bologna Process Independent Assessment Report we realise that never have so few words generated such deep changes in higher education in Europe.

Few European governments could have imagined, at the end of the 20th century, that during the first decade of the present century thousands of institutions of higher education, their staff and students, and 46 countries were going to work together so intensely and in a coordinated manner, to build a European Higher Education Area (EHEA), as voluntarily agreed to in the oldest university of our continent.

Furthermore, few universities had anticipated, more than a decade ago, the depth of the transformations that were about to occur. These changes have allowed – among others – for the adoption of a common framework of easily readable, compatible and comparable degrees along with the implementation of what was to become the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), the promotion of mobility and the drawing up of qualifications frameworks. Some of these changes are now also debated in other parts of the world and, in some cases, have even resulted in an imitation effect.

The Bologna Process, whose objectives and number of participants have increased in the five ministerial conferences which have taken place biennially since 1999, has certainly achieved impressive results, especially if we consider where we started from, the uneven support which the implementation of reforms has received in each country, the diversity of the models of higher education and institutional frameworks in which it unfolds.

Nevertheless, there are still aspects related to the Process which could and should be improved, in order to achieve more impact and to increase participation and acceptance on the part of European society and, particularly, our students. During the Spanish presidency of the European Union in the first semester of 2010, our focus will be on the social dimension, on equal opportunities and on equity issues which have been progressively acquiring a greater prominence in higher education and are considered vital to ensure a decisive improvement of higher education in Europe in the years to come.

Ángel Gabilondo Pujol
Minister of Education, Spain



Ángel Gabilondo
Pujol,
Minister of
Education,
Spain

Foreword from Hungary

Co-host of the 2010 Bologna Ministerial Anniversary Conference

More than a decade has already passed since Ministers responsible for higher education from 29 countries held a meeting in Bologna and signed the declaration launching the Bologna Process. At that time some of the signatories were enthusiastic about the challenge ahead while others were more sceptical about the future of the process.

At the beginning, no-one could foresee how long the road would be for the participating countries. Since then, much has been achieved: the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) has been established in principle. However, the process has not been completed and, in the next decade, our mission will be to complement structural and legislative reforms with the equally necessary changes in attitudes.

The uniqueness of the Bologna Process lies in the fact that it quickly transcended the political sphere by becoming a joint venture of countries, the European Commission and representatives of important international organisations (the Council of Europe and UNESCO), and those of higher education institutions, students, teachers and researchers working in higher education as well as employers. Thus higher education has become an issue with a European dimension relevant for society at large.

The objectives and reforms of the Bologna Process have contributed to the enhancement of European competitiveness and attractiveness. The essence of the process can probably be defined most accurately as a common European answer to common European problems.

The Bologna Process is a model. The way in which this intergovernmental process embracing as many as 46 countries operates is unprecedented in history: it works without international legal treaties, on a voluntary basis, integrating all the stakeholders, implementing a consensus-based decision-making system, which operates efficiently.

I truly hope that not only the Bologna reforms but also the political and cultural model underpinning it has raised global attention. If the considerable international interest in the Second Bologna Policy Forum co-hosted by Austria and Hungary on March 12, 2010 can be taken as an indication, this seems to be case.

The structural transformation of higher education was accompanied by debates in Hungary. These debates were sparked by (a perceived threat to) cherished traditions, a number of changes in the institutional system, long-cultivated conventions in education and the accentuated peculiarities of individual disciplines.

However, we can already see how far we have come in the Bologna Process, although we can also see what still lies ahead. While the euphoria as well as the scepticism of the early days have disappeared, we have today a more realistic picture of the values and results of the process, as well as the tasks to be accomplished.

This provides an excellent base for the concerted effort to continue our work in the next decade.

István Hiller
Minister of Education and Culture, Hungary



István Hiller,
Minister of
Education and
Culture,
Hungary



Budapest: venue of the Ministerial
Anniversary Conference 2010

Foreword from Austria

Co-host of the 2010 Bologna Ministerial Anniversary Conference

This publication will provide a glimpse into what – in many respects – can be regarded as groundbreaking in European higher education cooperation. Over a decade of the Bologna Process has brought about many reforms in higher education across Europe both at the system and the institutional levels. Differences in interpretation and in the speed of the implementation of the agreed objectives have put high pressure on those directly impacted – namely the higher education institutions, staff and students. Still, a greater coherence in European higher education has been achieved.

Now, at the date agreed by 29 countries in 1999 to mark the establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), it is time to take note of the achievements but also for critical reflection. Much still needs to be done, as also shown by the recent student protests.

We have been painfully reminded by the recent economic crisis, whose negative effects on jobs and the economic output are far from being fully understood, that it is the level and type of a person's qualifications which constitutes the decisive factor for employment. Today, knowledge, skills and competences determine employability in increasingly competitive and more internationally oriented labour markets.

Even though almost 11 years have passed, the sentiment of the Bologna Declaration still holds true. Higher education and research systems need not only continuously to adapt to changing needs, society's demands and advances in scientific knowledge but they also have an important role in contributing to stable, peaceful and democratic societies.

The instruments provided by the Bologna Process should enable autonomous higher education institutions to fulfil their manifold missions not only in the European Higher Education Area but also in an international context.

One of the core Bologna objectives has been the promotion of mobility. Apart from purely academic benefits, mobility experiences also provide intercultural, linguistic, social and other soft skills and contribute significantly to personal fulfilment. The added-value for higher education institutions and systems is an increase in internationalisation and brain circulation. Societies at large profit from an enhanced mutual understanding between countries and regions.

Higher education and research have always been international. The engagement in policy dialogue among different regions in the world interested in fostering mutual understanding and learning in higher education has been intensified with the development of the European Higher Education Area.

Let us – and I mean all the stakeholders together – jointly take on the future challenges identified by the contributions of all stakeholders at the Bologna Ministerial Anniversary Conference on March 11/12, 2010 and the Bologna Process Independent Assessment Report!

Beatrix Karl
Minister of Science and Research, Austria



Beatrix Karl,
Minister of Science
and Research,
Austria



Vienna: venue of the Ministerial
Anniversary Conference 2010



1999–2010 **THE MAKING OF BOLOGNA**

By Pavel Zgaga



At the signing ceremony of the Bologna Declaration at the Aula Magna of the University of Bologna on 19 June, 1999, everyone could finally relax as the arduous negotiations on the final wording of the Declaration were concluded. Everyone knew the event was an important step towards better cooperation between higher education systems in Europe; nevertheless, even in this atmosphere of expectation, few realised that this moment marked the beginning of a new era in European higher education aimed at improving quality across Europe. Eleven years later and “Bologna” has become a reality and has turned into a European success story.

How did this happen and what does it mean? And what could it mean for the future? In the 1990s, something was “in the air”. All national systems were deeply challenged by massification of higher education and by new expectations regarding higher learning. There were also other challenges: rapid Europeanisation (e.g. Maastricht Treaty, 1992), the turbulent political changes and opening of Central and Eastern Europe and, last but not least, increasing global competition and/or cooperation in higher education. Already by the end of the 1980s, European academia had responded to the first waves of these challenges by “looking forward to far-reaching co-operation between all European nations” in the Magna Charta Universitatum, also signed in Bologna (1988).

And yet, there were “systemic barriers” to be removed first. Europe’s national systems have been traditionally different – so much so that this posed a problem both within an “enlarging” Union as well as within “reunifying” Europe at large. Cooperation between countries and their institutions needed a mutual approach to solving these growing problems. The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention), initiated in the early 1990s and adopted at a UNESCO/Council of Europe conference in 1997, looked to address the question of this diversity at the level of the recognition of higher education qualifications by introducing the notion of “substantial difference”, which put the onus of demonstrating such substantial difference on the recognition bodies. However, the problem also needed to be addressed from yet another angle; as system level incompatibilities between national frameworks existed.

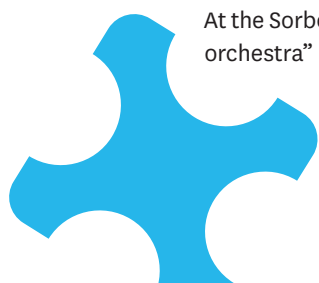
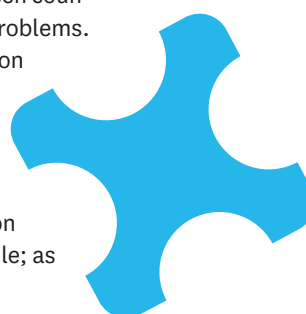
The Sorbonne Declaration in 1998 was the first attempt to overcome this situation. It called for “harmonisation of the architecture of the European higher education system” – and immediately received some angry responses. Should we refer to a “System” or “systems”? Harmonisation was a highly disputed term as it seemed to be in contradiction with the subsidiarity principle, i. e. the (legal) fact that nation states remain responsible for their educational systems. In fact, it was clear already at the Sorbonne Meeting of four European Ministers that an “open European area for higher learning” should start from the basis of “respecting our diversities, but requires on the other hand continuous efforts to remove barriers and to develop a framework for teaching, and learning, which would enhance mobility and an ever closer cooperation”. A dispute on harmonisation following the Sorbonne invitation “to consolidate Europe’s standing in the world through continuously improved and updated education for its citizens” was obviously a clear sign of an enormously difficult task ahead. However, it did not block the initiative; on the contrary.

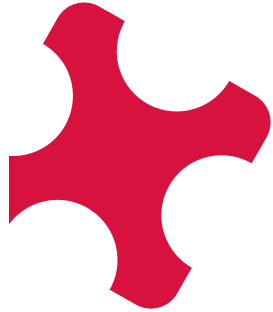
The Bologna Declaration of 1999 did not use the term “harmonisation” at all and soon the dispute was forgotten. At the meeting, after a long debate, it prevailed that “harmonisation is not harmonisation” as the UK Minister Baroness Tessa Blackstone articulated during the last session.

At the Sorbonne Meeting “harmonisation” signalled “the guiding principle of the orchestra” composed of a number of different instruments (as argued later by the French Minister of the time, Mr. Claude Allègre). Yet the Sorbonne Declaration also instigated debate around potential controversies

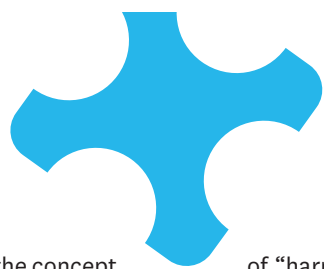
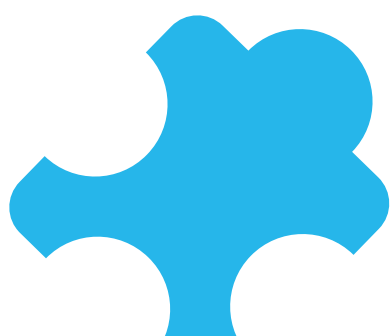


Pavel Zgaga,
Professor in Philosophy of Education
and Director of the Centre for Education Policy Studies
at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education,
Slovenia





» The processes of conceptualisation and implementation rest on different logics but they also need each other as a mutual 'corrective'. «



encapsulated in the concept of “harmonisation”. It was claimed, for example, that it undermined national responsibility for higher education systems and threatened to erode the subsidiarity principle.

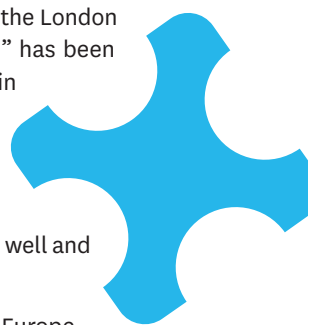
In keeping with the image used above, it could be argued that the complexity of “harmonisation” was perceived as “a dangerous music”, reminiscent of the Ulysses epic. In time the focus of attention gravitated ever closer to ‘the orchestra’ and away from a perceived threat.

This was perhaps a stepping stone for later success. The 29 Bologna signatories agreed to support “the general principles laid down in the Sorbonne Declaration” and promised to engage “in co-ordinating our policies to reach in the short term, and in any case within the first decade of the first millennium” a number of objectives later developed and today well known as “the ten Bologna action lines”. Not a uniformed and/or centralised “European system” but a development of “easily readable”, “comparable” and “compatible” national systems was recognised as the key feature of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) to be reached by means of convergent national reforms. As a cohesive system, the Bologna reforms not only signal a European answer to specific European problems but also a strategy to become attractive worldwide and to enhance international cooperation and academic competition.

The idea of the EHEA contained two “dimensions” from the beginning: an “internal” and an “external” one. From the outset it was about internal European relations and cooperation in higher education and the potential of a cohesive “European system” but equally about external relations and competition/cooperation with other world regions. During the development of the Bologna Process, the “external dimension” was developed into a strategy on European Higher Education in a Global Setting adopted at the London Conference in 2007 while the development of the “internal dimension” has been marked by more complex milestones. The latter has been mainly visible in two documents adopted at the Bergen Conference in 2005: A Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA and Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA. This work had been particularly hard. After the Prague Conference (2001), the old truth that “the devil is in the detail” was confirmed but nevertheless the details were elaborated quite well and agreed upon on by the middle of the decade.

A particular issue which had to be solved within this period was: which Europe is (or should be) covered by the EHEA? An overwhelming majority of the original Bologna signatories came from the “old EU” and EU-associated countries – and since 2004 “new EU” – countries. The signal sent from Bologna in 1999 sparked a surprisingly broad echo: by 2005 the “Club” had expanded to 45 members and its “geographic eligibility” was shifted to signatories to the European Cultural Convention – the “large” Europe. Thus, it proved – perhaps a little paradoxically – what the Sorbonne Declaration stated: “that Europe is not only that of the Euro” (or – we could add – a political union): “it must be a Europe of knowledge as well.” It must be universal and open; tied to its prominent academic and cultural traditions. A decision from the Berlin Conference (2003) on the “enlargement” of the Bologna Process beyond the initial limits was integral to further success.

By 2005 the concept of the emerging EHEA and most of the “bedevilled details” were fixed and the process was beginning to move from concept to implementation. Everyone who has at least some experience with shifting from policy development to implementation knows how complex and complicated this task can be. It is particularly difficult if it involves 46 countries which closely cooperate in policy development but which still take independent policy decisions. The EUA Trends Report of 2005 already warned that the experience of introducing new degree cycles into national systems has demonstrated that



the Bologna Process leaves “ample room for different and at times conflicting interpretations regarding the duration and orientation of programmes”. There is “Bologna” but it would be short-sighted to neglect the variety of co-existing “Bolognas”. We still have to test their eventual balance and level of integration. Implementation never follows genuine policy ideas in full. This must not be interpreted simplistically as a “move away from original ideas” or even as a “betrayal”.



The processes of conceptualisation and implementation rest on different logics but they also need each other as a mutual “corrective”. However, if they diverge too dramatically there could be a problem.

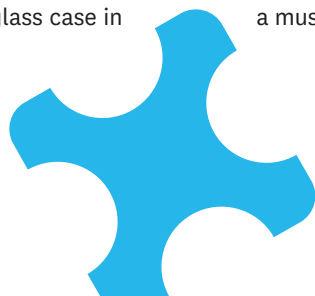
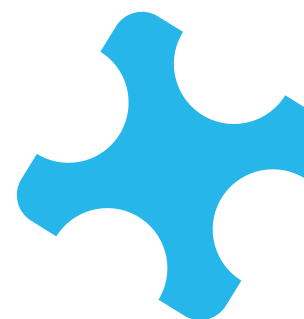
When discussing possibilities for future higher education cooperation in 1999, Guy Haug, one of the “Bologna architects”, proposed “four main avenues for combined action”: (a) a generalised European credit system; (b) a common, but flexible frame of qualifications; (c) an enhanced European dimension in quality assurance and evaluation; (d) empowering Europeans to use the new learning opportunities in Europe. In my view, this agenda has been completed and this is what makes “Bologna a European success story”. According to studies presented at the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Conference in spring 2009, European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) has been broadly accepted; an “overarching” framework of qualifications was approved and has started – although with difficulties – its national implementation phase; the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) has been established. Last but not least – and talking as an “Erasmus professor” from my own experiences – new learning opportunities have been enormously enhanced: an “open European area for higher learning” is not an abstract idea – it really exists today.

Words of recognition are always more convincing if they come from outside. In our case in particular if they come from the United States. In spring 2009, American “Bologna researcher” Clifford Adelman highlighted: “While still a work in progress, parts of the Bologna Process have already been imitated in Latin America, North Africa, and Australia. The core features of the Bologna Process have sufficient momentum to become the dominant global higher education model within the next two decades.” What distinguishes Adelman’s statement from a cheap compliment is his metaphor of the “Bologna accountability loop”: “If, for example, student mobility is an objective [...] one needs a recognition system [...] hence Qualification Frameworks, a common credit system, Quality Assurance, and comparable degree structures. All these, under Bologna, became supra-national phenomena, and all are glued together in what this monograph calls an ‘accountability loop’. They require ‘combined action’.”

Indeed, this is what Europe can be proud of. Further contributions in the section “Stakeholders at the heart of decision making in Bologna” of this publication will shed more light on ten specific aspects of a “loop” as they are discussed at the present stage of the Bologna Process: from Qualification Frameworks, Mobility and Data Collection, via Recognition, Quality Assurance and the Social Dimension to the higher education and research nexus: Doctoral education and the Bologna Process, Employability, International Openness and, last but not least, the so-called Bologna Stocktaking. It is crucial for the sustainable success of the Bologna Process that these aspects have been firmly kept together, interlaced in a “loop”.

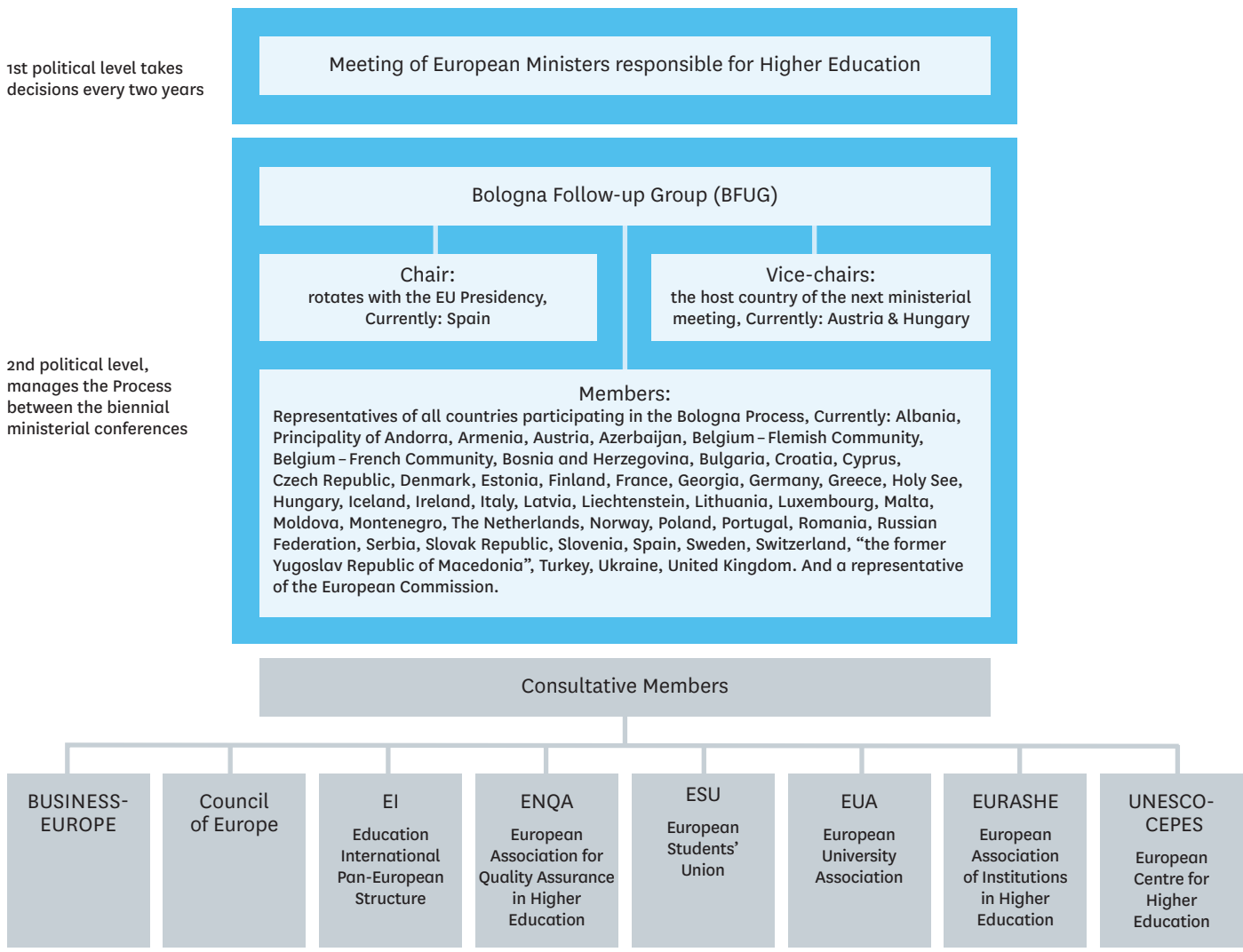
But success is a double-edged sword. It is inebriating but it is also binding. Real success cannot be measured in terms of “final implementation” and celebration but in searching for new momentum and re-conceptualisation. Beyond 2010, the “accountability loop” should not be stored in a glass case in a museum. ■

» Success is a double-edged sword. It is inebriating but it is also binding. Real success cannot be measured in terms of ‘final implementation’ and celebration but in searching for new momentum and re-conceptualisation. «



Who is involved in the

Overview of the organisational structure



Bologna Secretariat

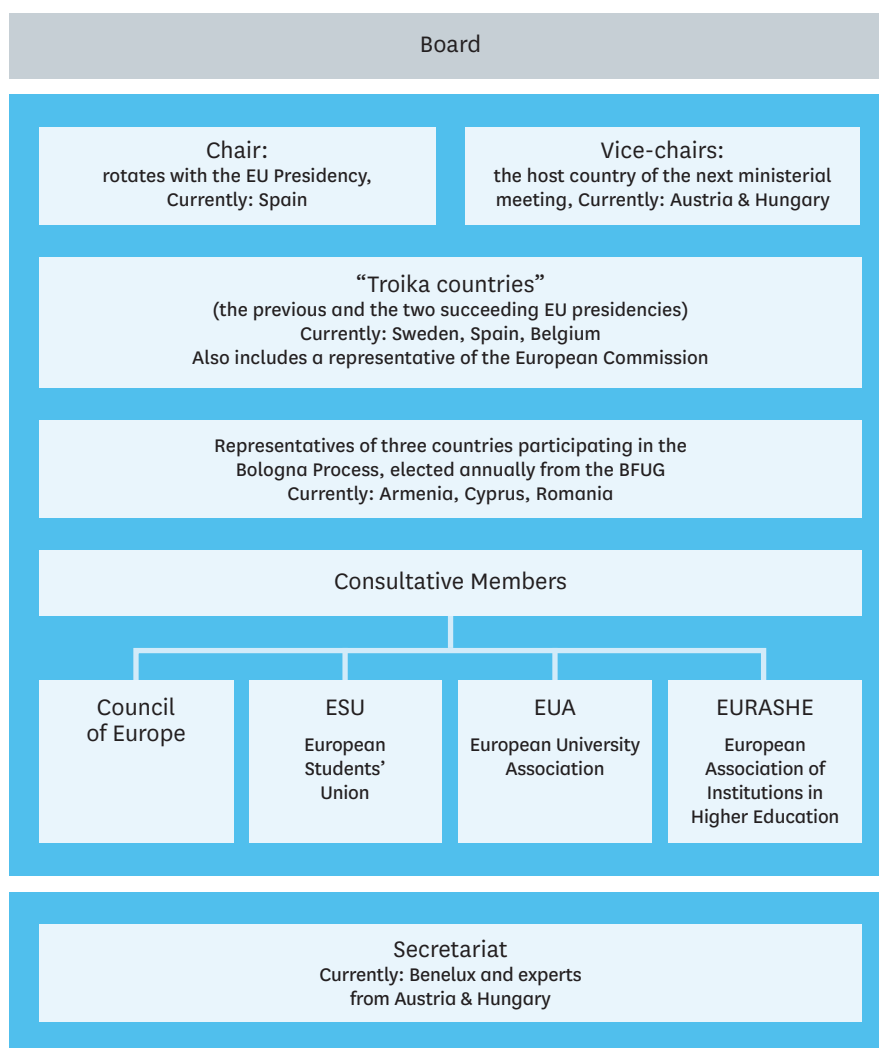
When the Ministers met in Berlin in 2003, they agreed to have the Bologna Process follow-up work supported by a Secretariat, provided by the country hosting the

following ministerial conference. In 2003, Norway thus established the first Bologna Secretariat, followed in 2005 by the UK and in 2007 by the Benelux countries Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. The 2010 Ministerial conference brought an exception to this rule – Austria and Hungary did not take over the Secretariat but sent two advisers to the Benelux Secretariat, which was asked to continue for another year.

The Secretariat has two tasks: assisting the host country in preparing the ministerial conference and, under the authority of the chair of the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG), supporting the European follow-up process. The Secretariat, thus, provides administrative support to the BFUG, its Board and its working groups. It also maintains the Bologna website and archives, acts as external and internal contact point for the

Bologna Process ?

March 2010



The Board prepares the BFUG meetings

Support structure

Process, and provides representation at various events. In short, the Bologna Secretariat is there to serve the Bologna Process, dedicated to making the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) a reality.



The team of the Bologna Secretariat (from left to right, front row): Françoise Bourdon, French Community of Belgium; Sabine Neyer, Austria; Magalie Soenen, Flemish Community of Belgium; Sára Demény, Hungary; Marie-Anne Persoons, Flemish Community of Belgium; (from left to right, back row): Marlies Leegwater, the Netherlands; Cornelia Racké, Luxembourg

Contribution of the European Commission

By Androulla Vassiliou

For many years, the European Commission has been supporting the Bologna Process. Its objectives are fully in line with the EU’s modernisation agenda for universities. The Bologna vision of a borderless European Higher Education Area owes a great deal to the Erasmus mobility programme, launched in 1987, and to related EU initiatives and tools such as the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, while, in turn, Bologna inspires many of the policies which make up our modernisation agenda for universities.

Looking back at what has been achieved, we note that an impressive range of reforms has been set in motion to make European higher education more comparable and more compatible, more competitive and more attractive for Europe’s citizens as well as for students and scholars from other continents. However, a lot remains to be done in the second “Bologna decade”. Certain issues will require our particular attention, such as mobility, student-centred learning, transparency, recognition and international openness.

The Commission is looking forward to continuing its contribution to this unique collective effort of public authorities, universities, teachers, students, international organisations and other stakeholders.



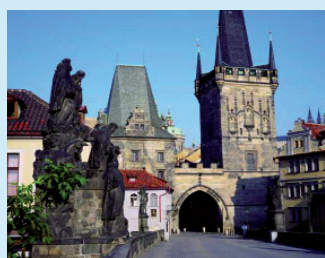
Androulla Vassiliou, EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth

Ministerial Conferences

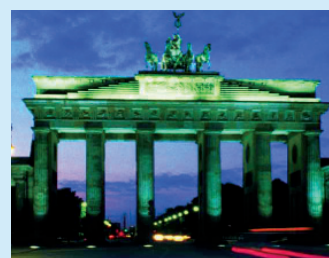
Starting from the meeting of the European Ministers of Education in Bologna in 1999 there have been biennial follow-up conferences where the progress was assessed and objectives for the next stage were agreed upon.



1999 Bologna



2001 Prague



2003 Berlin



2005 Bergen



2007 London



2009 Leuven / Louvain-la-Neuve

Stakeholders at the heart of decision making in Bologna

BUSINESS- EUROPE



Philippe de Buck, Director General
of BUSINESSEUROPE

The Bologna Process has led to a modernisation of European higher education by building upon and strengthening Europe's intellectual, scientific and cultural dimension. This change process is essential to face the challenges of globalisation, technological change and population ageing, and to address the expectations of the European societies.

In many countries, companies cannot find much needed highly skilled employees, such as engineers and IT-specialists. To fill this need, the Bologna Process has defined the importance of lifelong learning policies and practices because they are the key to raising the employability of those who are already in the workforce by refreshing and

updating their skills and competences on a continuous basis. Student numbers may well start to decrease for demographic reasons in the near future. Striving for an expansion of student numbers in the higher education system, better accessibility and higher completion rates are our most crucial challenges.

We believe profoundly that the overall goals of the Bologna Process, improving comparability and compatibility throughout Europe, are the right answers to these future challenges.

Council of Europe



Sjur Bergan, Head, Department of
Higher Education and History Teaching
Council of Europe

The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is an incarnation of the ideal that the Council of Europe embodies: a Europe for individuals; one characterised by democracy, human rights and the rule of law; and a Europe fluent in intercultural dialogue.

The structural reforms that have characterised the first decade of the Bologna Process serve broader purposes: they make it easier for all Europeans to move across borders with the value of their qualifications intact and they help ensure that our higher education is of high quality. Based on the European Cultural Convention, the European Higher Education Area deserves its name and

is not just a regional phenomenon in a part of Europe only.

As we look toward the second decade of the European Higher Education Area, we must make sure it fulfils all major purposes of higher education: preparation for employment; preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies; personal development; and the development of a broad and advanced knowledge base, from Reykjavík to Vladivostok and from Valetta to Spitzbergen.

Education International



Monique Fouilhoux,
Deputy General Secretary of
Education International

Education International (EI) is the world's largest global union federation representing teachers worldwide, including c. 700,000 higher education staff members across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

EI became a consultative member of the Bologna Process well into the Bologna developments at the Bergen ministerial meeting in 2005. Since then, EI has made significant contributions, particularly working towards the fulfilment of the action lines on mobility and the external dimension

of the EHEA. This has helped EI empower staff unions to tackle Bologna issues and to become more involved in their national contexts. Beyond 2010, more efforts need to be made at the European level in order to tackle the divide between EU and non-EU countries in the EHEA. In turn, at the national level, governments and institutions need to provide more support to staff members for the implementation of the Bologna reforms. They also need to involve staff at all levels of decision-making regarding the Bologna Process. Without concerted effort in these two areas, we will not succeed in having an EHEA as envisaged in the Bologna Declaration.

ENQA



Achim Hopbach, President of ENQA

The Bologna Process has drawn increasing attention to quality assurance in European higher education and has assisted ENQA in developing its role as a key promoter of the European quality assurance dimension. ENQA officially joined the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) as a consultative member in Bergen in 2005. Through the Bologna Process, the collaboration and dialogue between the different stakeholders in quality assurance has intensified, which has made it possible to launch common projects and to formulate shared standpoints. ENQA has participated

in important projects, such as drafting the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ENQA, Helsinki, 2005) and launching the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), together with its E4 group partners – EUA, ESU and EURASHE. The work of ENQA, and of the E4 group, has become more visible through having been actively involved in the BFUG. Most importantly, the Bologna Process has made it possible for ENQA to make the voices of its members heard throughout the EHEA.

ESU



Ligia Deca, Chairperson European
Students' Union (ESU)

By now, no one doubts the importance of measuring Europe's progress in establishing a European Higher Education Area. ESU's Bologna with Student Eyes (BWSE) does not portray an institutional or governmental vision of the Bologna Process and this makes the survey unique. Rather, the publication reflects the perception of ESU-affiliated national unions of students on how concretely the changes reported by institutions and governments have been implemented. As one of the students who filled in our BWSE survey said: "The problem is that when you are the beneficiary of all these measures you might get

a fairly different feel than the intended one. It might be a problem of communication, it might be a problem of delay between legislative action and on-the-ground implementation, but at the road's end, what is felt at grassroots level is not always the same to what it is supposed to feel like." The Bologna Process, in the student's enthusiastic eyes, is not about ticking structural boxes. It is an unprecedented chance for reform towards student-centered learning and it requires a joint effort between all partners, an effort in which we, the students, are an equal partner able to shape our educational experience.

EUA



Jean-Marc Rapp, President of EUA

The European University Association (EUA) has been closely involved in the Bologna Process since the beginning, with the aim of ensuring the full involvement of universities at each step in the process. EUA believes that the support of Europe's 5,000 plus higher education institutions is essential to achieving the objectives of the Bologna Process. These ambitious reforms were designed not only to support mobility within Europe but also to answer some of Europe's social and economic challenges by enhancing the quality of university education, research capacity and graduate employability. Ten years down the line few could have imagined

the momentum the Bologna Process has created in fundamentally transforming European higher education with almost all European universities now having a common degree structure. Of course, there is still much unfinished business to be completed, not least in terms of reaching some of the more qualitative goals set such as improving significantly employability of graduates, and reforming outdated curricula. But what is important is that there is now a real opportunity for universities and their staff and students to build on the immense success of Bologna as we move into a new decade of international higher education cooperation.

EURASHE



Lars Lynge Nielsen,
President of EURASHE

The Bologna Process has brought about a number of important and necessary changes. These achievements are mainly in the three areas of quality assurance, the stakeholders' model and learning outcomes. Convergence in quality assurance is an essential ingredient of an EHEA that wants to play a role in a global sphere. Higher education institutions develop and implement in all their activities a common European culture of quality, a quality assurance system and transparent quality control mechanisms, consistent with their profile and mission. No party can claim to have exclusive ownership of an European

Higher Education Area (EHEA) dedicated to the overall development of society so the commitment and involvement of all stakeholders concerning the sustainability and impact of higher education on society is essential. Finally, the shift in focus in the education process from teachers' input to students' learning outcomes constitutes the foundation of the recognition of the competences achieved, both in a formal context and in lifelong learning and personal development processes. They are the cornerstone for a broader societal contract between all stakeholders.

UNESCO-

CEPES



Peter Wells, Director a. i.
of UNESCO-CEPES

The world may have changed on 9/11 (2001), yet arguably Europe's world changed on 9/11 (9 November) 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall – the sparking of a social and geo-political revolution across the region. Ten years later, another revolution was ignited by the Bologna Declaration, only this time in the context of the world of higher education.

Where 1989 freed the spirit and aspirations of generations, 1999 freed the minds of a new generation to be truly global leaders; learners and educators free to enjoy an unprecedented diversity of new opportunities for the exchange of ideas, research, skills, cultures and traditions,

thus breaking-down barriers of prejudice and ignorance that had so marred the twentieth century.

For the UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education, charged with promoting peace, tolerance and development through higher education, the "Bologna Process" could scarcely be a more crucial contemporary commitment. The Bologna Process is more than a technical exercise; it speaks to a moral obligation to promote and support freedom of thought and opinion between different peoples and cultures. This remains at the heart of UNESCO's mission and must also be for all institutions of higher learning.



Widening access and participation to European higher education

By Efstathios Michael

The concept of the ‘social dimension’ in the Bologna Process has been appearing in ministerial communiqués since 2001. However, only in 2007 did the European Ministers agree on a common definition for the objective of the social dimension, as proposed by the working group led by Sweden: “We share the societal aspiration that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations.”

The first working group on social dimension (2005–2007) recommended this broad approach given the “considerable differences and challenges in relation to the social dimension of higher education between the participating countries”. The Ministers further agreed to report on their “national strategies and policies for the social dimension, including action plans and measures to evaluate their effectiveness”. Therefore it called upon each country to develop a strategy, including national action plans, to ensure a country specific approach. Furthermore, it was recommended to work towards comparable and reliable data on the social dimension.

The national strategies for the social dimension, including action plans and measures illustrating their impact were presented to the Ministers in 2009. These national reports showed a great variety in national policies regarding the social dimension and bridging the differences between the Bologna countries was deemed quite difficult. Most countries have taken some action in order to enhance participative equity, but only a few have set up monitoring systems for measuring progress on this issue. Even fewer have made efforts to create an integrated strategy by considering synergies between government actions and institutional practices, funding arrangements, lifelong learning strategies, recognition of prior learning, cultural and linguistic minority issues, student guidance and counselling services, communication policy, social policy, anti-discrimination protection, tax system etc.

During the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve, the Ministers identified the social dimension as a key issue regarding priorities for the decade to come. They agreed upon the goal that: “Each participating country will set measurable targets for widening overall participation and increasing participation of underrepresented groups in higher education, to be reached by the end of the next decade. For the first time, it was also noted that efforts to achieve equity in higher education should be complemented by actions in other parts of the educational system.” There still seems to be a long way to go before the student body entering, participating in, and completing higher education at all levels reflects the diversity of our populations.



Efstathios Michael,
Cyprus, Chair of
the Social Dimension
Coordination
Group (2007–2009)
first Working Group
on Social Dimension
(2005–2007)

In order to achieve the ministerial aspirations set out in 2007 and 2009, and given the differences between the Bologna countries, national level initiatives have to be supported at the European level by the sharing of good practices on the one hand and the development of comparable and reliable social dimension data on the other hand. It is only through political commitment in combination with the tools for measuring and comparing achievements that progress can be reached. ■

National Strategies: Ireland



The National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2008–2013 of Ireland is one example where progress has been achieved. In its report on the social dimension of the Bologna Process Ireland states that “Ireland has achieved an unprecedented expansion in educational opportunities over the last four decades and has now reached entry rates to higher education in excess of 55 per cent. Assessment of future skills needs in the National Skills Strategy predict that entry rates to higher education should reach 72 per cent by 2020. The overarching single goal of the Widening Access strand is to develop initiatives to underpin the concept of lifelong learning and to improve access rates to third level from designated under-represented groups, in order to achieve the envisaged rates of participation in higher education”.

Students with special needs

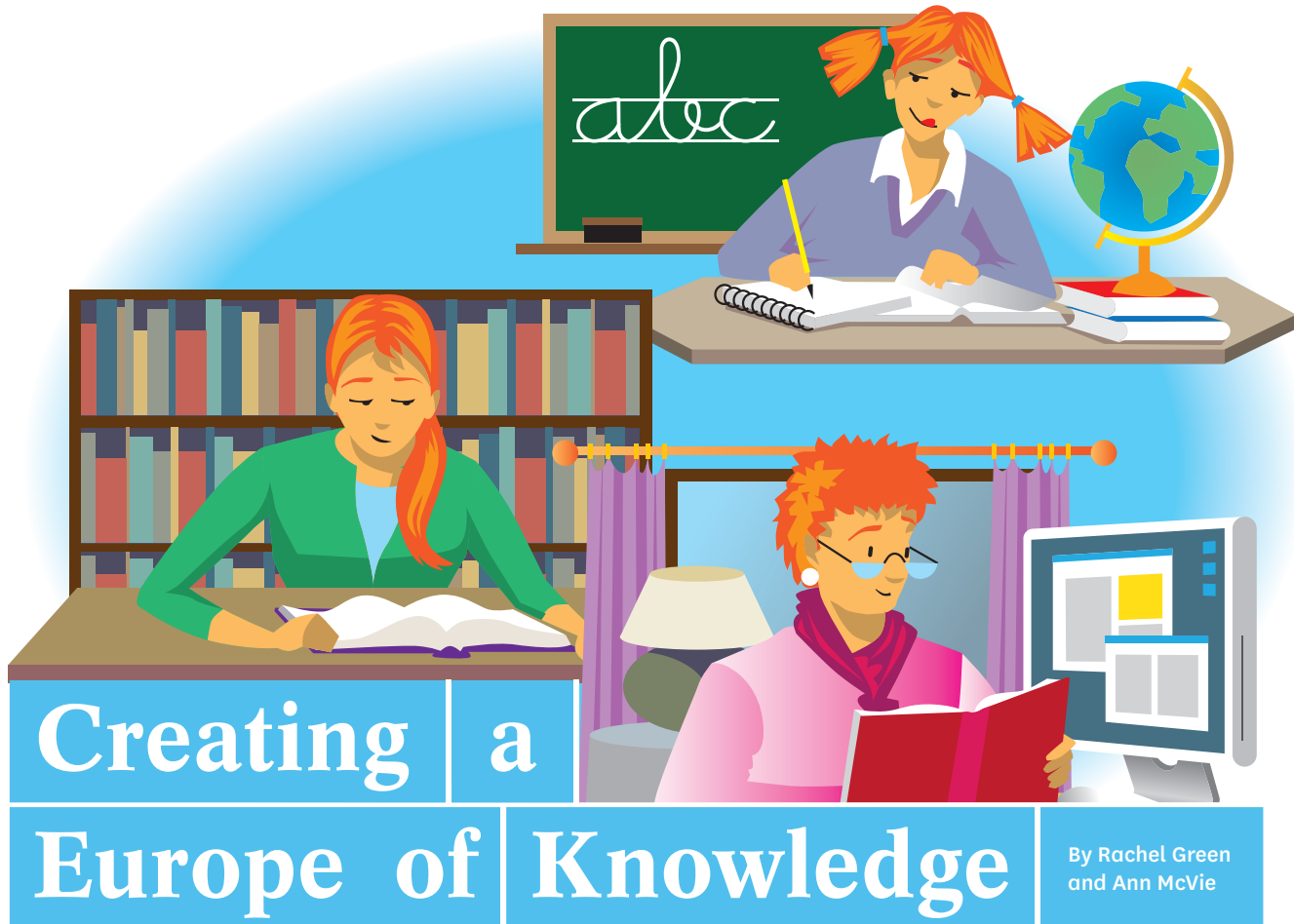


In Hungary, students with special needs are awarded additional points in the competition for admission to higher education. Higher education institutions also receive supplementary funding for each student with a disability they admit. This funding has to be used for special equipment and services for these students. In Sweden higher education institutions have to spend a minimum proportion of government funding on disabled students. In Norway all higher education institutions are required to have action plans to ensure equal access for students with a disability. Other countries reserve a specific number of places for candidates with a disability. Several countries have taken legislative initiatives to approve laws forbidding any discrimination of persons with a disability. Several countries offer special learning assistance for disabled students, and make special examination provisions. Some countries, like e.g. the Netherlands, support a national Expertise Centre, which offers advice to students and higher education institutions on specific issues and practical problems.

Measures for under-represented groups



Examples of these are the Office of Fair Access in the United Kingdom, the National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education in Ireland and the Wider Access Regional Fora in Scotland. These agencies approve and monitor agreements in which individual institutions set out the measures they will put in place to safeguard fair access to higher education for low income and other under-represented groups. They also encourage flexible delivery opportunities. Similar individual access plans, formulating measurable objectives on widening participation in higher education, also exist in Sweden.



Since the signing of the Bologna Declaration a decade ago, it has been clear that higher education systems must continue to adapt to ensure that the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) remains attractive and can respond effectively to the challenges of globalisation. This need for adaptation, building on existing achievements and effective practice, can be clearly seen in the related areas of lifelong learning and employability. Both are central to building a Europe of knowledge that benefits individuals, employers and society in general.

Lifelong learning: having been recognised as an essential element of the EHEA as early as 2001, the Prague Communiqué signalled that, in a Europe built on a knowledge-based society and economy, lifelong learning strategies would be necessary to face the challenges of competitiveness and the use of new technology, and to improve social cohesion, equal opportunities and quality of life.

Over the last decade, lifelong learning has come to be seen as a crosscutting issue, inherent in all Bologna action lines. Through Bologna seminars and other events, we now have a better understanding of what lifelong learning means in a higher education context. Particularly over the last two years, we have gained an appreciation of how Bologna “tools” can support lifelong learning: tools such as learning outcomes; credit-based curricula; national qualifications frameworks; recognition of prior learning, including informal and non-formal learning; and flexible learning paths. This is very timely. The growing demographic challenges facing Europe mean it is ever more pressing for us to overcome the barriers to lifelong learning, such as those that can arise from binary higher education systems.

The publication in July 2008 of the European University Association’s (EUA) Charter for Lifelong Learning marked a significant step forward. As well as calling for Government support, the Charter commits universities to:



Rachel Green, UK, Head of the Working Group on Employability (2007–2009)

Ann McVie, UK/Scotland, Head of the Lifelong Learning Coordination Group (2007–2009)

- embed concepts of widening access and lifelong learning in their institutional strategies,
- provide education and learning to a diversified student population,
- adapt study programmes to ensure that they are designed to widen participation and attract returning adult learners,
- provide appropriate guidance and counselling services,
- recognise prior learning,
- embrace lifelong learning in quality culture,
- strengthen the relationship between research, teaching and innovation in a perspective of lifelong learning,
- consolidate reforms to promote a flexible and creative learning environment for all students,
- develop partnerships at local, regional, national and international level to provide attractive and relevant programmes, and
- act as role models of lifelong learning institutions.

Part-time study

“After finishing my first year of the programme, my boss asked me already for a job on a higher level. He trusted me - and the fact that you are able to combine work and study, is a perfect way to show your capabilities... and potential competences...”

Wim Broeks, then 36 years old, part-time student from The Netherlands

It goes without saying that these commitments apply equally to all higher education institutions, polytechnics, universities of applied science, university colleges, or colleges of further and higher education. EUA and others will be working to take this agenda forward over the coming years, building on work continuing at national level across the European higher Education Area (EHEA) to:

- develop credit-based curricula and the widespread use of learning outcomes,
- implement short-cycle qualifications,
- increase the use of distance learning and offer more part-time provision,
- develop national guidelines for the recognition of prior learning and the accreditation of non-formal learning,
- develop a national quality code for the recognition of prior learning,
- explore the links between using learning outcomes, the recognition of prior learning and the development of national qualifications frameworks,
- set up lifelong learning networks,
- create staff development packs, and
- share good practice.

While progress has been made over the last decade, much remains to be done before lifelong learning becomes fully integrated within all higher education systems across the EHEA. The benefits will however be considerable. As recognised in the Prague and subsequent Communiqués, lifelong learning benefits society, the economy and individuals. It enables more students, from a broader range of backgrounds, to enter and re-enter higher education, thereby enabling them to upskill, reskill and maximise their personal as well as economic potential.

Employability

The original Bologna Declaration said that the creation of the European higher Education Area (EHEA) was a key way to promote citizens' employability. This has been echoed in the Prague and subsequent Communiqués. As we move towards a more knowledge-based society, employability – and the contribution higher education can make towards making lifelong learning a reality for all – will become increasingly important. It will be an essential ingredient in creating a learning society where citizens can update their skills and knowledge, acquire new qualifications, and improve their economic prosperity. Increasing the employability of our people is also key to improving the efficiency of our economies and the prospects for economic growth.

The 2007 London Communiqué said that improving employability in relation to Bologna reforms to the three cycle degree structure and in the context of lifelong learning was important. Since then world economic conditions have deteriorated although there

Return to education

Frank left school with no educational qualifications. For the next ten years he worked in a variety of low paid, low skill jobs. On successful completion of an Access programme, Frank went on to complete a BA in Communication Studies and subsequently gained postgraduate qualifications in Computer Studies and Corporate Administration.

Since completing his studies, he has been working in a variety of roles in higher education and is currently the Coordinator for a mentoring programme in the area of college to university transition.

“Having the opportunity to return to education after a decade not only allowed me to gain qualifications, it also gave me a new set of choices, an increased level of confidence, and increased earning potential. Possibly more importantly, it allowed me to see things in new and different ways and to realise that you are never too old to learn something new.”



Frank Brown, Mentoring Coordinator on The College Articulation Project based at Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland

are now encouraging signs that the worst of the recession may be over. Indications are that some sectors in some labour markets will face significant challenges and may well undergo fundamental change in the short term. Employability skills are now more important than ever: this has placed increased emphasis on the need for higher education systems to adapt if students leaving higher education are to take advantage of the growth and job creation associated with economic recovery.

In recent years progress has been made in strengthening the employability of graduates. Key to this has been improved dialogue and co-operation between employers and institutions: this allows institutions to be more responsive to employer needs and allows employers to understand the educational perspective. There have been tangible benefits. For example, some countries' higher education institutions have begun to define their mission as more employer-facing; some have started to seek a closer match between curricula and the needs of employers; some have improved the opportunities for work placements with employers; and others have begun embedding an entrepreneurial/enterprise strand more securely within their curricula.

But these have not become widespread or deeply embedded. Greater dialogue between higher education institutions and employers; improving employability skills; and strengthening the provision of information, advice and guidance to prospective students as well as to those graduating, are all areas where more remains to be done.

This is a shared responsibility between governments, government agencies, higher education institutions, employers and students. The rewards for success are great: a European Higher Education Area which maximises the talents of all its citizens and which contributes to the realisation of the Europe of knowledge. ■



Facilitating mobility between national systems

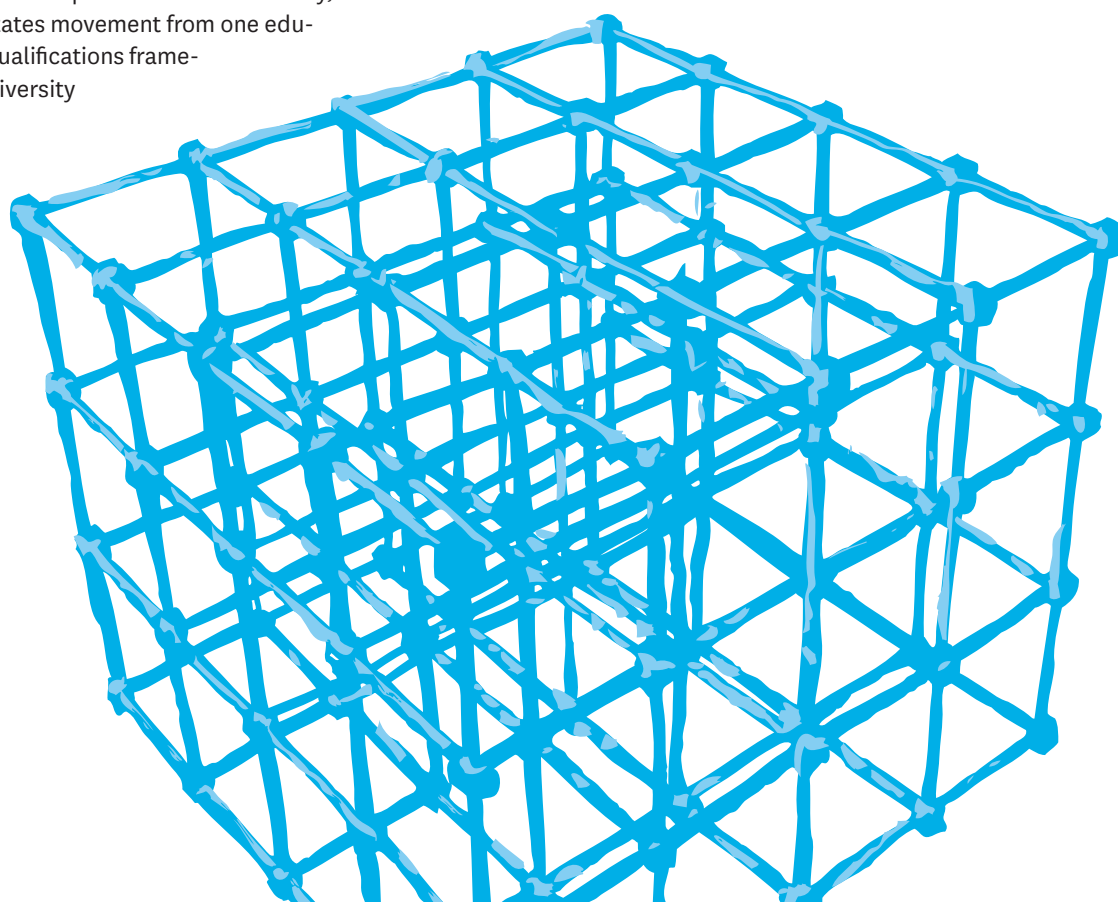
By Sjur Bergan

Qualifications frameworks have been described as instruments with a vision. Whereas terms like qualifications or diplomas easily make us think of a specific degree – or the document that certifies this degree, the number of years it took to get it or the procedure we followed to get there – qualifications frameworks describe all the different degrees that make up an education system. Qualifications frameworks are not primarily about procedures – they are about what is at the end of the procedures: about what learners know, understand and are able to do on the basis of a given qualification. The new emphasis on qualifications frameworks goes hand in hand with a new emphasis on learning outcomes. Were the expression not tainted by management speak, might we even talk about results-focused education?



Sjur Bergan,
Council of Europe,
Chair of the
Coordination Group
on Qualifications
Frameworks
(2007–2009)

The Bologna Process has taken the idea of qualifications frameworks, which originated in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, one step further. The overarching Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is made up of almost 50 education systems. Even if they all have much in common, each system also has its own specificities. The overarching qualifications framework for the EHEA, which Ministers adopted in 2005, allows each country to develop a national framework that takes account of its experience and traditions but at the same time ensures that national specificities are compatible with the overall European developments. The national framework is what the individual learner and curriculum developer relates to most easily, whereas the overarching framework facilitates movement from one education system to another. Thus, qualifications frameworks help make sense of the diversity that is one of the strengths of European higher education. They help make this diversity manageable, and they help learners move between qualifications within a single system, as well as between education systems all over Europe. All EHEA countries have now launched work on their qualifications frameworks. Six have already completed this work, and the rest have pledged they will have their national frameworks in place and ready for self-certification by 2012. ■



Developing a National Qualifications Framework (NQF): The example of Turkey

The establishment of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for higher education (HE) in Turkey was launched by the Council of Higher Education in 2006, and has now been approved. Level descriptors for the first, second and third cycles were prepared taking the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF-LLL) as a reference point. Studies for vocational and art education qualifications frameworks are high on the agenda. The above work accelerated the quality assurance studies in higher education. The draft law for the Turkish quality assurance Agency has been prepared and is under consideration.

This work brought together different stakeholders of higher education so that all bodies had the opportunity to discuss the situation, inform the others about their activities, concerns, data, needs and possible solutions. A Bologna Promoters Project was used as an effective

tool for the dissemination of studies. Turkish universities are now more sensitive to learning outcomes, competences and qualifications. They state that they may use the NQF to develop new and flexible programmes to provide learners with generic and subject specific competencies to use in a fast changing, global working environment.

The establishment of the NQF will lead to the clarification of qualifications by using the learning outcomes approach. It will facilitate the transparency, comparability, portability and transfer of qualifications both internationally and intra-nationally. The NQF will also contribute to the development of progressive routes between qualifications at all levels of the Turkish education system. It is planned to be used as a tool for the recognition of prior and experiential learning with flexible learning paths. What is needed now is the integration of

studies in order to include and make use of the results of various related projects. This will be achieved by the accumulation of information on student-centred learning, learning outcomes, consistency within different frameworks in the Turkish NQF, the building of consensus between institutions, and the initiation of necessary organisational changes. Besides its main goal of implementing a NQF for HE in Turkey, it will result in more flexible graduates, a quality workforce for the economy and highly qualified citizens for the country.



Selda Önderoğlu,
Bologna Expert and
Member of Turkish
NQF Working Group,
Turkey

Qualifications frameworks helping to reorient 21st-century education

It is not easy to encapsulate in a few lines the complex nature and significance of something that appears at first sight as mundane, soporific and tedious as 'qualifications frameworks'. Indeed, they are abstruse, unexciting educational devices that can never capture the imagination. Despite this they have the potential for having an enormously positive impact helping to reorient 21st-century education from its current focus on 'teaching' to 'learning'.

According to Socrates: "I cannot teach anybody anything, I can only make them think." Albert Einstein held similar views: "I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn." The modern professor should be regarded more of a facilitator than the font of all wisdom and students are never just empty vessels to be filled with information. Learning

is not a spectator sport!

These sentiments are at the heart of the new-style qualifications frameworks that seek to inspire student-centred learning, focused on learning outcomes – what a successful student can know, do and understand. This achievement is proved by appropriate assessment rooted in commonly understood standards linked to cycle/level descriptors that form qualifications frameworks.

Qualifications frameworks are just tools. They are a means to an end – improved education for all, which is given due national and international recognition. They are certainly difficult to implement and arguably the biggest challenge for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in the next decade. However, when done well they form part of a new transparent educational infrastructure, helping to establish consistent stan-

dards and facilitate fair recognition and mobility between autonomous states and institutions. They are part of a new educational paradigm that encapsulates a particular methodological approach to quality assurance for autonomous responsible institutions. Above all, qualifications frameworks lead to better qualifications. If this does not happen we must remember the late 13th century French proverb *mauvés ovriers ne trovera ja bon hostill*, bad workmen will never find a good tool.



Stephen Adam,
Former Bologna
Promoter, Higher
Educational
Consultant,
United Kingdom

Fostering mobility for lifelong learning

By Carita Blomqvist

Sound and fair recognition of qualifications is an instrument for attaining important policy goals, like fostering mobility or providing opportunities for lifelong learning. It also contributes to policy goals beyond the realm of higher education, such as promoting social cohesion and making the best possible use of the competences and talents of our societies.

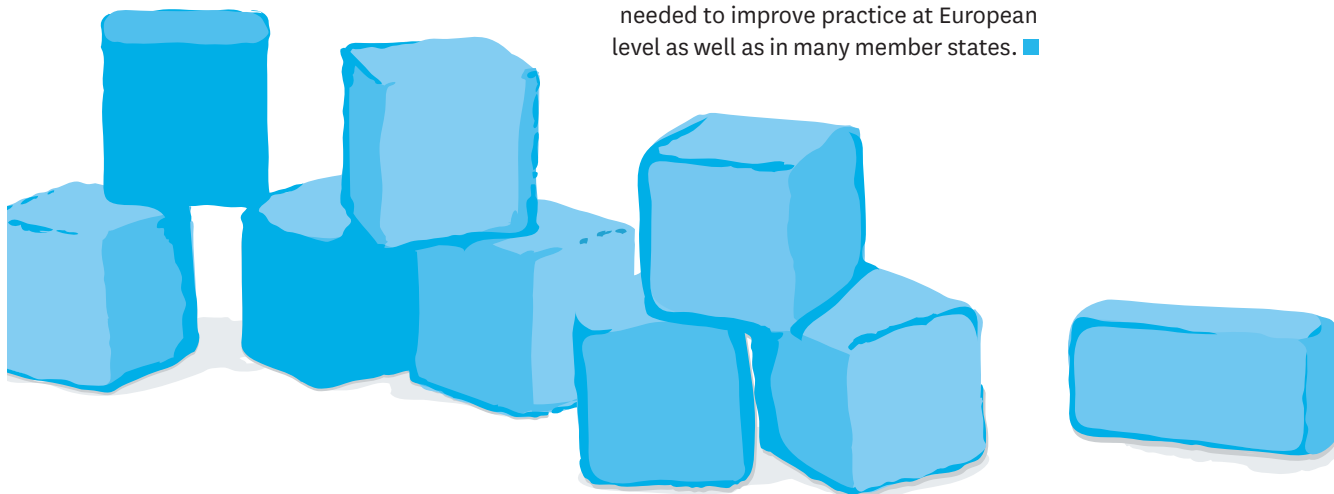
Fair recognition, as one of the main goals of the Bologna Process, is furthered by tools promoted by the Process, such as more wide-spread and consistent use of credits and the Diploma Supplement. In addition, at least two other important policy areas – quality assurance and reform of the degree structure, together with the qualifications frameworks – also have the potential to help improve recognition.

The number of countries who have ratified the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (better known as the Lisbon Recognition Convention), the only legally binding intergovernmental treaty that is a part of the Process, has grown to 49. All but two members of the Bologna Process have ratified, and the parties and signatories include countries outside the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), thus enhancing the global dimension of the Bologna Process. Also the work of the European Network of National Information Centres on Academic Recognition and Mobility (ENIC Network) in developing recognition practice goes beyond Europe, as does the daily work of many credentials evaluators.

The Bologna Process Stocktaking and other reports show that despite significant progress there is also room for improvements in implementing the tools provided by the Bologna Process in actual recognition practice throughout the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Recognition needs to be seen as an effort to assist mobile learners combined with an effort to further the quality of European higher education. The legal framework is largely in place, but considerable effort is still needed to improve practice at European level as well as in many member states. ■



Carita Blomqvist,
Chair of the
Lisbon Recognition
Committee



Nuffic – The Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education

Nuffic is the organisation for international cooperation in higher education and a member of the ENIC (European Network of Information Centres)/NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centres) network. Nuffic has witnessed major changes in the higher education system, due to the Bologna Process. In 2002, a ‘Big Bang’ took place, with the transformation of the traditional long academic programmes into Bachelor’s and Master’s and the introduction of a new accreditation system. All of this has had huge consequences on our daily recognition practice. It has become easier for us to compare foreign qualifications to Dutch ones, because of a greater variety in the Netherlands of matching Bachelor’s and Master’s programmes and degrees and because the diversity in the names of foreign degrees has significantly decreased. In some countries however, it seems that only the names and not the

underlying structure has been changed. Another contribution to fair recognition due to the Bologna Process is the rapid development of quality assurance and accreditation systems. It has become clearer what the status of higher education programmes is, and it has become easier for us to provide reliable information on this topic.

Very promising in this respect is the development of qualifications frameworks, linked to the overarching Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area. These frameworks will further advance the readability and recognition of qualifications, in particular at system level. Together with the Flemish Community of Belgium, the Netherlands was one of the first whose framework was assessed by an international committee and certified.

As an active member of the ENIC and NARIC networks, we appreciate that the importance of recognition has been

‘recognised’ within the Bologna Process. This has led to our involvement in projects with the aim of adapting its methodology to the changing needs of the ‘Bologna world’. The Lisbon Recognition Convention plays a pivotal role in this respect. Also crucial is the shifting emphasis from an input-driven approach to the output-based evaluation of learning outcomes, the former focussing on what a student has been taught, the latter what a student is able to do. In our view the Bologna Process really has furthered recognition, in the first place among the Bologna countries, but increasingly and inevitably also in a global setting.



Lucie de Bruin,
Nuffic, Head of
International Recognition
Department,
Dutch ENIC/NARIC,
Netherlands

Improving recognition across systems

The Bologna Process is almost certainly the most important multinational reform of higher education undertaken since the teaching guilds and the student nations established the revolutionary concepts of the studium generale and universitas in the 11th and 12th Centuries. With the Bologna reforms, the structure of European higher education started to resemble the original meaning of the baccalaureus, magister and doctor, albeit with a different lingua franca and inspired by modern challenges. The need to promote mobility, ensure portability of credits, and create the basis for European academic and research cooperation are goals as relevant today as they were in the days of the ius ubique docendi.

The action lines adopted by the Bologna ministerial conference are important to improving recognition across systems, but equally so are the subtle changes

accompanying Bologna: non-traditional modes of delivery; accreditation; allowing private education to provide a public service; decentralising control; empowering institutions; and emphasising educational breadth as well as depth in order to serve citizens and economies in a rapidly changing post-industrial world. Such reforms would make sense to the original university corporations of masters and students; they seem radical today only because of the more recent legacy of nationalism, statism, and the industrial organisation of society.

The Bologna Process is transforming Europe in more ways than were envisioned in 1999. It is influencing changes in work, migration, social policy and diplomacy as well as higher education, and will have an effect on school and vocational education as well. Globally, Bologna is improving European/Non-European cooperation and is inspiring reformers

in other parts of the world. Of course, there is much work left to do, not least of which are to improve student services and access and eliminate obsolete bureaucratic practices. To this American observer, the successes of the first Bologna decade leave no doubt that reform will continue, working toward an international community of study and research and aiming for the ideals first promulgated by the Constitutio Habita of Emperor Frederick II in 1158 when academic freedom was established in European law for the international students and scholars of Bologna who sought that right.



E. Stephen Hunt,
U.S. Network for
Education Information
Manager,
U.S Department of
Education,
United States

The bridge between European higher education and research

By Lesley Wilson



Lesley Wilson,
Secretary
General, European
University
Association (EUA)

In 2007, Education Ministers from the 46 countries in the Bologna process asked the European University Association (EUA) to support higher education institutions in sharing experiences on the range of innovative doctoral programmes that were emerging across Europe. This is the next phase in the major transformation of doctoral education that is taking place across Europe, driven, among other things by the reform momentum of the Bologna Process.

Considered as a crucial tool for Europe to increase its research capacity, doctoral education became an integral part of the Bologna Process in 2003 when Ministers meeting in Berlin, based upon a strong recommendation made by EUA, included doctoral education as the ‘third cycle’ of European higher education. The driving force behind this was the recognition, in particular by Europe’s universities, that doctoral education is the bridge linking the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA), and that, as the first stage of a research career, excellent conditions for doctoral level work will be crucial in determining the attractiveness of Europe for bright young research talent.

EUA has taken this process forward in the years that followed through a series of major projects and studies involving member universities from across Europe. This led to the adoption of the Salzburg principles in a crucial Bologna Seminar in February 2005 and fed into the policy recommendations of the 2005 Bergen Communiqué. At the Ministers’ request EUA continued its work, gathering considerable evidence on Europe’s changing doctoral landscape; in particular the rapid growth of structured doctoral programmes and schools seeking to offer greater critical mass, enhanced supervision and widened employment opportunities for doctoral holders in both public and private sectors.

It is no exaggeration to say that Bologna has provoked “quiet revolution” in doctoral education in Europe’s universities, highlighted by the results of EUA’s Trends reports which reveal the extent to which changes in doctoral training are taking place. By 2007 only 22% of the survey’s respondents had maintained the traditional master-apprentice model, while 49% had a mixture of individual tutoring and taught courses and 29% had established doctoral schools (Trends V (2007), p. 26). And this reform process continues to gather momentum, as highlighted by the success of the new EUA Council for Doctoral Education – the new body created by EUA to take forward the doctoral agenda in Europe, as requested by Ministers in 2007.

Structured doctoral programmes are being developed all over Europe. While some programmes are already well established, many other institutions are only now embarking on setting up the structures that meet the needs of their own specific situations: these vary greatly; from doctoral schools spanning across several large institutions, as for example in Denmark, to specialised units within one institution, like many places in Germany. It is fair to say that across Europe political declarations have given way to a practical phase

» It is no exaggeration to say that Bologna has provoked ‘quiet revolution’ in doctoral education in Europe’s universities. «

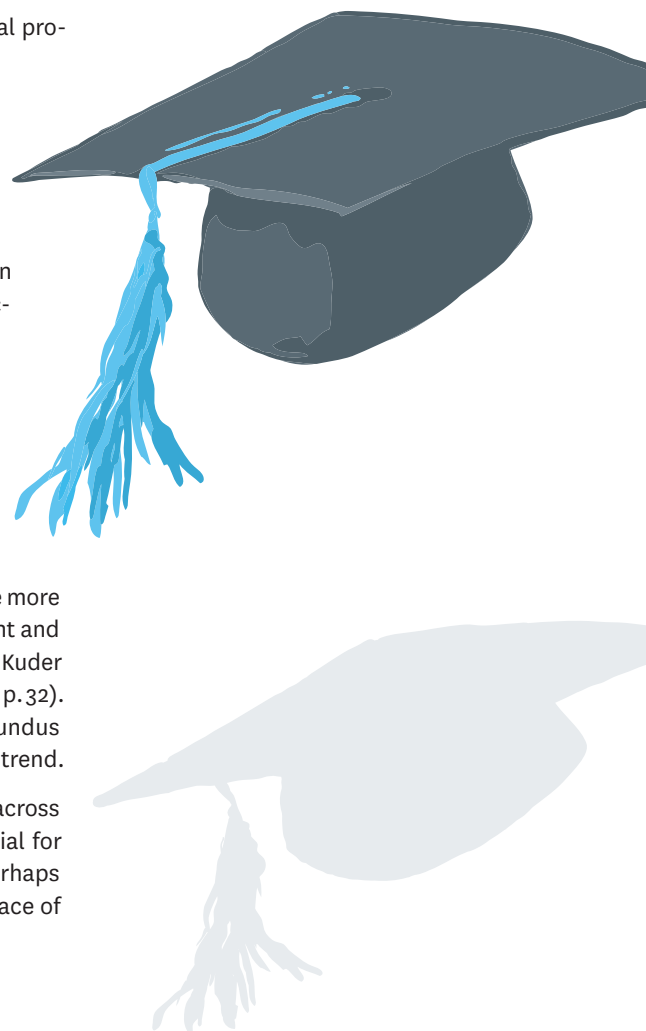
of implementation. However, there is no trend towards a uniform model of doctoral programmes in Europe; diversity will continue to be a European hallmark.

Doctoral programmes are also offering new career opportunities for students, with over 50% of doctoral holders now moving into careers beyond the academic sector. As result, it is clear that collaborative doctoral programmes – organised between universities and industry – are becoming increasingly important across Europe. A recent EUA study, involving 33 universities, 31 companies and 18 stakeholder organisations from 20 European countries, highlighted that both universities and industry consider collaborative doctoral programmes as key channels for supporting innovation and recruiting efforts.

Collaborative doctoral programmes are real working models of the “knowledge triangle” in which education, research and innovation are brought together in a common framework of high skills and knowledge development by university and industry partners. Their success is built from the bottom-up, based upon mutual trust and the recognition that there are no “one-size-fits-all” solutions.

Doctoral education is also becoming increasingly international and it is clear that joint programmes between institutions in different countries are likely to become more popular. An impressive 85% of the European respondents on a recent survey on joint and double degrees said they planned to establish more international degrees (Matthias Kuder Daniel Obst (2009), *Joint and Double Degree Programs in the Transatlantic Context*, p. 32). The inclusion of doctoral programmes in the European Commission’s Erasmus Mundus funding scheme with a significant increase in resources should also strengthen this trend.

Is clear to see that the Bologna Process has given valuable support to universities across Europe to reform and modernise their doctoral programmes. This has been crucial for universities and will help develop Europe’s research base in the years to come. Perhaps when we look back in ten years time, we will even say that Europe has taken the place of the US in terms of the gold standard for worldwide doctoral education. ■



Doctoral studies within the Bologna process: University of Zagreb case study

The Croatian higher education system first switched to a Bologna (3+2+3) structure in 2004. While the first generation of Bachelor students enrolled in 2004, newly structured doctoral studies started a year later in 2005. In particular, the University of Zagreb, as the largest national university with a significant number of doctoral students, decided to launch new three-year structured doctoral studies.

Requirements for such new programmes have been defined both at national and institutional level. Programmes had to include research, teaching and other forms of student activities related to their research work. Although courses, workshops,

seminars etc. were an integral part of programmes, research had to remain the central focus. Equally, the role of supervisors has been reshaped. All the new doctoral programmes had to be evaluated first at institutional level before being evaluated at national level in order to receive accreditation. At the moment, the University of Zagreb has more than 50 accredited programmes that bring together more than 2 500 doctoral candidates.

The newly introduced process of doctoral education at the University of Zagreb is now facing its first revision. Following feedback from the first generations of enrolled doctoral candidates, we have been considering different issues such

as: decreasing the overall number of programmes; the possibility of establishing doctoral schools; better defining the role of doctoral candidates, the supervisor, and the institution. The rule-book for doctoral studies and doctoral schools is still ‘under preparation’ and it is expected to provide a solid ground for further improvements of doctoral education.



Melita Kovačević,
Vice-Rector for
Science and Tech-
nology, University
of Zagreb, Croatia



Europe's role in the global higher education setting

By Barbara Weitgruber

The Bologna Process and the developing European Higher Education Area (EHEA) have raised growing interest in many parts of the world. The following statement reflects this interest and highlights some of the challenges related to cooperation and competition.

Juan Ramon de la Fuente

“As globalisation and internationalisation grow in importance for all higher education institutions worldwide, the European model, known as the Bologna Process, is increasingly playing a major role as a catalyst for greater regionalisation. Whether this approach is a stepping stone towards greater internationalisation, or, on the contrary, a move to build stronger blocks in a higher education landscape where competition is heating up will depend on the extent to which Europe, and other nascent regional initiatives, promote their global dimension.

It is easier to overcome barriers to international higher education and research collaboration such as distance, language and traditions within a single region. However, the International Association of Universities (IAU) is also well aware of the invaluable benefits of working with partners from well beyond one's region. The key is to ensure that such collaboration – whether between regions or within regional integration movements in higher education – gives pride of place to the respect and active participation of all interests, stakeholders and approaches so that all partners can benefit and overall, higher education can be strengthened and improved.”



Barbara Weitgruber, Austria, Chair of the Working Group EHEA in a Global Setting (2007 – 2009)



Juan Ramon de la Fuente, President of the International Association of Universities

With the Strategy “European Higher Education in a Global Setting” adopted in 2007 the Ministers of the countries participating in the Bologna Process identified five priority areas which are of special importance in the cooperation with other regions of the world.

The priority areas listed below are meant to provide a common framework to which all stakeholders can make their full contribution:

- Improving information on the EHEA
- Promoting European higher education to enhance its world-wide attractiveness
- Intensifying policy dialogue
- Strengthening cooperation based on partnership
- Furthering the recognition of qualifications

A first report on overall developments at European, national and institutional level in implementing this Strategy (published in 2009) pointed out that a number of steps have already been taken in all five areas, but further action is needed to respond adequately to the growing interest in the EHEA and to meet the many, very different expectations from across the world.

Goolam Mohamedbhai

“The Bologna Process and the creation of a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) have had two important effects on African higher education. First, the majority of universities in Francophone African countries have embarked on the process of adopting the LMD (Licence-Maitrise-Doctorat) qualification structure, as advocated by the Bologna Process. Second, efforts have started in creating an African Higher Education Area (AHEA), along lines very similar to the EHEA. Just as in Europe, these processes are meant to lead to harmonisation of higher education in Africa, thus facilitating continental academic mobility and institutional collaboration.

However, it is important that these processes take into account the specificity of Africa and not be a mere imitation of what is happening in Europe. Fears have also been expressed that the creation of an AHEA patterned on the EHEA would lead to increased academic mobility from Africa to Europe, which may worsen the brain drain situation.”

The concerns expressed by Prof. Goolam Mohamedbhai underline the need to engage in true dialogue and to foster cooperation based on partnership. As stressed by the participants of the first Bologna Policy Forum at ministerial level from 61 countries in April 2009 in their concluding Statement “transnational exchanges in higher education should be governed on the basis of academic values” and “fair and fruitful ‘brain circulation’” should be promoted.

Higher education and research have always been international. The opportunity for all stakeholders to engage in policy dialogue however has increased with the growing interest in the Bologna Process across the world. As higher education institutions and their representative organisations, students’ organisations and social partners are key partners in the Bologna Process, they are also main stakeholders in the emerging new forms of international cooperation. And it is, among others, this stakeholder involvement which makes the Bologna Process special as the following quote shows:

Dzulkifli A Razak

“The emergence of the European Higher Education Area, through the Bologna Process, is indeed a laudable example of how diverse institutions and stakeholders at all levels of higher education can, when working together, move the agenda of higher education for the benefit of the larger community. Asia in particular could learn much from this example in its attempt to enhance the contribution of higher education to the region.”

With the first Bologna Policy Forum, representatives confirmed their interest in fostering mutual understanding and learning in the field of higher education. It is now up to stakeholders across the world, especially policy makers, higher education institutions, students and staff to take concrete action in line with the Communiqué of the 2009 UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education recommendation: “International cooperation in higher education should be based on solidarity and mutual respect and the promotion of humanistic values and intercultural dialogue. As such it should be encouraged despite the economic downturn.”



Goolam Mohamedbhai, Secretary-General, Association of African Universities



Dzulkifli A Razak, Vice-Chancellor, Universiti Sains Malaysia, and Vice-President of the International Association of Universities



Enhancing opportunities for students and staff

By Gayane Harutyunyan and Rafael Bonete

Student and staff mobility is one of the central aims of the Bologna Process and has been promoted by all participants in the Process and enjoys unanimous support. Focus on, and support for, enhanced opportunities for mobility have been pivotal in the effort to overcome barriers and to work on the new instruments facilitating mobility.

One may find it difficult to remember how revolutionary the commitment to large-scale and easily-accessible student and staff mobility was eleven years ago. Today, mobility is more important than in the past: academics and students are more aware of, and open to, the positive effects of mobility than ever before. Higher education institutions now agree that it is strategically important to use the valuable working time of administrative staff, academics, students and university boards to make mobility function in practice. Over the years public funds allocated to student mobility have increased in many countries but there is still a long way to go and this will require more actions. It is likely that more funding for students is not enough and in the next decade we will also need to encourage and support our administrative staff and teachers to be mobile. Nothing is more effective in convincing students to go abroad than talking to a teacher who has already had the experience.

The academic relevance of mobility, particularly student mobility, has furthermore been enhanced and underlined by many of the initiatives and action lines developed and promoted by the Bologna Process, such as improved recognition practices, qualifications frameworks, quality assurance cooperation and the adoption of a three-cycle degree system.

Many of these achievements were further improved by the joint European Students' Union and Education International campaign to further increase student and staff mobility across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Entitled 'Let's Go!', this mobility cam-



Gayane Harutyunyan, Armenia, Chair of the Coordination Group on Mobility (2007 – 2009)



Rafael Bonete, Spain, Member of the Coordination Group on Mobility (2007 – 2009)

campaign put forward a clear picture of country achievements in relation to the Bologna mobility goal, spread further awareness of the importance of this action line and engaged student and staff unions at the grass-roots level in working towards overcoming the remaining obstacles to mobility in a direct and hands-on manner. The ‘Let’s Go!’ campaign proved once more that the commitment to mobility for all is as great as it was eleven years ago.

Looking Forward

It is therefore even more important in the future to make even better use of the Bologna tools, continuing to fight negative attitudes towards mobility and, most importantly, lobbying to make immigration and social policies mobility-friendly. Within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), there are still severe problems of unbalanced mobility, especially between European Union Member States and countries from outside the European Union. Substantial problems also remain regarding financial support for mobility, as well as problems related to student and staff social security in connection with mobility periods.

The motto for future work with mobility in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is taken from the European Students’ Union and Education International mobility campaign: Let’s Go! Make Mobility for Higher Education Students and Staff a Reality! ■



Obstacles to mobility: the experience of a Serbian student

Many obstacles still exist, as the case of one Serbian student shows. She has been mobile with the Erasmus Mundus programme in a two-year Master’s Programme organised as a joint degree by three higher education institutions in Europe. This student reports that, as an academic experience, the programme was very useful, not only because similar programmes do not exist in Serbia or in the region, but also because researchers from various international centres contributed to her programme as lecturers.

Furthermore, this student’s experience reflects the importance of tackling many different obstacles to mobility and highlights the fact that many problems

may exist on different levels. Although the student did not encounter any major obstacles to becoming mobile, she underlines that there are a number of problems related to administrative procedures linked to visas and residence permits. These hindrances, moreover, multiplied, as she had to apply for permits in each of the countries where the respective higher education institutions were located. Applications often included quite substantial documentation (e.g. police certificates to prove that there were no pending processes on her in any of the countries where she has spent at least six months at any time during her lifetime). However, unfortunately, upon returning home, the stu-

dent reports that she had even more severe problems, as it was difficult for her to get her joint master degree recognised in Serbia. The problem was finally resolved, as the student managed to get her degree recognised according to old recognition procedures, which, however, do not correspond to the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

The student concludes that mobility is still not a real opportunity for students in Serbia, as currently, there are only a small number of organised mobility programmes in Serbia, and the Erasmus Mundus Programme is possibly the only one offering sufficient scholarships for study in Europe.

Assessing impact and achievements for future policy

By Germain Dondelinger

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ata collection is one of the younger action lines of the Bologna Process. It expresses its need and willingness to engage both in a critical assessment of its achievements and in informed policy-making for the future.

Data collection was initiated at the Bergen Conference in 2005 in an attempt to gain a clearer view of the challenges facing the implementation of the social dimension and of mobility. It was argued that without a clear factual basis on which to build these policies no real progress could be made. This entailed that data collection was first a sub-group of the social dimension working group since the definition of indicators precedes the measuring of achievements. In other words it was only after the social dimension had been defined as “the societal aspiration that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations” and “that students [should be] able to complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background” that the proper definition of indicators could take place. These indicators ought to form the basis for reliable and comparable data on central aspects of the social dimension within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The indicators developed centre around:

- widening access, i. e. participation and completion rates
- on the study framework, i. e. expenditure on higher income, the institutions’ income, the students’ income and allocation of state support to students by social background
- student and staff mobility and
- effective outcomes and employability, i. e. educational attainment of the population, graduation and completion rates, unemployment rates of tertiary education graduates, returns on education and qualification mismatch.

At the outset there was no comprehensive survey for the social dimension in higher education, but a number of multi-purpose surveys existed which could answer certain issues related to it. However, these surveys all had different timetables and a differing coverage of the Bologna countries. A more consistent approach was required and in order to ensure the highest degree of reliability and comparability, the following international organisations were asked to collaborate. Eurostat, which is part of the European Commission, provides comparable statistics and indicators on key elements of educational systems across Europe, Eurydice, an institutional network now part of the Lifelong Learning Programme, provides readily comparable information on educational systems and policies across Europe and Eurostudent, a project coordinated by HiS (Hochschul-Informationssystem Hannover) focuses on the student body in higher education and especially on



Germain Dondelinger,
Luxembourg, Chair
of the Data Collec-
tion Working Group
(2007 – 2009)

the students' socio-economic living conditions and their international mobility. The approaches of the various organisations are complementary. Data come from a combination of administrative data and specialised surveys. Whereas Eurydice is a system descriptor of the normative framework, Eurostudent gives an indication of how the system works.

The work on data collection was first met with mixed feelings giving way to puzzlement at the depth of the report as well as full endorsement of the work being carried out. After a period of getting to know each other, the three organisations elaborated a consistent approach and thanks to the commitment of their representatives, two dedicated reports were made available. Some Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUP) members were worried that the recommendations of the working group would be too general and one member "was especially pleased to hear that we are making very concrete recommendations for our proposed report in 2009 and liked the idea of the synthesis tables" (as reported by Dominic Orr from Eurostudent).

The following examples testify to the very concrete nature of the results. "Data collection" shows that all countries have at least extensively introduced the new cycle-structure, but models vary considerably between countries and in some cases also within countries. It also shows that developments are taking more time than originally anticipated, probably because the complexity of the task had been underestimated. Substantial progress, for example, still needs to be made if the full potential of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is to be realised.

More specifically, as far as widening access is concerned, data show that between 2002 and 2006 the demographic structure entering higher education did not present any major changes. In the EU-27 almost a third of the population aged between 25 and 34 has completed higher education. This share is increasing in almost all Bologna countries.

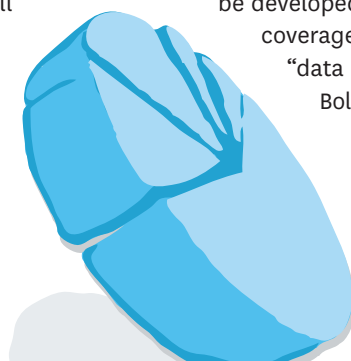
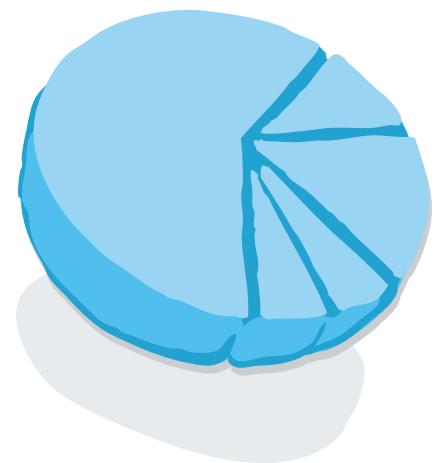
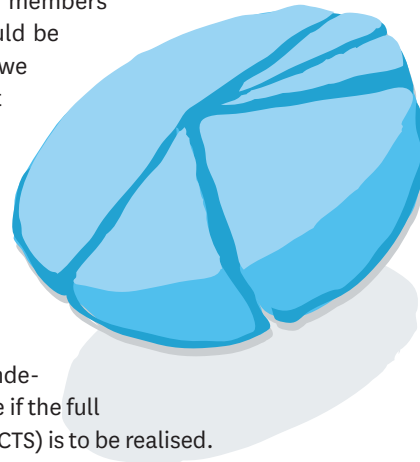
In terms of student income, in all countries for which data are available students combine income from job, family and state support in order to pursue their studies.

In most countries, students from highly educated backgrounds are more likely to have experienced a study-related stay abroad. As reported by students financial constraints are the most important obstacles in planning a study-related stay abroad. This reason was most often given by students from low-educated backgrounds.

As far as employability is concerned, in around half of the Bologna Area, 20% or more of young workers with tertiary education are employed below their theoretical skill level (vertical mismatch).

Although the financing of higher education is not a Bologna action line, data collection also sheds a light on this issue. Thus a "typical" Bologna country spent EUR 8300 Purchasing Power Standards (PPS) per full time equivalent student in 2005, of which nearly 30% was devoted to R&D and ancillary services. Spending on core educational goods and services per student were twice as high in the US as in most Bologna countries. Bologna countries are increasingly investing in R&D and ancillary services, while expenditure on core educational goods and services increase at a lower rate.

"Data collection" with its combination of comparable statistics and contextualised information provides a factual basis for steering the system, but also for mirroring how the system works. This system will be developed still further in the years to come to ensure an overall coverage of the Bologna countries. The further development of "data collection" is a sign of the growing maturity of the Bologna Process. ■



Raising the quality of European higher education

By the E4 group (ENQA-EUA-EURASHE-ESU)

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ocietal progress and the new global challenges require constant attention to the quality of higher education and therefore the promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance (QA) has been one of the defining objectives of the Bologna Process.

During the last 10 years, Bologna has helped to focus more on the quality of European higher education than ever before. For this purpose, the E4 group developed the “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” (ESG), which were adopted by Ministers of Education in 2005. The ESG defined common European standards for internal and external quality assurance in order to provide higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies across 46 countries with common reference points. In parallel, common requirements for national systems were defined at European level to improve the consistency of European quality assurance schemes.

Responding to the Berlin Communiqué (2003), which stated that “the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself”, higher education institutions have further developed their internal QA processes in line with the individual national QA systems, the ESG and their own specific profiles and missions. Simultaneously the focus of QA has broadened from merely trying to ensure a certain threshold of quality to include approaches of continuous improvement and quality enhancement.

The awareness of the importance of synergy between internal and external QA, as well as the need for the sharing of good practices, has risen in recent years and resulted in increasing transparency and cooperation between key stakeholders in QA – higher education institutions, students and QA agencies – at all levels (institutional, national and international).

The E4 group plays a key role in all quality related developments linked to the Bologna Process. One of the principal achievements in this area has been (at the request of Ministers) the establishment in 2008 of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). The register aims to provide clear and objective information about trustworthy quality assurance agencies that are working in Europe, and will provide a means for institutions (where national regulations permit) to choose between different agencies on the register. Other important objectives of the Register are the promotion of student mobility by providing a basis for the increase of trust among higher education institutions and reducing opportunities for dubious organisations or ‘accreditation mills’ to gain credibility in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and beyond.

» There appears to be a correlation between how seriously the ESG are taken and the level of student participation, thus we can conclude that proper ESG implementation acts as a safeguard towards student participation in external quality assurance practices. «

Bologna With Student Eyes (ESU) 2009, p. 49.



The “E4 group”, at the founding ceremony of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) on 4 March 2008 in Brussels, comprises the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European Students Union (ESU), the European University Association (EUA) and the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)

The E4 group also organises the annual European Quality Assurance Forum, which enables all higher education stakeholders working in quality – such as higher education institutions, students, quality assurance agencies, governments and intergovernmental organisations – to discuss and debate best practice and the latest trends in QA.

However, this is merely the beginning of the European QA journey, not the end. The ESG still remain to be implemented in some countries of the European Higher Education Area and the Register will be evaluated for the first time by 2012. As a result the E4 group will consider the need to revise the ESG, thus continuing its cooperation, together with the other stakeholders, in implementing and assessing the existing QA initiatives, in developing further the European QA dimension and in raising general awareness about quality in higher education. ■

Quality Assurance in Scotland



Heriot-Watt University is a university with a strong international profile. It recruits over 30% of its students from outside the UK into three Scottish Campuses and has a Campus in Dubai, over 60 international partners delivering Heriot-Watt courses and many independent distance learning students. Altogether there are about 10,000 students studying overseas. This scale of operation and the large number of international partners poses difficulties in quality assurance particularly self-assessment by partners and review by external peers.

One of the difficulties of coordinating quality assurance across such a diverse range of activities and countries is to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the language used. The Bologna Process provides just such a framework and allows meaningful discussions to take place not only between European partners but also with other international partners. It also establishes specific levels and reference points to support judgements. The Process has led to a common understanding of concepts such as academic

level and academic credit. This in turn allows academic staff and students in different countries to have meaningful dialogues about academic standards and programme quality – and thus develop them further – even if they have had experience of different educational systems.

The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland, which sits within the wider Bologna framework, provides a defined set of reference points. This promotes transparency and can be used by partners in support of self assessment and by external peers undertaking reviews. It is particularly valuable for students who are involved with quality assurance. The university makes extensive use of students as reviewers sitting alongside academic peers and they make a major contribution at all levels. The Scottish framework allows student organisations to train students as reviewers for any UK university.



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Publisher:

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RAABE Fachverlag für Wissenschaftsinformation,
Kaiser-Friedrich-Straße 90, 10585 Berlin,
Tel.: 0 30/21 29 87-0, Fax: 0 30/21 29 87-30,
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Graphic design: Florian Brendel (fb@buerobrendel.de)

Printed by: Kessler Druck + Medien, Bobingen

Photo credits: David Ausserhofer/Intro (page 21, lower right; page 28, above; page 31, above; page 32); European Commission (page 18, centre); Eszter Gordon (page 4, above); Heriot-Watt University (page 36); Britta Frenz (cover picture); Hofburg Vienna (page 5, bottom); Frank Homann (page 28, bottom); Magyar Turizmus Zrt. Fotóarchívum (page 4, bottom); Bettina Mayr-Siegl (page 5, above); Ministry of Education of Spain (page 3); Petra Spiola/BM für Wissenschaft und Forschung (page 29, above); Raabe Verlag (page 12, se-

ries of pictures, bottom); Redaktion + Recherche (page 18, left and right); UNESCO 2008 (page 15, bottom). The portrait photos on the pages listed in the following have been made available to the editors with the kind permission of the person or persons depicted and the institutions named (pages 7, 11; page 12, above; pages 13 – 14; page 15, above and centre; pages 17, 19; page 21, above; pages 22 – 27; page 29, bottom; page 30; page 31, bottom; pages 33, 35; page 38) **Illustration credits:** Florian Brendel (pages 22, 24, 27, 34), Joaquín González Dorao (pages 16, 19, 39)

The chapter on stakeholder contributions (pages 13 – 15) features all consultative members of the Bologna Follow-up Group in alphabetical order. The order of the thematic contributions (pages 16 – 38) follows the sequence of issues in the Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education in Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve of 2009. All authors are cited by name, surname and functions related to the Bologna Process only. Professional titles and/or academic degrees are omitted.

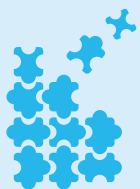
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Editorial deadline:

Vienna, Austria and Budapest, Hungary 1st of September 2009. Exceptions are page 5, 25th of January 2010 as a new Minister took office and page 24, 1st of December 2009

Student designed the logo for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)



The logo of the 2010 Bologna Ministerial Anniversary Conference and of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was designed by Zsuzsanna Palman, a fourth-year student at the

Hungarian University of Fine Arts, and selected in a competition held in Austria and Hungary. The graphic elements of the logo – puzzle pieces of various forms built on and fitting into one another – symbolize the action lines and values of the Bologna Process in building the EHEA. The puzzle pattern also points to the fact that creativity and innovation, ideally linked with playfulness, are important features of all lear-

ning processes. The three pillars also stand for the three study cycles of the Bologna Process. The dynamic position of the other pieces points towards the openness and the future potential of the EHEA as a whole as well as for the individual to the personal development through lifelong learning. Helvetica font is used as it is easy to read, elegant, and in harmony with the graphic elements of the logo.

Are We Nearly There Yet?

By Andrejs Rauhvargers and Cynthia Deane

The Bologna Process Stocktaking is a country-by-country evaluation of progress in each of the Bologna Process action lines. It is effectively a “peer-reviewed self assessment”. Countries compile their national reports using a common template and the Stocktaking Working Group assesses the reports against agreed criteria. The first Stocktaking was carried out before the ministerial conference in Bergen in 2005, to check what progress the countries had made half-way between the signature of the Bologna Declaration in 1999 and the deadline set for establishing the European Higher Education Area in 2010.

The initial idea of the Stocktaking exercise was to come up with a ‘scorecard’ showing scores from 1–5 for a series of indicators. The scores were colour-coded, with green for score 5 (all criteria met) through light green, yellow, orange and finally red for score 1 (no progress made). The so-called ‘traffic light’ system was very visual and it helped ministers to set goals for the ensuing 2005–2007 period and countries to see which parts of implementation they had to strengthen; however, it had its disadvantages as well, as shown in 2005 when the scorecard took all the attention and the analysis in the report was somewhat overlooked.

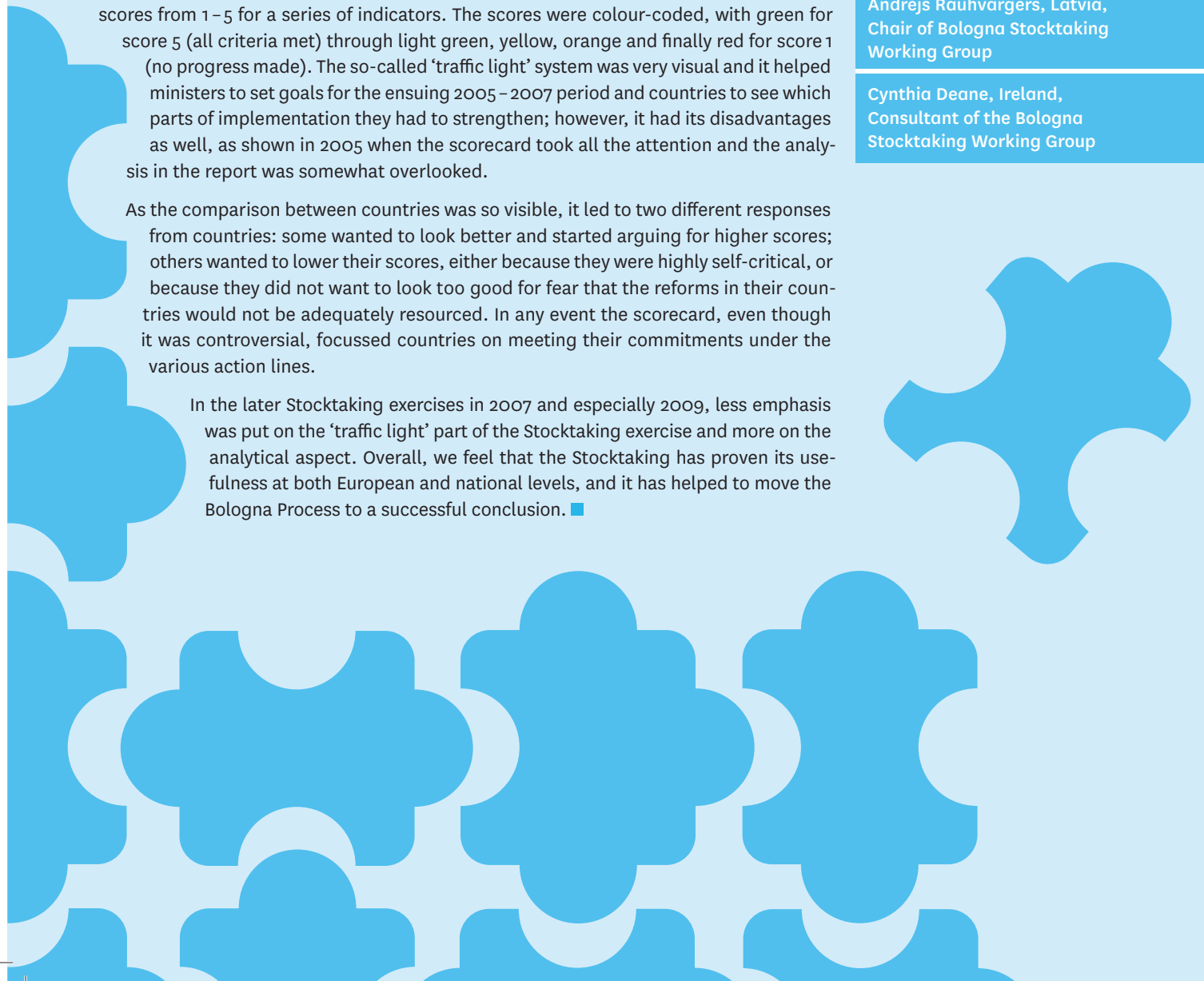
As the comparison between countries was so visible, it led to two different responses from countries: some wanted to look better and started arguing for higher scores; others wanted to lower their scores, either because they were highly self-critical, or because they did not want to look too good for fear that the reforms in their countries would not be adequately resourced. In any event the scorecard, even though it was controversial, focussed countries on meeting their commitments under the various action lines.

In the later Stocktaking exercises in 2007 and especially 2009, less emphasis was put on the ‘traffic light’ part of the Stocktaking exercise and more on the analytical aspect. Overall, we feel that the Stocktaking has proven its usefulness at both European and national levels, and it has helped to move the Bologna Process to a successful conclusion. ■



Andrejs Rauhvargers, Latvia,
Chair of Bologna Stocktaking
Working Group

Cynthia Deane, Ireland,
Consultant of the Bologna
Stocktaking Working Group



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