REGIONAL MEETING/WORKSHOP ON THE RECOGNITION OF HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

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THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

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Beware Bologna Process report overload ...
Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Conference Documentation
Reports submitted to the Ministers

- Eurostat/Eurostudent: "Key indicators on the social dimension and mobility"
- The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in a global context: Report on overall developments at the European, national and institutional levels
- Report on Qualifications Frameworks
- Report on Employability
- Report on Mobility
- Bologna Beyond 2010 report

(N.B. Hyperlinked documents)

- Stocktaking report for 2009 (not available yet)
THE BOLOGNA PROCESS REPRESENTS A REVOLUTION FOR EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION...

IMPACTS ON:

Education systems
Educational structures
Educational processes
Delivery mechanisms

+ Students / citizens
Employers
Academics
Administrators

+ International transparency, recognition, mobility, competitiveness, efficiency and attractiveness of European higher education

About better qualifications

A huge reform agenda to modernise European higher education
FOCUS:

1. Overview of the Bologna Process - aims
2. Drivers of reform
3. Time-line, components and overlapping action lines
4. The global dimension of the Bologna Process
5. Bologna Process and recognition - tools
6. Latest developments - the Leuven Communiqué
7. Is European experience relevant to the Asia-Pacific region?
Clarifications - Bologna is:

- often misunderstood. It is a voluntary, intergovernmental process not a European Union initiative (marked by fierce national independence);
- driven by 46 Ministers who are committed to converge their HE structures to create ‘compatible and comparable’ education systems (+ a common international methodological approach and academic infrastructure);
- politically neutral - supported by governments of the ‘left’ and ‘right’.
- designed to create the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010. However, it will take longer + countries need to reform at different speeds - this is not problematic…
The European Higher Education Area:

“Building on our rich and diverse European cultural heritage, we are developing an EHEA based on institutional autonomy, academic freedom, equal opportunities and democratic principles that will facilitate mobility, increase employability and strengthen Europe’s attractiveness and competitiveness.”

“Mobility of staff, students and graduates is one of the core elements of the Bologna Process, creating opportunities for personal growth, developing international cooperation between individuals and institutions, enhancing the quality of higher education and research, and giving substance to the European dimension”.

(London Communiqué, May 2007)
What Bologna seeks to achieve:

It is a reform process aimed at establishing a European Higher Education Area by 2010 when higher education systems in European countries should be organised in such a way that:

- It is easy to move from one country to the other (within the European Higher Education Area) – for the purpose of further study or employment;
- The attractiveness of European higher education is increased so many people from non-European countries also come to study and/or work in Europe;
- The European Higher Education Area provides Europe with a broad, high quality and advanced knowledge base, and ensures the further development of Europe as a stable, peaceful and tolerant community.

These goals are rather ambitious and not solely connected to the Bologna Process. However, within the Process, the necessary tools for achieving these goals are being developed and implemented.

SOURCE: Council of Europe publication ‘Bologna for Pedestrians’
2. Drivers of reform

Local and institutional:
- Increased competition coupled with financial pressures on institutions
- Increasing institutional autonomy and diversity of mission – universities are changing
- New technologies are impacting on teaching, learning, delivery and assessment

National:
- Existence of outmoded educational systems, structures and qualifications
- The need to expose the education system to best practice
- An increasing need for a highly skilled/educated workforce + mass HE systems
- A requirement for more flexible education systems that facilitate lifelong learning
- Increasing borderless/trans-national education + harsh economic imperatives
- Demographic pressures

International:
- Expansion of the global education market (student/market pressure)
- Problems with international recognition
- Increasing worry about failing European competitiveness (the economic imperative)
- Pressure from national and international organisations: European Commission, Council of Europe, EUA, EURASHE, ESU, Ministries, Professional bodies, Rectors’ Conferences, UNESCO, etc.
### 3. Time-line, components and action lines

#### TIME LINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Action Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Sorbonne</td>
<td>Mobility of students and teachers</td>
<td>European dimension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Bologna</td>
<td>Promotion of the EHEA</td>
<td>Commitment on national action plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Prague</td>
<td>Closer links education + research</td>
<td>Flexible learning paths</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Berlin</td>
<td>European Framework of Qualifications</td>
<td>Recognition of Joint degrees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Bergen</td>
<td>Flexible learning paths</td>
<td>Strategy to improve global dimension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Commitment on national action plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Leuven</td>
<td>Commitment on national action plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Mobility of students and teachers**
- **European dimension**
- **Promotion of the EHEA**
- **Closer links education + research**
- **Flexible learning paths**
- **Commitment on national action plans**

- **A common two cycle system**
- **Cooperation in quality assurance**
- **Involve HEI + students**
- **European Framework of Qualifications**
- **Recognition of Joint degrees**
- **Strategy to improve global dimension**

- **Mobility of researchers**
- **Social dimension added**
- **Recognition of degree/study periods (DS)**
- **National Frameworks of Qualifications**
- **Creation of European QA Register (EQAR)**

- **A system of credits**
- **Lifelong learning**
- **Include Doctoral level as 3rd cycle**
- **Standards & Guidelines for Quality Assurance**

- **Easily readable and comparable degrees**
- **QA HEI, international, +European levels**
- **Reinforcement of the social dimension**

(A Adapted from Eurydice report 2009)
4. The global dimension of the Bologna Process

- European HEI to further internationalise their activities and engage in global collaboration
- Enhanced policy dialogue based on cooperation and partnership with other regions of the world
- Organisation of Bologna fora - including global stakeholders
- Transnational education to be governed by European ‘Standards and Guidelines’ and ‘UNESCO/OECD guidelines for quality provision in cross-border higher education’
- Provision of improved information on the Bologna Process

SOURCE: Leuven Communiqué + report ‘The European Higher Education Area in a global context’ approved by BFUG February 2009
The recognition of qualifications (+ institutions + national qualification frameworks) is one of the key elements of the Bologna Process.

The 'fair' recognition of qualifications is regarded as an individual’s right.

Improving mobility without improved recognition and confidence in quality assurance arrangements is not possible.

The creation of the EHEA is designed to make possible the free movement of citizens/learners, students, staff and qualifications.
THE BOLOGNA PROCESS AND RECOGNITION TOOLS: building a common architecture

- Recognition: Prior Learning
  - Formal
  - Informal
  - Non-formal

- Qualifications Frameworks (common external reference points)

- Trans-border + Global Recognition
- 1997 Lisbon Recognition Convention
- Diploma Supplement
- Learning outcomes
- ENIC-NARIC Network + Recognition action plans
- ECTS Credit Transfer (and accumulation)
- Quality Assurance

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6. Latest developments-the Leuven Communiqué

Issued by 46 Education ministers 28/29 April, 2009 to take stock of the Bologna achievements and to establish priorities for the EHEA for the next decade.

- European education faces continued challenges including: globalisation, new educational providers, technological development, global financial crisis, etc.
- Ongoing reform of education is required - the Bologna Process will continue + existing Bologna objectives are still valid (next meeting 2012 Budapest/Vienna)
- Priorities for the next decade:
  - Focus on quality
  - Social dimension
  - Lifelong learning
  - Employability
  - Teaching mission (curricular reform based on learning outcomes)
  - International openness
  - Mobility
  - Multidimensional transparency tools
7. Is European experience relevant to the Asia-Pacific region?

- The Asia-Pacific region shares with Europe many common drivers for educational reform (growth, employability, globalisation, etc.).
- European states and HEI are also diverse in terms of finance, providers, processes, quality, corruption, efficiency, structures academic cultures, etc.
- Several of the key Bologna ‘tools’ are becoming a ‘world standard’. Many regions of the globe are showing huge interest in the Bologna reforms – Africa, Latin America, USA, etc.
- Important differences exist: cultural, lack of EU-driver, levels of academic infrastructure (especially QA), demographics, commitment, local problems, funding, language, academic year, etc.
- Any Bologna-type reform package is difficult to implement, takes time and real commitment. Educational reforms need to adjust to local and regional requirements.
- There are many useful lesson to be learned from Europe’s mistakes!
Develop an intergovernmental and voluntary process that is about mutual cooperation between countries facing similar problems.
No single country or institution should dominate the process (involve all stakeholders).
Allow the process to evolve naturally + adjust to regional needs + clarify what these are (stocktaking).
Focus on key common problems (via international seminars) and develop appropriate ways to help solve them (measure progress) - build on existing tools.
Create a common regional identity for the ‘space’– what you stand for and are seeking to achieve (deadlines).
Focus on transparency - so systems, institutions & processes are clear & informed judgements can be made about them (build mutual trust).
Develop a realistic time frame for reforms - (you cannot force dramatic cultural change on academic institutions + the top-down/bottom-up balance needs to be right).
Thank you!