

# The European Higher Education Area: National Developments, Trends & Reforms within a dynamic EHEA

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## Structure of presentation

- I. The changing policy context
- II. Achievements of Bologna
- III. Challenges remaining for 2010– for policy & implementation
- IV. Looking to the future

## I. The Changing Context

- The Lisbon agenda & a refocused strategy around research & innovation
- The importance of universities in building a knowledge society in Europe, e.g. present debate on the future of the ERA (“Green Paper”)
- Globalisation with an ever more global market for education & growing competition for talent
- More differentiation & institutional profiling – all across Europe
- ➔ Europe needs “strong institutions that are diverse, adequately funded, autonomous and accountable” (London Communiqué)

## II. Bologna Achievements (1)

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- Movement for reform across 46 countries, in a relatively short period – over 74% of HEIs now say that they consider the EHEA necessary & desirable
- Structural reform - enormous progress since 1999: 82% of HEIs have the 3 cycles in place compared to 53% in 2003 (Trends V)
- Flexibility and partnership as principles: with a joint responsibility of all partners for successful implementation
- A voluntary process with no legal obligations & a tiny bureaucracy

## II. Bologna Achievements (2)

### **National/institutional implementation & commonly agreed European standards & guidelines**

- 3 cycle structure – in the context of the common framework of the overarching Framework for Qualifications for the EHEA
- Transparency & recognition of qualifications using common tools: ECTS & DS & now the European Register
- Quality enhancement & Quality assurance on the basis of the European Standards & Guidelines (ESG)
- Reform of doctoral programmes on the basis of commonly agreed principles

## III. Priorities until 2010

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### 1. **Policy level –strengthening the European dimension**

- Creating the European Register for QA agencies
- Further developing the international strategy
- Agreeing on the shared characteristics of the EHEA

### 2. **Implementation**

- Making student centred learning a reality
- Engaging with society

## III. 1.i) Establishing the European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies

- A web based list, voluntary, providing information on trustworthy QA agencies working in Europe, i.e. those agencies that fulfill the QA standards adopted in Bergen, based on national or ENQA reviews.
- A service to students, employers, HEIs, governments and QA agencies.
- Will be the responsibility of the stakeholders: HEIs, students, QA agencies and social partners.

## III.1.i) Benefits of the Register

- An instrument for enhancing trust & giving European level legitimacy to QA agencies via a process based on stakeholder partnership
- Gives HEIs (& governments) the possibility of selecting a QA agency that uses methods most suited to their specific goals/institutional strategies and missions
- Facilitate the evaluations of joint degrees
- Enhances the attractiveness of the EHEA to international partners

## III.1.ii) The importance of the international strategy for the EHEA

- The Bologna Declaration (1999): “We must in particular look at the objective of increasing the international competitiveness of the European system of higher education”

## III.1.ii) The importance of the international strategy for the EHEA

- Growing interest in the Bologna process worldwide
- Action required at institutional, national & European level
- Particularly important for universities – strategies & structures to enhance their international profiles
- Managing cooperation and competition
- Graduate education has a specially important role to play – example of the Banff principles

## III.2. i) Tasks to be completed Questions of Implementation

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- Making student centred learning a reality
  - ✓ Using the different Bologna transparency instruments & tools properly: ECTS, DS
  - ✓ Focus on learning outcomes
  - ✓ At national level – developing qualifications frameworks
  - ✓ Progression from one cycle to another – the master level?
- Continued focus on quality – also in response to growing demands for transparency, growth in rankings etc..
- Removing obstacles to mobility

## III.2.ii) Tasks to be completed (2) Engaging with society

### **Joint responsibility of governments & HEIs:**

- Greater engagement with business, the public sector and society
- Ensuring the employability of “Bologna” graduates – starting with the public sector
- Attention to the social dimension – equity in access and success
- Making LLL a reality
- Improving data

## IV. Looking to the future

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- Maintaining the momentum in response to a changing policy context
- Continuing curriculum change in response to the needs of more diverse learners
- Improving links between the EHEA & the ERA – more researchers & better career opportunities
- The broader reform agenda: governance, autonomy & the challenges of funding European HE
- Less a new vision & more continued engagement to meet the goals already identified