BOLOGNA beyond 2010

Foreword

In the London Communiqué dated May 18th 2007, the ministers for higher education of the Bologna Process asked "BFUG as a whole to consider […] how the EHEA might develop after 2010 and to report back to the next ministerial meeting in 2009."

The structure of this report was agreed upon at the BFUG meeting in Brdo on March 13th-14th 2008. It was to contain three main parts. Part 1 relates to the initial Bologna objectives that will require further attention after 2010. Part 2 deals with new challenges for the next decade. Part 3 fleshes out the future arrangements for the decade to come.

A number of issues were mentioned for each part of what was then called a non paper. This had been done in order to indicate the kind of issues that would need identifying in the different stages leading up to the finalizing of the report.

The Ghent conference of May 19th-May 20th 2008 led to a more precise definition of those issues and added new ones. The extraordinary BFUG meeting held in Sarajevo on June 24th and June 25th 2008 gave further precision to the areas identified and suggested a number of focal points.

As a result of this process, a fourth chapter has been added summarising the conclusions.

Part 1 considers the present policy areas and action lines of the Bologna Process. The underlying assumption is that not all the action lines will have been completed by 2010. The Ghent conference as well as the Sarajevo meeting corroborated that assumption and strongly warned of a two-speed implementation of the Bologna Process. The independent assessment which will be available for 2010 will still give a clearer indication as to what extent these action lines will need completion.

Part 2 is based on the assumption that if the Bologna Process is to be continued it will need to provide relevant, concrete and operational answers to issues affecting higher education in the second decade of the 21st century. The challenges mentioned tend to be global ones. The question that the Bologna Process needs to address is what the specifically European response is going to be.

Part 3 discusses the follow-up structure required to support this cooperation.

Part 4 summarises the conclusions and proposes a master plan for future objectives and actions.

The perspective from which this proposal has been drafted is a thematic one so that there is no chapter on the stakeholders. Indeed the Bologna Process has by definition rested upon a co-operation between the various stakeholders (Governments, academic community, society at large) and this should also be the case in future. Therefore, what matters most is identifying the challenges and finding the appropriate answers before specifying the role each stakeholder should play.

BOLOGNA BEYOND 2010

The contribution of European higher education to the global public good

Introduction

In many respects, the Bologna Process has been revolutionary for cooperation in European higher education. Four education ministers participating at the celebration of the 800th anniversary of the University of Paris (Sorbonne Joint Declaration, 1998) shared the view that the segmentation of the European higher education sector in Europe was outdated and harmful and thus signed the Sorbonne Joint Declaration. The decision to engage in a voluntary process to create the EHEA was formalized a year later in Bologna by 29 countries (The Bologna Declaration, 1999). It is now apparent that this was a unique undertaking as the process today includes no fewer than 46 participating countries, out of the 49 countries that ratified the European cultural convention of the Council of Europe (1954). This means that, eventually, the joint declaration signed by four ministers in Paris mobilized numerous (higher) education ministers and high-ranking civil servants, as well as many thousands of rectors, deans, professors and students who contributed to the conception of the project and, in particular, to its implementation. No other initiative has mobilized so many people, apart from the creation and development of the EU in 1957. Moreover, the process has aroused growing curiosity in other parts of the world, as well as fear and envy.

The process has also been successful, because it has given an important role to higher education institutions and their representative associations as well as to the European Students' Union. It involves employers' representatives and trade unions in its decision making bodies. The process also encouraged many countries to ratify the Council of Europe-UNESCO Lisbon Recognition Convention (1997).

In this report the terms "higher education institutions" and "universities" will both be used as generic terms to cover the diverse establishments providing higher education.

At its inception the Bologna Process was meant both to strengthen European integration and the competitiveness of European higher education through the introduction of a system based on undergraduate and postgraduate studies and to foster student mobility through easily readable programmes and degrees. Quality assurance has played an important role from the outset, too. The various ministerial meetings since 1999 have broadened this agenda and have given greater precision to the tools that have been developed. The undergraduate/postgraduate degree structure has been modified into a three-cycle system, which now includes the concept of qualifications frameworks with an emphasis on learning outcomes – what people know, understand and can do – as well as how different qualifications articulate. The concept of the social dimension of higher education has been introduced and the recognition of qualifications is now clearly perceived as central to European higher education policies.

The Bologna Process has created a number of instruments that have given European higher education greater coherence and have placed it on the worldwide map. Besides, the instruments put in place are multipurpose instruments serving various objectives.

At the same time, though, some overall goals can also be looked at in terms of instruments. Mobility is both a means and an end. It strongly contributes to the European dimension of higher education, but it is also a goal worth pursing in itself.

Progress over the years has been uneven, as can be seen from the various stocktaking exercises. Perceptions differ between countries, between institutions as well as between disciplines. An independent assessment has been asked for to clarify what has been really achieved and to what extent this has been done. This report is to be ready for 2010. However, we should be prepared for the eventuality that not all participating countries will have implemented all policies and reached all stated goals by 2010.

Moreover, prior to the publication of the independent assessment the ministerial meeting of 2009 is to give political orientations for the future of the Bologna process. The present report proposes the possible main foci these orientations could take.

Chapter 1. Finalising the initial agenda

Not all the objectives will have been reached by all the participating countries by 2010; it is, therefore, necessary that the Bologna Process should continue after 2010 so that its implementation can be finalized. First priority for the future should be given to completing the existing action lines.

In the following chapters and for purposes of clarity, a distinction has been made between action lines with clearly defined operational outcomes and underlying policy areas.

1.1. Action lines

This category comprises the degree structure, qualifications frameworks, recognition, and quality assurance.

1.1.1. The degree structure and qualifications frameworks

The European Higher Education Area is structured around three cycles, bachelor, master and doctorate, with a possibility of intermediate qualifications within the first cycle, and with proper progression from one cycle to the next; each cycle is defined in terms of generic descriptors based on learning outcomes. The first two cycles are also defined by ECTS credit ranges and student workload. The bachelor programme typically contains between 180 and 240 ECTS, while the master programme typically carries 90-120 ECTS, at least 60 of which should be at master level.

Qualifications frameworks certified against the overarching Qualifications Framework for the EHEA and designed to encourage mobility as well as employability are currently being implemented. In most countries self certification procedures will be completed after 2010 and the self certification reports will only then be made accessible to partners.

It is undeniable that the implementation of the degree structure and the focus on quality assurance are the most visible outcomes of the Bologna Process and for non specialists these two outcomes are what the Bologna Process stands for. Yet, the structural reform amounts to more than a re-labelling of previously awarded diplomas. Degrees are increasingly defined in terms of learning outcomes and the introduction of credit points has led to a focus on student centred learning. While much of the structural reform is already in place, the key challenge is to move from structure to practice. Further work and associated resources will be required to improve understanding of learning outcomes and development of curricula based on learning outcomes. This will involve a better understanding of the nature of learning outcomes as well as a greater focus on subject areas. As a result the way teaching is conducted will change, which in turn will have organisational implications.

1.1.2. Quality Assurance

Maintaining the quality of European higher education at a high level and raising it even further has been one of the major goals of the Bologna Process.

The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) is about to be fully operational and national quality assurance agencies have started implementing the European Standards and Guidelines, which will be a requirement for agencies to be included in the register.

Furthermore, the ownership of quality assurance is embedded in the world of academia. Internal quality assurance is the responsibility of the institution and a clear link has been made between the development of a “quality culture” inside institutions and the degree of institutional autonomy.

However, beyond these operational goals the issue of quality and excellence remains of paramount importance. How you define quality is influenced by the topic of the selection or non selection of students and by the diversification of providers.

Furthermore, the effects of the changes made within the Bologna Process on quality need investigating. There has been a proliferation of quality assurance and accreditation agencies and this trend is likely to continue into the future with the advent of more subject based accreditations. The accumulation of accreditation labels, often as a means of branding, carries the risk of having too many of them as well as the danger of bureaucratization.

What should be borne in mind is that the ultimate goal is to enhance the quality of teaching and research; quality assurance mechanisms are not an end in themselves, but should act as a support for the institutions in their continuing development.

1.1.3. Recognition

Recognition of qualifications has been a cornerstone of the Bologna Process since its very beginning and the Lisbon Recognition Convention is the only legal document that the Bologna Process relies on. It increasingly ensures that all learners are given fair recognition of their qualifications.

However, there is a general perception that recognition practices are not yet coherent across the EHEA and that variations in programmes are defined as substantial differences and thus as impediments to recognition. Furthermore, there is inconsistency between recognition for academic purposes and recognition of professional qualifications.

The key point is to ensure that there is more transparency about how the Lisbon Convention is implemented, the processes involved and the criteria for decisions.

It is expected that there will be more agreements on automatic recognition once the degrees and diplomas are related to the qualifications framework. In this sense the establishment of qualifications frameworks and recognition are closely linked; the existence of quality assurance mechanisms should also contribute to greater trust in issues of recognition.

Generally speaking, as far as these action lines are concerned, the degree structure and qualifications frameworks, recognition and quality assurance are those that have led to structural reforms and to the institutionalization of the Bologna Process. It is worth recalling that the European register for quality assurance agencies, which is the very product of the Bologna Process, is a legal structure. The degree structure and the qualifications framework have direct legal implications for the participating countries. The Bologna Process has thus had direct implications on the way the participating countries organise their own systems. At this stage there is no felt need for new measures or new rules, but what is called for is a proper understanding and implementation of these action lines, especially at institutional level.

1.2 Policy areas

The social dimension, employability and the Bologna Process in its global dimension are defined as policy areas in the sense that they define objectives that have not yet been translated into a regulatory framework.

1.2.1. Social dimension

The definition given to the social dimension is one that includes all provisions needed for having equitable access into, progress and completion of higher education. By emphasizing the social characteristics of higher education, the political objective aims at reducing social gaps, at providing equal opportunities to quality education and at strengthening social cohesion.

The Bologna Process has increasingly heightened its policy attention on the social dimension. The policy messages are manifold:

- In a knowledge-society higher education is important to the development of successful economies and in providing opportunities for all individuals to participate in and benefit from a successful economy;
- Equity and social justice issues are imported into higher education, which becomes a driver for social cohesion and social citizenship.

While participation rates vary considerably between European countries, measures to expand enrolments have not necessarily increased social equity. Inequalities remain large. The reasons given can be found both inside and outside the higher education sector. It is argued that universities come far too late in a system where choices have to be made earlier on in a pupil's career. Institutions of higher education thus cannot overturn a student's former social and cultural experience. Barriers to equitable access within the higher education sector include the cost of participation, entry qualification requirements, a lack of flexible learning opportunities, limited availability of support services and an "institutional culture".

The vision of higher education as contributing to social cohesion is part of the welfare state model of social cohesion. Education and more specifically higher education institutions act as public instruments for the re-distribution of wealth through investing in social mobility and above all through public investment in the younger generation. This welfare state model defines and measures how far the university has met its obligations of social cohesion in terms of groups defined by social background or relative disadvantage.

The key point is to improve access to higher education and the successful completion of first and second cycle study programmes. This involves improving the study environment and creating the appropriate economic conditions for students to be able to profit from the study opportunities. In order to widen participation, flexible learning paths are needed and so are measures actually allowing a diverse student population to participate in higher education.

The social dimension of higher education is not only related to the student body at bachelor and master level. The status of doctoral students is a concern and there is now a tendency to consider doctoral candidates as early stage researchers thus giving them employee status. Clear career paths ought to be set out. Providing good social and working conditions is a necessary requirement to attract more students into doctoral study programmes and thus guarantee the sustainability of the European research endeavour.

In order to understand the social dimension of higher education and to monitor this social agenda more reliable data are needed. Collecting data is a measure that will have to be widened in its scope so that a monitoring and a development of this policy will become possible.

1.2.2. Employability

Employability has been defined as the empowerment of the individual student to seize opportunities on the labour market. It involves the teaching and learning of generic skills and competencies like analytical skills, communication skills as well as the capacity to reason at a level of abstraction. The balance between the teaching and learning of knowledge on the one hand and the acquisition of transferable skills on the other hand is a delicate one. Not only does it raise a question about the relationship between the depth of knowledge and the ensuing accurate mastery of skills and not only does it mean restructuring whole curricula, it also has a direct impact on the way the scholar or teacher perceives his/her role, which differs from the one in which the teacher merely

acts as a lecturer. This new paradigm changes the life of the university department and thus requires further development.

Employability, however, is not a recent objective of higher education. Universities have always trained practitioners of law, medicine, theology and engineering; they have also been the training institutions for future civil servants and teachers. The introduction of the bachelor/master structure into these "regulated" professions proves challenging and the use of learning outcomes is daunting.

Employability also refers to people staying in employment, not only to recent graduates. University training needs further investment in lifelong learning if it is to address this issue properly.

Considered from the perspective of the labour market, employability also entails a rethinking on the employers' side, be they private or public ones. We need to realize that in many countries the full potential of bachelor degrees is not yet fully developed. The prevailing expectation still is that a specific diploma prepares for a specific job and that the longer the study programme the better the preparation for the job. This is short sighted. In a changing economic environment the degree holder must be capable of summoning knowledge and skills that make it possible for him to adapt to manifold situations. But businesspeople must be open to this perspective and especially smaller and medium sized enterprises still have a long way to go. A realization that a great many jobs are generated in the small business and voluntary sectors has led to the tailoring of appropriate degree programmes. It is essential that degrees testify to abilities and capacities that go beyond the immediate needs and that at the same time degrees do not lead to unemployment. Any employability measure will have failed if it does not lead to employment.

The key point is to design curricula and to foster teaching methods that promote the learning of competencies and skills that are needed in tomorrow's economy, including in the regulated professions. The employers' engagement in the design of curricula is a way of tuning programme provisions in such a way that they are relevant for the labour market. However, programme construction will still have to pay attention to the longer term needs of society for the provision of important centres of knowledge and research regardless of a more immediate context. This is a delicate balance to strike.

Moreover, the promotion of the new degree structure among employers, especially among small and medium sized enterprises, is an urgent short term task.

Employability is not restricted to the first two cycles. In carrying out their central role in the training of researchers, universities increasingly have to face the challenges of a changing labour market for young researchers and need to prepare them for a wider variety of careers than in the past i.e. not only in the academic environment, but also in industry, non-profit organisations, private companies, or private and public independent research centres.

1.2.3. Lifelong Learning

Goals like the social dimension and employability can only be reached if they are set within a perspective of lifelong learning. The concept of lifelong learning is a broad one where education that is flexible, diverse and available at different times and places is pursued throughout life. In its scope it is founded on the four "pillars" of education for the future as they were identified by the Delors report (1996): learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together (and with others) and learning to be.

In late modernity, change and uncertainty are often seen as defining characteristics of the contemporary world. Lifelong learning is supposed to empower the individual, the citizen and the worker to address the different forms of change - economic, cultural, technological and demographic – in a positive manner. Lifelong learning puts emphasis on the need to become a "learning society" and lends support to the need for both

economic competitiveness and social cohesion. Lifelong learning is both a cultural and economic commodity, located not only in the market place but the in the social system of class and status.

Lifelong learning is concerned with climbing higher up the qualifications ladder and improving knowledge, skills and competences, using recognition of prior learning. On the one hand, lifelong learning has thus become a policy goal for supporting economic growth.

On the other hand, lifelong learning is seen as having a social function to encourage democracy and active citizenship. Three major domains stem from this social function:

- a concern for social justice with an emphasis on educational fairness, equality and empowerment;
- a concern for social inclusion;
- a concern for reducing poverty (poverty being understood through the categories of income (relative and absolute), capability (deprivation of knowledge and skills for participation in public life) and indirect poverty caused by poor health, infrastructure, natural disaster, war).

The key point is that if lifelong learning is to succeed *it must be rooted in a social and economic climate in which learning is valued, used and rewarded. This amounts to a cultural change. The more fundamental structural issues to face are in terms of building the kind of seamless robe of provision required for a system of lifelong learning based on multiple sources of financing.*

1.2.4. The attractiveness of European higher education

The Bologna Process clearly impacts on how higher education in Europe relates to higher education in other parts of the world. At the same time, it is clear that the global dimension of the Bologna process, seen from a European perspective, is a mix of what we have in common – the European Higher Education Area – and elements that are specific for each participating country, including strategies for marketing one's own national higher education.

The attractiveness of the EHEA is based on its striving for excellence and its openness; it hinges on a number of conditions, among which the following ones feature prominently:

- make it an attractive place for study and research,
- make it an attractive labour market for academics through the quality of the experience and clearly defined career paths,
- preserve its rich and diverse cultural heritage in terms of institutional cultures, teaching and learning styles and curricular diversity.

Generally speaking, the reputation of European higher education rests upon its quality; reputation and quality are intertwined and they are main factors encouraging international students and academics to work/study in Europe.

The external dimension of the Bologna Process is also about positioning the EHEA in the global world of higher education. By 2020, the role competition plays in higher education will have grown substantially on account of the international "arms race" in investments and in innovation. The EHEA will have to position itself vis-à-vis its competitors, but it is unlikely that it will succeed in anything more than partly closing the gap between the US supremacy as a leading knowledge economy and the European one. However, the EHEA should aim at becoming the most creative and innovative sector in a global setting.

As the Bologna Process developed, a growing interest in both the Process as such and the emerging European Higher Education Area could be noted worldwide and it becomes increasingly clear that the Bologna Process needs to react to this growing interest. While the EHEA should not appear as "fortress Europe", changing the criteria for membership

or defining different categories for countries that expressed interest but are not eligible for membership do not seem to be feasible solutions.

The key point thus is to provide information on the EHEA specifically targeted at non-EHEA countries through, among others, an appropriate EHEA-website and to facilitate coordinated information visits to and from non-EHEA countries. The values and achievements of the EHEA should be actively promoted.

Optimal use should be made of existing EU policy fora for cooperation with other regions of the world.

As agreed at the ministerial meeting in Berlin, the geographical scope and overall criteria for determining membership of the Bologna Process are the signing of the European Cultural Convention.

Cooperation mechanisms should be devised to further cooperation with countries that have indicated an interest in the Process but are not eligible for membership. These mechanisms should be of mutual benefit and can include the following:

- *Policy dialogue on specific topics, such as quality assurance, recognition, student involvement, governance, etc;*
- *Participation in Bologna-related conferences, seminars and other events;*
- *Invitations to contribute to Bologna projects where appropriate;*
- *Cooperation in the framework of relevant EU programmes with partners across the world;*
- *A discussion forum with participants from non-EHEA countries en marge of ministerial meetings, making full use of existing EU and UNESCO initiatives.*

1.2.5. Mobility

Mobility is one of the fundamentals of European cooperation and it has been a dominant issue in the rationales of the various communiqués of the Bologna Process. Indeed, apart from the economic value of creating a mobile labour force, student and staff mobility also has a cultural value enhancing mutual understanding between countries and regions as well as personal fulfilment. Mobility has much to do with the internationalisation of the system and the institutions and it finds its corollaries in multinational faculty and in international curricula. However, progress in this area does not seem to match the initial expectations.

The original expectation was that the creation of a single space of education would give mobility a further boost. This does not necessarily seem to have happened. With regard to intra-European short-term programme mobility (Erasmus type mobility) the introduction of a two-tier degree system is sometimes pointed at as an obstacle to student mobility. It is argued that shorter degrees would make it more difficult to integrate a study period abroad and in some countries this latter argument has started massively to influence the debate about short-term mobility under the conditions of Bologna during the last years.

It is therefore suggested that stronger curricular efforts should be made in order to make teaching and learning during the study period abroad more meaningful.

With regard to intra-European degree mobility, the positive expectations have remained in place. The existence of one and the same degree structure makes mobility from one country to another easier.

There is also growing emphasis on student mobility from other parts of the world. Growing proportions of mobile students from other parts of the world will impact on issues of quality, curricular change to accommodate their needs and expectations as well as the language in which the programme is delivered.

However, mobility is also related to immigration issues and social security issues. These cannot be ignored as they define the relationships between the two groups of countries of the Bologna Process - those who are members of the European Union and those who are not – and their respective relationships to countries in other parts of the world.

As far as academic mobility is concerned, issues of careers, social benefits, job security and pensions need to be taken into account when promoting increased mobility and international recruitment of academic staff.

Besides the social dimension, mobility remains the key issue to be further developed under the Bologna beyond 2010 agenda. In terms of curriculum design, joint degrees and the ensuing necessary institutional partnerships are to be further developed. Each programme should provide "mobility windows" and provide for mutual recognition of study periods abroad.

In terms of the legal framework conditions, grants and loans are to be made portable and recognition improved; and entry requirements into a country should reflect the openness of the EHEA.

Staff development is a necessary condition for the development of joint curricula.

If the EHEA is to stay a centre of excellence in research and in teaching, staff mobility needs to be increased and the EHEA should become an EHEA labour market. The granting of visas and work permits specifically designed for and aimed at researchers is to be made easier. The transfer of pension rights will have to be made more widely possible. These measures interact with other areas of policy making and the follow up structure should respond to this adequately.

Generally speaking mobility is closely related to the social dimension and the development of a high quality learning and working environment with good social conditions. The political commitment to mobility will be laid down in a mobility code for the EHEA. Data collection will help monitor developments in this field and will enable the definition of benchmarks.

1.3. The curriculum, an underlying issue

The shift from structural reform to implementation, from institutionalization to practice will be successful if curricular development is an ongoing process. A degree structure based on learning outcomes, lifelong learning provision, study programmes with "mobility windows" - to cite but those - will only be properly implemented if it rests upon curricula that render the attainment of these objectives possible. Curricular change is thus the instrument par excellence and even though it is not a Bologna action line, it nevertheless features prominently on the Bologna agenda. Good practice in this area, which is ultimately the hallmark of quality education, must be one of the strengths of the European Higher Education Area.

While learning outcomes have been generically defined for the degree structure in the context of the Dublin descriptors, the key point is to develop subject specific descriptors for knowledge, skills and competences.

Chapter 2. Bologna 2020

It is worth recalling one of the broad issues of the Bologna Declaration: *"Meanwhile, we are witnessing a growing awareness in large parts of the political and academic world and in public opinion of the need to establish a more complete and far-reaching Europe, in particular building upon and strengthening its intellectual, cultural, social, scientific and technological dimensions."* This initial vision still holds true as an overarching principle for 2020. Yet, the world has changed since the last decade of the previous millennium and the goal as set forth in the Bologna Declaration needs to be related against a background of new challenges in order for relevant operational objectives to be defined.

2.1 Globalisation and competitiveness

2.1.1. Global competitiveness in an emerging borderless higher education and research market

One of the most visible manifestations of globalisation is the emerging "borderless" higher education market, which is the most evident trend in what is likely to be a continuing move toward a diversification of higher education provision. Traditional forms of provision, through organised programmes delivered by public and private higher education institutions belonging to a national education system and providing face to face interaction between learners and faculty are likely to remain the most important form of provision, but it is at the same time likely to meet competition and challenges from a range of other forms of provision, not all of which may even exist today. The huge increase in the world-wide demand in higher education, the budgetary and capacity problems of many countries to meet this demand, and on the other hand the opportunities created by new communication technologies and the Internet, shape an environment in which new, mostly for-profit providers can successfully expand the supply of educational services. Universities from North America, Europe and Australia take initiatives to reach out their educational provision to this international higher education market, by active recruitment of international, fee-paying students to the home institution, by establishing branch campuses or franchising and twinning agreements with local institutions. The international demand for higher education has also invited new providers from outside the higher education sector to enter the scene.

These market-like processes also entail that higher education institutions will tend to function more like an enterprise. Commercialising research results can be used as a means to increase income; the funding of research through research projects can endanger the autonomy of the researcher in the sense that tenure is no longer guaranteed since it is dependent on revenue from projects. Universities provide incubation support, advice on legal, technical or financial issues, expertise and knowledge transfer. Spin-offs tend to grow faster and have lower failure rates than conventional business start-ups. In other words by engaging in "academic capitalism" institutions of higher education become fully embedded in what is now called the knowledge triangle, but they risk losing the sense of their own identity which has rested upon their perceived, distinctive contribution: teaching for personal/cultural development, long-term research programmes, critical and reconstructive scholarship, an institutional space not owned by one powerful social agent but obliged to relate to all.

The demand for more relevance might lead to a "commodification of knowledge production" on the one hand, and it might turn the relationship between teaching and learning into a provider-customer relationship on the other hand. This might constitute a threat to the other functions of the university pertaining to critical, thinking, curiosity driven research and theorising.

Furthermore, the global problems are such that they cannot be solved by the methodology or the knowledge gained in one science alone. The most interesting debates take place at the edge of scientific fields or at the crossroads of sciences. "Disciplinarity" increasingly shows its limits, while interdisciplinarity is very much needed to be able

- to address new investigations which are required by scientific developments in society, for example in bio-ethics, or by research opening up new fields at the cross-roads of subject areas, which is a must for our Knowledge society ;
- to contribute to higher education and research as “global public goods”.

Interdisciplinary approaches are needed to have creative people and to make the most of all the talents left unexploited in society; interdisciplinary approaches empower students:

- to address an issue from a wider range of perspectives, from different angles;
- to communicate with each other, while over-specialization makes it increasingly difficult;
- to understand, to read better an ever-complex reality with different clues for reading it, which makes it really crucial now to have multi or inter-disciplinary research teams in a knowledge society.

However, the universities and policy-makers have not yet overcome past experience. The department or faculty structure of most universities reflects the classification of science rooted in the 19th century; the traditional organisation is not innovative enough and not rational enough either in terms of the use of resources (cf. splitting the teaching of the same fundamental disciplines in the earliest stages of various health related study programmes). Organizational reform at institutional level must reflect this new organization of science. Curricula should build bridges between humanities and natural sciences. Content reform is needed if institutions are to be responsive to the needs of society.

However, the need to compete in the global world of higher education does not exclude cooperative agreements. The resources needed for knowledge production are such that they can rarely be found within a single institution. Effective generation of new knowledge is increasingly based on complementary division of labour between various institutions, but also between industry and academia. Collaborative research and knowledge production can successfully take place provided that there is a positive willingness, a sense of maturity on both sides and that there is a willingness to adhere to a clearly drawn legal contract, including constraints on publishing due to patents, but also to be active in the pre-competitive collaborative research area, where there would be no patents and few publication constraints.

The key point is to reassert the unity between teaching and learning and to stress the fact that a distinguishing characteristic of European higher education is to base teaching and learning on the latest research findings. It should be noted that in a context in which the new models of open innovation and technology management are non linear and user-driven *many types of research occur. By teaching a research methodology as part of the curriculum from early on, institutions of higher education will contribute to educating creative graduates able to function in the knowledge society and to rely on skills to deal with continuously changing technologies.*

Furthermore the key issue is to design new forms of provision compatible with the ICT age and in line with the demands of an interdisciplinary approach.

Finally an international regulatory framework might be needed to transcend the national policy contexts. The agenda of legal issues might be the following one: inventions and ownership; intellectual property; contract research; the rights of the researcher; the professional status and career of the researcher; ventures.

2.1.2. Global competitiveness and intercultural dialogue

Globalisation does not only relate to an emerging borderless market. Higher education is also a means of cooperating with other parts of the world. It is about strengthening North-South cooperation and working towards a globally engaged European higher

education. The economic effect of globalisation leading to the creation of wealth is increasingly linked up with a capacity to handle differences and diversity.

At the same time these trends are scarred by conflict, intolerance and fear. Our societies are faced with a number of challenges requiring that their members have the intellectual ability to analyze challenges, see connections between different areas, devise solutions and act on the basis of incomplete information, but also that they have attitudes of citizenship: a will to solve conflicts through negotiation and majority decisions (with due regard to minority views) rather than violence, a recognition of the importance of human dignity and of minority rights, and also an ability and willingness to engage in the public sphere and to weigh the benefits to the community in relation to individual benefits.

Higher education institutions can play a special role in this context. They are particular places for debating fundamental issues and they, therefore, should develop:

- intercultural competencies
- understanding of different societies, their traditions, cultures and beliefs in Europe and beyond
- an ability to reason ethically
- responsible citizenship.

The key point is to further the role of higher education in developing intercultural awareness. Curricula should help students to develop knowledge, skills and habits of mind to be able to reflect on their own beliefs and the choices they make; they should be aware and critical of their own assumptions and beliefs and engage open-mindedly with different cultural forms and historical moments.

2.2. Demography

European demographics are such that the average age of the European population is somewhere in the mid-forties. In ten years' time it will be in the fifties. Against this background, the central questions are how we secure enough professionals to operate Europe as well as how we develop a civic culture that will include and preserve a measure of solidarity between generations.

European Higher Education has experienced "massification" during the last quarter of the previous century, without, however, giving fair access to children from culturally less privileged backgrounds. On the other hand, our capacity to address the societal issues of the 21st century, be they related to energy, climate change or social cohesion, will only be met if we manage to tap into intellectual resources that have hitherto been neglected.

Lifelong learning is a way of addressing this issue. In an ageing population, advanced education for professionals is of paramount importance if they want to remain creative and innovative within their field or move to another one.

The key issue, therefore, is to design the lifelong learning agenda in such a way that it can meet the challenges posed by an ageing population. Widening access and diversifying the body of learners are objectives that are met through the implementation of student centred learning and through flexible learning paths connected to qualifications frameworks and to recognition of prior learning.

This will entail a mainstreaming of lifelong learning in institutions of higher education and will call for changes in the legislative framework.

Furthermore, the implementation of lifelong learning to meet the demographic challenge has an impact on mobility. Mature students are less likely to engage in mobility schemes for personal or family reasons. The same situation applies to part-time students who will have to combine work and study. Mobility will have to be conceived of differently to meet the demands of an ageing population.

Regional differences in demographic changes, will also have their impact on mobility flows of students and staff.

2.3. Roles and responsibilities

It is worth recalling that the modern university was put at the disposal of the nation-state by its German philosophical founders. One of the main functions of the university was to train future civil servants, which led to the nineteenth century nation building mission of the university. However, there is now a growing disentanglement in the relationship between institutions of higher education and the State. Moreover, the sole responsibility of the nation state has been nuanced by greater Community action within the European Union.

The Bologna Process has led to structural reforms that were not part of the agenda at the outset. University autonomy is one of them. Usually it is defined as less regulation, keeping government intervention at arm's length. The reform process leading to greater institutional autonomy has taken place in an environment of structural changes in the economy and was for some time accompanied by a serious economic crisis. At the same time the instrumentality of system steering through evaluating institutional performance, efficiency and achievement has been developed.

At the European level, a growing "contractualisation" of relationships is expected and at the same time there will be an increasing penetration of international conventions and declarations into legal systems. Institutional autonomy is placed within this increasing number of interacting and overlapping layers of governance. So more market does not necessarily imply less State. Autonomy and regulation are not contrasting pairs.

The Council of Europe Recommendation on public responsibility adopted by the Council's Committee of Ministers suggests that the responsibility of public authorities for higher education and research should be nuanced and defined relative to specific areas. The text broadly recommends that public authorities have:

- exclusive responsibility for the framework within which higher education and research is conducted;
- leading responsibility for ensuring effective equal opportunities to higher education for all citizens, as well as ensuring that basic research remains a public good;
- substantial responsibility for financing higher education and research, the provision of higher education and research, as well as for stimulating and facilitating financing and provision by other sources within the framework developed by public authorities.

This recommendation points clearly at different roles public authorities can play as well as to the fact that public authorities may have an important role in some areas without claiming a monopoly. In other areas, the role of public authorities cannot be shared with other actors.

The state is thus increasingly seen as a regulator, a catalyst rather than a direct provider; this raises the question of the regulatory framework.

The key issue is to redefine the roles and responsibilities of the various actors involved with regard to:

- *Quality development and assurance*
- *Funding framework*
- *Governance*
- *Institutional autonomy and accountability*
- *Diversity of missions and institutions*
- *Social dimension.*

2.4. Institutional diversity

Global competition in higher education brings with it international league tables, rankings, benchmarks and other comparisons of the performance of higher education institutions. These trends invite the creation of new groupings whose reference points will be the need to maintain global reputations rather than to contribute to national or local needs. This will lead to a few rich research universities. However, for the majority of institutions this kind of "status" is beyond their reach and striving for it would anyway distract them from other important purposes. The latter certainly include economic ones, but also roles in relation to social equity, social mobility, social cohesion, citizenship, cultural engagement. All these form the various potential "public goods" of higher education.

The question arising out of these considerations is whether greater differentiation in the mission statements of higher education institutions will be necessary to protect them from market forces. Indeed, as a spontaneous corollary to the convergence brought about by the Bologna Process, institutions have further differentiated themselves. They show considerable variation in mission and ambition. Mission differentiation seems to be a promising avenue for development contributing to the overall performance of the system as a whole.

The key issue is that institutional diversity should be made transparent. The next phase should therefore consist in the development of instruments to really address diversity and make it readable and understandable. The tools used for this differentiation of institutions would be the development of relevant transparency instruments like classification based on a sound methodology and the acknowledgement of diverse policy contexts, like multiple reputation mechanisms.

2.5. Funding

If we turn to American higher education, we realize that these institutions, both public and private, enjoy great autonomy, often combined with substantial public and private funding.
We know that Europe does not have great fortunes ready to endow foundations and that the tax system is not conducive to this practice. Yet, the government must behave as if it dealt with institutions that are as autonomous as the American ones and face the question of how to finance them. Moreover funding in the US tends to take the form of allocation of resources to students and researchers rather than to institutions.

One of the most hotly debated topics in Europe about the efficiency of higher education funding has to do with the main sources of financial support for the institutions.

Generally speaking, the funding of higher education in many countries takes place by means of allocating grants to higher education providers. In the past the main criteria to determine the amount of funding allocated to each institution by the State have been based on input. There has been a change over the last years from input funding to output criteria, through the introduction of output criteria in the calculation of funding and through the use of instruments such as performance-based funding and contract funding.

Furthermore, the sources of funding have been extended with the introduction of cost sharing in higher education, mostly associated with the introduction of tuition fees to cover part of the costs of instruction. Economists tend to consider that policies of low or no tuition fees are negative not only on efficiency grounds but on equity ones, since higher education is still to a large extent the preserve of students coming from wealthier social groups. In terms of redistribution policies, we face a re-distribution from low income groups to wealthier ones since all tax-paying citizens bear the cost. However, there is also concern about the possible negative effects for potential demand.

Future debates about the funding of higher education will continue to engage both the allocation of costs and also the legitimacy of those costs. At the same time there will continue to be pressures to find new revenues since in most countries tax revenues are already stretched. Certainly changes in tax policy encouraging private philanthropy would be a step forward.

The key issue is to encourage further discussion and sharing of good practice in relation to accessing diverse sources of funding, recognising that in practice very few countries are going to be able to provide sufficient public funds to fund all the higher education provision they would like. A diversification of funding mechanisms does not mean, though, that higher education ceases to be a public good. The responsibility of public authorities is not limited to providing direct funding. It includes laying down the rules under which alternative funding may be sought and provided.

The European higher education agenda needs sustainable funding. The question is whether a target like 2% of GDP for higher education should be adopted. Public funding should not be declined because of the entrepreneurial behaviour of institutions, reasonable tuition fee policies and other financial means invested from private sources.

It emerges that a number of policy objectives and instruments that have been defined and developed over the last decade still appear to provide adequate responses to the challenges facing the European societies in the following decade. The pursuit of the objective of the social dimension of higher education with its agenda of participative equity and of social fairness coupled with lifelong learning are ways of addressing the demographic challenge.

The curricular reforms underway help educate creative and innovative people able to function in a knowledge society, while the policy “Bologna in its global dimension” makes European higher education fit to both compete and cooperate on a global scale. However, this should not detract us from ensuring that these action lines and policy areas will be taken to the next stage of their development if they are to remain effective and relevant.

Chapter 3. Follow-up structure

The first two chapters of this report have outlined the possible content of future Bologna Process cooperation. This third chapter will deal with the follow-up structure needed to support this cooperation, as requested by Ministers at their meeting in London:

We ask BFUG as a whole to consider further how the EHEA might develop after 2010 and to report back to the next ministerial meeting in 2009. This should include proposals for appropriate support structures, bearing in mind that the current informal collaborative arrangements are working well and have brought about unprecedented change.

(London Communiqué, paragraph 4.3)

3.1. Present support structures

Since 1999, Ministers have met every two years to assess progress made and to decide on new steps to be taken. The follow-up structure supporting the process in-between those ministerial meetings has emerged gradually; the arrangement as it exists now, was agreed upon by Ministers at their meeting in 2003 in Berlin.

"*Ministers entrust the implementation of all the issues covered in the Communiqué, the overall steering of the Bologna Process and the preparation of the next ministerial meeting to a Follow-up Group, which shall be composed of the representatives of all members of the Bologna Process and the European Commission, with the Council of Europe, the EUA, EURASHE, ESIB and UNESCO/CEPES as consultative members. This group, which should be convened at least twice a year, shall be chaired by the EU Presidency, with the host country of the next Ministerial Conference as vice-chair.*

A Board also chaired by the EU Presidency shall oversee the work between the meetings of the Follow-up Group. The Board will be composed of the chair, the next host country as vice-chair, the preceding and the following EU Presidencies, three participating countries elected by the Follow-up Group for one year, the European Commission and, as consultative members, the Council of Europe, the EUA, EURASHE and ESIB. The Follow-up Group as well as the Board may convene ad hoc working groups as they deem necessary.

The overall follow-up work will be supported by a Secretariat which the country hosting the next Ministerial Conference will provide.

In its first meeting after the Berlin Conference, the Follow-up Group is asked to further define the responsibilities of the Board and the tasks of the Secretariat." (Berlin Communiqué)

The BFUG in Rome on 14 November 2003 reacted to this request by Ministers and further defined the responsibilities of Board and Secretariat.

In 2005, Education International Pan-European structure (EI), ENQA and UNICE (now BUSINESSEUROPE) were accepted as additional consultative members of the Bologna Follow-up Group.

The main **advantage** of the Bologna Process and the present support structures is that they enable the key stakeholders to work together as partners. The present arrangement creates a sense of collective ownership among ministers (and ministries) as well as higher education institutions, students and staff based on informal cooperation and partnership.

EUA, EURASHE, ESU, Education International, ENQA and BUSINESSEUROPE, together with the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO-CEPES, have greatly

contributed to the process of policy formulation and also play an important role in facilitating the implementation of the Bologna Process reforms.

Another element of the present support structures that is often mentioned as strength (not least in the London Communiqué) is their relatively informal character, which further increases the sense of engagement and ownership among all participants.

In terms of **membership,** the Bologna Process currently has two categories: members (the 46 countries and the European Commission) and consultative members. To become a member of the Bologna Process, countries have to be party of the European Cultural Convention and to declare their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the Bologna Process in their own systems of higher education. BFUG introduced the additional category of "BFUG partner" for organisations that wished to be involved more closely with the Bologna Process but were not interested in or not eligible for consultative membership.

Ministers responsible for higher education in the countries participating in the Bologna Process meet on a regular basis (currently every two years) to assess progress made, to decide on new steps to be taken and to set priorities for the period leading to the following **ministerial conference**. These meetings play an important role in overseeing the implementation and maintaining the momentum of the process but also allow Ministers to react to new challenges.

The Bologna Process is currently **chaired by** the country holding the EU Presidency, which rotates every six months. This means the EU Presidency country chairs and usually also hosts the meetings of Bologna Follow-up Group and Board, oversees the work in-between those meetings and represents the Bologna Follow-up Group at international events.

The Bologna Follow-up Group (**BFUG**) oversees the Bologna Process between the ministerial meetings and meets at least once every six months, usually for one-and-a-half days. The BFUG has the possibility to set up working groups to deal with specific topics in more detail and also receives input from Bologna Seminars.

The **Board**, as defined by the Berlin Communiqué normally meets once before each BFUG meeting to assist Chair and Secretariat with preparing the BFUG agenda and other meeting documents.

The central task of the **Bologna Secretariat** is to support the work of the Bologna Follow-up Group at four levels: BFUG, Board, working group, seminar. The Secretariat prepares draft agendas, drafts reports, notes and minutes and carries out the practical preparation for meetings as requested by the Chair. It is also at the disposal of the Chair to assist it in its tasks of finding compromise solutions, coordinating work and summing up situations. While the Chair of the Bologna Process rotates every six months, the Secretariat provides continuity in proceedings.

Another task of the Secretariat that has become increasingly important is to provide up-to-date and reliable information about the Bologna Process (for both a European and a non-European audience) and to maintain an electronic archive. To fulfil those functions, the Secretariat makes use of the Bologna website as central tool.

Finally, the Bologna Secretariat is asked to prepare the following ministerial conference. Up to now, the Bologna Secretariat has been provided by the country/countries hosting the following ministerial meeting, which led to a full rotation every two years. Seconding national experts has been a possibility that so far has not been used.

3.2. Support structures beyond 2010

The support structures are deemed to have been working efficiently and effectively over the years. One of the main advantages is that the threat of over-bureaucratization has been successfully avoided, the structures in place being light ones and the Secretariat changing on a regular basis. Besides, its "unbureaucratic" touch, the Bologna Process has managed to create a sense of ownership among its members through the incitement to contribute to specific policy areas, for the good of the EHEA. It is, therefore, suggested that they be only slightly modified.

The chair of the Bologna Follow-up Group should also in future be linked to the rotating EU Presidency while a twinning arrangement with a non-EU country should be sought. The question of how to define the non-EU country co-chairing BFUG should be further explored.

The Board should be maintained, but its terms of reference should be updated to turn it into an advisory committee for the Chair and the Secretariat to prepare BFUG meetings. The rules for its composition should remain unchanged, although a good balance between EU and non-EU countries should be sought.

The Secretariat should be a rotating Secretariat linked to the next host country(ies). It should preferentially be internationally composed. The issue of continuity from one Secretariat to the next needs exploring.

A permanent website should be established with a country-neutral name and should be managed by the Secretariat.

In order to interact with other policy areas, BFUG should set up a number of working groups gathering experts and policy makers from other fields, like immigration, social security and employment.

The next ministerial conference will be organized in 2010 jointly by Austria and Hungary. The Benelux countries will provide the Bologna Secretariat until 1 July 2010, with national experts from Austria and Hungary being seconded into the Secretariat in Brussels.

The following ministerial conferences should be held in 2012, 2015, 2018 and 2020.

Chapter 4. Conclusions and master plan

The first priority for the agenda beyond 2010 is to finalise the action lines started previously and to move from structure to practice. This will be done in a spirit of mutual assistance maintaining and even increasing the energy that has so far gone into the establishment of the EHEA. In a short term perspective, this entails implementing the new degree structure, also endorsing it in the so called regulated professions, as well as developing and implementing qualifications frameworks, which are based on learning outcomes, have been devised with stakeholder involvement and are linked to quality.

Mobility of students and staff will continue to feature prominently on the agenda. As far as mobility of students is concerned, a significant number of curricula will be designed in such a way that they create “mobility windows” and/or lead to the awarding of joint degrees. The framework conditions will be such that the granting of visas and work permits as well as the portability of grants and social benefits will be made easier. For this purpose ad hoc working groups set up by BFUG and comprising experts and policy makers from the policy fields concerned will prepare and propose the appropriate measures.

Mobility policies must thus bring together political initiatives of this kind with a range of practical measures running from recognition through financing to receiving students at host institutions, and they must devise different formulas for mobility to seek to include students who have family and work obligations.

As far as mobility of staff is concerned, framework conditions will be established to ease immigration into the EHEA as well as within and to guarantee social security and adequate pension rights to the mobile staff. BFUG will seek the advice and support of experts and policy makers from the respective fields.

A policy document establishing a mobility code will be drafted and put forward for adoption. Data collection will help monitor the internationalization of higher education and will serve as a basis for benchmarking.

Two major issues are identified as facing higher education in the years to come. The two challenges of demography on the one hand and of global competitiveness on the other hand call for a coordinated European response. Emulation and competition will vie with cooperation in a global world while the unique European response will lie in the implementation of the social dimension of higher education.

The first major issue facing Europe in the decade to come is the **demographic challenge** of an ageing and increasingly diverse population in a knowledge society. This challenge is to be met by reinforcing the social dimension of higher education, by fully engaging in lifelong learning practices and by rethinking international mobility.

Equitable access into, successful progress and completion of higher education for the whole spectrum of the population in their various walks of life and age groups call for a learning environment of great quality geared to the needs of a diverse student body. While a coherent strategy for lifelong learning will be devised, improved and enhanced data collection will help monitor the developments in this field.

The teaching and learning in the institutions of higher education will aim at educating creative graduates able to function in the knowledge society and to profit fully from lifelong learning opportunities through the provision of adequate learning paths. Student centred learning will be developed as a new paradigm with learning outcomes focusing on specific subject areas. Business engagement will be fostered to foster the employability of graduates at all levels of higher education.

A second major issue facing Europe is the **competitiveness of European higher education in a global context**. The policy will engage European higher education globally by striking a balance between cooperation and competition. The role of educated people who clearly see how economies and values operate together and how they are accelerated by critical thinking and discovery is central to the achievements of humankind. The teaching and learning experience will have to reflect this dimension of education.

The nexus between teaching and research will remain a principle firmly entrenched in the EHEA. It is recognized that there are various types of research and that there is great differentiation in the missions of higher education institutions.

Transparency is an important way of making European higher education attractive; new instruments will be designed to show the strengths of institutions with diverse mission statements.

A third issue is the **redefinition of the roles and responsibilities of the various actors** in a system defining higher education as a public good. A policy statement by ministers will determine the various roles in relation to quality development and assurance, funding frameworks, governance, institutional autonomy and accountability and the diversity of missions and institutions.

The present organisational structure of the Bologna Process is endorsed as being fit for purpose, while it is recognised that a link with other policy areas will have to be established. This concerns immigration and social security to advance the mobility and social dimension agenda.