



**The European Higher Education Area  
in a Transatlantic Context:  
„The External Dimension“ of the  
Bologna Process**  
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1

**Context: The Bologna Process**

Overarching aim:

- A European Higher Education Area (EHEA); internationally competitive and attractive

How?

- By facilitating greater comparability and compatibility between the diverse higher education (HE) systems and institutions across Europe and by enhancing their quality
- In close cooperation of governments, HE institutions, students and other stakeholders

2

**Context: Bologna Process**

- 46 countries (all party to the European Cultural Convention)
- European Commission
- 8 consultative members: EUA (European University Association), EURASHE (The European Association of Institutions in HE), ESU (European Students' Union), Council of Europe, UNESCO-CEPES (The European Center for Higher Education), ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), BUSINESSEUROPE; Education International – Pan-European Structure

3

**European Higher Education**

- Academic Values: institutional autonomy, academic freedom, democratic principles and equal opportunities
- HEI: enrich and transmit traditions and cultural heritage to succeeding generations
- HEI: important role in European integration & in building a knowledge society
- European answers to global challenges

4

**Sweeping Reforms in HE**

- Easily readable and comparable degrees: a qualifications framework of three cycles: Bachelor - Master – PhD (each cycle relevant to labour market → employability) & Joint degrees
- National qualifications framework: describe what learners should know, understand and be able to do <-> European framework
- Recognition of Qualifications: Lisbon Recognition Convention; the only legally binding commitment in the Bologna

5

**Sweeping Reforms in HE**

- Transparency tools: ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) and Diploma Supplement
- Mobility of students and staff: core objective; part of HE culture; many obstacles remain
- European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education & European standards and guidelines for Quality Assurance in HE
- Lifelong Learning: inherent in all aspects (flexible learning paths, recognition of prior learning . . .)

6

### Sweeping Reforms in HE

- **Social Dimension:** Lack of data  
First report by 2009
- **General definition:**  
"We strive for the societal goal that the student body entering, participating in and completing HE should reflect the diversity of our populations. We therefore pledge to take action to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunities." (London, 2007)

7

### EHEA in a Global Setting

**Berlin Communiqué in 2003:**

- Ministers welcome the interest shown by other regions of the world in the development of the European Higher Education Area and . . .
- . . . encourage the co-operation with regions in other parts of the world by opening Bologna seminars and conferences to representatives of these regions.

8

### EHEA in a Global Setting

**Bergen Communiqué in 2005:**

- We see the EHEA as a partner of higher education systems in other regions of the world, stimulating balanced student and staff exchange and cooperation between higher education institutions.
- We look forward to enhancing the understanding of the Bologna Process in other continents by sharing our experiences of reform processes with neighbouring regions. We stress the need for dialogue on issues of mutual interest.

9

### EHEA in a Global Setting

**London Communiqué:**

- We are pleased that in many parts of the world, the Bologna reforms have created considerable interest and stimulated discussion between European and international partners on a range of issues. These include the recognition of qualifications, the benefits of cooperation based upon partnership, mutual trust and understanding, and the underlying values of the Bologna Process.

10

### EHEA in a Global Setting

**London Communiqué:**

- We adopt the strategy "The European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting" and will take forward work in the core policy areas: improving information on, and promoting the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA; strengthening cooperation based on partnership; intensifying policy dialogue; and improving recognition.

11

### EHEA in a Global Setting

- **Information:**
  - Up-date & extension of the Bologna Website: information for international students & researchers for all 46 countries; information on thematic issues
  - Bologna Brochure
- **Promotion:**
  - not yet widespread in the EHEA

12

### EHEA in a Global Setting

- Cooperation Based on Partnership
  - Already common practice in HE and research
  - Joint action based on mutual understanding
- Improving Recognition
  - Crucial for international cooperation

13

### EHEA in a Global Setting

Policy Dialogue:

- Two-way process at all levels (governments, stakeholders...)
- Topics: HE reforms or specific thematic issues (exchange of best practice and experiences; „peer learning“)
- Making best use of existing fora:  
Challenge: EU 27 - EHEA 46

14

### Opportunities & Challenges for Trans-Atlantic Cooperation

- More and better information on HE in Europe
- Greater comparability of European study programmes, degrees and HE systems
- Important issue: recognition of qualifications and degrees
- More and better information on cooperation opportunities with the EHEA (incl. funding)

15

### Opportunities & Challenges for Trans-Atlantic Cooperation

- Structured cooperation:
  - Recognition: United States of America part of ENIC and NARIC networks
  - Quality Assurance: European Register open for all agencies fulfilling the criteria
- Dialogue on issues of mutual interest & exchange of experience (incl. participation in conferences & workshops)

16

### Opportunities & Challenges for Trans-Atlantic Cooperation

- Study opportunities/Curriculum Development:
  - More programmes offered in English
  - Joint degree programmes
  - More cooperation and scholarship opportunities at national and European levels (e.g. flagship programme ERASMUS MUNDUS)

17



For Further Information:

European Bologna Website:  
[www.bologna2009benelux.org](http://www.bologna2009benelux.org)

LOOKING FORWARD  
to our  
COOPERATION!

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18