

The Bologna Process

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Outline

- 1) A bit of History***
- 2) How does it work?***
- 3) Achievements***
- 4) Challenges***
- 5) Lessons learned***

1) A bit of History

-The ***Erasmus Programme*** (*European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students*) was born in 1987.

It showed the difficulties and obstacles to student mobility:

-*Incompatibility of Higher Education Systems*

-*Lack of clear rules for the recognition of periods of studies abroad...*

-BOLOGNA DECLARATION (1999): Bologna Process

General Aim:

A European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in 2010

Goals:

Competitiveness

Employability

Mobility

Main Objectives:

*-Readable and comparable degrees (**Diploma Supplement**)*

-A common structure of based in two main cycles (now 3: B-M-D)

-A common system of credits (ECTS)

-Develop mobility programs

-Cooperation in quality assurance

-Promotion of the European dimension of higher education

-The *Bologna Declaration* was followed by several Communiqués:

**Prague-2001,*

**Berlin-2003,*

**Bergen-2005,*

**London-2007,*

**Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve 2009,*

**Budapest-Vienna -2010 (official launching of the EHEA)*

**Bucharest -2012*

As stated in the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, the main priorities for the 2010-2020 are:

- *Social dimension*
- *Lifelong learning*
- *Employability*
- *Student-centred learning*
- *Education, research and innovation*
- ***Mobility: “In 2020, at least 20% of those graduating in the European Higher Education Area should have had a study or training period abroad”***
- *Multidimensional transparency tools*
- *Funding*

2) How does it work?

4 key elements:

- 1) Based on **voluntary cooperation**, with no legal obligations (Communiqués are not international law).
- 2) The Bologna Process is a **collective effort** of public authorities, HEI, teachers and students, together with stakeholders associations, employers, IO and institutions.
- 3) The process is closely connected with **EU policies** and programmes.
- 4) "We reaffirm our commitment to increasing the compatibility and comparability of our higher education systems, whilst at the same time **respecting their diversity**" (London Communiqué, 2007)

-Every two or three years there are **Ministerial Conferences** organized in order to assess the progress made within the EHEA and to decide on the new steps to be taken.

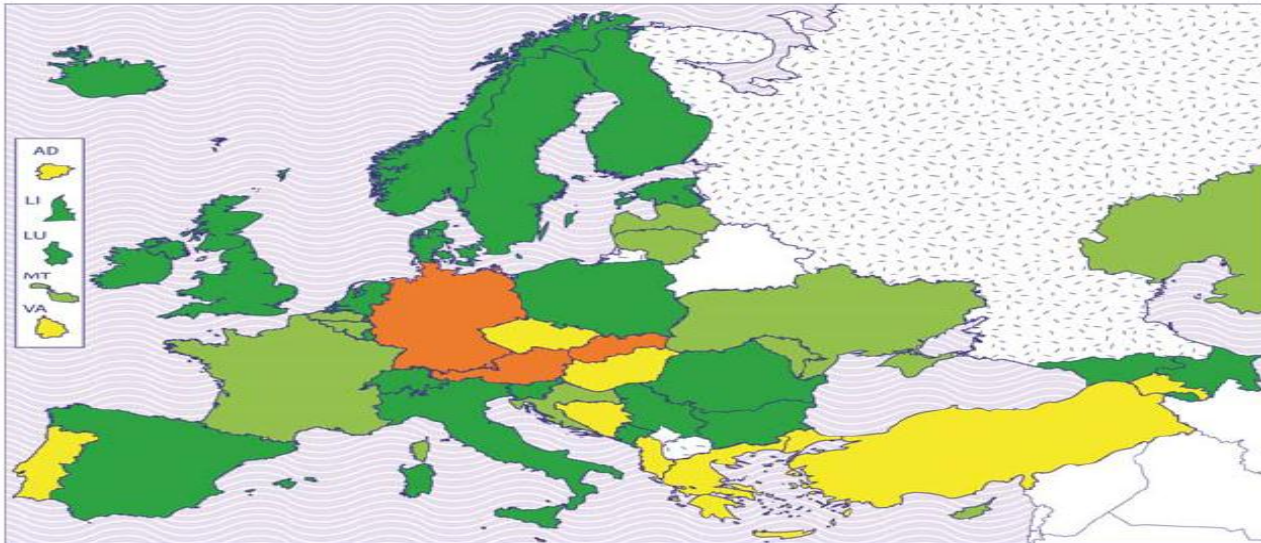
-The main follow-up structure is the **Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG)**: oversees the Bologna Process between the ministerial meetings and meets at least once every six months.

-The BFUG has the possibility to set up **working groups** to deal with specific topics and it receives also input from Bologna Seminars.

- The BFUG is composed of the representatives of all members of the Bologna Process and the European Commission, with the Council of Europe, the EUA, EURASHE, ESU, UNESCO, Education International, ENQA and BUSINESSEUROPE, as **consultative members**.
- The BFUG is being **co-chaired** by the country holding the EU Presidency and a non-EU country, which rotate every six months.
- The work between two meetings of the BFUG is overseen by a **Board**.
- The overall follow-up work is supported by a **Secretariat**, provided by the country hosting the next Ministerial Conference.

3) Achievements

a) ECTS



	2012 Report*	2009 Report**
Dark Green	23	21
Light Green	11	18
Yellow	10	7
Orange	3	2
Red	0	0

 Data not available

* Source: BFUG questionnaire, 2011.

** Source: Rauhvargers, Deane & Pauwels, 2009.

Scorecard categories

- ECTS credits are allocated to all components of all HE programmes, enabling credit transfer and accumulation AND ECTS credits are demonstrably linked with learning outcomes
- ECTS credits are allocated to all components of more than 75 % of HE programmes, enabling credit transfer and accumulation AND ECTS credits are demonstrably linked with learning outcomes
OR
Credits are allocated to all components of all HE programmes using a fully ECTS compatible credit system enabling credit transfer and accumulation AND credits are demonstrably linked with learning outcomes
- ECTS credits are allocated in 50-75 % of all HE programmes AND ECTS credits are demonstrably linked with learning outcomes **OR**
ECTS credits are allocated to all components of more than 75 % of HE programmes enabling credit transfer and accumulation, but ECTS credits are not yet linked with learning outcomes
- ECTS credits are allocated in at least 49 % of HE programmes **OR**
a national credit system is used which is not fully compatible with ECTS
- ECTS credits are allocated in less than 49 % of HE programmes **OR**
ECTS is used in all programmes but only for credit transfer

-There are no countries where ECTS credits are allocated in less than 50% of programmes.

-No country allocates credits on the basis of contact hours only.

- In half of the countries HEI allocate credits to students on the basis of a combination of workload and learning outcomes.

b) Diploma Supplement

-The use of DS is clearly growing but:

- *Diploma Supplements are in many cases not prepared properly and hence do not provide the expected information to the users.*
- *In some countries the DS is not issued free of charge.*

c) Recognition of qualifications

- Recognition has been at the heart of the BP.*
- Despite of signature and/or ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention by all of the EHEA countries except Greece, actual implementation needs to be improved.*

d) Social dimension

- *“We, the Ministers, reaffirm that higher education is a **public responsibility**. We commit ourselves, notwithstanding these difficult economic times, to ensuring that higher education institutions have the necessary resources within a framework established and overseen by public authorities. We are convinced that higher education is a major driver for social and economic development and for innovation in an increasingly knowledge-driven world. We shall therefore increase our efforts on the social dimension in order **to provide equal opportunities to quality education**, paying particular attention to underrepresented groups” (Budapest-Vienna Declaration March 12, 2010)”*

Providing quality higher education for all

*"Widening access to higher education is a precondition for societal progress and economic development. We agree to adopt national measures for **widening overall access to quality higher education**. We will work to raise completion rates and ensure timely progression in higher education in all EHEA countries.*

*The student body entering and graduating from higher education institutions **should reflect the diversity of Europe's populations**. We will step up our efforts towards underrepresented groups to develop the social dimension of higher education, reduce inequalities and provide adequate student support services, counselling and guidance, flexible learning paths and alternative access routes, including recognition of prior learning. We encourage the use of peer learning on the social dimension and aim to monitor progress in this area" (Bucharest Communiqué, April 2012).*

We still have a long way to go...

4) Challenges

- 1) *Harmonisation and convergence of QA processes, based on common principles (e.g. generic frameworks such as the ESG) is still missing. The E4 group (ENQA, ESU, EUA and EURASHE) in cooperation with EI, BUSINESSEUROPE, EQAR are preparing a revision of the **European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance.***
- 2) *Easier comparison and understanding between national QA systems.*
- 3) *Build and promote mutual trust.*
- 4) *Improve transparency.*

In the Bucharest Communiqué the Ministers agreed on the future priorities for action by the 2015 which are reflected in the the 2012-2015 BFUG Work Plan with four major working groups:

- a) Reporting on the implementation of the BP which will prepare the next implementation report for 2015.*
- b) Structural reforms (QF, recognition, QA, and transparency)*
- c) Mobility and internationalization*
- d) Social dimension and lifelong learning*

*-Do not forget that the implementation of the Bologna Process is the responsibility of **countries and HEIs** and requires deep changes:*

**Explaining the purposes of the reforms and convincing students and staff members of their benefits remains a major challenge and crucial to success.*

**The national implementation of Bologna Process costs were ignored in some countries, HEI had to finance the costs of change of their own budget and this is specially dramatic in the context of the economic crisis. How to ensure that at least 20% of those graduating in the EHEA have had study or training period abroad if student do not get financial help?*

5) Lessons learned

- 1) *Leadership is vital at the University level*
- 2) *It takes time and a lot of energy to change the system*
- 3) *Students have to change already in secondary schools*
- 4) *The right system of incentives is crucial*
- 5) *Smart funding is needed*
- 6) *Some opposition is normal*
- 7) *Don't be too bureaucratic*

Thanks for your attention!

¡Gracias por su atención!

Questions?



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Useful links

- 1) <http://www.ehea.info>
- 2) <http://www.eua.be>