Franziska Muche (ed.)

Opening up to the Wider World

The External Dimension of the Bologna Process

ACA Papers on
International Cooperation in Education

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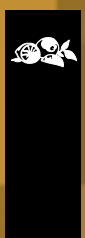

The Bologna Process stands for the European integration process in the field of higher education. The progress achieved so far within the Bologna member states is admirable; however, a concentration on internal processes can only be a first step towards becoming a global actor. The Bologna declaration formulates the objective of enhancing the attractiveness of European higher education on a global scale, and this statement has been repeated and refined since 1999. But is the implementation of Bologna really making Europe more attractive and transparent, and if so, how? The present volume addresses these issues. The papers in this publication are based on the presentations delivered at an ACA conference held in Hamburg, Germany, in 2004.

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Contents

Franziska Muche
Introduction 7

Peter Scott
Europe on the higher education world map 13

Christian Tauch
The Bologna Process: state of implementation and external dimension 23

Angelika Schade
Quality assurance and accreditation: confidence-building or multiplication of national, European and global agencies? 31

Jochen Hellmann and Courtney Peltzer-Hönicke
Globalization in higher education: the growing importance of quality-oriented admissions procedures 37

Sjur Bergan
Recognizing Bologna: the three cycle structure – a global reference? 43

Salvador Malo
Latin America between the US and Europe: can Bologna open new perspectives? 53

Krishnapratap B. Powar
Asia: from importers of education to partners in cooperation – an India-centric appraisal 61

Ulf Lie
Africa – the forgotten continent? 69

Catharine R. Stimpson
Less hand wringing, more hand shaking: a United States perspective 79

Karel Reus
The international higher education marketplace: lessons from the Australian experience 85

Volker Gehmlich
European higher education institutions at the eve of a new experience: competition tools and concepts of survival 93

Pieter van Dijk
Europe as an immigration union for talent: highly skilled migrants and the concept of the knowledge worker 105

Ulrich Teichler
Non-European students: the forgotten half of the Bologna-Process? 111

Peter van der Hijden
Towards a global qualifications framework? Bologna as a model for global cooperation in higher education . . 121

Annex 127

Introduction

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When European ministers of education convened in Bologna in May 1999 and decided to create a single European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010, one of their major motivations was to enhance the attractiveness of Europe's universities and colleges on a global scale. Until very recently, no major international conference had addressed the issue as a separate theme. This lack was recognized by the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA). One main line of the association's efforts in the promotion of internationalisation of education is directed towards "putting Europe on the global map". Along this line, ACA organised a conference in Hamburg, Germany, in October 2004. The theme was "Opening up to the Wider World: The External Dimension of the Bologna Process". The papers gathered in this publication are based on the presentations delivered at the conference.

The global dimension of the Bologna Process

Although mainly regarded as a European intra-governmental process, since its very beginnings, the Bologna Process has had an inherent global or "external" dimension:

- In 1999, the Bologna Declaration stated the objective of "increasing the international competitiveness of the European systems of higher education". It states the "need to ensure that the European higher education system acquires a world-wide degree of attraction" and "to promote" it on a global scale.
- Two years later, the Prague Communiqué turned the issue into the additional action line "Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area", and confirmed the "importance of enhancing attractiveness of European higher education to students from Europe and other parts of the world".
- At the 2003 Berlin conference, European education ministers welcomed the participation of government representatives from other world regions, and their interest in the development of the European Higher Education Area. Ministers linked the Bologna Process to the wider context of the Lisbon Process. They took due account of the strategic objectives agreed at the European Councils in Lisbon and Barcelona, aiming at converting the EU into "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in

the world" by 2010 and "a world reference for the quality and relevance of its education and training and the most-favoured destination of students, scholars and researchers from other world regions." Finally, ministers encouraged the "co-operation with regions in other parts of the world by opening Bologna seminars and conferences to representatives of these regions".

- Last but not least, the Bologna Follow-up Group recommended, in their 2003-2005 work programme, that "a discussion on globalisation might (...) be useful, as quality assurance and recognition go beyond the European Higher Education Area."[1]

The above statements indicate how enhancing Europe's attractiveness has remained – and over the years even gained in importance – a vital driving force behind the transformation and innovation of higher education in Europe. At the same time, the remarkable changes taking place in Europe had mainly been discussed from an intra-European perspective. All actors in the Bologna Process had simply assumed that the structural changes under way would by necessity result in the enhanced attractiveness of our continent on a worldwide scale. As a result, there was limited systematic thought on how exactly the reforms were going to achieve this, and in which way they might have to be fine-tuned to attain this aim.

Possibly, the Bologna signatory states were – at least so far – preoccupied with the implementation of the internal structural reforms. But there appears to be a basic lack of information on activities directed towards an external dimension of "Bologna". Are there initiatives that go beyond the borders of the European Higher Education Area? Initiatives to export Bologna, to adapt credit systems to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), to have the European definition of the Bachelor's, Master's and PhD degrees recognized worldwide or to use Bologna structures as models for joint degrees? This may be the case, but it has not been sufficiently investigated. Finally, it is high time to obtain feedback from a non-European perspective and investigate if the aim of creating a transparent and attractive EHEA is actually being achieved.

Seeing Bologna from different perspectives

The articles gathered in the present volume take up these and other questions and analyse if – and if so, how – the reforms taking place in European higher education enhance the European Union's global attractiveness. In their

1 The quotes are taken from the following documents: "The Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999", Joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education; "Towards the European Higher Education Area", Communiqué of the meeting of European Ministers in charge of Higher Education in Prague on May 19th 2001; "Realising the European Higher Education Area", Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Higher Education in Berlin on 19 September 2003; Work Programme 2003-2005 for the Bologna Follow-up Group, March 2004. All documents can be viewed at http://www.bologna-bergen 2005.no.

papers, experts from European and non-European countries approach this theme from various perspectives:

- They review the core elements of the Bologna Process – that is, the introduction of a three-cycle degree structure, ECTS, and a system of quality assurance and accreditation, as well as the recognition of qualifications. The overarching question here is how exactly these reforms would help improve the reputation and attractiveness of European higher education in the world? What kind of fine-tuning might be needed to get beyond current achievements?
- They look at additional measures and related issues, for example, marketing and competition, and immigration policy, and analyse how these relate to the global dimension of the Bologna Process.
- They assess and analyse the impact of the Bologna Process on cooperation and competition between Europe and other world regions, namely Australia, Asia, Latin America, Africa, and North America.

The authors of the first articles address the Bologna Process and its core elements in relation to Europe's global position.

Peter Scott analyses Europe's place on the "higher education world map" in the context of the Bologna Process. Starting from Europe's traditional key position in higher education, he takes us through the marginalisation of European universities in a global context towards Europe's "awakening" with the Bologna and Lisbon Processes. In a thorough analysis, the author demystifies common prejudices on the advantages or disadvantages of European universities in a global context, especially compared to their US counterparts. Christian Tauch, based on the Trends III Report he co-authors, gives an overview of the driving forces behind and the state of implementation of the core elements of the Bologna Process. Taking this current state of the art document as a starting point, he explores questions related to a potential external dimension of the EHEA. Angelika Schade and Jochen Hellmann, the latter in a paper co-authored with Courtney Peltzer-Hönicke, address "quality" from two different angles. Angelika Schade deals with developments in quality assurance and accreditation at national regional and global levels, and with international cooperation in quality assurance. Jochen Hellmann and Courtney Peltzer-Hönicke discuss the importance of quality-oriented admissions procedures in the building of the EHEA and in a global context. Recognition, and in particular the question of whether the three-cycle-structure as it is being implemented with the Bologna reforms can be considered as a "global reference", is the theme of Sjur Bergan's paper. The author analyses the dangers of an inward-looking system and the challenges related to "recognizing Bologna" beyond its borders.

The overarching question of Bologna's impact on Europe's relationship with other world regions is common to the following articles.

Salvador Malo, Krishnapratap B. Powar, and Ulf Lie consider whether Bologna can open up new perspectives for cooperation with Latin America, Asia, and Africa, respectively. Salvador Malo, after giving an overview of higher education in Latin America, analyses the situation of Latin American higher education "in between" Europe and the United States. For this purpose, he explains the impact the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) had on Mexican higher education, and refers to the influence of Bologna on higher education in Latin America. The title of K.B. Powar's article is "Asian countries: From importers of education to partners in cooperation?" He tackles this theme by referring to the four different modes recognized under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) to impart and "consume" education: cross-border supply, consumption abroad, commercial presence, and the presence of natural persons, and questions the role of Europe and the Bologna Process in this context. Ulf Lie's topic "Africa – the forgotten continent?" inspired him to explore whether Africa is forgotten, and if so by whom: by the Africans, by the donors, by higher education and research or by Bologna, offering possible solutions to current challenges for cooperation in higher education with Africa.

"Flexing muscles? Europe and its competitors USA/Australia" was the title of the conference session gathering the presentations of Catherine Stimpson, Karel Reus, and Volker Gehmlich. The articles based on the presentations explore the impact of the Bologna Process on competition between Europe and these two world regions. Catherine Stimpson gives an overview of the current state of higher education in the United States; she explores the role of the US in global education, and how this role has changed. In the context of relations of competition and cooperation between US higher education and other countries, she addresses the impact of, and knowledge on, the Bologna Process in the US. Karel Reus presents an outline of the Australian universities' approach to the "international higher education marketplace". He explains how Australia entered this "market", how Australian institutions market themselves and recruit students internationally, and what role the government plays – all this with a view to the lessons a post-Bologna Europe could learn from the Australian experience. The "tools and concepts of survival" European higher education institutions may need in a competitive environment are at the centre of Volker Gehmlich's article. He analyses the (political, economic, legal, social, etc.) environment in which European institutions are operating, and explores strategic choices higher education institutions could make to position themselves and acquire a competitive advantage.

Karel Reus and Volker Gehmlich both address a possible implication of the Bologna Process, which is also linked to the aim of enhancing Europe's attractiveness: the adoption of a market rationale and the need for strategic positioning in a competitive environment. Pieter van Dijk tackles another "additional issue" which is crucial for internationalisation in higher education at the global level, and for the Bologna Process in particular. His paper is on immigration

policy, and the need for more attractive immigration conditions and less bureaucratic procedures for “talent”, or “knowledge workers”, as highly skilled persons are called in the Netherlands, the author’s home country.

The two last papers in this volume take us back to a general perspective of Bologna’s external or global dimension. At the ACA conference, Ulrich Teichler chaired a roundtable discussion entitled “How readable is Europe? European and non-European views on the European Higher Education Area and the Bologna reforms”. In his paper, he combines the lessons learned from the panellists’ contributions with his own views on the Bologna Process in a global context. He raises some painful subjects: the danger of becoming too obsessed with structures and forgetting about other factors that influence the attractiveness of higher education systems; the danger of overlooking new barriers that could originate from the reforms; the danger of becoming too Euro-centric and “forgetting” about non-European students. In short, the need to listen more carefully to how the “wider world” perceives the Bologna reforms. Finally, Peter van der Hijden explores whether Bologna could be a model for global cooperation in higher education, and if the Process takes us towards a global qualifications framework. He approaches the theme from a European Commission perspective, taking up the latest developments in the follow-up of the Berlin conference and in the run-up to the Bergen ministerial meeting in 2005.

Main tendencies

What were the outcomes of the ACA conference, and what are the main tendencies of the papers gathered in the present publication? Two main aspects can be identified:

First, speakers and participants confirmed that the Bologna reforms were a step in the right direction. But they also underlined that structural reforms were not enough for Europe’s ambitions to become a worldwide reference in higher education. True excellence in teaching and research was at least as much, if not more, dependent on the presence and commitment of high-quality teachers and researchers. Europe’s ability to attract and retain these high achievers critically depends on whether it will be able to provide them with the resources and working conditions they need.

Second, speakers from other world regions confirmed that the reform agenda was gaining attention outside of Europe, though at different degrees by the different target academic groups. While higher education leaders and managers are probably the best informed, there are clear deficiencies on the side of the faculty. The fact that word about the reforms has travelled beyond the confines of Europe does not mean, however, that non-European observers have a detailed knowledge of the aims and elements of the reform process. There is therefore a clear need to provide targeted information on the Bologna Process outside Europe.

To put the message of “Opening up to the Wider World” in a nutshell:

- Europe must continue to vigorously implement the agreed reforms;
- it must inform the relevant academic stakeholders elsewhere about the “Process” more comprehensively;
- it must not forget that structural reform alone will not suffice to make Europe a global higher education leader;
- it should not become too inward-looking.

Investigating the global or external dimension of the European Higher Education Area does not only refer to whether the “attractiveness enhancement” aim of the Bologna Process has been achieved. It too is an attempt to counteract the trend of becoming too inward-looking; too busy with ourselves. The global dimension has always been there, and ignoring its existence is dangerous and shortsighted.

Speakers and participants at the ACA conference “Opening up to the Wider World: The External Dimension of the Bologna Process” called for a follow-up on the subject. We hope that the present publication will be a first step in this direction, and that all those who have contributed to it will find an adequate reward in the present volume.

Europe on the higher education world map

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Introduction

The 'Bologna Process', the efforts to establish a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) which have now acquired an impressive dynamic, is Janus-like – in the sense that it faces in two directions. It faces inwards in that 'Bologna' is closely identified in many European countries with internal processes of reform and modernisation; and outwards because one of the overriding intentions behind the creation of the EHEA is to make European higher education more attractive to students (and staff) from outside Europe. These two aspects of 'Bologna', of course, are linked; internal reform and modernisation are partly designed to enhance external competitiveness. There are also important links to two other pan-European processes: the parallel establishment of a European Research Area – in particular, the creation of a European Research Council – and the declared intention of the leaders of the European Union in the Lisbon Declaration to make the EU the world's most dynamic and leading region in terms of science, technology and innovation by 2010.

Nevertheless, there is a danger that European higher education systems – and European universities – will become too absorbed in the details of 'Bologna' and pay insufficient attention to the wider intentions and implications of this historic process. In particular, there is a risk that the internal dimensions of 'Bologna' will be emphasised at the expense of the external dimensions. To the extent that these external dimensions are acknowledged, the risk is that they will be interpreted almost exclusively in terms of global competition – especially with the United States – and that the equally important (but non-market) links between European higher education and other systems will not receive the attention they deserve. In other words, debates about the external dimensions of 'Bologna' will be dominated by the need for European universities to project – even 'sell' – themselves to the wider world to such an extent that any sense that European higher education has both a set of obligations to other systems, and a lot to learn from their experience (again with the exception of the United States), will be lost.

There are two reasons why it is important to consider, in the context of 'Bologna', the place of European higher education in this wider world. The first, and more obvious, reason is that in an intensely interactive global eco-

nomy and in a knowledge-based society – and a world society with global brands and images – higher education in general, and universities in particular, are key institutions. They 'make', and 'remake', our world through the science and technology they produce; they shape, and reshape, our world by educating no longer narrow elites but mass student populations; they imagine, and re-imagine, our world through the ideas, and intellectual cultures, they foster. The second reason is that Europe has always occupied a key place on this higher education world map – because Europe is one of the most dynamic regions in the global economy; but also because, as a result of its long history, Europe has always been the source of some of the world's most significant cultural reference points. However, there is today a growing concern, even pessimism, about whether Europe can continue to occupy such a key place on that map. There are fears that European universities are already unable to compete successfully with American universities and in the future perhaps with universities in newly emerging countries, in South and East Asia. Because universities are so crucial to the success of a knowledge-based society, that lack of competitiveness may lead to a wider loss of dynamism and momentum. Europe as a whole may suffer if its universities flag. So a lot is at stake.

The argument in this paper can be summarised in three stages:

I) The first stage is that, in the past, Europe was used to being at the centre of things. The long history of European universities and, until very recently, the geopolitical significance of our nations, meant that students from Africa, Asia, and even America came to Europe in large numbers. Paris, London, and other European capitals (and also other large university cities), were academic magnets. Science flowed through the same channels. Well into the second half of the 20th century the bulk of Nobel prizes were won by Europeans – and academic culture in a wider sense, in the humanities and the social sciences, was also decisively shaped by European perspectives and European achievements;

II) The second stage of the argument is that all that has begun to change. As has already been said, the feeling appears to be growing that Europe – and European universities – are laggards. Europe has already been overtaken by the United States (as the number of Nobel prizes now won by Americans suggests). It is to American universities that clever Indian and Chinese PhD students, and post-docs, now flock. Even in the humanities and social sciences, America seems to have taken over Europe's leading role. And things may get worse as other nations also begin to compete with, rather than defer to, Europe – the Chinese, for example. So the prospect seems to be that Europe, and European universities, instead of being at the centre of things may be increasingly marginalised – relegated to the 'museum culture' of palaces and castles. Even if these fears are exaggerated, even misplaced, they are still very real;

III) The third stage in the argument is that, against this background of threatened decline-and-fall, there is clear evidence that Europe is 'waking up'. A European higher education area is gradually emerging as a result of the Bologna Process – which is not only likely to increase the competitiveness, and attractiveness, of Europe's universities; but also has stimulated far-reaching reform processes across the continent. The reforms are likely to be more radical than anything that has taken place in the United States since the 1960s. The development of a European Research Area, the establishment of a European Research Council and similar initiatives, are having a similarly galvanising impact on research. Finally European governments have signed up, through the Lisbon Declaration, to the aspirations – and, not just the aspirations, the target – of making European the most dynamic knowledge economy in the world by the end of this decade. Whether this target is achieved or not, its existence seems to be powerful proof of how things are changing in Europe and of how Europe is abandoning its former habits of complacency, condescension, weariness.

A crisis of European universities?

The starting point of the argument must be the past eminence of European universities, that strong (and possibly waning?) sense that Europe (and therefore its universities) was truly 'at the centre of things'. In fact, this eminence may have been both exaggerated, and misunderstood, as a brief discussion of the major periods of university development in Europe – how we got to where we are now – may demonstrate.

I) First, the claim that the university is a uniquely European institution, 'invented' here in the high Middle Ages, can be pushed too far. It is true that the particular organisational forms that became characteristic of all universities – forms which continue to this day, at least in a nominal form, with Faculties, Deans and so on – were established first in Europe. These organisational forms emerged in response to a particular historical context – the development of 'corporations' against the backdrop of a universal Church and emerging monarchies. But 'academic' institutions had existed much earlier – in the shape of court or monastic 'schools' of which the medieval university was merely an elaboration; and they also existed elsewhere – in the medieval Islamic world, and in China and Japan;

II) Secondly, the 'awakening' of Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries, under the influence of the twin forces of Renaissance and Reformation (and Counter-Reformation), and the Enlightenment of the 18th century – movements which decisively formed Europe – to some extent bypassed the university. In the earlier part of this period universities were important (for example, the English Parliament elected in 1641 – which went on to wage war, defeat and execute a king – had more graduates than any Parliament elected before the 20th century), but later the influence of universities faded

(as their – alleged – organisational rigidity and intellectual sterility made them increasingly irrelevant). By 1800 the university had become an all-but-redundant institution (and was, indeed, 'abolished' in France after the Revolution – which is why the establishment of the University of Berlin in the following decade was such a highly symbolic episode). Admittedly, more recent scholarship has tended to qualify this bleak picture – but it is still very difficult to argue that the European university was the 'engine' of Enlightenment, still less of urbanisation, industrialisation and secularisation that produced modern Europe;

III) Thirdly, the modern university which emerged in the 19th and 20th centuries was a partner – a servant even – of the modern state. The two – university and state – had a symbiotic relationship. In a positive sense the university was a major engine of professionalisation; it trained the new expert cadres in both state and industry. The university also made a significant contribution to secularisation as notions of scientific expertise and rational belief took over from older belief systems. But, on the negative side, universities also helped forge national identities – and, in some cases, nurtured a more extreme nationalism. University research, in particular, benefited from national rivalries and geopolitical conflicts. The drive for military technology was a major driver of investment in research. When the degree to which the university was, is, or should be an international institution, is considered, it is important to bear in mind these links between universities and the formation of nation states. It is equally important to bear in mind the fact that the 'modernity' – the secular and expert values – espoused by universities was characteristic of the so-called 'West';

IV) Fourthly, however uncomfortable the thought may be, the stories of the European university and of European colonial empires are deeply entwined. Students did not (and do not) flock to Paris and London simply because of the excellence of the universities in those cities; they come because the history of empire established zones of cultural influence that persist to this day. The reputations of universities in Berlin or Moscow cannot be divorced from the power and influence of Germany and Russia (or the Soviet Union). It is a real challenge for European universities to transform these historical, and in some senses negative, links into forward-looking and positive connections;

V) Despite what has just been said, in the fifth period of European university development (after 1945 and especially after 1960) the reputation of European universities owed a lot to the successful disengagement from empire – while continuing to foster post-imperial cultural, linguistic, even sentimental connections. But two other phenomena contributed to this resurgence of the European universities in the second half of the 20th century. One was the example of reconstruction, reconciliation, and resilience. Within a few short years after 1945 the European institutions which are so familiar

today had begun to be built. The rest of the world looked on and was impressed by what seemed then to be a 'European miracle'. The second was the development of the welfare state – and the expansion of higher education. Universities, once the preserve of elites, became powerful agents of democratisation. They were on the side of the people – at last. Even the exuberance of student revolt, and the New Left, with its farcical echoes of 1848, contributed to this sense of emancipation;

VI) But, more recently, things seem to have begun to go wrong. There is now a pervasive feeling that, far from being at the 'centre of things', Europe and its universities are being pushed to the margin. Today America, tomorrow possibly China, is the new talisman. One reason for this is that perhaps Europe did not respond as imaginatively, as resiliently, to 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall, as it had to 1945, the end of the Second World War. In Western Europe, outside Germany (and maybe inside it), there was even a sense of annoyance that a familiar, even comfortable, bi-polar arrangement had been disturbed. In Central and Eastern Europe the tension between 'rejoining Europe' and 'joining the world' – in other words, the global capitalist economy under American hegemony – has never been resolved. If there is a crisis – or, at any rate, a crisis of confidence – in European universities, it may be partly due to a suspicion that Europe as a whole has somehow failed to rise to a challenge – first in the aftermath of 1989; and, more recently, in pushing ahead with the building of stronger European institutions.

Europe and America compared

Whatever the reason, there is today a pervasive feeling of unease. On the one hand, there is a target set in the Lisbon declaration four years ago to make Europe the most competitive 'knowledge' economy by the year 2010. On the other hand, there is growing concern that Europe's universities are not up to the job. As *The Economist* commented in a recent (September 2004) article: "One of Europe's primary intellectual resources, its university system, is in terrible shape. Just how terrible was underlined in the recent annual survey by Shanghai's Jiao Tong University. This ranking gave eight of the top ten places to American institutions with only Oxford and Cambridge breaking the American monopoly. You had to go down to 39th before an EU university outside Britain (the University of Utrecht) featured."

Of course, it is important not to exaggerate the alleged 'decline' of European universities. *The Economist* is not an impartial source – its real targets are state control and public funding, both of which European universities are 'guilty' of compared to a small, but high-profile and decisive, minority of American institutions. Nor is the Shanghai ranking the most reliable. It uses American-derived measures of esteem and – surprise, surprise – American universities come out on top. These measures also over-value historic reputation. For example, it is far from clear that Oxford and Cambridge are

Britain's 'best' universities. Imperial College, the London School of Economics, and even the newly merged University of Manchester are rated just as highly. In crucial respects, the social elitism and (literally) medieval forms of government of Oxford and Cambridge present those universities with major challenges. Also, with due respect to Utrecht, is it really the 'best' continental European university – better, for example, than Leiden or the Erasmus University in Rotterdam (restricting the comparison to other Dutch institutions)? But, when all the excuses are made and all the caveats are entered, there is still a sense of unease that European universities are not as competitive as they should be; and, if Europe is to become the world's most successful 'knowledge' economy, its universities will have to be reformed and modernised.

Consequently, there may be some value in drawing up a balance sheet of European and American advantages – not, of course, in a mindless spirit of transatlantic rivalry. In many ways, certainly in intellectual terms, in terms of scientific research and scholarship, European and American universities belong to the same community, to a common family. Jacques Derrida, who died recently, although seen as a quintessential French philosopher, was just as much at home in the United States. Indeed, it is possible to construct quite a convincing argument that America was a debtor nation; not just literally so, in the balance of trade, but also in terms of the intellectual balance of trade. American universities, and America's science base, simply could not be sustained without a constant influx of bright young Europeans (and, more recently, Indians and Chinese). This is both a strength, because it demonstrates the immense attraction of American higher education – but also a weakness, because its indigenous talent is not sufficient to maintain the creativity of the American research system.

American universities enjoy three key advantages:

I) The first and most obvious is the geo-political dominance of the United States. International students flock to Harvard and Berkeley for very much the same reasons as they flock to Paris or London (and used to flock to Moscow). The United States is, for the moment, the world's only super-power. Its eminence is a powerful lure. But, of course, super-power status comes at a cost. Political issues get intertwined with academic affairs. Some people, institutions, and nations are reluctant to 'trade' with America – whether by taking up academic positions there or engaging in scientific and scholarly collaboration with American institutions – because they disapprove of American politics and ideology. Conversely, since 9/11 – again for political reasons – the Americans have been much less welcoming to international students. As a result, applications from China to American universities were down by 76 per cent last year, and from India they were down by 58 per cent;

II) The second advantage enjoyed by American universities is the English language. Because English has become a world language, Anglophone countries are at an advantage in terms of student mobility – especially

in subjects like business and management or information technology – and also, perhaps, in terms of science and research. So much of scientific and scholarly publication is now in English – which boosts, maybe artificially, the 'quality' of research in Anglophone countries – which, in turn, may explain the pattern of 'top' universities revealed in surveys like the one from Shanghai. But Anglophone countries also suffer from disadvantages which the British, in a multi-lingual continent, are perhaps more aware of than the Americans in a more mono-lingual environment (although Spanish is rapidly becoming the *lingua franca* of the Americas – and increasingly in the United States itself). Nevertheless, there is a tendency to equate global with English;

III) The third advantage which American higher education supposedly enjoys goes to the heart of the contrast between Europe and America. This is that the American system is more responsive, more flexible, and more differentiated. Consequently, as higher education becomes more and more of a 'market' – or, at any rate, more market-like (and nowhere is this more pronounced than in some parts of international student mobility and global research competition), American institutions will be at a greater and greater advantage. They are less burdened, so the argument goes, by restrictive legal, administrative, and funding regimes – and may also have fewer inhibitions about the kind of teaching and research programmes they are prepared to offer. However, this comparison, so flattering to America, may be only partly true. First, even if – as a general rule – American universities are more entrepreneurial than European universities, there are many exceptions (both rigid and inflexible American universities and adaptable and entrepreneurial European universities). Secondly, like is not always being compared with like. Many individual state systems in the United States are highly regimented, while across the continent of Europe (as opposed to individual national systems) there is a great deal of variety – unified systems where no formal distinctions are drawn between different types of higher education institutions (as in Britain), binary systems in which distinctions between classical universities and higher vocational or professional schools have been maintained (as in Germany – or, on rather different terms, the Netherlands). Individual national systems in Europe should really be compared with individual state systems in the United States. The overall US system should be compared with the emerging European Higher Education Area as the Bologna Process unfolds, which would certainly have the effect of softening the stark contrast between American enterprise and European rigidity.

European universities have three (contrasting) advantages:

I) The first is the historical and cultural depth which Europe enjoys. Of course, it is important to avoid sentimental rhetoric. Most European universities were established (or decisively re-founded) in the 19th or 20th centuries. Their antiquity is very much exaggerated. Most grew out of the same in-

dustrial urban professional society as American universities. But with due deference to Benjamin Franklin or Thomas Jefferson, or later Emerson or Thoreau, the Enlightenment was very much a European project. The particular cast of modernity, however universal its aspirations, is derived from a specific historical environment and cultural milieu – and the difficulties we now face, in the shadow of 9/11, demonstrate just how contingent our supposedly universal values really are. That environment and milieu were (and are) European. Europe, as a result, may be better adapted culturally and psychologically than the United States to recognize, and respect, difference – the 'other'. The reasons why more international students are coming to Europe are not due entirely to the much tougher immigration regime in America, but are also linked to a belief that in Europe they can encounter 'Western' values that are both more original and more subtle – and also less aggressive, allowing the encounter to take place on more equal terms;

II) The second advantage possessed by Europe is that it is multi- rather than mono-lingual. Too much attention is sometimes paid to the costs and disadvantages of multi-lingualism – such as the political sensitivities about which languages should be recognized or the high cost of translators or the fear that, if courses are not taught in English, it will be impossible to attract international students. But it is equally important to recognize the strengths and advantages of multi-lingualism – and, in particular, acknowledge the subtlety of the cultures and the codes that different languages represent. Outside Europe this is easier. No one doubts that the Chinese language, as a set of signs and representations, is intimately bound up with Chinese culture and civilisation. But in Europe too languages both reflect and shape our patterns of thoughts, our intellectual and cultural habits, subtle and distinctive nuances. Sometimes these differences are small – but they are always significant (and they are potentially creative). It is also important to recognize that the languages of modern Europe are not simply the traditional European languages – but also Chinese and Arabic, Urdu and Bengali. It is possible to argue that a multi-lingual environment, because of its multi-culturalism, represents a much richer educational environment. Even English is enriched by its juxtaposition with other languages and it is impoverished by its isolation from them.

III) The third advantage possessed by Europe is its diversity. At first sight this may appear to be a disadvantage – but it can also be an advantage that operates at various levels. For example, diversity of academic cultures, organisational structures, and institutional traditions can be translated into a diversity of experiences for students. Just as it is widely recognized that students within Europe benefit from moving within Europe, so international students – potentially, at any rate – could be offered a rich and varied transnational experience within Europe. Or, to take another example, the processes of reform within European higher education can learn from the experiences of similar reforms in other European countries. This dynamic can

already be observed at work within the Bologna Process – indeed, it is the overall moral effect of that process rather than its detailed projects that is likely to be most significant in the longer term. If this analysis is correct, European higher education may even be able to accelerate the reform process in ways that are more difficult in the American system, which is both more uniform and more segregated.

Conclusion

In summary, this paper is an attempt to offer a much more positive account of Europe's place on the higher education world map than is usual. The usual account is that European higher education is losing ground to the Americans because it is too hide-bound (divided into classical universities committed to a high academic culture and other institutions with much less elevated missions), that all our institutions are too much under the thumb of the state (or in thrall to a rigid bureaucratic culture) and, as a result, are not sufficiently entrepreneurial. So the ambition to make Europe the most advanced knowledge-based economy in the world by the end of this decade is a pipe-dream; it cannot be realised. But it is possible to offer an alternative (and more hopeful) account – for two major reasons:

The first reason is that the 'standard' accounts of both European and American higher education are both caricatures. The two systems are not so different. Both have enterprising universities – and both have less enterprising institutions. It is misleading to have too rosy a picture of American higher education (and this mistake is rarely made by Americans themselves). It is highly dependent on importing academic talent from other countries – including, of course, Europe (as is European higher education, of course, in some key scientific and technological disciplines). If European higher education is too dependent on state funding, then American higher education is arguably over-dependent on tuition fees paid by students. Some of the allegations made about American universities – all certainly exaggerated – about so-called 'dumbing down' or 'political correctness' flow from this overdependence on student fees – and so on consumer whims. There is also growing consumer resistance to ever-increasing fees.

The second reason is that the world is changing. The true significance of 9/11 may turn out to be that it forced people in the West, both in America and Europe, to recognize that the rest of the world is predestined to follow the path of the West; and that globalisation could bite back – and with the most terrible consequences for the calm and stability of the societies which we have comfortably inhabited for half a century or more. But those societies too are changing – not simply because they have been obliged to take account of these forceful reminders of external diversity (even if these reminders are perceived as threats to 'civilisation' that must be resisted) but also in terms of internal diversity (because our societies are being transformed – from the

inside). To engage positively and successfully with this diversity, in both forms, it is necessary to be more generous and open-minded and – perhaps – less certain about the superiority of Western values. Here, universities and higher education have a very special role to play. They are both the most important carriers of modern values, values of 'objectivity', of science, of secularism; they are also mediators and translators, institutions with open frontiers that can transcend their own cultures, contexts and environments, and engage creativity with those of others (without demonising them as the 'other').

Of course, all universities have that creative potential, European or American. The argument presented in this paper is more modest – to suggest that, faced with these complex and subtle challenges, European universities may not be as poorly equipped as is sometimes supposed. They have formidable advantages – and, as a more coherent European Higher Education Area is developed, those advantages will be strengthened. When the Bologna Declaration was signed (and before that the Sorbonne Declaration) in the forefront of education ministers' minds were two things. The first was the potential of the declaration to boost internal reform agendas, such as reducing the length of time that students took in some countries to finish their courses; and the second was a desire to make Europe more competitive in terms of attracting international students. One of the aims of subsequent declarations, and the policies they have encouraged, has been to make Europe a better place for scholars, scientists, and researchers. Of course, these initiatives can be interpreted in superficial, even cynical, ways – for example, 'selling' European higher education to the wider world. But – potentially at any rate – they have a more profound impact, in terms of highlighting the contribution European higher education can make within a diverse and pluralist world society – and world culture. The phrase 'New World Order' is often used to describe the hegemony of the United States as the world's only remaining super-power. But there are more liberal and more open interpretations of that phrase, a New World Order, which extend far beyond geopolitics into the worlds of science and culture – and to the New World Order described in these terms European universities can make a very significant contribution.

The Bologna Process: state of implementation and external dimension

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Adopting a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, essentially based on two main cycles, was at the top of the Bologna Declaration's list of objectives. To most observers from non-signatory countries, the introduction of degrees at Bachelor and Master level is virtually synonymous with the Bologna Process. As the participating countries continue to work on their reform agenda, due to be finished by 2010, it is increasingly evident that they are heading into uncharted waters. Worldwide, observers are following the reforms in the participating countries, and their trials and errors, attentively.

The European ministers in charge of higher education agreed at the Berlin Conference in September 2003 on three intermediate priorities for the period up to the next conference in Bergen in May 2005. All participating countries should report on progress achieved in introducing: (i) the two tiers; (ii) setting up a quality assurance system; (iii) improving the recognition of degrees and study periods.

This article will first look at the main reasons for, and driving forces behind, the Bologna Process, and will then sketch the state of implementation of the three intermediate priorities. It will end by looking at a – potential – external dimension of the Bologna Process.

Why was the Bologna Process started and why was it received with such great interest? A few reasons come to mind:

- High levels of student mobility, mainly as a result of the ERASMUS programme, meant that students and professors faced continuing problems of compatibility and recognition between higher education institutions and qualifications in different European countries: the time seemed right for a thorough reform of European systems and structures;
- There was a growing tension between national degrees – defined, accredited and recognized exclusively at the nation level – and an increasingly European/global labour market;
- The inefficiency of national higher education systems was a longstanding cause for complaint in many countries: high dropout rates, extremely long study durations and unemployment among graduates because they did not meet the needs of the labour market;

- The diminishing attractiveness of European universities:
  - to students and faculty from other world regions who complained of the lack of readability, visibility, recognition of the national higher education systems
  - to students in some European countries who began to show a growing interest in overseas providers.

The main goals of the Bologna Process

The Trends III report of 2003 revealed that for the leaders of European higher education institutions the Bologna Process has three main driving forces:

1. The overall enhancement of academic quality – which is to say that the reforms should go beyond purely formal changes in degree systems;
2. To prepare graduates for the European labour market – 91 per cent of the heads of higher education institutions regard employability as an important or very important criterion when redesigning curricula, and 70 per cent of higher education institutions keep a record of the employment of their graduates;
3. To enhance the competitiveness and attractiveness of the national – though not the European – system of higher education.

Berlin 2003: concrete intermediate priorities

As already mentioned, the European ministers in Berlin commissioned for their next meeting in Bergen in May 2005 a stocktaking report on national progress in the following fields:

1. Quality assurance systems
2. Two-tier structure
3. Recognition of degrees and periods of study

What does the Berlin Communiqué say on quality assurance?

The primary responsibility for quality assurance lies with the individual higher education institution. By 2005 national quality assurance systems should include

- A definition of the responsibilities of national bodies and higher education institutions;
- The evaluation of programmes or institutions (internal & external assessment, students' participation, publication of results);
- A system of accreditation or comparable procedures;
- International participation, cooperation, and networking.

ENQA (European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), together with EUA (European University Association), ESIB (The National

Unions of Students in Europe) and EURASHE (European Association of Institutions in Higher Education), was asked to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines for quality assurance for the Bergen Conference.

External quality assurance

The Trends III report published in 2003 showed that almost every country had a national quality assurance agency, and that the countries which did not yet have an agency were about to establish one. 80 per cent of higher education institutions are undergoing some form of external quality assurance. In the past, distinct forms of quality assurance were used in different countries or parts of Europe. This is changing, and various forms of quality assurance are increasingly being combined or merged within one country. For example, the previously clear division between accreditation (more dominant in Eastern Europe) and quality evaluation (more dominant in Western Europe) is softening. In a similar way, the gap between a programme or institutional focus in external quality assurance is narrowing. Most higher education institutions accept the need for external quality assurance because it is seen as enhancing the institutional quality culture. There is, however, criticism of costs and the burden it imposes on higher education institutions in some countries. Better-developed internal quality assurance systems could, to some extent, allow for a diminution of external quality assurance.

Internal quality assurance

In Europe, 80 per cent of higher education institutions have internal quality assurance procedures in place, mainly focussed on teaching. Only half of all higher education institutions assess research through internal quality assurance, while less than a quarter address other aspects of quality assurance internally. In most countries, the existing internal quality assurance is not robust enough to justify a reduction of external quality assurance.

The Berlin Communiqué and the two-tier structure

All EU countries must have started the introduction of Bachelor's and Master's degrees by 2005. National qualifications frameworks and cooperation on the elaboration of a European qualifications framework are also being encouraged. Bachelor's and Master's programmes should have different profiles and lead to different learning outcomes. All Bachelor's graduates should be eligible for Master's programmes, while all Master's graduates should be eligible for doctoral programmes.

The Trends III findings on degree structures

The legal possibility to offer two-tier structures already exists or is being introduced, often until a pre-set deadline, in 80 per cent of the Bologna coun-

tries. The remaining 20 per cent are planning to introduce new legislation to allow for a two-tier framework.

53 per cent of higher education institutions already have two tiers or are introducing them, while 36 per cent are planning to introduce the two-tier degree structure. Only 11 per cent of higher education institutions see no need for structural reform. European agreement on the credits and workload of the different degrees has been reached: 180-240 ECTS credits are required for Bachelor level degrees and 90-120 (60 as the very minimum) credits for Master level degrees.

Beyond structures and labels: the need for descriptors, level indicators, and frameworks

There is a risk that the new degree structures are being introduced in superficial and incompatible ways. To truly achieve a system of "easily readable and comparable degrees", more than a simple re-labelling of structures is needed. Fundamentally, there needs to be – and, in fact, this is already happening – a re-orientation from inputs to outputs in the organisation of study programmes. Several initiatives to define descriptors, levels, and learning outcomes have been set up during recent years, such as the Joint Quality Initiative and the Tuning project, as well as the 2003 Copenhagen seminar on qualifications frameworks.

Qualifications frameworks

Some countries already have a national qualifications framework – such as Denmark, Ireland, and the UK, the latter with separate qualifications frameworks for England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. These documents provide transparency; not by defining core curricula but by providing so-called "descriptors" for general characteristics of different levels of qualifications. The Berlin Communiqué calls for the elaboration of national qualifications frameworks and, in parallel, for a European qualifications framework. This should be an "acceptable, non-intrusive, over-arching European qualifications framework to accommodate the huge diversity of European educational awards."[2]

The Berlin Communiqué and the recognition of degrees

All "Bologna countries" are expected to ratify the Lisbon Convention if they have not yet done so. The national ENIC-NARIC offices (European Network of Information Centres on Academic Recognition and Mobility/ National Academic Recognition Information Centres) should further the implementation of

2 Stephen Adams: *Qualification structures in European Higher Education*, Study prepared for the Danish Bologna Seminar, Copenhagen, 27-28 March 2003

the Convention. Moreover, ECTS should be used more intensively to facilitate the recognition of academic qualifications. From 2005, every student graduating from a higher education institution in a Bologna signatory state should automatically receive the Diploma Supplement upon graduation, issued free of charge in a major European language. Overall, the Diploma Supplement should be more widely used by higher education institution and employers.

The Lisbon Recognition Convention and ENIC-NARIC

At the time of the Berlin Conference in September 2003, two thirds of the Bologna countries had ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention. But the Trends III report showed that more than half of academic staff seemed *not very aware or not aware at all* of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Cooperation between higher education institutions and their national ENIC-NARIC could also be improved: only 20 per cent reported close cooperation, 25 per cent do not cooperate at all, and 28 per cent had never heard of ENIC-NARIC, or at least not under this name.

The European Credit Transfer System: key findings

Trends III confirmed that ECTS has clearly emerged as *the* European credit system. In many countries, it has become a legal requirement, while countries with national credit systems are ensuring their compatibility with ECTS. Two thirds of higher education institutions today use ECTS for *credit transfer*, while 15 per cent use a different system. Almost three quarters of higher education institutions declared that they had already introduced ECTS for *credit accumulation*.

While most higher education institutions claimed to have in place smooth and efficient recognition procedures for credits gained from periods of study abroad, students' experiences contradict this. In many higher education institutions the use of ECTS is still not integrated into institution-wide policies or guidelines and its principles and tools are often insufficiently understood.

An unrealised potential: joint degrees

Joint Degrees are mentioned in the Bologna Declaration and in the Prague Communiqué. They are linked to all Bologna objectives, but receive a relatively low priority at ministerial levels. The support for joint degrees from higher education institutions and students is slightly stronger, but they have not yet been realised as a core tool for institutional development. The introduction of joint degrees is restricted by national legislations, which in 2003 did not allow for joint degrees in 50 per cent of countries. This is all the more regrettable as joint degrees represent a huge opportunity to foster mobility within Europe, underline Europe's attractiveness to students from other parts of the world, and facilitate the strategic positioning of institutions and net-

works. The new ERASMUS Mundus programme will hopefully provide the added momentum necessary to push the issue of joint degrees higher up on the policy agenda.

How to reach beyond Europe: the Berlin Communiqué on the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area

Ministers pledged support for further scholarship programmes aimed at third countries, such as ERASMUS Mundus. They stressed that trans-national exchanges in higher education should be based on academic values and quality. Bologna seminars and conferences would be open to participants from other regions of the world.

The external dimension of Bologna: three questions the rest of the world may ask

1. Can we join the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), and, if so, when?
2. If we cannot or do not want to join, can we still learn from the European experience?
3. We see no reason to change our own system and do not want to join, but what does Bologna mean for us in terms of recognition, exchange, etc.?

Who can join the European Higher Education Area?

Ministers decided in Berlin that the European Cultural Convention should be used as reference document when deciding on a country's eligibility. Supplementary requirements are a detailed application with a description of intended reforms and an explicit commitment to the Bologna objectives. The following countries are eligible to apply: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Monaco, San Marino, and the Ukraine. Of these, the Ukraine and Moldova have already declared their interest in joining the EHEA in Bergen 2005. The three Caucasus countries have expressed an interest in Bologna information seminars.

The second group: learning from the European experience

Europe's Mediterranean neighbours, linked to universities in the EHEA through numerous cooperation agreements, have been closely following the progress of the Bologna Process. There is huge interest in Latin America in closer cooperation with the Bologna countries and in implementing similar reforms regarding the two tiers, learning outcomes, ECTS, and quality assurance. The French government had organised a first conference in Paris in 2002 on recognition matters between Europe and Latin America; in early 2004 the so-called 6x4 EULAC project was presented by the Paris-based association COLUMBUS. Furthermore, an extension of the successful Euro-

pean Tuning project to Latin America is underway, and there may be other initiatives being prepared on either side of the Atlantic. Finally, the Central Asian States are taking a keen interest in the developments in the EHEA and various information events are being organised – for example, by the Open Society Institute.

The third group: what does Bologna mean for us?

The main competitors of Europe in the higher education arena – the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand – observe attentively the developments in the "Bologna countries". But they see recognition problems with the three-year Bachelor favoured by most Bologna signatory states, whereas for example in the United States the traditional undergraduate programme takes four years to complete. This problem can only be solved through negotiations on the comparability of learning outcomes and the resulting equivalence of awards. The qualifications frameworks (at national and European level) and the Diploma Supplement will play an important role. In Asia, "Bologna" is attracting ever more attention, as shown at the first EU-ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Conference on cooperation in higher education in Bangkok in November 2004, which included discussions on ECTS, learning outcomes, and quality assurance procedures.

Towards a global dimension of Bologna?

How should we assess the impacts of the Bologna Process on regions beyond the borders of its signatory countries? Is the glass half full or half empty? One the one hand, the Bologna Process has attracted considerable worldwide attention in the few years since its inception, and it is even inspiring national reforms in some countries outside Europe. On the other hand, within Europe itself, much progress still needs to be made in many of the most central aspects of the reforms. We have begun to export the model to other countries but we are still far from completing the European Higher Education Area ourselves and there seem to be new problems lurking behind every corner. This may create confusion and disappointment among our partners and could jeopardise those aspects of the Bologna project that strive to make the European Higher Education Area an attractive destination for students and academics from all parts of the world.

For more information

- www.bergen-bologna2005.no
- www.eua.be (Trends reports, etc.)
- www.esib.org

Quality assurance and accreditation: confidence-building or multiplication of national, European and global agencies?

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New developments in quality assurance and accreditation

During the last quarter of the twentieth century, external quality assurance and accreditation systems have been established in all regions of the world (cf. OECD/CERI 2003). In some regions, this worldwide development has been strongly supported by other higher education reforms. For example, higher education systems in Europe are currently undergoing deep reforms triggered by the Bologna Process: enhancing academic quality and the employability of graduates are the two most frequently mentioned driving forces. So it is unsurprising that the so-called Trends III Report (2003) identified that all Bologna signatory countries have established or are establishing agencies responsible for external quality control. Since the end of the 1990s, with the introduction of accreditation in nearly all European countries, a new phase in quality assurance has started (cf. Schwarz/Westerheijden 2004).

The national level: accreditation councils and agencies

The environment in which higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies operate is changing rapidly. Globalisation of higher education, increased initiatives aiming at internationalisation, the activities of the so-called providers and various forms of 'borderless' higher education, and – not least – the discussion on the liberalisation of trade services in higher education, challenge the higher education community worldwide and call for new and imaginative strategies. In the field of international quality assurance there is an urgent need for action that will develop a basis for trust in the quality of global higher education. The number of institutions of higher education around the world is increasing, and higher education is becoming much more differentiated than ever before. Therefore, providing students, institutions, employers, governments and others with robust and reliable information about the quality of institutions and programmes in higher education worldwide is increasingly important to support mobility and increase the quality of education.

The terminology used in external quality assurance is diverse, but there is also a broad range of approaches that include:

- Scope of accreditation
  - accreditation of study programmes
  - accreditation of institutions
- Sector of accreditation
  - university sector
  - non-university sector
  - state sector
  - private sector
- Standards and criteria
- Composition of expert teams
- Results: yes/no decisions/decision with conditions
- Publication of results

National approaches are not exempt from the suspicion of being self-serving or tolerant of complacency and they may find it very difficult to establish trustworthiness. There are ongoing discussions on a kind of "meta-accreditation"; that is, a multilateral system based on some form of accreditation or certification of agencies.

Regional/world level: networks and associations

The Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation, and the Recognition of Qualification was launched as part of UNESCO's mission to respond to the emerging ethical challenges and dilemmas that arise from globalisation. Its action plan focuses on: updating the regional conventions so that they better respond to the new challenges of a changing higher education environment, capacity building for quality assurance at national and regional levels to ensure the sustainable development of higher education systems, and developing information tools for students on quality provision of higher education to empower them for informed decision-making (cf. UNESCO 2005).

There is no generally accepted model or strategy but there are various good practices and demanding developments in international quality assurance and accreditation. A broad range of networks for co-operation and regional capacity building is evolving.

The broadest and most inclusive approach is the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) which developed principles of good practice that include:

- The Mission statement
- Decision-making
- Resources
- Documentation

- The external committee
- The public face
- System of appeal
- Quality assurance of an external quality assurance agency
- Collaboration with other agencies
- The relation between the external quality assurance agency and the higher education institutions

The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) is engaging in developing a code of good practice and a register of quality assurance agencies. The Berlin Communiqué of September 2003 called upon ENQA, in co-operation with EUA (European University Association), ESIB (The National Unions of Students in Europe) and EURASHE (European Association of Institutions in Higher Education), through its members to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance, to explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance and/or accreditation agencies or bodies, and to report back to the ministers in 2005.

The European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA) was founded by twelve accreditation organisations from eight countries. It promotes mutual recognition of accreditation as part of the process towards the establishment of the European Higher Education Area. As a basis for this, ECA members agreed on a common code of good practice:

Goals of the Code of good practice (ECA)

- The “Code” defines necessary requirements for accreditation organisations. All members of the network should fulfil these requirements.
- The “Code” serves to support the internal quality assurance policies of an accreditation organisation and provides suggestions for the continuous improvement of its quality.
- The “Code” shall not lead to predominance of one single point of view, but should instead promote “good practices”, and prevent bad quality.
- The “Code” should be continuously updated to conform to the current, international “state of the art of good practices”.
- The “Code” serves as a yardstick for external evaluations of all network members by an international group of experts.

The experiences of these networks show that while practices differ, there is agreement on the essentials. And while regional capacity-building is important it is insufficient: it lacks coordination and consistency on a worldwide scale (cf. UNESCO 2005).

International co-operation: mutual trust and confidence-building

The limitations of national approaches towards quality assurance and accreditation and the huge cost for maintaining the status quo clearly suggest a need for a coherent European response (Haug 2003). With its report on the implementation of the Council Recommendation on European co-operation in quality assurance in higher education (cf. European Commission 2004), the European Commission analysed that important efforts have been made at the bilateral and regional levels to create a climate of confidence. This would facilitate mutual recognition of quality assurance systems. The idea is that quality assurance in Europe could contribute effectively to the objective of making European higher education a "world quality reference".

In July 1999 the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP) established the Commission on Global Accreditation and started considering the viability of a World Quality Register (WQR); that is, a register listing trustworthy quality assurance agencies worldwide. Inclusion on the register would be based on an evaluation by an independent group of quality assurance experts, on the basis of agreed professional standards and under the auspices of a consortium representing as broadly as possible the international higher education community.

It is recognized that quality assurance agencies need to have greater capacity to cope with the demands and challenges of increased cross-border mobility of students, programmes, and providers worldwide (cf. OECD/CERI 2003). Globalisation, trade issues and the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), transnational higher education, mobility, recognition issues, and 'borderless' higher education increase the need for trustworthy quality assurance and accreditation systems. The credibility and legitimacy of these systems should be supported by sound, comparable criteria and methodologies based on professional standards (cf. Van Damme 2003).

With such a worldwide approach there are challenges which need to be addressed:

- Developing a common concept of quality while respecting cultural sensitivities, diversity, national sovereignty, and institutional autonomy;
- Promoting cross-border quality assurance and international quality arrangements;
- International recognition of degrees on the basis of mutually accepted definitions and standards of quality assurance;
- Regional capacity building and networking that links into a worldwide approach;
- Ownership of an international register.

Compared to other quality assurance strategies and models of international co-operation – such as the mutual recognition of agencies, or in contrast, direct accreditation by an international body – the IAUP Worldwide Quality Register adopts a multilateral approach of standards-setting and recognition. At the same time, it respects the autonomy of agencies and their national context. The WQR should include agencies that have been evaluated by a group of independent experts as responding to mutually agreed quality assurance standards and benchmarks. Inclusion of an agency in the WQR guarantees that this agency meets agreed standards for trustworthy quality assurance. The initiative would also have a strong developmental approach, by assisting emerging quality assurance and accreditation agencies in building up their professional expertise.

It was always the intention of IAUP to follow a very inclusive approach and build a strong acceptance in the field that could strengthen the legitimacy of the proposal. In the first instance, UNESCO and INQAAHE were seen as the preferred partners because of their global and inclusive nature. Although it was clear that UNESCO was not in a position to formally endorse the proposal, it was integrated into the debate on international quality assurance in the framework of the UNESCO Global Forum. The debate in within INQAAHE was concluded at its General Assembly meeting in Dublin in April 2003. The network decided not to engage formally in a worldwide system of evaluation and registration, but to adapt a code of principles which would act as guidelines for trustworthy quality assurance. Through regional capacity building, training activities and the dissemination of good practices, the WQR could assist in the development of sound quality assurance systems in higher education, which would help to improve higher education institutions.

Future prospects

Quality assurance is an issue with high priority on the political agenda, and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. But it is the quality assurance agencies as well as the educational institutions that have to prove their quality. In higher education, quality assurance agencies will sustain and strengthen existing regional and international networks to enhance their credibility. One important tool to check the quality of agencies will be the cyclical review of agencies (cf. ENQA 2005), which will take place on either a regional level or a world level. It is important that agencies will have the opportunity and infrastructure to measure themselves against international standards. This is the only way that worldwide confidence-building will be possible.

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Globalization in higher education: the growing importance of quality-oriented admissions procedures

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With the growing number of international degree programmes and international applicants, the higher education arena has become increasingly globalized. For this reason, institutions in many European countries find themselves in need of a new admissions structure. That structure must adhere to the following principle: admissions should not be based on bureaucratic paper pushing, but rather on decisions made by qualified academic experts. The keyword "quality" defines this new type of admissions structure.[3]

Quality is of utmost importance for international students, even more so than for "home" students. When one considers the time, money and energy an international student invests in obtaining a place at, traveling to and adjusting to a foreign institution, with or without tuition fees, it is clear that expectations are likely to be high and wrong decisions much more difficult to correct. International students demand high standards, and rightly so: excellent instructors, well-structured study programmes and a good infrastructure (i.e. advising and support services). All this has received much attention within the Bologna Process and, from the point of view of incoming students, it is the improvement of this infrastructure that is likely to be seen as the core aspect of Bologna.

Another facet of "quality" with regard to international student recruitment and admissions, one which up to now has been relatively neglected, is that higher education institutions are themselves particularly dependent on the quality – more so than on the quantity – of international students. One could even go so far as to say that the quality of this group is more important for higher education institutions than that of the "home" students:

- International students are important for the development of the institution as an academic and research "location". The ideas and intercultural competence these students bring with them enrich a higher education institution's student body.

3 This article treats the admissions process from the perspective of a German higher education institution. For information on the admission of international students in other countries, please see Muche, Kelo, Wächter: *The Admission of International Students into Higher Education. Policies and Instruments*, ACA Papers on International Cooperation in Education, Bonn: Lemmens 2004.

- The “failure” of international students places the higher education institution in a negative light, more so than when “home” students fail. An international student’s negative experience at a European institution will reflect badly on that institution’s reputation in the student’s home country. A higher education institution can put as much money as it wants into international marketing; one negative letter to the editor of an Indian newspaper from an unsatisfied customer, i.e. student, can destroy the higher education institution’s marketing campaign. The most effective advertisement is a satisfied customer.
- The additional financial investment an institution places in an international student must be justified. An international student’s failure has even more grave financial consequences than a national student’s. Even if a “home” student fails, his/her parents have already contributed, through their taxes, to the country’s higher education system. With international students, the financial contribution the guest country makes is only warranted when a student graduates and begins a successful career, whether he/she stays in the host country, returns home or moves to a third country.

The **success rate of international students** serves as an important quality parameter and indicator of the performance of a higher education institution. This quality (success rate) parameter is more important than quantity (number of international students enrolled). In Hamburg, for example, the money allotted to the higher education institutions by the state is dependent on a number of parameters. A certain percentage of this amount is contingent upon the number of successful international students, i.e. the number of international graduates. This is meant to put positive pressure on the various faculties and institutes as it pushes them into healthy competition. It is in their best interest to admit only those applicants who they think will succeed. Good international universities are good not because of the number of international students they have enrolled, but because of the number of international alumni they produce. It seems that only in Europe do some higher education institutions still regard this fact with a measure of skepticism. Ergo, it is in the higher education institution’s best interest to provide a selection procedure that seeks out the best.

If you want your students to succeed, you have to be able to choose the ones you want

As stated above, the debate in Europe has revolved around the quality of the study programmes and not around the quality of the international students. The situations in France and Germany shall serve as examples for this discussion. Within the French system, we have to distinguish between the university sector and the Grandes Ecoles (a type of “elite” university). The Grandes Ecoles use a highly selective admissions procedure to choose their students and have, consequently, a very high success rate among internatio-

nal students. Those who are not admitted to the Grandes Ecoles turn to the universities, which do not have selective admissions and thus enroll these students. However, many of these students are “weeded out” in the first few years of their studies; that is, the system is so designed that a large number fail the introductory courses and leave university without finishing. Would it not be better and student-friendlier if this weeding out took place before the students wasted these precious years? And, especially for international students, before they arrived and took up their studies in France?

The situation in Germany is somewhat different. In many subjects – those with so-called restricted admissions (*zulassungsbeschränkte Fächer*) – the number of applicants is much higher than the number of places available. It should be noted that the term “restricted admissions” is a legal term stemming from the lack of places and not from the necessity for qualified students. Admission here is based for the most part simply on the applicant’s secondary school grade point average (GPA). This is a bureaucratic procedure where no other criteria are of importance. A highly motivated applicant for medicine with excellent recommendations and laboratory experience may be denied admission because her high school history grade pulls her GPA 0.10% below that needed.

In non-restricted subjects, admission is based on the fulfillment of formal requirements (for German applicants: secondary school certificate; for foreign applicants: a secondary school certificate equivalent to a German one and German language skills). At no time during the process for either type of admissions does an applicant’s motivation play a role. In addition, an applicant’s suitability cannot be measured by simple formal criteria such as grades as they do not paint an entire picture of the applicant.

Low graduation rates amongst international students are quite common in some European countries. In Germany, the success rate for this group is lower than that for German students. Logically, the opposite should be true as an international student’s investment in his/her studies (and need for success!) should be significantly higher than that of his/her German counterpart. There are perhaps two main reasons for this lower success rate of international students. Firstly, the infrastructure of many institutions is not tailored to meet the needs of international students, although the goals of the Bologna Process are leading to many improvements in this area. Secondly, it must be said that a number of international applicants are not optimally motivated. These so-called visa seekers apply for admission in order to secure a residence visa, not because they have a genuine interest in pursuing a degree in the chosen course of study in the respective country.

The visa seeker issue underscores the following: the blame for low graduation rates can be placed on the problems related to the traditional type of admissions structure largely in use. The incompatibility of national secondary school certificates often causes uncertainty amongst administrators process-

ing applications – secondary school systems in different parts of the world have such different requirements that an objective standard cannot be used. The heterogeneity of grades leads to a further predicament. Different countries have not only different grading systems, but also different traditions of awarding grades, and these are not always comparable. Some cultures tend to give nearly all students very high grades whereas others give the same number of students "middle" grades for the same work; almost no one receives a perfect or near-perfect score. In the end, a six (excellent) in Bulgaria is not necessarily better than thirteen points in Morocco. If secondary school certificates and GPAs are the only criteria for admissions, who can really determine if Candidate X from Australia is more suitable than Candidate Y from India?

A student's "failure" within the European system can have catastrophic consequences. In many developing countries, the "adventure" of sending a family member to study abroad can cost a generation's worth of savings. Should the student "fail", not only does the family lose face, but it reflects badly on the system which failed the student. Moreover, the image of the international student suffers within the institution: teaching staff regard taking on more international students with reservation and the development of a "guest friendly" infrastructure for the "good" international students becomes more difficult. One asks why an effort should be made to assist these students if they are going to fail.

Just as scholarships are granted, so should places be offered

Those responsible in countries without a selective aspect to admissions must re-think the process. Above all, the nonsensical notion that studying at Institution X is a basic civil right, even if one is unqualified and/or unmotivated, must be eliminated. A change in thinking is necessary: in the future, not all places available for a given study programme should be filled if there are not enough qualified candidates. Just as scholarships are granted based on an applicant's achievements, so should places be offered. That is, an applicant should submit a complete application, including such documents as a letter of motivation, and the decision should be made by a committee consisting of experts from the respective field of study. The majority of a given committee should be the instructors involved with the study programme and not bureaucrats because it is the instructors, the experts in the field, who can better judge what type of students are needed and wanted for a particular programme and what skills and motivation candidates must bring with them to succeed.

Formal requirements and achievement-based selection criteria are two very different aspects. Of course, formal requirements such as secondary school certificates are necessary for the admissions procedure; they ease the administrative handling of applications and reduce the number of applicants to

a technically feasible number. However, they alone cannot determine an applicant's quality and suitability for a given study programme. Achievement-based selection criteria are decisive in determining this.

Moreover, in order to provide a greater degree of objectivity in checking applicants' formal requirements, we should aim at having this stage of the application process take place outside the respective university. Instead, a central service office could take over this time-consuming process. In Germany, the Berlin-based uni-assist office (Application Services for International Students) currently provides this service for over 50 higher education institutions. uni-assist processes applications according to each participating higher education institution's pre-defined formal criteria (criteria which each higher education institution is free to set within certain legal restrictions). That is, if Institution X requires applicants to have advanced German language skills, only those applications from applicants meeting this criterion will be forwarded to the university for a final decision. Both students and institutions benefit from this new system. Students have the advantage of only needing to submit one formal application and one set of certified copies even if they are applying to several participating institutions. Institutions have the advantage of being able to put personnel resources to better use – for example, by increasing their advising and support services for international students and by concentrating resources on the final selection procedure.

In summary, there are several aspects of the process that should not be overlooked:

- The higher education institution must be able to formulate its specific criteria autonomously. This allows the institution to define a target group and very specific profile. If we view students as customers, we can also improve our customer service by providing possible applicants with target group information before they apply.
- The selection process should be carried out by experts in the field of study, not by laypersons. Not only can these experts better judge the applicants' qualifications, but their involvement in the decision-making process also leads to their commitment to the future students' success.
- The selection should be global in nature; that is, the applicant's entire personality should be taken into account. GPA, letter of motivation, interview, extracurricular activities, study aptitude tests (i.e. the Graduate Record Examination GRE), etc. should all play a role in the decision process.

The goal of selective admissions procedures is the development of a differentiated system in which the right students are brought together with the right instructors at the right institution. As long as many European institutions view the admissions process as a bureaucratic act and not as a selection procedure, the European Higher Education Area will not be able to reach its highest potential in the international arena.

Recognizing Bologna: the three cycle structure – a global reference?

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Introduction

The ACA conference on "Opening up to the Wider World: The External Dimension of the Bologna Process" addresses a very important topic. However, the name under which this topic has broadly come to be known is hardly suited to allay the concerns of those who might feel that the process toward a European Higher Education Area might have become too inward-looking. The term "the external dimension" seems to be more concerned with drawing a line between "them" and "us" than with fostering one of the key values of the university heritage – that of true international cooperation. Nevertheless, the fact that the relationship between the European Higher Education Area and other parts of the world is now being addressed explicitly is a significant step forward, and I would argue that the importance of this step outweighs the clumsiness of the terminology.

A global reference?

The question of whether the three-cycle system is a global reference raises the question of what a global reference actually is. Such a reference could be understood as one widely found or, alternatively, as one that is widely emulated – in other words, a model that has earned the most sincere form of flattery, viz. imitation. It may well be argued that the distinction is artificial since a model that is widely emulated will also be widely found. Even if the end result may be the same, I believe there is value in keeping the two separate.

What is more, I believe it is the aspect of emulation that is most relevant for our present purpose. I believe it is fairly safe to say that the three-tier system is the world reference, in that it is the model that academics and policy makers argue for or against, the model that is widely known by the general public regardless of the specificities of the system of their own countries, and the model that countries tend to reform toward if and when they modify their current system. For the sake of argument, consider the opposite scenario:

4 The author would like to thank Athanassia Spyropoulou for valuable comments to this article. The views expressed in it and the responsibility for any remaining errors remains the author's own.

how many higher education reforms over the past generation have included a move away from a three tier system toward, say, a system in which at least five or six years of study would be required to obtain a first qualification which is the only one offered below the doctoral level?

The three-tier system is not new to Europe *per se*. Countries like Ireland, Malta, and the United Kingdom have had a Bachelor, Master, and Doctorate system for a very long time, and other countries have also had such systems for so long that anyone working in higher education today is unlikely to have other qualifications unless they have been obtained through academic mobility. In some countries, however, these qualifications have gone by other names, such as in Norway, where Latin names were adopted in despite the conspicuous lack of a classical tradition in the education system as a whole.[5]

What is new is the amplitude of the movement toward the three-tier system: the number of countries that are currently reforming degree systems that have long traditions and that have in some cases been seen as a sign of academic strength and perhaps also as a sign of national particularities. The requirement under the Bologna Process that all participating countries adopt the three-tier system[6] justifies referring to this system as a "European way". I was reminded of this expression when looking over some old photographs. One of them showed a sign with the European flag[7], the colors of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and the caption "the European way is the true way for the Baltic [countries]". This photo was taken in Kaunas in fall 1990, at a time when the Baltic States were not yet independent and when any talk of "joining Europe" seemed like a very distant goal to most people. The point of the image is that things may happen in unexpected ways and at unforeseeable speed, and this is also the case with the near universal European move toward the three-tier system.

More often than not, this system is referred to as the Bachelor-Master system. Quite apart from the fact that this shorthand leaves out the most advanced qualifications, it begs the question of what is in a name. In the same way that the United States and the United Kingdom are sometimes referred to as two countries separated by a common language, it is worth asking whether the world is separated by a common set of qualifications, or at least qualifications that have a common name.

5 The Norwegian first degree in humanities, social sciences and natural sciences has traditionally been a cand. mag. (*candidatus magisterii*), whereas the second degree was a cand. followed by a name that indicates the major field of study – cand. philol. for humanities, cand. polit. for most social sciences and cand. real. for natural sciences. An extensive recent reform, known as the Quality Reform (Kvalitetsreformen) has modified the degree structure as well as the names of qualifications.

6 The Bologna Declaration (1999), as well as the Praha Communiqué (2001), actually refer to a two-tier system, as does the Berlin Communiqué (2003). However, the latter also includes doctoral studies and qualifications in the European Higher Education Area, so that it is now appropriate to refer to a three rather than two-tier system.

7 The twelve yellow stars on a blue background originated with the Council of Europe in 1955 and have been adopted as the symbol of Europe, used by the Council of Europe and the European Union alike.

The underlying assumption seems to be that qualifications that require a similar duration of three or four years of study, as is generally the case for the first degree, are also similar in level, quality, workload – and ultimately in value. In one way, this assumption takes us back to where recognition specialists[8] were ten years ago or more, where the counting of years of study took on great importance. Today, the recognition community is rapidly moving toward a much more sophisticated view of qualifications, in which the main parameter is not how much time a student has spent pursuing a given qualification, but how that time has been spent. The emphasis is, in other words, shifting toward what a graduate knows and is able to do with a qualification rather than the procedure through which the qualification was earned. Again, this is a shift in emphasis between two elements that – in quite different proportions – have been present in recognition work as well as curriculum development for a very long time rather than a complete shift from one parameter to another. Nevertheless, the shift is both significant and far-reaching, and it is embedded in the standard legal text for the recognition of qualifications in Europe, the Council of Europe/UNESCO Recognition Convention[9].

What is a qualification?

This leads us to the question of what is in a qualification, and five different elements would seem to be helpful in the analysis.[10]

Workload

The counting of years of study we just referred to is one way of referring to workload. The problem with this reference, however, is that time, or even years, of study is an ambiguous entity, and that time could equally well be expressed in hours or weeks. Even then, however, time may refer to classroom attendance only, to other kinds of organized activities (such as exams), or to all activities related to study, including independent work, time spent on research in libraries or on the Internet, etc. The current European practice is to express workload in ECTS[11] credits, the basis of which is that a year of study is divided into 60 credits and includes the full workload of a study programme. This solution, which is well known to North American readers,

8 Shorthand for those who are professionally engaged in assessing foreign qualifications for the purpose of recognizing them in terms of the education system of the country in which they work.

9 The Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, adopted in Lisboa in April 1997, also referred to as the Lisboa Recognition Convention. The text of the Convention, its Explanatory Report, and a continually updated overview of signatures and ratifications may be found at http://conventions.coe.int; search for CETS 165. For an overview of current trends in recognition, see Sjur Bergan (ed.): *Recognition Issues in the Bologna Process* (Strasbourg 2003: Council of Europe Publishing).

10 In the following, I rely on the input to and outcomes of the Bologna seminar on Qualifications Structures in European Higher Education that was held in København on March 27-28, 2003, cf. http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/en/bologna_seminars/index.htm. The results of this seminar are now at the core of the work on qualifications structures, and a new Bologna seminar on qualifications structures will be held in København on January 13-14, 2005, cf. http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/; go to “Bologna seminars”.

11 European Credit Transfer System.

allows institutions to take account of the workload and recognizes that students progress at different speeds. While some students may earn more than 60 credits, others may obtain less than the average number of credits during the same time. Some criticism as been leveled at the ECTS, in particular as concerns its function with regard to credit accumulation and indication of level. The Bologna Declaration referred to ECTS or "similar systems", but so far no credible alternative has appeared at European level.

Level

Level indicates the degree of accomplishment within a given field. Saying that the three-tier system is the global model implies that in most countries, the higher education system recognizes three levels or main degrees of achievement. If we take the education system as a whole, the number of levels is of course considerably greater, and there is no "global model". Among the most advanced qualifications frameworks in Europe, for example, the Irish specifies ten and the Scottish twelve levels. I will discuss qualifications frameworks in more detail in the last part of the article. In the Scottish framework, the first level applies to learners with severe learning difficulties, whereas the highest is the doctorate. As important as the concept of level is, it cannot adequately describe a qualification all by itself. If it could, there would be little reason to discuss an overarching qualifications framework for the European Higher Education Area; referring to it as a three-tier system would have done the trick.

Quality

A third element in assessing a foreign qualification is establishing that it is of sufficient quality. The question, of course, is how quality is defined. Quality assurance is one of the most hotly debated issues within the Bologna Process. The debate tends to focus on external rather than internal quality assurance, and it could easily be the topic of a separate article. For our purposes, suffice to say that while there is agreement that quality assurance is essential, agreement on standards and methodology for quality assurance still seems some way off at European, much less at world, level. This is, in fact, an area in which developments have been quite rapid, in that we have moved from implicit assumptions of quality in education systems that have essentially been state run to explicit provision for quality assurance in more diverse systems. As late as 1997, when the Council of Europe/UNESCO Recognition Convention was adopted, there was still discussion of whether a formal quality assurance system was necessary or not. Today, the discussion focuses on what such a system should look like.

Profile

Even if a qualification is of adequate level and quality and has been obtained through an adequate workload, its profile may not be suitable for all purpo-

ses. The first point to be made is that a qualification is more than the sum of its parts, and that it should constitute a coherent whole. To take an extreme example for the sake of illustration, a student who earned ten credits in each of a range of different subjects (e.g. ten credits in mathematics, ten in history, ten in Russian and so forth) would not earn a first degree even if the sum of the credits would be 180 or 240. All higher education programmes would require a minimum of concentration in a specific area, and someone who had a first degree in, say, mathematics and wanted to do a second degree in, for example, history would probably have to do additional work in history even if the first degree were of adequate level, workload, and quality, since there would be an issue with the profile of the qualification.

At the same time, there is also increasing awareness that while concentration in a specific area is required, learners may strengthen their qualifications by taking some credits in other areas. Essentially, three types of courses are all seen as legitimate within a given study programme:

(I) those that contribute directly to the student's specialization or main area of competence;

(II) those that are in other academic areas but that underpin this specialization;

(III) those that are in distinct academic areas and do not contribute to or underpin the student's specialization, but that give his or her qualification an added dimension by broadening the student's horizon or by providing a basic competence in a second academic area.

For example, a student whose academic specialty is history would most likely have to earn a considerable part of his or her credits from history courses, the level of which should be appropriate to the level of the qualification. However, such a student would most likely also need some knowledge of relevant areas – we may perhaps call these "supporting disciplines"[12]. According to the student's specialization within the quite broad discipline of history, these "supporting disciplines" could be economics, statistics, a foreign language or a whole range of other disciplines, and the courses may not necessarily be of the same level as the qualification the student is working toward. A history student at second degree level may well need a basic introduction to statistics, but there should also be a limit on how many introductory courses in "supporting disciplines" may count toward the degree. Finally, the same student may wish to broaden his or her horizon or add a second area of competence by taking a number of credits not related to the relevant specialization within history.

12 I have calqued this term on the one my native language – Norwegian – used to describe such disciplines, at least in a previous system: *støttefag or redskapsfag*.

Learning outcomes

As we see, considerations of workload, level, quality and profile all come together and end up in considerations of learning outcomes. Ideally, assessment of qualifications should be done on the basis of learning outcomes, or to put it more crudely, on what you know and can do. In practice, other factors of a more procedural nature will also have to be taken into account, as outlined in this article. Still, there is increasing emphasis on the definition and assessment of learning outcomes, which was the topic of one Bologna conference, in Edinburgh in July 2004, and which also was one of the key issues in the Bologna conference on recognition in Riga in December 2004.[13] This is likely to be the most important challenge in recognition in the foreseeable future. Even if great progress has been made, much remains to be done, and that includes developing attitudes to recognition[14] as well as a better understanding of the issue.

Learning outcomes may be discipline specific or transversal. These have lately been well developed by the Tuning project[15], which has sought to establish learning outcomes at first and second degree level in a number of academic disciplines. While subject-specific learning outcomes vary from one discipline to another and essentially describe what somebody with a first or second degree in history, mathematics, linguistics or any other discipline should know and be able to do with this qualification, the transversal or generic learning outcomes are those that are characteristic of all, or at least most, forms of higher education at a given level. They would, for example, include the capacity for analysis and synthesis, the capacity to learn, problem solving, the ability to communicate knowledge in an understandable manner to non-specialists, the capacity to apply knowledge in practice, concern for quality, and information management skills. These are skills that facilitate later learning and adaptation to different circumstances, and they are also skills to which employers attach great importance.

Qualifications frameworks

The full complexity of qualifications is brought together in what in the Bologna context is now referred to as “new style” qualifications frameworks. At one level, all education systems have qualifications frameworks since all systems have a set of qualifications. However, few European systems have qualifications frameworks in the real sense of the term; i.e. a description of their different qualifications in terms of functions, and learning outcomes, and

13 Further information will be found at http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/; go to “Bologna seminars”.

14 See Sjur Bergan: “A Tale of Two Cultures in Higher Education Policies: the Rule of Law or an Excess of Legalism?” Journal of Studies in International Education, Volume 8, Issue 2, Summer 2004.

15 Tuning Educational Structures in Europe. See http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/educ/tuning/tuning_en.html with further links to the websites at the two lead institutions for this project, the Universities of Deusto and Groningen.

not least in terms of how they articulate. A coherent qualifications framework would describe how learners can move from one qualification to another, whether horizontally or vertically, and what they would be expected to know and be able to do with each qualification. At least in the higher education part of the qualifications framework, each qualification should allow learners either to leave the education system and go into the labor market or to continue their education.[16]

At national level, Denmark, Ireland, and the United Kingdom have well established frameworks, the latter with separate frameworks for England, Wales, and Northern Ireland on the one hand and Scotland on the other. Some other countries, like Hungary or Finland, are very close to establishing "new style" frameworks. At the level of the European Higher Education Area, ministers at their Berlin meeting in 2003 undertook to elaborate an overarching framework of qualifications. The working group appointed by the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) will present its proposal at the seminar on qualifications frameworks in January, and the BFUG will discuss the proposal before making a recommendation to the Bergen ministerial meeting.

The articulation between the overarching framework and national frameworks is not straightforward. There is agreement that the overarching framework should be just that: a frame into which national frameworks would fit and on which national frameworks would be modeled, but it would be considerably less detailed than national frameworks. The degree to which the overarching framework would be prescriptive is still under discussion. On the one hand, education systems must be left considerable leeway, but on the other hand they must develop within the broad outline of the overall framework or lose relevance. It is perfectly possible to design a qualifications framework where students would need to take 500 ECTS credits for a first degree, but such a framework would be of little help in furthering European cooperation.

The ultimate purpose of the overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area, then, may perhaps be described as providing a coherent structure within which there is scope for considerable variation to take account of the practices and traditions of individual education systems, but within limits that – like Europe itself – balance unity and diversity.

"Recognizing Bologna"

The Bologna Process has met with considerable interest from most regions of the world, whether from Asia or Africa, the Arab Region or North America, and not least from Latin America. Many regions seem to see the Bologna

16 With the exception of the doctorate, from which no further organized studies are foreseen, since this is the highest qualification in the system. Nevertheless, the doctorate – as with other qualifications – may lay the foundation for a lifetime of self-study.

Process not as a ready made model to be imported wholesale, but as an interesting example to be studied and adapted to their own circumstances. This would seem like a very healthy approach to take. Nevertheless, an expression of interest does not necessarily signify deep knowledge. There is no doubt that individuals and institutions may be found in all regions that have a profound understanding of the Bologna Process, but a superficial knowledge and a considerable degree of curiosity – and also considerable lack of knowledge – of the Bologna Process are probably more representative. This is by no means a criticism: general knowledge among Europeans about higher education policies in other regions is probably, if anything, considerably lower.

This relative lack of knowledge, except among those with a special interest in the Process, is, however, a formidable challenge to those of us deeply involved with higher education reform in Europe. We have to find ways to make "the real Bologna" known. The Bologna Process is certainly about the reform of education systems and structures, but it is also about asserting fundamental values and finding new solutions that will allow these fundamental values to guide our education policies in new circumstances. An overall public responsibility for higher education as well as a commitment to equal opportunities for all qualified candidates are fundamental aspects of the European university heritage, but we need to find appropriate ways of implementing them in modern, complex societies characterized by a high degree of interaction which leads to both increased competition and increased cooperation.

The Bologna Process may, perhaps, be described as a framework for making sense of the diversity that is higher education in Europe.

In terms of recognition, one important challenge is to provide clear information on European qualifications and education systems. Improved use of the Diploma Supplement and the ECTS as well as description of learning outcomes would seem to be important steps in the right direction. The overarching framework of qualifications would also seem to be of key importance since it will provide an overall structure to which to relate qualifications from various education systems.

Yet, the reform of the degree system and the universal introduction of the three-tier degree structure as adopted in the Bologna Process may also be seen as a problem. In this context, it is important to keep in mind that reducing the overall time European students take in obtaining their qualifications is not an optional or incidental feature of the Bologna Process. Rather, making the study process more effective was clearly one of the main goals of the Bologna Declaration and it remains a key objective in the process that followed from the Declaration.

Yet, if all that the "external dimension" retains of the Bologna Process is that a first degree requires 180 ECTS credits or three years of study, the recogni-

tion of qualifications issued within the European Higher Education Area is clearly at risk. As Europeans, we may regret that US higher education institutions seem to have problems with recognizing first degrees of 180 ECTS credits from continental Europe, but seem to be less severe if the qualification in question is a three-year Bachelor's degree from a United Kingdom university. The fact is nevertheless that – at least for the time being – the problem is not perceived, but real, and the discussion at the Hamburg conference underlined this.

One of the main challenges for Europeans is therefore to go beyond the discussion of 180 or 240 credits and to help develop a more sophisticated discussion about qualifications in all parts of the world. Within Europe, we have been through this painful exercise ourselves, and we are not quite through the process yet. We need to use this experience to engage in discussions in all other parts of the world, to reach agreement that the recognition of qualifications is far more than counting years, and that learning outcomes are more important than learning procedures. In so doing, we must also learn to be more generous in our own assessments, which do not always recognize the true potential of students but focus rather on their past constraints.

The "external dimension" of the Bologna Process is therefore of key importance to its overall success, and now is the time to address it. We have already achieved a great deal, so we have a basis on which to discuss, but we are still at a stage where adjustments to the reality of the outside world are possible and necessary.

Systems that develop without due regard to the outside world run a high risk of failure. Those who have been to Stockholm may have seen a vivid illustration of this if they have been to the Vasa Museum[17], which incidentally is an exceptionally attractive one. *Regalskeppet Vasa* was the pride of the Swedish fleet when it was built and launched in 1628, and Stockholm society both high and low gathered to watch its maiden voyage. Alas, there is a reason why the ship is today in a museum close to down town: its maiden voyage was also its last, and it was a short trip. The calculations of its carrying capacity were less than perfect, and the Vasa paid the price. It was a splendid ship, but it had one major fault. It sank.

I hope and believe that the European Higher Education Area will be every bit as elegant as the Vasa, but that it will also be seaworthy. This will require that it be open to the world, and that it will take account of the views of those that are a part of it as well as of those that will interact with it from the outside.

I live in Alsace, and I have come to appreciate the architecture of Vauban, such as the beautiful fortress town of Neuf Brisach. However, a fortress is closed and turned inward, and it is not a fitting image for the European

17 http://www.vasamuseet.se/Vasamuseet/Om.aspx

Higher Education Area. That fitting image may, however, also be found locally through the Pont de l'Europe/Europabrücke that spans the Rhine between Strasbourg and Kehl. This bridge allows people and goods to cross freely between two countries with a history of strife and conflict but with a recent past as well as – hopefully – a long future of intense cooperation. Today, regardless of your nationality, you can cross freely between the French and the German side without leaving any part of your luggage behind in customs.

This must also be our ambition for the European Higher Education Area: free movement of students, graduates, and staff that will not have to leave any of their real qualifications at the border between education systems because of unreasonable or protectionist recognition procedures and practices. For this ambition to become reality, we need further policy development, and we need to do so, not with a view to the "external dimension", but in dialogue and cooperation with partners – and competitors – on all continents.

Latin America between the US and Europe: can Bologna open new perspectives?

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This paper was a contribution to the meeting on the external dimension of the Bologna Process and addresses whether Bologna opens up new perspectives for higher education in Latin America. After an overview of Latin America's higher education, a short analysis will be made of the impact that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) had on Mexican higher education. The paper then looks at the European contribution to higher education in Latin America and at the influence Bologna might have on its future development. Finally, a brief description will be given of the 6x4 EULAC project, as an example of how Bologna can open up new perspectives.

Higher education in Latin America

As occurred in other regions of the world, Latin America's higher education experienced growth and diversification during the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Presently, the total number of students in the region exceeds twelve million, with Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia accounting for half the total number, even though the overall tertiary education enrolment rates in these three countries are still only at around 20 per cent of the age group. The number of private institutions has rapidly increased and in many Latin American countries they are already receiving more students than public institutions, while in others they are close to receiving the same number.

The growth of non-university tertiary education institutions, although important, does not yet absorb a significant number of students. Thus, the majority of tertiary education students still attend university type institutions.

Besides the growth of higher education, the last ten to fifteen years have seen remarkable progress in evaluation and accreditation processes conducted within the higher education systems of the region. Most of these began with, and still rely on, self-evaluation exercises that developed into formal peer evaluation processes conducted by external agencies, later accompanied by programme and institutional accreditation mechanisms and agencies. In addition, various Latin American countries also use entrance and exit standardised examinations. As a result, some Latin American countries have

accumulated a longer and wider experience in evaluation and accreditation than several European countries.

The financial constraints of the region, growing student populations, the increasing number of higher education institutions, and the larger role of private education have all contributed to a gradual shift of the government role from regulatory to supervisory. Gradually, funding mechanisms associated with performance and project goals and outcomes have become frequent in government circles, and external evaluation has become more widely accepted.

Finally, the ever increasing presence of information technologies, the fast pace of scientific and technological innovation, the shifts in occupational structures and other characteristics of present times all exert their influence in Latin America and its higher education systems. From the political and economic points of view, globalisation has given way also to various trade agreements such as NAFTA, MERCOSUR (Mercado Común del Sur), and the Andean Pact.

However, these forces and changes have not brought a transformation of Latin America's higher education. University education at the undergraduate level still continues to provide students with a *licenciatura*; that is, it remains committed to training the students as if all of them would enter the learned professions. This means that higher education is still dominated by rigid study programmes structured around disciplines and knowledge, centred on the professor and in the classroom; and organised around schools and faculties where students have little chance to move from one syllabus to another, very few opportunities of attending other forms of tertiary education, and where universities are still in control of licensure and certification.

The US model is followed at the graduate level but the number of doctoral programmes is still quite limited, concentrated in a few institutions and with very low numbers of PhDs graduating every year;[18] while the majority of students are enrolled in Master's programmes in business and market oriented study areas. A very small proportion of the programmes involve research activities although universities still represent the most significant share of the region's overall scientific effort, generally oriented towards fundamental aspects and not directly concerned with innovation.

Resistance to changes in the structure of higher education comes from various historical and social factors that contribute to the non-recognition or non-acceptance of market forces by universities, to the persistence of a conflict-reliance relationship with government, and to weak links with businesses and industries. A condition in which international actors and forces are generally viewed as threats, not as opportunities, where discussions regarding

18 Brazil is the exception, having a significant number of doctoral programmes and graduates.

alternative paths of development for higher education institutions give ground to ideological debates rather than actions, and where there is a limited acceptance and openness to internationalisation.

The North American Free Trade Agreement and its impact on Mexico's higher education

Three points must be remembered in relation to NAFTA. First of all that it is a commercial, not a political, educational, or cultural agreement involving some 400 million people with a combined gross domestic product of US$8.7 trillion. Effective as from 1 January 1994, NAFTA is a free trade and investment pact signed between Canada, Mexico and the United States by which each country gives the others "...a treatment not less favourable than it accords, in like circumstances, to its own investors ...".

Second, that the differences (asymmetries) between the signatories mean that its impact and importance in the United States is much less than in Canada and Mexico.

Third, that in comparison to the European Union (Treaty of Rome) it is not a finished body of rules and regulations; it is an agreement favouring the free movement of goods and capital – not of labour – within the three countries. Higher education is not included: there is only a provision on professional services, and an annex authorises the development of mutually acceptable standards and criteria on:

a. "accreditation of schools or academic programmes where professional service providers obtain formal education;

b. (...) qualifying examinations for the purpose of licensing professional service providers".

However, the expectations NAFTA created for higher education led to the establishment, in 1993, of a Trilateral Steering Committee on Higher Education, which met regularly for several years to analyse, develop and support different initiatives to further the "North American dimension" of higher education.[19]

The idea of trilateral cooperation in higher education had come to the forefront before, with the Wingspread Conference held in Racine, Wisconsin (1992), followed by meetings in Vancouver (1993), and Guadalajara (1996).

In preparation for NAFTA, Mexico established twelve Committees for International Practice with the task of reviewing and comparing Mexican standards of professional practice with standards in Canada and the United States, the aim being to reach agreements for mutual recognition.

19 Mallea J., Malo S., and Pendergast D.: *The Vancouver Communiqué Revisited: An assessment.* CONAHEC Working Paper 8, 1999.

Twelve years after Wingspread and ten after the signing of NAFTA, very few of the expected outcomes have been accomplished.[20] It is true that Canada and Mexico are collaborating in higher education much more than they did in the past, that the US remains the main destination for Mexican (and Canadian) students,[21] and that there are hundreds of programmes, agreements, and centres that favour student mobility, academic and research collaborations, and cultural interchange within North America. However, it is difficult to attribute any of these trends to NAFTA. The influence of the United States higher education derives from many factors, most of which would still be there if NAFTA had not been signed.

The influence of the Bologna Process on Latin America's higher education

World dynamics and the forces shaping and defining the economic development and competitiveness of nations are transforming higher education. Words such as competitiveness, market forces, technology parks, transnational education and the like, unheard in university circles twenty years ago, are now the basis for academic meetings and higher education strategic plans.

Europe's awareness of these changes and of their consequences – i.e. that its universities were no longer the world's most attractive for scholars and students- contributed to the development of various programmes and later to the Bologna Process. It also caused the European Union to set the goals of becoming the world's most important space for higher education, and the most competitive and dynamic region in the world in higher education, science and technology.

The Bologna Process is widely observed, documented and analysed not only due to Europe's economic and political importance, or because it is the university's birth place and still has many of the leading universities in the world. It is also of great interest because of the high number and diversity of higher education systems involved in the Process, and because it is taking place without major conflicts.

Some academics in Latin America dread globalisation because of the threats they consider it brings to national identity, to the humanistic vision of the university, and to the conception of higher education as a public good; there are fears that the search for competitive advantage will erode the financial basis and social vocation of higher education institutions. Others welcome the

20 Barrow C.W., Didou-Aupetit S., and Mallea J.: *Globalisation, Trade Liberalisation, and Higher Education in North America*, Amsterdam: Kluwer Academic Publishers 2003.

21 Canada and Mexico occupy the sixth and seventh position by number of students attending US institutions; Brazil the 12th, Colombia the 17th, and Venezuela the 22nd. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 27, 2004, page 20.

winds of change these world forces and trends bring, thinking they will help free universities of old burdens, find new paths and rethink the purpose of education.

Ideological debates often lead to inactivity and Latin America needs to move fast. Bologna has special relevance to Latin America's higher education: not only are there strong historical and cultural ties between Europe and Latin America, but Latin America's universities share a common ancestry with the universities of Continental Europe. Most importantly, Europe's globalisation is perceived as less menacing than that of the United States, and Bologna is seen as a "work in progress" rather than a finished model to be copied or imposed.

This common heritage and the traditional links between the two regions led the heads of state and government of countries in the European Union, Latin America, and the Caribbean (EULAC) to declare their interest in working together to create the "EULAC Common Space for Higher Education"[22] (EULAC-HE).

As a follow-up to this declaration, the EULAC-HE Steering Committee developed an initial action plan centred on the development of frameworks through which the quality of institutions and programmes in both regions could be established, and study periods could be recognized. The action plan also emphasised the establishment of EULAC-HE chairs and the creation of centres in Europe devoted to Latin America and the Caribbean, and vice versa; and the creation of a website for the EULAC-HE space. Besides the steering committee monitoring of the activities in each of these areas, a progress assessment was made during the EULAC summit meeting held last May in Guadalajara, Mexico.

But the distance between the higher education systems of the two regions will most probably increase rather than diminish – despite the efforts at co-operation described above, the many projects undertaken by institutions and governments of both regions, and the various programmes that have been implemented to further higher education collaboration between Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean – most noticeably those generated in the European Union. It is not that the Bologna Process represents a transformation of Europe's higher education in directions that Latin America should not take. What is occurring is that Europe's higher education is transforming at a fast pace, while the transformation of Latin American higher education has not yet begun.

There are marked differences between the two regions, not only in terms of available resources and existing conditions. The higher education changes in Europe follow those taking place at political, economic, legal, and social

22 Political Declaration of the EULAC Summit Meeting, Madrid, May 17, 2002, paragraph 30.

levels, of which the Council of Europe and the European Union are conspicuous manifestations. They also reflect a long and successful experience with European education programmes – such as ERASMUS – and initiatives aiming to increase mutual understanding and awareness between the many education systems in the region, as well as to increase mobility of students, academics, and graduates. Some of these programmes, for example ALFA (América Latina – Formación Académica) or ALBAN (América Latina Becas de Alto Nivel), promote mobility between Europe and other world regions. In contrast, the changes in Latin America take place in a context of, at best, intra-region initiatives limited to a small number of countries. These are mostly trade initiatives, without the strength to provide unity of purpose to the region, and with little experience in multinational – and much less continental – higher education programmes.

The enlargement of the European Union; the force of the development of many Asian countries; and the growing presence of major new providers of higher education services, are pulling Europe's attention away from Latin America. Latin America, on the other hand, besides being pressed by its limited resources and many development problems, is not generally aware of the Bologna Process and its implications for higher education in the region.

If no actions are taken, Latin America and Europe will follow different paths as regards the vision, structure, outcomes, degrees, and objectives of their higher education systems. Analogous to what occurred in the case of Mexico and NAFTA, some years from now Europe will realise that it missed the opportunity of creating (or developing) the EULAC-HE space, and Latin America will realise that it lost an opportunity to reshape its higher education, develop a Latin American academic community, and maintain its close cultural ties with Europe.

The 6x4 EULAC project

The 6X4 EULAC[23] project addresses the need for closer cooperation and mobility among higher education systems in Latin America and the Caribbean and focuses on the primary goal of the EULAC Declaration, which is to build a common higher education space between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean. Key aspects of the project include developing an approach to assess and recognize expected learning outcomes and competencies, and strengthening the relevance and links of higher education, research, and innovation with society. Special attention is given to the development of mechanisms to facilitate the recognition of qualifications for further education and work purposes and to increase academic mobility.

23 6X4 refers to six professions and 4 axes of analysis. EULAC refers to the European Union, Latin American and Caribbean (Common Space for Higher Education).

Quality and transformation of higher education require the contribution and commitment of key actors and stakeholders at all levels. The project design is based on the active participation of Latin American and EU academics and higher education institutions. Six working groups will undertake comparative analyses on four major issues and work towards the development of common frameworks or instruments and a series of recommendations to facilitate a regional approach and to build EULAC-HE. Representatives and experts from national or regional associations and governments have contributed to the design phase and will continue to participate in the project.

In the long term, the project aspires to contribute to the transformation of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean to improve quality, to the integration of the region through a common higher education space, and to foster the collaboration between Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean. On the other hand, its medium term goals are to promote and facilitate the relevance of higher education for society; the mobility of students, researchers, and professionals; the recognition of qualifications for further academic studies and for work; and the knowledge exchange or transfer for the development of society.

Over 150 participants from nine Latin American countries and six EU countries will directly contribute to the project goals and objectives and to the creation of sustainable networks for implementation. The participants will include faculty, researchers, administrators, and experts from universities and higher education institutions, national and regional university associations, and national governments. Experts from quality assurance; professional, research and accreditation agencies and networks; national and international higher education organizations; employers and their associations, will contribute to the project as associate participants.

The project design is based on six professional and disciplinary working groups – medicine, chemistry, engineering, history, mathematics, and business administration – each of which will address four analytical axes: competencies, academic credits, evaluation and accreditation, and training for innovation and research.

It is expected that the project will provide (i) a set of professionally-based networks that will work towards the application of the project models and instruments at the institutional level; (ii) increased knowledge of, and commitment to using, a competency approach and credit system in the participant institutions; (iii) closer links with civil society partners to ensure relevance and effectiveness of innovation and research.

The project recognizes the diversity within disciplines, institutions, countries, and regions, and respects institutional autonomy. Its focus is the assessment of learning outcomes not the reform of curricula. The centre of analysis is the relevance, assessment, and recognition of competencies as expressed in

graduate profiles for further academic studies, work experiences, and contribution to society. Finally, comparative analysis between countries and regions is based on the perspectives of professors, academics, and institutions.

The design phase of the project covered all of 2004. During this period a series of meetings and consultation processes were held in which a cross section of key higher education actors and experts from Latin American and EU countries participated. The project will be launched in April 2005 and it will last two years. It is expected that serious consideration will be given to the outcomes of the project and that additional stages will follow to move forward with the application of new mechanisms, to involve the next level of key actors from national and regional associations and governments to act on the project recommendations, and to strengthen the EULAC-HE.

The 6X4 project is building on the accomplishments and networks created through EU programmes such as ALFA, projects such as Tuning (Tuning Educational Structures in Europe) and TEEP (Trans-national European Evaluation Project), as well as on projects promoting the ERA (European Research Area). Latin American experiences such as MEXA (Mecanismo Experimental de Acreditación de Carreras del MERCOSUR), CSUCA (Consejo Superior Universitario Centroamericano), RIACES (Red Iberoamericana para la Acreditación de la Calidad de la Educación Superior) were also taken into account. The intention is to continue to collaborate with existing and new initiatives that are working towards a common higher education space within Latin America and the Caribbean and the development of EULAC.

Further information can be obtained from the project's website:
www.6x4uealc.org or from uealc@ceneval.edu.mx.

Asia: from importers of education to partners in cooperation – an India-centric appraisal

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Introduction

During modern times the countries of Asia have been, to varying degrees, importers of higher education. The import of education started in the nineteenth century when much of Asia was under the rule of European powers – Britain, France, Portugal, and the Netherlands. The first step was the adoption by – or imposition on – the Asian countries of the model of higher education prevalent in the country of the respective colonial ruler. A consequence was the movement of Asian students to Western countries to pursue higher education. After independence, the number of young people proceeding abroad for higher education steadily increased. Today, both the affluent and the highly merited apparently favour studying in the developed countries.

The spread of free-market economic orthodoxy in the early 1990s led to the commercialisation of higher education. The universities of the developed world started operating in the developing countries, ostensibly to meet the unmet demand for higher education, but actually to generate the badly needed resources they required. While the consequent internationalisation of higher education is to be welcomed, care needs to be taken that the advent of foreign providers does not have adverse social effects, like increasing economic disparity and enlarging the urban-rural divide. Clearly, the import of unalloyed foreign education has to be replaced by a system of effective partnership through academic cooperation.

Higher education as a service

In the present era of globalisation, and in an international economy that is at least partly regulated through the World Trade Organisation (WTO), education can be traded as a service through four different modes recognized under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), which comes under the remit of the WTO. These are cross-border supply, consumption abroad, commercial presence, and the presence of natural persons. The status and potential for trade in education through these different modes is briefly reviewed in the paragraphs that follow.

Cross-border supply

The cross-border supply of education is effected through distance education. This takes two forms – conventional distance education using print and audio-visual material, and e-learning through the Internet. Conventional distance education is highly developed in Asian countries and is available at low cost (Yoshida, 2001). However, there are limited possibilities for Asian countries to impart education from the developed world through conventional distance learning. Cross-border supply through the Internet, however, has immense potential, especially in disciplines like management and trade that have strong international components. There is a danger that the indigenous higher education systems may be inundated by the flow of information from outside. Hence, Asian countries may find the need to regulate cross-border supply of education through electronic transmission. An example to follow could be Mexico, which has telecom laws that restrict the use of transmission satellites, does not recognize degrees awarded electronically, and prohibits joint ventures.

Consumption abroad

Trade in education through consumption abroad is expressed in terms of student mobility. The magnitude of this trade, and its potential, is clear from the fact that in 2003 there were approximately two million international students worldwide, with the United States hosting nearly a third of them. An Australian study (Böhm, 2003) estimates that by 2025 the total number of international students would be about eight million. About 60 per cent of the world's international students come from Asia, chiefly China, India, Japan, and South Korea. The major receiving countries are the countries of the developed world led by the United States and followed by the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Australia.

A perusal of the data on student exchange between Asia and Europe provided by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (www.uis.unesco.org) is revealing. It shows that the 'balance of trade' is highly skewed against Asian countries. In 2000-01 (the last year for which data from all the main countries are available) 207,202 students from the Asian countries went to Europe while the movement in the reverse direction was only 9,622 students. The number of students, in Europe, from East Asia, South East Asia, South and Central Asia, and West Asia, was respectively 59,095, 29,854, 59,349, and 68,903. The major contributing countries were Turkey, China, Japan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and India. However, many of the registered Turkish students may be permanent residents of Europe. The main receiving countries were the United Kingdom, Germany, and France.

In most European countries, the representation of Asian students is relatively small. In 2000-01, no Asian country figured in the list of top ten countries represented in France. In Germany, two Asian countries were listed in the top

ten – China, third with 9,109 students and Iran, seventh with 6,359 students. In the United Kingdom top ten list there were four countries from Asia, with China in sixth place with 10,332 students, Malaysia in seventh place with 9,168 students, Hong Kong in eighth place with 8,976 students, and Japan in tenth place with 6,154 students (Davis, 2003). Australia attracts much larger numbers of students from Asia; the figures for 2000-01 and 2001-02 being respectively 107,622 and 129,071. In 2000-01, of the 107,622 international students in Australia, 89,715 (83 per cent) were from Asia, the principal contributing countries being Singapore (18,644), Malaysia (17,840), Hong Kong (16,395), Indonesia (9,720), China (9,720), India (4,467), and Thailand (3,039) (Stevenson-Perks and Nuna, 2002).

In 2000-01, 47,411 Indian students went to the United States, compared with only 4,302 to United Kingdom, 1,412 to Germany and 239 to France. Australia attracted a larger number (4,578) than the three European countries. While in 2000-01 there were 61,812 Indian students studying overseas, only 7,480 students went to Europe. In contrast, India received only 7,791 students, of whom 240 were from the United States, 51 from the United Kingdom, 19 from Germany, 23 from France and 44 from Australia (Bhalla, 2002). In the following years, there has been a steady growth in the number of students going to the developed world from India. The number going to the United States increased substantially to 74,603 in 2002-03 (Institute of International Education, 2004). By that year, the numbers had also increased to 3,303 in Germany and reportedly to about 9,000 in the United Kingdom.

In 2000-01, 51,986 students from China went to the United States. Europe was a more popular destination for Chinese students than for Indian students. 10,388 went to the United Kingdom, 9,109 to Germany and 3,068 to France. The number of Chinese students in the United States in 2002-03 was 64,757. No data is available regarding the number of students going from Europe or the United States to China, but by all accounts the number is small.

Asian students in the US

The data presented above show that Asian students are keen to pursue higher education in the developed world, the preferred destination being the United States, which in 2002-03 had 586,323 international students. The top five countries of origin of international students in the United States in 2002-03 were Asian. These were India (74,603), China (64,757), Korea (51,519), Japan (5,960), and Taiwan (28,017). Indonesia (11,614) and Thailand (11,606) respectively occupied ninth and tenth positions (Institute of International Education, 2004).

The situation has changed since 9/11. A survey of 126 educational institutions carried out by the Council for Graduate Schools of the United States

reports an overall decline in international graduate school admissions during 2003-04. The decline in student numbers from China, India, and Korea are respectively 48 per cent, 28 per cent, and 14 per cent (*The Times of India*, 16th October 2004).

Asian students in Europe

The number of Asian students opting for Europe has traditionally been relatively low. The reasons for this, which prevailed until very recently, include the need to learn a foreign language; the uncertainty posed by a single-tier degree structure; the lack of clarity regarding equivalence of qualifications; the absence of a clearly defined credit-transfer mechanism; and in the case of some European countries, insufficient provision for external quality assurance, monitoring, and accreditation. These shortcomings were known in Europe, but as internationalisation of higher education was not a priority until very recently, they were disregarded. The picture changed in 1999 with the adoption of the Bologna Declaration calling for the creation of a European Higher Education Area.

After the initiation of the Bologna Process, the situation has dramatically changed. According to the Trends Report by Reichert and Tauch (2003), 60 per cent of the Bologna countries, and almost 90 per cent of the higher education institutions have, or will soon have, a two-tier structure. Two thirds of the higher education institutions use the European Credit Transfer System for credit transfer. Some countries, such as Germany, now use English as the medium of instruction, at least for the preliminary courses. This has certainly helped increase student mobility across Europe. It remains to be seen whether the reforms will significantly increase the numbers of Asian students coming to study at European universities. The post 9/11 situation in the United States provides an opportunity for other developed countries to attract Asian students. Will Europe make use of this opportunity?

The European Union has been successfully promoting student mobility through the ERASMUS-SOCRATES programmes. However, because of the very nature of the programme the mobility has been across and within Europe. No doubt, this has contributed to European integration. However, one cannot discount the possibility that a Euro-centric approach can result in a diminishing of the global perspective. Higher education needs to be global in form and content. The decision-makers could possibly consider enlarging the scope of student mobility under SOCRATES and allow students to travel outside Europe, especially to Asia.

So far, the above-named destination countries have been free to recruit Asian students: there is little possibility of democratic nations like India restricting the number of students going abroad, despite the so-called brain drain. Even countries like China, which are not politically liberal, are unlikely to impose restrictions on the number of students going overseas. However, in

adverse conditions, such as economic recession with shortage of foreign exchange, a few countries may feel the need to regulate the outflow of students.

Commercial presence

Towards the end of the last century, a diminishing of government support forced many universities in the developed countries to find new ways of generating funds for their maintenance and development. The extension of the free-market economy in the early 1990s provided them with an opportunity to do so by marketing their educational wares in the developing world where there was a steadily increasing demand for higher education, especially professional higher education. Foreign providers have adopted various means to operate in developing countries, but from a commercial point of view, direct involvement through commercial presence has been the most successful. Commercial presence has three main forms (McBurnie, 2004):

1. The granting of franchise to local academic institutions or business organisations, which then provide the physical infrastructure and administer the programmes. The foreign institutions provide the intellectual property, including curricula and teaching-learning materials; conduct the examinations; and award the degrees. The local partner has no say in academic matters (franchise model).
2. Twinning programmes leading to joint-degrees or dual degrees. This includes 'articulation arrangements', where students undertake the major part of their studies in local institutions but complete the programme on the campuses of the foreign providers. They thus share academic responsibility. The credits earned in the host country are transferred to the provider institution, which awards the degree or diploma (articulation model).
3. Establishment of local centres or campuses by the foreign providers in which there is formal (face-to-face) teaching according to academic curricula developed in the home country, but using local faculty (campus model).

The franchise model is the most common. However, during the last three to five years an increasing number of Western universities have entered into the twinning arrangements of the articulation model. The articulation model exemplifies the transition from total import to cooperative ventures. There are few instances of providers starting off-campus centres or campuses.

The programmes offered by the foreign providers have found ready acceptance in most Asian countries – partly because of unmet demand, but more because of the aura associated with foreign universities that, more often than not, translates into employment opportunities. The 'consumers' are largely young people from the more affluent families who do not have the grades to secure admission to the better public institutions in their own country.

Since the early 1990s, there has been a steady increase in the number of foreign providers in the developing countries of Asia. Unfortunately, most of the best universities are not represented. Many of the providers occupy lowly positions (in league tables), or are even not accredited as universities in their own countries. A fairly large number of their collaborating partners in the host country are business enterprises rather than academic institutions. India is a good example for this "trend". The data below is taken from surveys of advertisements for academic programmes offered by foreign providers. The advertisements appeared in Indian newspapers between July and December 2000 (Powar and Bhalla, 2001), and January and April 2004 (Powar and Mukand, 2004). The surveys revealed the following results:

1. An increase in the number of advertisers from 144 in 2000 to 319 in 2004;
2. An increase in the number of providers recruiting students for their home campuses from 117 to 204;
3. An increase in the number of providers offering programmes in India under the commercial presence mode from 27 to 114;
4. Nearly one third of foreign providers were not recognized universities in their own countries;
5. About one third of the Indian collaborators were not part of the formal higher education system;
6. Articulation programmes that were absent in the results of the 2000 survey had become common by 2004. Over 60 articulation arrangements are presently in place.

Unfortunately, most of the activities of the foreign providers are commercial in nature and not infrequently the quality of education provided is sub-standard. The scenario is probably replicated in other Asian countries and is a matter of concern. Consequently, many countries have developed, or are developing, regulatory mechanisms. The All India Council for Technical Education, which oversees engineering and management education in India, has issued regulations to control the entry and operation of foreign universities or institutions that seek to offer technical education. Hong Kong has issued a Non-Local Higher and Professional Education (Regulation) Ordinance. Malaysia has several regulations that control the operation of foreign educators. In Indonesia, foreign providers have to apply for a licence to operate as a working partner of a local institution. Recent Chinese regulations require foreign providers to be partnered with a local institution and a multi-staged approval system has been put in place (McBurnie, 2004).

The regulations take different forms, but include limiting the number of programmes, partners, and campuses; insisting on joint ventures with a local academic partner; imposing high licensing fees and/or taxes; and regulating the amount of money that can be repatriated.

Presence of natural persons

A low number of teachers and scholars move from the developed world to the Asian countries. Western scholars tend not to be willing to go to developing countries for extended periods. However, an appreciable number of Asians take up teaching or research assignments in the developed countries. The chances of there being an appreciable increase in teacher mobility, for extended periods of service, are remote.

Present status and future outlook

Many Asian countries have large and well-developed higher education systems. They have a large number of institutions that offer a high standard of education and are themselves capable of exporting education. China and India, having, respectively, the largest and third largest student enrolment in higher education in the world, are prime examples. Indian university-level institutions have established campuses in the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Nepal, and Malaysia, with more on the way. Indian universities have off-campus centres in some of the Gulf countries (in the Middle East). McBurnie (2004) has drawn attention to the fact that Singapore and Malaysia encourage foreign providers to operate in their country with the objective of generating expertise for becoming an education hub (Singapore) and/or exporting education (Malaysia).

Europe needs to appreciate (and accept) the fact that economic, political and educational equations are fast changing. Japan is acknowledged to be a developed nation and an economic power. China and India have fast-developing economies and are on the way to becoming economic powers. Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and others have commendable work cultures and efficient economies. They have to be treated as equal partners. India and China have considerable natural resources; large pools of scientists and technologists; acknowledged core-competencies in key areas; vast populations with about 55 per cent of the people being under the age of twenty-five; and (as mentioned earlier) large higher education systems. These are ingredients for success in the fast emerging knowledge economy.

Focussing on India, it also has a great tradition of learning and innovation. During the last fifty years it successfully engineered a green revolution in agriculture, a white revolution in dairying, a blue revolution in space technology, and a grey revolution in computer science. It has emerged as a world leader in software technology. India (along with China and many other Asian countries) has many things to offer to the developed world.

In view of these facts, foreign providers should be more receptive to Asian sentiments and adopt a collaborative approach that will generate them reasonable funds, yet promote the interest of the host countries, instead of adopting a purely commercial approach. They need to work in partnership with local recognized academic institutions, making use of available local

expertise. They also need to resist the temptation of greater profits through franchise operations involving business enterprises. Above all, they need to respect the policies, culture, and sentiments of the host nation. Today, there is a need for greater cooperation between Europe and Asia in the field of higher education. It will be beneficial to both.

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Africa – the forgotten continent?

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When I was given the title of this paper – based on a session held at a conference about the European Bologna Process and its relationship to the rest of the world, I first thought about ways in which Africa is forgotten by the rest of the world, and, inevitably, by whom it is forgotten. Since the title features a question mark, it is an invitation to answer a question, but this first has to be defined. In the following I shall attempt to define what the "forgottenness" consists of, by formulating several premises to develop an argument for another kind of cooperation policy with Africa in higher education.

Africa – forgotten by the Africans?

I believe an argument could be made for Africa being forgotten by those in power on the continent, who can be said to be responsible for the continent and its peoples. In the introduction to the 2004 World Development Report, *Making Services Work for Poor People*, President Wolfensohn argues that "Services work when they include *all* the people"[24] – that is, when communities and actors participate, take charge and inform one another, and when processes are transparent and actors accountable. The Report goes on to state that money is not channelled to the poor, but further enriches the rich: "In Nepal 46 percent of education spending accrues to the richest fifth, only 11 percent to the poorest."[25] "In the early 1990s in Uganda the share of non-salary spending on primary education that actually reached primary schools was 13 percent."[26] Then the World Bank Report actually says that "...private markets are not the solution to these problems in the first place. Private providers fail to reach the very poor."[27] "Improving service outcomes for poor people requires strengthening the three relationships in the chain – between client and provider, between citizen and policymaker, and between policymaker and provider."[28] The Report makes a good case for a continent forgotten by its own, even if we allow for detrimental external conditionalities by the rest of the world. I hasten to add that the annual World Bank reports do not necessarily reflect the Bank's lending and aid practices.

24 *World Development Report 2004: Making Services Work for Poor People*. Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2003, p.xv.
25 Ibid. p.3
26 Ibid. p.4
27 Ibid. p.8
28 Ibid. p.10

Africa – forgotten by the donors?

Large amounts of aid are still poured into Africa, even allowing for the fact that the total sum has been steadily decreasing over recent decades. So the continent is hardly forgotten by people outside of Africa. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund are still concerned with Africa. One may well question their aid policies and those of the rest of the world toward Africa, but not their attention to Africa.

There are signs of improvement. Although only a small proportion of aid reaches the very poor, there is, in many African states, a growing middle class and critical elite. I believe that our aid has contributed and still contributes to this development. If we recall how our own democracies were built, the development of such oppositional elites was crucial; as was the contribution of the populace through taxation – perhaps a central precondition for the demand for transparency and accountability in governance. Our aid to Africa helps support elites, but simultaneously slows down the creation of participatory democracy because it maintains state bureaucracies that function with only limited tax revenues from the population. Development is full of such contradictions. But our aid also keeps alive cooperation and dialogue between the North and the South, and a mutual learning system, a fact not often highlighted by economists. The way this dialogue and cooperation is conducted will be addressed in the final part of this essay.

Africa – forgotten by higher education and research?

The 2003 World Development Report informs us that countries in the South have access to only four percent of research and development resources in the world.[29] They are marginalized in the global knowledge society. In 2003 and 2004, contributions to research in Tanzania had a donor financing of 70 and 80 percent. At a conference arranged by UNESCO in 2003, Samoff and Carrol from Stanford University recapitulated the history of World Bank higher education policy by initially making the point that within a decade after most African states gained independence, the Bank's policy changed:

> *Rate of return analysis, which had become the assessment tool of choice, showed that society would benefit more from allocations to basic education. ... By the 1990s, severe deterioration of higher education institutions, African insistence on a holistic perspective to the development of the education sector, and fascination with the knowledge era combined to support another political reversal. Higher education ... once again warrants significant public support and funding. African universities scramble to fit the new frame...*[30]

29 *World Development Report 2003: Sustainable Development in a Dynamic World: Transforming Institutions, Growth, and Quality of Life*. Washington, DC and New York: The World Bank and Oxford University Press, 2003.

30 Joel Samoff and Bidemi Carrol: *From Manpower Planning to the Knowledge Era: World Bank Policies on Higher Education in Africa*. Prepared for the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge, 15 July 2003, p.1.

According to Samoff and Carrol, African experts maintain that many countries have not recovered from this attack on higher education. They continue:

> *Stinging indictment! That widely articulated view holds the World Bank at least partly accountable for the deterioration of Africa's universities and the decline of higher education in Africa more generally. ... Deteriorating economic conditions, pressure from external funders an (sic) internal constituency to reduce cost and redirect resources to basic education, and leaders' perception that university communities were more a political threat than a development engine combined to undermine higher education.*[31]

Now even the World Bank is worried. In the foreword to *Improving Tertiary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Things that Work*, the World Bank's Birger Fredriksen says:

> *It is important that Africa's development partners support this renewal process of African higher education. Tertiary education plays a key role in the economic and social development of any nation. This is particularly the case in today's globalized, information and knowledge-based economy. ... In addition, while universities may be weak in many SSA countries, they are often the only national institutions with the skills, equipment and mandate to generate knowledge, and to adapt knowledge developed elsewhere to the local context."*[32]

The population growth rate in many developing countries is extremely high. In the next 25 years, it is estimated that the world's population will increase by 2 billion people. More than 95 percent of this increase will be in developing and transition countries.[33] This projection does not take into account the attainment of the poverty reduction aims of the Millennium Development Goals. At the same time, current development cooperation policy does not sufficiently respond to this increase in population as far as education is concerned. The poverty reduction aims of the Millennium Development Goals, for example, are very narrowly conceived and simplistic on this: literacy makes for poverty reduction. We have heard this before. My contention is that literacy alone is insufficient. To make development sustainable requires a holistic view and the involvement of higher education and research. African experts have made the point repeatedly, last time forcefully in the Conference of Rectors, Vice Chancellors and Presidents of African Universities (COREVIP), held in 2003 in Mauritius.

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31 Ibid. p.1

32 *Improving Tertiary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Things that Work*. Africa Region Human Development Working Paper Series – No.56. Report of a regional training conference held in Accra, Ghana on September 22-25, 2003. Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2004, p.i.

33 *World Development Report 2003: Sustainable Development in a Dynamic World: Transforming Institutions, Growth, and Quality of Life*. Washington, DC and New York: The World Bank and Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 1, 7, 8

The need for a new European approach to Africa?

So what can Europe do? It is obvious that we are not doing the right things. In September 2004, the Society for International Development organised a conference in The Hague entitled "A New Era – European Development Co-operation: toward policy renewal and a new commitment". The following statements give an idea of the issues at stake.[34] Nadji Khaoua, University of Annaba, Algeria, stated "European development policy is an ambiguous mixture of generosity and ideological dogmatism." At the end of the conference, development experts said that "the EU package is a large one, but packed also with paternalism and claims to domination." Many European participants, including EU officials and members of non-governmental organizations agreed that "European development policy is heavily bureaucratic and inconsistent, leading to ineffective use of a considerable amount of money." Outgoing development commissioner Poul Nielson admitted "that European development policy is 'overloaded with ex-ante controls' that make effective application of plans almost impossible."[35] Former development commissioner Dieter Frisch said that "European development assistance is the worst targeted." Participants found that "[the] EU and its member countries contribute a little more than half of the total world aid which is estimated at 58 billion dollars a year. But much of this money is lost through poor management and heavily bureaucratic procedures" and that "European leaders must consider also that development is not a one-way process." Professor Lallan Surajnandan Prasad, University of Delhi, summed it up by stating that "European and North American officials should have learnt by now that they need us as much as we need them. Development is not alms, but a process that should enrich both parties. (...) If European development politicians cannot accept this, they can keep their aid. (...) We don't want development with unacceptable conditionality attached."[36]

If this conference is symptomatic of what many experts in higher education actually think about European development cooperation, then it is high time we rethink it. It is hard to escape a paternalistic attitude in aid programmes. The South lacks economic power and infrastructure, not intellectual capacity. We must find a way to cooperate that brings our tendency toward social engineering to a minimum and invites mutual benefits.

34 "Development-EU: Domination Tied Into Aid Package." A two page synopsis by Julio Godoy of "Europe and the South: A New Era – European Development Cooperation: towards policy renewal and a new commitment," a conference in The Hague September 27-28, 2004, organized by the Society for International Development with participation of 250 experts from Europe, North America, Latin America, Africa, and Asia. IPS-Inter Press Service News 2004. All quotes in the following section are from the same source and conference.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

From the European dimension to the world dimension

It is true that we need them as much as they need us. Globalization does not simply mean easier travel, communication, financial transactions, and greater cultural interaction. It also entails a geographical widening in the transmission of diseases; criminal networks and weapons trade; whitewashing; and "McDonaldization" of our cultures. This is the world we all inhabit and we face the same challenges.[37] In higher education, we have to deal with new forms of communication; uncertainty about the role of the university; the commercialization of education; the increase in the number of students entering higher education; the decline of state investment; but at the same time, increased accountability for the same investment; growing dependence on new revenues, market-related revenues and tuition; increased institutional autonomy; demands for expanded capacity and flexibility; increasing research costs; greater interdisciplinarity; professional management and changes in internal governance; and a new emphasis on internationalization and international cooperation, to mention just a few of the challenges higher education institutions currently face.[38]

In many European countries and institutions, higher education has become mass education. It is no longer selective. This trend is opposed by some people, who advocate the creation of centres of excellence. But most of the candidates are not "elite". They have smaller salaries to look forward to and less identification with the public institutions. The flowering of evaluation and accreditation units, and the need for strict results-based controls, is a response to the lack of selectivity in higher education and the lack of a control system that divides, ranks, and introduces hierarchies. The system approaches what is common in Africa. The necessity for autonomous institutions is not the same in the South as in the North; we must consider that African institutions of higher education are not in our situation. But what we now see in Europe about the flux and new combinations of academic disciplines, the breakdown of the division between pure and applied research – and consequently between traditional universities and the professional schools – brings us closer to the needs of the institutions in the South, and towards closer cooperation with them.

Africa – forgotten by Bologna?

Since the theme of the conference this paper is based on was "Bologna and the world", we come back to the question of whether Africa is forgotten by

37 Most of this paragraph and the one that follows are closely based on a paper by Professor Tor Halvorsen, University of Bergen, and Tom Skauge, Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education, entitled "Globalisering av kunnskapssamfunnet" 2003. Translation from Norwegian into English by the author.

38 The list is constructed with some help from a presentation by David Ward, President of the American Council on Education, at an European University Association conference in Turin, June 2004

Europe. We could consider Africa's position as being either "forgotten by Europe" or "out of the loop" of what is happening in Europe in the context of the Bologna Process. Let me state quite frankly that Africa is no more ignorant of Bologna than, for example, the US. But Bologna is taking European higher education in a particular direction, and that must be a concern for Africa, if only because public higher education in Africa still has strong links to European education.

The Bologna Process started in 1999 with the education ministers' declaration to strengthen Europe's intellectual, cultural, social, scientific, and technological dimensions. This should be done, for instance, by making degrees in higher education comparable with each other, by facilitating mobility and cooperation, and by introducing systems of quality assurance. It is a process because it develops through the biannual conferences of ministers. There seems to be no reason why the Bologna initiative could not be made to include institutions of higher learning in the South. In fact, as it is being implemented, the Bologna Process will at least facilitate closer cooperation with the South. It will create the need for cooperation on degree systems and credit transfer, description of studies and study points, and systems of quality assurance. The world dimension is just as important as the European dimension.

Partnership

The strengthening of partnerships between higher education institutions could be a solution that would benefit higher education in both the North and the South. Bologna points in this direction by removing hindrances to mobility, cooperation, and trust. Erasmus Mundus, to some extent, is emblematic of this development. It builds European Master's programmes with several universities from several nations, gives scholarships to students from outside Europe, and may also invite institutions in the South as partners. The Erasmus Mundus programme was launched to strengthen the ability of European higher education institutions to compete with commercial providers in other world regions, so it does not quite meet our needs vis-à-vis the South. However, partnership in higher education seems today to be one of the most important strategies for universities and university colleges to survive in the struggle for top students, excellent research, and additional income.

The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education and the Department of Administration, University of Bergen, participated in a survey at the COREVIP conference in Mauritius in 2003. One of the questions in the survey was on the form of cooperation preferred by higher education institutions to strengthen higher education in their countries. The most frequent answers were: cooperation in networks (included in 68 percent of answers); twinning projects (67 percent); and university alliances (67 percent). The idea of cooperation is central to Bologna. It is up to us now to take up the invitation to partnership from the South.

A partnership programme

Europe should consider another type of cooperation with the South in higher education to supplement the traditional education aid to Africa. The following section is closely based on an extract from the "Proposal for a European programme for co-operation in higher education and research with Africa south of the Sahara".[39]

With few exceptions, existing international academic cooperation with Africa is driven by development aid principles and rationales, with mixed results. The goal of our effort should be

- "To strengthen higher education and research both in Africa and in Europe through reciprocal academic cooperation and institution building.
- To help realise the ambition formulated by the European Ministers of Education in Stockholm in 2001, that in 2010 Europe will be open to cooperation for mutual benefit with all other regions, and the most-favoured destination of students and researchers from other regions of the world. *This ambition, however, must be supplemented by the willingness to develop and share, not drain, resources*."

Institutionalisation: Our efforts to strengthen the partnership between Europe and Africa in the context of the Bologna Process should be based on institutional cooperation. Cooperation within higher education and research is fast becoming institutionalised, and is no longer just a matter of personal relations between individual faculty staff. The difference in infrastructure and material resources between European and African partner universities is best dealt with through cooperation at an institutional level, as this provides long-term commitment and the right framework for the exchange of information, mutual understanding, and the development of common strategies for dealing with the challenges posed by these material inequalities.

Equal terms: Cooperation with partner universities in Africa needs to be considered in the same way as cooperation with other regions of the world; not as altruistic development cooperation, but genuine cooperation based on equality and reciprocal demands and benefits, and standing on its own academic and professional merits.

Our neighbours to the south: the argument for Africa

Many of the most pressing global challenges – such as ecological degradation, climate change, poverty, health, nutrition, fresh water, ethnic conflicts, and human rights – cannot be addressed without increasing the participation

39 The "Proposal for a European programme for co-operation in higher education and research with Africa south of the Sahara" was jointly produced by Helene Ullerø, University of Oslo, Norway; Dorrit van Dalen, Nuffic, the Netherlands; and Ulf Lie, Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education, Norway. The proposal was then called Proximus and was presented in its final form in July 2004.

of, and expertise from, Africa. An increase in the resources for higher education and research in Africa is necessary to facilitate African participation in finding solutions to these global problems. This capacity must be consolidated and expanded through the development of a sustainable higher education infrastructure, international cooperation, and brain-sharing. Increased cooperation between European and African universities offers both sides an opportunity to develop excellence in education and science within a number of increasingly relevant academic fields.

From aid to cooperation: the argument for professionalism and equality

Sub-Saharan Africa is the poorest part of the world, but civic institutions are in place and need strengthening, not least the institutions of higher learning and research, which are central to development in any country. Institutional cooperation is coming into its own in Europe and in the world at large, and it is now time to take African institutions seriously as partners. They lack much of the infrastructure and the academic resources Europeans are used to, but they have considerable human capital. In the partnership, Europe must contribute with more resources, but equality in cooperation must otherwise be a fundamental principle. Openness with regard to expectations will allow dialogue and build trust, and trust is, when all is said and done, an invaluable resource.

It is through concentrating on the form of the relationship that professionalism is built and acquired. Activities that are seminal to the academic should be at the centre of the cooperation projects; i.e. research and research methods, curriculum development, teaching and teaching methods, and the running of courses. It is a precondition to establish professionalism and professional pride.

Research and education: the argument for long-term commitment

The aim of all cooperation is the achievement of greater strength through the pooling of resources. This applies to academic cooperation, including in a North-South context or with Africa. To be truly sustainable and to avoid an over-reliance on personal relationships, the building of research and educational cooperation requires long-term commitment.[40]

Overall, the proposal not only advocates strengthening educational relations with Africa, but it is also a plea to take another close look at our aid policies and ourselves. And it is certainly in the spirit of Bologna.

40 I remind the reader that this section is closely based on the “Proposal for a European programme for cooperation in higher education and research with Africa south of the Sahara” jointly produced by Helene Ullerø, University of Oslo, Norway; Dorrit van Dalen, Nuffic, the Netherlands; and Ulf Lie, Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education, Norway.

Africa – forgotten?

To return to the original question posed in the title of this essay, we must question how we forget, not only what we forget. Attention and memory result from connectivity – of connecting to other phenomena in our memory – or, to put it another way, they are a matter of relationships and dialogue. The question could just as well be turned around: let us hope they do not forget us. And if our relationship to Africa and Africans is a relationship of sheer altruism or sheer self-interest, forgetting is likely to be easy. A meaningful relationship is a precondition for memory – to call to mind as well as to bear in mind. I am arguing for taking each other seriously – for meaningful relationships. Then Africa – or Europe – will not be forgotten.

Less hand wringing, more hand shaking: a United States perspective

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Because of my long involvement with women's studies, I was recently reading a publication from ATHENA, the Advanced Thematic Network in Activities in Women's Studies in Europe.[41] Its theme was the changing nature of women's studies/gender studies/feminist studies after the formalization of the Bologna Process on June 19, 1999. As Annex 2, the publication printed the "Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Higher Education in Berlin on 19 September 2003", which reviewed the progress towards a "coherent and cohesive European Higher Education Area by 2010". I realized that I was not only doing research into European women's studies. I was studying the profound and rapid changes in European higher education. In so doing, I was like most Americans who now confront the Bologna Process: we have a lot to learn and not much time in which to do it.

Ignorance is always dangerous, but the United States' ignorance of the Bologna Process – outside of some educational experts – may be particularly dangerous. It is significant in and of itself, and it is significant as but one sign of how deaf, dumb, and blind we might be to the possibility, perhaps the probability, of a diminished role in global education. To be sure, United States higher education retains enormous strengths that have evolved since the 17th century and the founding of Harvard College in 1636, our first institution of higher education. Since then, Harvard has been joined by at least 3500 other institutions. Ideologically, socially, and economically, higher education is perceived as a good for both individual citizens and the public, especially in the so-called Information and Lifelong Education Age. Since 1998, the Master's degree is growing at a rate of about three percent per year. Organizationally, United States higher education has some national standards set by a variety of organizations. The Federal Government, for example, matters for undergraduate financial aid and science research; professional organizations, an aspect of civil society, for faculty quality; another group of professional organizations for college and university sports. These national standard-setters and others combine creatively with our vast decentralization. Decentraliza-

41 Rosi Braidotti, Edyta Just, Marlise Mensink (eds.), *The Making of European Women's Studies: volume V. A work in progress report on curriculum development and related issues in gender education and research*, Utrecht: ATHENA, May 2004.

tion means that we have many different kinds of institutions: public and private; religious and secular; research universities, comprehensive universities, professional and technical schools; colleges that grant baccalaureate degrees, and community colleges; historically black colleges and universities, tribal colleges, and white majority institutions. As a result, institutions are responsible for student recruitment, domestically and internationally. Recruitable students have an immense array of institutions and programmes within these institutions from which to choose. Intellectually and academically, we generate ideas in every discipline and profession, an activity that federal investment in science after World War II propelled. Ethically, after great struggles, United States higher education generally supports the values of academic freedom, diversity, and equity (in some spheres), and it generally rejects sexual, racial, and ethnic harassment and bullying.

As it has grown, United States higher education has had many different kinds of relations with other countries. If you will forgive my deployment of the language of the marketplace, it has imported and exported ideas; it has imported and exported educational models; it has imported and exported scholars, researchers, and teachers; and it has imported and exported students. My life was irrevocably changed by being a Fulbright Scholar at Cambridge University in the late 1950s. At its best, the United States has shown a spacious, principled commitment to international education, scholars, and students. This has brought countless political, social, and academic goods – including the variety of perspectives through which teaching and learning grows. At its worst, citizens of the United States have displayed several flaws. We have been narrow and parochial, or seen study abroad programmes as a chance for American kids to play and get a nice cultural experience, or strategized that international students, in the United States or abroad, could be a cash cow, or, at the very least, a cash calf. Indeed, foreign students give more than US$12 billion to the United States economy each year, and two-thirds say that they pay for their education themselves from their own and family funds.[42]

Because of the public and private goods that international and global education generates, I fear any diminution of United States activities in this sphere. Our appeal is shrinking – at least temporarily, and this has enormous consequences for our institutions and for our relations with the world. As educators know, the number of foreign students in the United States grew markedly in the 1950s and 1960s. By the mid-1980s, the United States was the primary destination for international students. Perhaps our major rival was France, which attracted many African students. Today, the United States has 586,000 foreign students, more than any other country and one quarter of the world's

42 Philip G. Altbach, "Higher education crosses borders: can the United States remain the top destination for foreign students?", *Change*, vol. 36, no. 2 (March-April 2004): 18-24.

foreign students. About half of them are in graduate programmes. My own graduate school of arts and science, with about 4000 students from over 100 countries, is 40-45 percent international. We support all our doctoral students with at least five years of full financial aid, including tuition, stipends, and health insurance. Nationally, the majority of foreign students, 55 percent, are from Asia. The top five sending countries – India, China, South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan – are in various stages of development. Yet, given the size of higher education in the United States, international students represent a comparatively small proportion of all our students, 2.7 percent of the undergraduates enrolled in 4-year institutions and 13.3 percent of the graduate students, at least in 2001-02.

I write "at least in 2001-02" deliberately. For it is well-known that the United States as a whole and particular institution after institution are now reporting dramatic declines in international interest. To cite but one or two of many indicators: the total number of international applications to United States graduate schools for fall 2004 declined 32 percent from fall 2003; student visa applications 24 percent from 2001. The Council of Graduate Schools found the 126 institutions it surveyed in 2004 had a 34 percent drop in admissions from China, 19 percent from India, and 12 percent from South Korea.[43] The most immediate cause of this unhappy devolution is, of course, symbolized by the words "SEVIS" and "Mantis"[44], the difficulties, delays, humiliations, worries, and anxiety of obtaining visas after 9/11/01. The United States, my Chinese students tell me, seems "unfriendly". We are suffering from partially self-inflicted wounds. Fortunately, the higher education establishment in the United States has forcefully protested both post-9/11 visa policies and continued to serve as an advocate of international education. The State Department, which has great responsibility for visas, and other agencies have become worried about the loss of foreign students and have initiated a few ameliorative administrative measures. The State Department, for example, has hired 350 consular officers to help clear up backlogs.

Even if visas were to be promptly and fairly granted, our difficulties would doubtless remain. Their causes ought to be clear to anyone who wishes to look and listen. Many United States institutions may have gotten slack about recruiting foreign students. They may be embodying a theory that "Since we have built it, they will come." This same attitude may have enabled the United States, despite the work of some institutions and the presence of "American universities" in some countries, to lag behind in starting up "transnational

43 The most recent reports can be found in Burton Bollag, "Wanted: Foreign Students", *Chronicle of Higher Education* (October 8, 2004): A37-43. See, too, Heath Brown, "Data Sources: Declines in International Graduate Students Applications and Admits: A Campus-Based View of the Issue", *CGS Communicator* XXXVII, 8 (October 2004): 5-6.

44 Note from the editor: SEVIS stands for Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. Visas Mantis is a security clearance programme, which was established in 1998 to prevent scientists from illegally transferring technology out of the country.

initiatives" and offering degrees "offshore", efforts in which Australia and the United Kingdom have pioneered.[45] The students who do come to the United States find it expensive – unless they have fellowships and assistantships. In 2004, according to a report from the 18th IDP Australian International Education Conference, total costs (living costs plus tuition) of a Bachelor of Engineering in Hong Kong were almost two times less than in Canada, 2.5 times less than in Australia, and three times less than in American public institutions.[46] Unfortunately, both foreign and domestic students in the United States find themselves under financial pressures as public investment in higher education decreases, forcing increases in both tuition and the debt levels students carry.

In addition, the alternatives to United States higher education are strong and attractive. People who are aware of them often speak of Australia (with its jump in international student enrollment from 35,290 in 1994 to 136,252 in 2003), New Zealand, Canada, and Great Britain. Significantly, these are all English-speaking countries, home to the current international *lingua franca*. China is increasingly open to foreign students, although I do not know what language it will use for instruction. Its Ministry of Education has said that it expects 86,000 foreign students in 2004-05 and, if all goes well, 120,000 by 2008. Like Australia, China looks to the Asian countries – such as South Korea and Japan – on which the United States has historically counted for its enrollments.[47]

Europe has drawn foreign students since the founding of its universities, and now the Bologna Process will create a transnational system larger than that of the United States. The consequences for the United States will be increased competition. More succinct, manageable graduate degrees in Europe may pose a particular challenge for graduate programmes in the United States. Logistically, as we continue to recruit European students to these programmes, we will have to figure out how to articulate the 3-year European undergraduate degree with our 4-year one. In ways that I do not pretend to comprehend, we will need to discuss the relations between higher education and the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).[48]

The story that the bar graphs are telling – for the United States, the bar graphs signifying foreign student enrollments are flattening out; those for Australia, Britain, and Canada are rising – no doubt would have been told as the world eventually became less unipolar and more multipolar. The causes I

45 I am indebted to Altbach for this information.

46 *Not-So-Foreign. A Bulletin for U.S. International Education Professionals*, Publications by Higher-Edge, 3:28 (October 13, 2004): 1.

47 *Not-So-Foreign. A Bulletin for U.S. International Education Professionals*, Publications by Higher-Edge, 3:27 (October 6, 2004):1.

48 John H. Yopp, "Changes in European Higher Education and Their Implications for U.S. Graduate Education", *CGS Communicator* XXXVI: 10 (December 2003): 1-2, 4-6, usefully summarizes the Bologna Process and its implications for the United States audience.

have outlined may be accelerating a process that was already in motion. In the summer of 2004, enmeshed in these issues, I published an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* about the United States research university cast in the form of a letter to a graduate student. The behemoth of the research university reminded me, I wrote, of another American behemoth, the auto industry, "especially when Detroit was the car-manufacturing center of the world, the Detroit of gas-guzzling and befinned cars, the Detroit before Toyotas and Hondas and VWs, the Detroit that did not sufficiently forecast hurricane winds of change."[49]

I, however, love most of the universities and colleges in the United States. I have spent much of my career in them and value their strengths, which I outlined earlier. If we are to retain these strengths, there is much that we can do other than mope about declining applications and scowl at "the competition" when we notice how good it is. Above all, we must retain our academic quality for all our faculty and students. This is central to our mission and identity. For our domestic students, we must improve our education in the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). Foreign students in graduate programmes have fuelled the STEM disciplines in higher education in the United States and its post-graduate scientific labor force. In 1999, 27 percent of all the scientists and engineers holding doctorates were foreign-born, ranging from 12.6 percent in the social sciences to 44.6 percent in engineering. The United States has appealed to this invaluable pool of human capital for academic, social, and economic reasons. Some estimates have Chinese students choosing not to return home ranging from 66 to 92 percent, Indian students 77 to 88 percent. My Chinese students, especially the young women, report special difficulty at their visa interviews because of the suspicion that they are less foreign students than stealth immigrants. This importation of scientific talent has permitted us in the United States to worry far less than we should about the STEM disciplines in our primary and secondary schools, especially for poor and/or minority students. To adapt an agricultural metaphor, we have not grown the corn for our own crops.

Internationally and politically, we need to remember even more urgently that foreign policy in general and educational policy in particular should find value in allies and reciprocity among nations, regions, and institutions. This should lead to even more academically interesting cooperative courses, degrees, and research among institutions around the globe. On a less high-minded note, I expect some organizations and institutions in the United States to call for us to be at once more international and more competitive for "our share" of foreign students. The most aggressive "marketing campaigns" may be launched by the institutions most dependent academically and financially on

49 Catharine R. Stimpson, "Reclaiming the Mission of Graduate Education", *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (June 18, 2004): B6-B8.

them. For better or worse, our decentralized institutions are used to being competitive – at least with each other. For we struggle against each other constantly for “star” faculty, promising students, research monies, reputational rankings, and sports championships. Being competitive per se holds few fears.

In the United States and elsewhere, that cluster of intellectual activity known as women’s studies/gender studies/feminist studies has been concerned with the question of competition. How can we avoid two extremes? One is a cooperation so vapid and flaccid that no-one is wild with energy, ambition, or creativity. The other extreme is a competition so vicious that all we can do is fight in zero-sum power games. In the 1970s, a theory emerged of “cooperative competition” or the “cooperative challenge.” Here the players in a game play **against** an opposition, their rivals, but they also play **with** their rivals in the opposition. They do so by cooperating to obey the same rules and by respecting each other. This world in which we educators think, teach, and learn is riddled with violence, riven with cruelty, and awash with blood. If our educational systems are to compete for prizes, glory, faculty, and students, and they surely will, it is our solemn obligation to compete in a way that pushes back violence, repudiates cruelty, and washes away blood. The rules of our shared game ought to be radiant with the morality of thinking, teaching, and learning: the spirited, collegial pursuit and generation of complex truths; a freedom of consciousness and conscience; the opening of doors and books and computer networks. Our globe is small, our internationalism fragile. Our legacy must be the strengthening of their ligatures.

The international higher education marketplace: lessons from the Australian experience

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Introduction

The material in this chapter was presented in slide format at the recent conference on "The External Dimension of the Bologna Process", held in Hamburg in October of 2004. The brief given to the presenter was to present Australia as one of the countries "flexing muscles" in the international education marketplace. The original presentation, and this slightly modified chapter based on it, was perhaps tangential to the main theme of the conference, but it seemed appropriate that attention should be given to the international higher education marketplace. Europe will undoubtedly engage more with that marketplace post-Bologna. It is worthwhile now to look at what might be involved, as well as to consider the dangers and benefits. This paper presents a brief outline of the approach of Australian universities to the international higher education marketplace, and offers some cautionary advice.

Australia enters the market

One factor above all others launched Australian universities into the marketplace: the imposition in 1989 of "cost-recovery" fees for international students, while permitting universities to keep most of the resulting income. One could argue at great length about the "chicken or the egg" – the causality of the relationship between the imposition of fees and the progressive reduction of direct government financial support for universities in Australia. What seemed like an income bonanza to some at the time has since been counterbalanced by progressive reductions in government support. While thirty-eight of the forty-three Australian universities are still firmly state universities, some Australian universities now receive more than fifty percent of funds from non-government sources. It can be argued that many (perhaps most) Australian universities are now locked into the marketplace. A recent downturn in the number of international students accepting places for the year 2005 – of more than twenty percent in some universities – will almost certainly lead to a re-evaluation by universities of their vulnerability to changes in the marketplace. Australian universities are not cushioned by endowments and large research incomes in the way that many universities in other coun-

tries are. There is a cautionary lesson here for European universities in countries where the desire of governments to save money may force them into the marketplace.

The long-term justification for participating in the market

Australian government policies set the scene by establishing the conditions and motivation for generating income from the marketplace. “The bills need to be paid.” After that has been stated the logic of the marketplace has taken over. Universities compete for an increased market share and for the best students. Rationalisations come into play. Universities see that the marketplace also provides opportunities for profiling and enhancing international reputations. “Profits” are used to improve facilities, employ extra staff and support scholarships and research.

Academic or business values?

Australian universities have developed a reputation for aggressive engagement with the international higher education marketplace. Yet, while there is a self-confessed move in the direction of being business-like, Australian universities are far from being businesses. Academic values always reassert themselves in the ongoing life of universities to a degree that would not be tolerated in a true business culture. There is a tension here, of course, as the proper “business-like” values of accountability, responsibility, and financial probity come face-to-face with the proper “university-like” values of freedom and openness of discourse. An important task for universities everywhere in the twenty-first century is to find a balance and, perhaps, to demonstrate that being business-like and being university-like are not incompatible ideals.

In the final analysis, universities succeed in the marketplace in direct proportion to their ability to attract the best academics and students, and to provide quality study programmes that will serve students well in their post-university lives.

Target groups

Of course, students are the ultimate target for marketing, but getting the message to potential students is often mediated through friends, families, agents, and educational institutions. Very detailed understandings of social and political conditions in various target countries also play a significant role. The factors prompting consideration of study in another country vary from country to country. Social and educational policies in Malaysia differ from those in China and these differ from those in Norway. The capacity to pay is very important, but students will also assess carefully the chances that an international education will enhance job and lifestyle opportunities back at home. The considerable expense of an international education is evaluated as an investment.

The question of profit

Is there a profit? Yes, but not as large as one may think. After expenditure on teaching and physical resources for providing the study programme, and after the costs of recruiting the students are taken into account, there is not much left in the bank. Australian universities have become better-resourced and better-staffed, but they have not become rich.

The costs of engaging in the international higher education market are considerable. It is true that this cost is largely born by the fee-paying students themselves. They pay for their own recruitment in the same way that a car buyer pays for the marketing of that car. However, it is also true that the advance investment in marketing and recruitment is great, covering salaries, promotional materials, travel costs, exhibition costs, agents' commissions, market research, processing of applications, and services for students once they are on board.

How do Australian universities market and recruit?

In a typical Australian university the targets for the type and number of students are negotiated with those who will teach them. Faculties and schools will make their needs known to those who will go into the field to talk with potential students and parents.

Market research is fundamental. In Australia this comes from various sources. IDP Education Australia (IDP) provides market intelligence for existing and potential market countries. The shareholders of IDP include the Australian universities. Australian Education International (AEI) also provides market intelligence. AEI is part of the Australian Government's Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). Both IDP and AEI do not provide analysis of student choices. Determining that fine, but critical, level of analysis falls to the individual universities. Student motivations and choices are explored through commissioned research, as well as through surveys and interviews of students, analysis of choices made by students not accepting offers, reports of recruiters in the field, and an informal grapevine of information shared by colleagues. Some secrets are jealously guarded. Most secrets become common knowledge in a relatively short time. Competition is serious, but cooperation exists. There is a considerable appreciation of the common good; of the fact that we sink or swim together in hostile seas.

Not only students, but countries have different characteristics in the marketplace. There are various ways of classifying countries, but a simple schema often used is to classify markets as emerging, mature, or declining. An emerging market is a market that is expected to generate a growing demand for transnational education. A mature market is one where there is a known demand for transnational education, and which is well understood and actively cultivated. A declining market is one from which the demand for

transnational education is dropping off. In Australia much attention is being paid to important mature markets that are making the transition to declining status. Declines in student numbers can result from appreciation of the Australian dollar, changes in the perception of education quality and, significantly, a transition of countries from net exporters of students to net importers. The significance of the entry of countries like Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, and China into the international education marketplace should not be underestimated. Traditional competitors are also becoming smarter. The UK, for instance, is learning from Australia and is starting to challenge us in what we thought was our own game.

It is important to understand also that students' second and third choices are important. For instance, a student may want to study at Oxford, but find that the fees-quality nexus will not allow it. It is difficult to get in, and it is expensive to stay there. Then other factors come into play. There may be a trade-off between perceived quality and price. Nearness to the home country may be a factor. Opinions of parents, friends, and relatives may be considered. The chances of getting a job with a degree from a second- or third-choice university in a congenial second- or third-choice country will be investigated. It can be argued, and supported with research, that a great many international students are not studying in the university where they would most like to be. The final choice will mostly not be seen as a bad thing, but may nevertheless not be seen as ideal.

Universities will typically have finely-honed marketing strategies, and teams of recruiters well-versed in the university's various educational "products" (degrees, diplomas, preparatory programmes). The recruiters will spend a large part of each year abroad, attending educational fairs, and conducting information sessions. All of this recruiting activity is supported by the clear branding of individual universities which project the core message of the university as an educational institution of quality. With respect to particular countries the message will be focused on the needs of students within their social, political, and educational milieu.

Sophisticated application procedures are put in place. Individual universities may receive ten thousand or more expressions of interest in any year. These will need to be reduced in number to fit the targets set by faculties and schools. Reducing the number of students down to perhaps one-fifth finally accepting an offer of a place is a filtering process that requires very close cooperation with the faculties and schools.

Student support services are an essential, if indirect, part of the marketing effort. If students are not happy the word will get around, and will influence the reputation of the university abroad. After fifteen years in the international education marketplace Australia can now boast a proportion of international to domestic students of sixteen percent. In some universities the proportion is as high as twenty-six percent. While the increase in revenue is celebrated,

the strain on teachers, classrooms, language support, and other services can reach almost breaking point. Success in the marketplace can be a double-edged sword. Poor provision of services resulting from increased demand can lead to student dissatisfaction, and this can feed back into the marketplace in a very negative way. It all happens very quickly, and lost reputation is hard to recover.

The "products"

It is important to understand that fundamentally the marketing of educational programmes boils down to selling dreams and futures. Few students seek pure knowledge for knowledge's sake. Students are investing in the future. The vehicles for the realisation of dreams and futures takes the form, in a university context, of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, short study programmes, diplomas, upgrading and access programmes, twinning programmes, and programmes that allow articulation from previous tertiary education into Australian degrees. For universities entering the marketplace it is not simply a matter of advertising and promoting existing courses. Success depends invariably on fine-tuning educational offerings to meet the needs of students in key markets. Accountability to the students and their needs becomes much more important than it may be otherwise. This change in attitude as a consequence of the market is to be applauded.

The university and its prestige are of fundamental importance, but so is the actual course of study. It is well known that the same or similar courses of study in different universities carry more or less weight in the job market. The successful university in the international education market will therefore continually review its courses in the light of consumer demand and preferences. Content is fine-tuned. Titles are changed. Entry requirements are modified. The "product", in other words, is moulded to a greater or lesser extent to the needs of the market. Consumer responses are monitored as well, and research is done on success rates in the job market. This sort of process is well understood in relation to such degrees as the MBA, but it applies right across the board to all academic offerings.

The role of government

From the Australian experience it would appear that governments can play a significant role in providing a regulatory environment, quality control, market intelligence, and financial incentives.

In Australia governments at the state and federal levels were quick to take an interest in international higher education. The critical issue in the early days was quality control. This related particularly to some of the smaller private English Language colleges, which were springing up in great numbers. Some of these colleges were accused of not providing adequate resources and programmes. The result was the imposition of strict controls, and the

initiation of the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS). Since that time all providers of courses for international students must register under the CRICOS scheme. In recent times the issue of quality control has come even more to the fore with the enactment of the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act, which sets down a stringent consumer protection regime. The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AV-CC) has also developed a code of ethics, to which all member universities are committed.

Governments have only lately understood the nexus between international education and benefits to the economy. These benefits are great, and can be measured in terms of taxation income, consumer spending, property rentals and sales, and tourism. When considered in this broader light international higher education can become an export industry of very significant proportions, and worthy of government support.

It is important to understand that, despite the significant degree of centralised imposition and coordination of regulatory laws and regulations, Australian universities act with a high degree of independence and autonomy in the marketplace. It is universities that recruit, not states and not the country as a whole. Each university determines its own strategies. Each university must cover from its own budget the costs of marketing and recruitment. There is no coordinated Australian approach to the market. There is no Australian brand. To this extent Australia differs quite significantly from the UK and Germany where there is a primary focus on the marketing of the nation, with universities determining their strategies in step with that focus. Australia's success without a coordinated brand could be an argument against such branding exercises. The developing strength of the UK in the marketplace could be seen as a counter-argument in favour of national branding.

Lessons

The Australian experience delivers the lesson that success depends on knowing what you want, knowing where to get it, knowing how to get it, and being willing to invest. Experience also demonstrates the need for a supportive university, supportive governments, and supportive organisations.

While in Australia fee-paying international students effectively cover the costs of the resources required to educate and service them, there is a considerable lag in the development and provision of such resources. It takes years to add another teaching building. Recruitment of senior staff takes time. Development of business plans can be painstaking. Universities are therefore in a risk-taking environment, and prudence can lead to a situation where the provision of facilities can lag behind the need for them. Rapid increases in the demand for fee-paying places can make the situation worse when planning cannot keep up with demand. Conversely, sudden downturns in numbers can lead to over-provision and consequent reductions in staffing.

Jobs can be lost when the capacity to predict market changes fails. Heads can roll!

What then are the key lessons arising out of the Australian experience for new entrants into the international education marketplace after Bologna? Above all a new player needs to be aware that the marketplace is both a blessing and a curse. Good things can, and do, happen, but there can be insidious changes in university culture if care is not taken.

Australian success in the marketplace has lead to better facilities, more staff, an international profile and friends abroad, but it has also changed universities in attitude and in governance. In the post-Bologna period in Europe universities have much to learn from the Australian experience. It is possible that engagement in the market is to some degree inevitable, but Europe will need to find a way that protects it from the worst effects of market logic.

European higher education institutions at the eve of a new experience: competition tools and concepts of survival

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This topic can be approached in several ways, depending on perspective, but as the title suggests, a useful way to respond to competition is in terms of strategy. There are "three lenses" through which strategies can be formulated (Johnson/Scholes 2004): the design, the experience, and the ideas lenses. But is competition taking place in higher education?

Education and training are currently regarded as being a public good. This may change in the coming years, but right now, there is no obvious need to include business ideas in education. Or is there? The US and Australia are referred to as "competitors". But is there a market in which education and training are exchanged for money or other goods, and where only the fittest can survive?

For the time being, we will disregard the question if education is a public good or not, to allow for the design of a model which uses some business concepts to highlight how European institutions should "find their way" in a changing environment. In this new context, they find themselves competing with each other and with organisations and institutions from abroad. Before going on to address how institutions should respond to the new context in terms of reaching and sustaining competitiveness, where they want to be in the future and how they are going to get there, we need to consider the current situation.

1. "The Position": where do European higher education institutions stand?

The factors which determine the "position" of institutions include the environment, the competences and resources of institutions themselves, and the expectations and purposes attached to education and training. There is no such thing as *the* European institution. Across Europe, universities and other higher education institutions have very different approaches to competition. Some institutions have formed alliances to make them stronger; such as those supported by the European Commission – including the Thematic Networks and the approximately 150 institutions which have formed a group committed to "Tuning Educational Structures in Europe". There will surely be an increase of such initiatives – with or without financial support from

governments, the EU, or others – when more of the objectives of the Bologna Process are met and a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) comes into being. There may be a need to analyse the macro-environment, the industry, the market, and higher education institutions. The tools to do so could include, for example:

- PESTEL (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Ecological, and Legal Environment);
- Porter's Five Forces model (Porter, M.E. 1998);
- Market analysis;
- SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats).

PESTEL: an analysis of the political, economic, social, technological, ecological, and legal environment of European institutions

Across Europe, the direct involvement of governments in education and training is changing. In some countries, the decision to launch a new study programme is no longer decided by the regional or national government, but through a system which first examines whether or not the programme fulfils basic qualitative criteria to be accredited. On this basis some governments directly subsidise the programmes without any further intervention. The quality assurance system being introduced within the Bologna Process has helped to fasten this change at the *political* level.

In *economic* terms, globalisation has become a familiar concept to businesses and in the medium term is likely to become important for educational institutions. Skills shortages, combined with high unemployment levels, have prompted some former top industrial states to rethink their approach to education and training to overcome this paradox. In the short term, this may mean "importing" the necessary skills, even from outside Europe. This happens already with ICT specialists, but there are also cases of German doctors being flown into various parts of the UK to provide weekend medical cover. They are otherwise unemployed, but want to work, although do not necessarily want to leave their homes. The single market allows for this, and is especially feasible when flights – for example, between Germany and the UK – are cheaper than tickets for local public transport.

From a *social* viewpoint, the lifetime of knowledge in many fields is becoming shorter; therefore the need for continuous education and training becomes increasingly necessary. Some European countries have had a functional lifelong learning system for years but there are others for which this entails a totally new approach.

Technological advancement has created new jobs but many existing ones have become obsolete or have changed considerably. In line with a corresponding development to make jobs more motivating, job descriptions have

been altered and many have become enriched. This in turn requires a more flexible workforce and one which is multi-skilled. A typical example is the former "secretary" whose job was to type the manuscripts of managerial staff. Today, a secretary may not have to type at all but has to do several managerial tasks: operating agendas, organising meetings, and directing staff, to name a few.

Awareness of *ecological* issues has increased, and the requirement of new skills to address environmental problems has fostered the creation of new jobs. They may replace the jobs in developed countries which have been lost following the shift of many "traditional" industries to countries with lower labour costs.

In *legal* terms, regions appear to be becoming increasingly empowered in educational policy. Does this mean a fragmentation that may hinder the creation of a single European Higher Education Area?

Industry analysis

Porter's Five Forces model forms the basis for an overview of forces that should be considered by higher education institutions operating in the EHEA:

- *Barriers to entry*
  - Can an institution in a member country of the EHEA set up a subsidiary in another member state of the Bologna Process?
  - Can institutions from outside the EHEA enter the "Bologna area"?
  - To what extent do national accreditation requirements restrict the free movement of institutions and study programmes?
- *Substitutes*
  - Will non-formal and informal learning be allowed to replace formal education and training?
  - Will private organisations be allowed to set up a learning institution with the right to issue degrees, diplomas and/or other academic certificates?
  - Will global corporations be permitted to enter the market?
- *Suppliers*
  - If the idea is to integrate not only formal but also non-formal and informal education and training, who will the suppliers be?
  - As higher education has become more open and internationalised, how is it possible to identify or target potential students?
  - Is a different approach needed, and if so, what should be communicated? A programme as such might not be attractive but a clear profile could be – showing flexible approaches which would allow learners to access higher education in the way that suits them.

- *Buyers*
  - Is the profile of organisations employing graduates from higher education institutions changing? Political considerations and the demand of industry for multi-skilled human resources make it necessary to take into account a "catchment area". This will change in quantitative and qualitative terms as more sophisticated jobs emerge, even in areas where until recently only basic levels were required.
- *Competitors*
  - Institutions from outside the "Bologna area" may appear and new training opportunities might be designed as alternatives to a traditional way of studying – at least in the perception of the potential "customers". These could be institutions like the German "Berufsakademien", where students have an employment contract with a company which allows them to undergo alternative periods of education and training. At the end of the programme, the student will have a professionally recognized training and a Bachelor's degree.

Market analysis

When referring to markets which market is meant? Is it a specific geographical market? For example, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) refers to Brazil, Jordan, Mexico, Namibia, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, Turkey, and Vietnam when defining the future markets for German institutions. The EU also defines areas in geographical terms by allowing not only the EU member states to participate in EU-subsidised programmes but also associate and prospective members, some of which may join on a purely self-financing basis.

The establishment of an overarching European Qualifications Framework – one of the priorities of the next Bologna Conference in Bergen in May 2005 – may be another definition of the market, this time in product terms. "Products" are the various levels which can be reached. They are described by learning outcomes, linked to a specific number of ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits. Degrees – indicating a specific level of qualification – and even sub-degrees, may be seen as key elements of the respective product markets. These products may be the focus of competition with those of other regions, such as the US and Australia.

The European Qualifications Framework cannot be isolated from national contexts. Qualifications frameworks will be developed at the national level and higher education institutions will need to consider whether they will use a framework based on learning outcomes and credits to improve their competitiveness. The market participants should be analysed in terms of the institutions – changing in ownership and teaching and learning methods – and the learners, whose demands and perspectives change, partly due to shifting career expectations.

Stakeholder mapping

The position of an educational institution is shaped by the expectations and purposes of its stakeholders and by its environment. The stakeholders include academic staff (researchers and teachers), students, administrators, parents, friends, enterprises, civil society, governments, and other institutions of education and training. With the tool of "stakeholder mapping" they could be grouped according to their impact on the one side and their interest on the other. A stakeholder map shows that the expectations of parents and enterprises have to be met. Friends may have a high personal impact but usually their influence on education and training is very limited. Of course, the way that "impact" and "power" are allocated on the stakeholder map lacks sound empirical findings. It is only used to demonstrate how the impact of people and organisations can be identified and thus inform the strategic responses of institutions.

Competences and resources

An analysis of the resources and competences is essential to identify a possible unique "selling point" of a European institution. This will reveal the *strengths* and *weaknesses* of the institution in relation to its competitors and will highlight *opportunities* and *threats* (SWOT). The strengths of higher education institutions in Europe could be their cultural diversity, their fee structure (if they are demanded at all), and the availability of student accommodation and relatively low living costs – although this does not apply in every state participating in the Bologna Process.

The lack of transparency as regards the variety of programmes available and the differing structures and denominations of degrees are typical weaknesses compared to competitors. Whether the diversity of languages is also a weakness can be argued; it depends on the perspective. However, it is a significant barrier to the mobility of students and teachers.

Defining these strengths and weaknesses in light of the results achieved by the analyses of the environment and the expectations of stakeholders indicates the opportunities and threats facing institutions in a competitive environment. In other words, critical success factors will have to be respected to allow European institutions to become and remain competitive.

Are European diversity, a European quality assurance system, the European Qualifications Framework, or the academic recognition convention of degrees unique resources? Or is it mobility and the joint development of curricula which give European institutions the edge? These factors may become core competences and be developed on the basis of the Bologna and Copenhagen Processes. These competences could be advanced by implementing ECTS/ ECVET (European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training), the Diploma Supplement, information package, learning

agreements, transcript of records, to name a few, meeting the critical success factors, such as transparency, in a competitive environment where there is added pressure to attract sufficient numbers of students and of high calibre.

2. Where do institutions want to be? The strategic choices

Strategic choices can be identified at institutional and/or departmental levels to clarify and direct future institutional development.

Scenarios

Before going into details it may help to outline possible scenarios – in other words, factors that may confound or promote the success of an institution. Such developments could be the:

1. Creation of the EHEA
2. Implementation of a quality assurance system
3. Introduction of a qualifications framework
4. Breakthrough in terms of academic recognition
5. Allocation of credits to learning outcomes in a coherent way
6. Launch of a life-long learning concept
7. Change of governance
8. Development of a market for education and training
9. Ruling of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) that education is not a public good
10. Merging of education and training in terms of the Bologna and Copenhagen Processes
11. Penetration of the EHEA by Australian and US institutions
12. Increase of concentration of suppliers (institutions)
13. Balancing of power of various types of higher education institutions
14. Emergence of corporate universities
15. Growth of education and training in developing markets
16. Establishment of strategic alliances, joint ventures, mergers, and acquisitions across borders.

What is the “certainty” or “uncertainty” of these scenarios becoming a reality? This, of course, is speculative, but it seems that the activities listed in the Bologna Action Programme are very likely to be implemented, including the:

1. EHEA
2. Quality assurance
3. Qualifications framework
4. Academic recognition
5. Credit system
6. Concept of life-long learning
7. New governance
8. Market emergence for education and training.

All the other scenarios are therefore “uncertain”:

9. Ruling of the WTO that education is not a public good
10. Merging of education and training in terms of the Bologna and Copenhagen Processes
11. Penetration the EHEA by Australian and US institutions
12. Increase of concentration of suppliers (institutions)
13. Balancing of power of various types of higher education institutions
14. Emergence of corporate universities
15. Growth of education and training in developing markets
16. Establishment of strategic alliances, joint ventures, mergers, and acquisitions across borders.

In strategic terms, the scenarios of greatest interest are those which would have the highest impact and are the most uncertain. Institutions have to be best prepared for such uncertain situations. The above factors could be classified as “expected” or “not expected” to become reality; that is they may have opposite futures:

Education will stay a public good	Education will become a market good
Education and training will merge	Education and training stay separate
Australian and US institutions will penetrate the EHEA	Australian and US institutions will not penetrate the EHEA
Institutions will be merged	Institutions will not be merged
Power of higher education institutions will be equally distributed	Power of higher education institutions will not be equally distributed
Corporate universities will emerge	Corporate universities will not emerge
Education and training in developing markets will grow	Education and training in developing markets will not grow
Strategic alliances across borders will be formed	Strategic alliance across borders will not be formed

These outcomes are clustered according to the perspective of the institution. Scenarios can be positive (“benign”) or negative (“hostile”), while expectations are made according to the most likely probability based on experience; the so called “industry wisdom”.

Scenario 1: benign

1. Education will stay a public good
2. Education and training will merge
3. Australian and US institutions will not penetrate the EHEA
4. Institutions will not be merged
5. The power of higher education institutions will be equally distributed

6. Corporate universities will not emerge
7. Education and training in developing markets will grow
8. Strategic alliances across borders will be formed.

Scenario 2: hostile
In an unfavourable case the scenario would be the following:

1. Education will become a market good
2. Education and training stay separate
3. Australian and US institutions will penetrate the EHEA
4. Institutions will be merged
5. The power of higher education institutions will not be equally distributed
6. Corporate universities will emerge
7. Education and training in developing markets will not grow
8. Strategic alliances across borders will not be formed.

The most likely scenario would be a mixture of “benign” and “hostile” elements; for example:

Scenario 3: industry wisdom

1. Education will become a market good
2. Education and training merge
3. Australia and US institutions will not be able to penetrate the EHEA
4. Institutions will be merged
5. Power of higher education institutions will be equally distributed
6. Corporate universities will not emerge
7. Education and training in developing areas will grow
8. No increase in concentration but in cooperation (platform, hub-and-spoke, one-stop-shop).

What is the benefit of such speculation on possible futures? Both at institutional and departmental level strategies could be informed by the scenario which the institution expects to happen (one of the three). On this basis, an overall strategy would be formed. Taking scenario 3, for the purpose of demonstration, the strategy at the institutional level could be:

We have to define those resources and competences which distinguish us from others. Do our programmes have specific profiles? Do we know where our graduates are employed?

We should talk to training organisations to find out how to take advantage of new developments. If we cannot beat Australian and US institutions we should cooperate with them. If our institutions are merged with others we have to ensure that our identity is not lost.

As the power of higher education institutions will be equally distributed we better integrate “Berufsakademien”; a network should be designed. As corporate institutions will not be allowed, we should move outside the traditional

fields and find options for setting up spring-offs and branches, and consider outsourcing to help capitalise on the growth of education and training in developing areas.

Which of our programmes are suitable for export and which could be franchised or established as off-shores? Finally, the essence of the "industry wisdom" scenario: we should find adequate forms of cooperation. These could be, among others, joint ventures, strategic alliances, or franchising. However, as education becomes a marketable good, we should be careful not to fall foul on competition law, as both joint ventures and strategic alliances could be interpreted as "hidden forms" of concentration (mergers) or as unlawful cartels.

However, institutions cannot stop there. These ideas have to be transformed into concrete moves. To this extent lessons can be learned from industry; for example, the establishment of common platforms, a hub-and-spoke system, a one-stop-shop, or a screwdriver plant – these forms have proved to be very successful.

Lessons from industry

Common Platform
The institution may define modules which are elements of several study opportunities. The idea can be taken from the car industry where most of the producers use common platforms for different models of cars. By designing various modules onto this platform customised products are achieved.

Hub-and-spoke system
An institution could make agreements with other education and training institutions in its region. They do not have to be at the same level, they could be schools, vocational schools, training organisations, or academies to name a few. There will be – as the airline industry has proven – a win-win situation for all partners. One option is a code which the learner will carry throughout his or her learning and training career. It would then be much easier to have achievements documented in one booklet (e.g. EUROPASS), and students could easily move between countries and institutions, as well as between different types of education and training. This has parallels with an airline in an alliance which takes passengers to a destination where – keeping their code – they may continue with a different airline to reach their final destination. The luggage, meanwhile, is passed from one airline to the other without any hassle for the passenger. The latter could apply in education and training where marks, examination papers, and achievements would be forwarded from one institution to another without the student having to pick them up, photocopy them, or send them out.

Another option in a hub-and-spoke system is that the academies or training organisations operate as "feeders" for the higher education institution which

is the centre. Airlines from regional airports carry passengers to the "hub" – which in Germany is Frankfurt and in the UK is London-Heathrow – from where they are taken overseas. The feeders are the spokes in this case; the spokes in education and training would be schools and colleges which "feed" their leavers into institutions of higher education. As centres of excellence, the hubs would focus on particular services at identified levels.

One-stop-shop
Entering a bank normally means that any type of business related to money can be dealt with. Similarly, higher education institutions should become centres offering any type of opportunity related to learning. They do not have to operate these activities themselves but the potential student should find all relevant information at the centre where knowledgeable staff design "personal career plans" or "individual learning pathways". This may mean that the student begins in a partner institution or organisation.

Screwdriver plant
When the Japanese car manufacturers set up the first plants in the UK, many people disliked their moves as it meant that in the UK only parts of pre-fabricated modules had to be "screwed together". Today, hardly any negative criticism is heard as it has become very clear that in this way other industries of the region have benefited or new ones have been attracted. As outlined above, an educational institution may function as a "centre of excellence", focusing on research and the design of teaching and learning programmes, materials and learning methods while other institutions specialise on teaching the programmes, using the materials and applying the learning methods. This division of labour can work on the condition that the quality of structures, processes, and products is carefully scrutinised. These agreements could be set up as franchise arrangements.

These ideas can be applied at the departmental as well as at the institutional level. This model could be used to develop departments, assuring that the overall offer of the institution is perceived as attractive by potential learners and that departments exploit potential synergies. If a department is in trouble, it will try to find a solution – which, of course, may mean its transformation or elimination.

3. Perspectives

Higher education departments should focus on distinguishing themselves from departments in other institutions and on how to sustain this difference – or alternatively think of how best to market themselves. This could be in terms of an attractive fee structure, combined with a loan system – taking into account that some countries have not yet introduced fees for degree programmes – or in terms of the learning environment (size of classes). In the case of "cost leadership" it is again worthwhile to observe the rulings of the WTO: can countries with free higher education be taken to court for dump-

ing? If education becomes a marketable good this might well be the case. Perhaps those challenging questions which have confronted many other industries will be raised. What really makes a programme European – considering that this characteristic allows for all the benefits of the internal market? Is “local (European) content” identifiable at all, remembering the discussions which took place in the car industry? The solution may be the “rule of origin”; that is, the place where the teaching and learning was designed.

There are several directions and methods open to institutions seeking to identify their strategy on the basis of the framework set out in this paper. But before implementation, the feasibility, acceptability, suitability, and sustainability of the strategy should be tested. The culture of the institution(s) must also be identified to reveal possible barriers to change.

This paper has attempted to outline to institutions of higher education that before developing new strategies, they should define the position they are in at the moment. Deciding where they want to be in future, and having made sure that this is feasible, enables them to discuss the best way and the most adequate means to get there, considering the wishes of their stakeholders and respecting their own resources and competences to make acceptable moves. However, in a competitive environment they will have to be permanently alert to defend and sustain their position. The next stage should focus on how to implement the ways and means, identifying their own organisational culture, and on making change a reality. In other words, where do you want to be and how are you going to get there? The catch is that the external environment is unpredictable, and by the time a strategy is implemented, the environment may have altered and new positions may have been defined. Demographic and political realities may have changed the rules of the game. Strategies will not last forever; there is a continuous process of feed-back and feed-forward and a permanent updating and adjusting.

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Europe as an immigration union for talent: highly skilled migrants and the concept of the knowledge worker

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This paper is about the migration of highly skilled people and the concept of the knowledge worker. In Europe, when we talk about the migration of knowledge workers, we usually mean that we need to attract people to Europe to give our economies a boost or, to put it another way, to deploy their overseas talent in our dynamic knowledge society. And we devise ways of getting them here.

Yet if our current approach to this continues, we may still be looking for the right way years down the line. The policies that are being prepared and improved at the moment seem to have come out of the wrong mould.

A more dynamic knowledge society, a more competitive Europe, is the goal that the Lisbon agenda was designed to achieve. But more competitive compared to what? Well, the United States, of course, as well as other countries, such as Australia and Canada. Lisbon sets the targets for investments in research, for the numbers of research workers and for migration. On the subject of migration, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research calculated last year that Europe needs to attract 700,000 researchers from outside its own borders. People who possess the right skills can choose whether they go to the US, Australia, Canada, or a European country. So they can choose between the English-speaking countries that regard themselves as immigrant countries, or they can go to Europe, which has no ambitions to be a union of immigrants and has no policy to encourage inward migration, not even for specific groups, such as knowledge workers.

The European Union has achieved great things in the field of internal mobility: the free movement not just of goods and services, but the free movement of people, too. If an Austrian national wants to go and work in Denmark, then he's welcome to do so. There is no need for him or his employer to show that he is not doing a job that could be done by a Dane, he does not need to apply for a residence permit, and – for students – the university tuition fees are the same as those for national students. Although it may be true that few Europeans actually make use of these rights – conditions are generally quite good in their home country – the important thing is that these European ideals have been achieved.

Yet when it comes to letting people in, Europe is still very much a fortress. Let's take a look: when the European Commission proposed that knowledge

workers from third countries should not lose their residence status when they return to their home country – the point being that they would then be more readily inclined to return to their own country, thereby encouraging brain circulation – it was rejected by all fifteen member states. Legal residence is a commodity sold for a high price. Employers and the higher education community are calling for a relaxation of immigration rules for knowledge workers and highly skilled people who want to enter the EU. Some European countries are already considering the opportunities available to achieve a relaxation of the rules. Yet so far it amounts to little more than marginal noise, and we still seem to be a long way from choosing a radically different course.

In Germany, serious efforts have been made to find another approach. In recent years, a lot of hard work has gone into a new immigration law that would help highly skilled workers *who take the initiative* to come and strengthen the German labour market. The core of the new regime was to be a points system (along broadly similar lines to the scoring systems used by Canada, Australia, and New Zealand), where prospective immigrants are awarded points based on their qualifications. The new immigration law will now come into force on 1 January 2005, I understand, but without the points system. Again, highly skilled workers will only be able to immigrate once they have already signed a contract with an employer. The government's concern to provide security and jobs for its own people took care of that. The new law is therefore still based on specific demand from specific employers rather than on the global *supply* we say we are competing for.

Nevertheless, we should give credit where it's due: at least Germany is already way ahead of other European countries. And the discussion alone provides a boost. *If* we are convinced that we need so much talent from outside the European Union – and that is an if, but I'll come back to that later – then this is the way to go forward. Let me explain what has happened in the Netherlands. It's not a particularly happy example. I was actually a bit worried that the organisers of the conference were being slightly ironic when they asked *me* to come and give a talk on the concept of the knowledge worker. Well, if they were, I wouldn't want to spoil their fun. The Dutch government had defined knowledge workers as people who had at least a Master's degree and who intended to come to the Netherlands to engage in knowledge-intensive work at a research institution. In the practical implementation of this policy, a question arose: how do you decide who exactly belongs to this group of fine men and women, the saviours of our welfare state, quickly and with a minimum of red tape? The answer appeared to be as simple as introducing an income threshold. Generally speaking, a low income means a low level of education, and so anyone with a low income from outside the European Union does not get in. On the other hand, high-earning prostitutes qualified without a problem. The government has now put a stop to this, but the rather odd principle of an income threshold is still in place.

What are the other attitudes and ideas on the immigration of highly skilled workers in Europe? The Directive on the admission and residence of non-European students which was adopted in May is a watered-down version of the original Commission proposal. The possibilities it creates now only apply to students intending to stay for at least two years, thereby excluding even many Master's degree students. The Directive does not apply to students of non-accredited programmes (in other words, new programmes) at accredited institutions.

Three weeks ago, at a conference in The Hague, the European Council and the Competitiveness Council were urged to save the Directive on the admission and residence of non-European researchers – which has yet to be adopted – from the same fate. This is not to say that the Directive itself is bad: it stipulates, for example, that applications for residence permits by researchers and other knowledge workers must be dealt with within thirty days and that the residence permit must also allow knowledge workers to travel freely throughout the European Union; and it provides for some improvements in the social status of their families while staying in the Union. To support this policy, a Code of Conduct and a Charter for the recruitment and careers policy of international knowledge workers has been proposed.

While this is all very positive, it is merely a framework which will have little effect if we do not act to provide more opportunity for talented people to come before they have signed a contract with an employer. Meanwhile, employers are tempted to move out of Europe themselves. Businesses may deny vehemently that they are considering this option, yet at the same time they are sounding the alarm.

We need to ask ourselves two things. Firstly, are we still firmly behind the Lisbon agenda? And secondly, what are we doing to attract talent besides creating a framework?

1. Do we still need Lisbon?

How much do we really need those 700,000 researchers, for example? It looks as though that figure was calculated somewhere in Brussels by taking the target figure of three per cent of Gross National Product investment in research and development, and then working out how many people you need to do put away that money. On a side note, it looks like we're not going to achieve three per cent anyway. And it turns out that we still have only around five researchers per 1,000 inhabitants rather than the eight of the Lisbon agenda. Many of the Lisbon ambitions won't be achievable by 2010.

More fundamental is the fact that you will find these days less emphasis on the knowledge economy, which is essentially the foundation stone of the Lisbon agenda. The question is being raised if we really want to get involved in economic competition with the United States on their terms? Maybe not, if it

would also imply an economy that might force people to take on two jobs to achieve success. Dutch university professor Henriette Maassen is one of a growing group of critics who have pointed out that – fortunately – Europeans aren't striving to achieve the sort of wealth that provides them with material things that make them less happy than simple pleasures, like a stroll on the beach.

This is a warning that we ignore at our peril. But I was perhaps more shocked by the stark warning given recently by Jeroen van der Veer, the Chairman of Shell. According to him, the European desire to become the most dynamic knowledge society is little more than wishful thinking, while in the meantime Europe is *losing* business.

In 1999, 42 per cent of all Shell employees were based in Europe. The figure in 2004 was 39 per cent and it is still falling. Many of these jobs are research posts and jobs for highly skilled employees. In 1999, Shell had 30 per cent of its employed capital invested in Europe. By comparison, that figure has fallen to 27 per cent in 2004 and in 2010 it will have dropped to less than 25 per cent.

Many large companies are – for a variety of reasons – increasingly off-shoring their labour, including highly skilled labour, to countries outside Europe. The reasons for doing this include slow population growth and an inflexible labour market. Solutions can be found partly in the labour market itself, but also in the degree to which higher education is meeting the needs of the labour market. Whether we will need 700,000 new researchers is difficult to say, but what is certain is that we will need knowledge workers from other countries.

The simple question is this: how will we get them here? The answer: technology, talent, tolerance. This is not my own answer, but – if I have it right – was originally also suggested by one of our captains of industry. He is absolutely right. When it comes to the crunch, a top researcher doesn't choose a particular country or university because of the immigration rules, a charter ruling his recruitment, or even salary expectations, but because he can work alongside a Nobel prize winner, or because he will have access to the latest high-tech research facilities and can engage in cutting-edge discourse in his discipline. Technology, talent, and tolerance are what makes Europe the place to be in the eyes of international knowledge workers. Technology, talent, and tolerance are the qualities that we need to show to the rest of the world.

What are we going to do about it?

2. What is Europe doing to recruit talent?

Talent and technology

When I think of talent in Europe, I think of top-level research that is at the forefront in its field, at places like the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN) or HIV research in the Netherlands. I think of glass fibre

communications and certain medical disciplines. But I also think of the *link* between technology and culture. It is this, I believe, that sets us in Europe apart in the eyes of outsiders from the various other Valhallas for scientists around the world. New architecture that is defining itself within our history, new discoveries being made as scientists restore Rembrandt's Nightwatch, the engineering techniques developed for the bridge across the Bosporus, a true symbol of the link between Europe and the culture of its neighbours.

Europe itself is all about links, openness, curiosity about others – all qualities that are crucially important in education and science. Initiatives towards a European higher education and research image must build on these characteristics.

In the meantime, however, some improvements are needed, so we will need to put our money where our heart is. I would not want to suggest that our love for learning should go as far as that of the English nobleman who bought one of Isaac Newton's teeth and had it set in a ring. But a little bit of enthusiasm can go a long way. Looking at the field of technology, we see that investment in research in Europe is stagnating, and, as I mentioned, the three per cent of GDP that each country should be spending will probably not be achieved before 2010. Perhaps even more significantly, government investment per student in Europe is now half of what it is in the United States.

Another weak spot in Europe is of course the lack of coherence between higher education and the needs of research and the private sector. We have been talking about it for years, but what are we actually doing about it? Who is going to offer us a platform to showcase best practice, allowing us to develop a sustainable relationship between higher education and research and the private sector right across Europe?

Tolerance

Finally, let us look at tolerance. Tolerance is not just a quality that you have; it is of vital importance if we are to attract talent from outside the EU. Tolerance is not a static value, but a virtue that you maintain by constantly subjecting yourself to other views. *It is a desirable quality because it determines the quality of democracy and debate, as well as the quality of scientific study and society as a whole*. On this note, I have returned to the start of my argument. Tolerance is an attribute with which Europe competes with other parts of the world and continues to rate highly. We need to showcase this, and build on it, so that Europe becomes a union of immigrants – at least for the highly skilled.

Non-European students: the forgotten half of the Bologna-Process?

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Preface

At the Conference "Opening Up to the Wider World: The External Dimension of the Bologna Process", held on 17-19 October 2004 in Hamburg (Germany), one of the Round Table Discussions that was held focussed on the theme "How readable is Europe? European and Non-European Views on the European Higher Education Area and the Bologna Reforms". The organisers of the conference, the Academic Cooperation Association and the University of Hamburg, invited me, a higher education researcher involved in research on international cooperation and mobility in higher education for more than two decades, to chair this discussion and open it up with a statement that would touch on existing debates on the subject and articulate more provocative views.

Our remarks were considered by the audience and the organisers to be sufficiently thought-provoking to be addressed in later discussions. In what follows I take the liberty of incorporating into my own thinking what I learned from the stimulating remarks of the panellists. These were Peter van der Hijden, officially Deputy Head of Unit for School Education and Higher Education of the Directorate General for Education and Culture and one of the most creative thinkers in the team of officials in the European Commission continuously involved in matters of higher education; Salvador Malo, the Director-General of the National Evaluation Centre for Education (CENEVAL) in Mexico and a driving force for the improvement of assessment in higher education; Krishnapratap B. Power, at the time of the conference Director of the Amity Foundation for Higher Learning, with experience from many core positions in the higher education policy arena in India; Catherine R. Stimpson, Professor and Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Science of New York University and well embedded in trans-Atlantic dialogues on the benefits and dilemmas of internationalisation both in North America and Europe. I am grateful for having had the opportunity to listen to their views, but I take responsibility for the limitations of the subsequent reflections.

The preoccupation with cryptic terms and messages

Imagine that somebody, a European university president, professor, or student, who had been lucky enough to spend more than five years on a desert

island without any connection to the outside world, returned now to a European university. That person would be overwhelmed by the spread of cryptic and symbolic vocabulary: “Bologna Process”, “European Higher Education Area” (some insiders call it even “EHEA”), “ECTS”, “Diploma Supplements”, “modularisation”, etc. This person would wonder whether he or she had ended up in a religious organisation, totalitarian regime, or secret society rather than in a knowledge-based and professional organisation. And if the desert island returnee even tried to understand these words, it would become clear that at a certain period of learning, students are not awarded “credits” but rather whole “credit systems” (see the last letter of ECTS); that students who stay at home are not awarded “accumulation credits” but rather “transfer credits” (see the third letter of ECTS), that “modularisation” has at least ten different meanings; that the “Bologna Declaration” is a sequel to the “Sorbonne Declaration”; and that there are many additional elements of cryptic knowledge around. The language of the Bologna Process is borrowed from bureaucratic language, political propaganda, and esoteric cults. This syncretistic jargon could certainly be improved if it was enriched by poetic language.

The “Bologna Message”

To be a good believer one does not necessarily have to read the Bible, but one has to know the message. Many people erroneously believe that the Bologna Declaration has set Bachelor’s programmes at three to four years of study, one to two years for Master programmes, and both programmes together at about five years. This is a misinterpretation, but it is irrelevant, because it is not the main concern of the Bologna Declaration or of our “daily bread”, the Bologna Process. Many people never read the Bologna Declaration, but we all know its core message. The success of the Bologna Declaration is based on the fact that it persuasively conveys a single, relatively simple message; let us call it the “Bologna Message”: within about a decade, a stage system of study programmes and degrees shall be introduced in all European countries to make European universities more attractive for students from outside Europe and facilitate student mobility. The message sounds complicated, but within the framework of a complex knowledge-generating and knowledge-transmitting system, it can be viewed as relatively short and simple.

A single mechanism with two key purposes

The “Bologna Message” comprises two elements.

- It points out that a single mechanism is expected to be enormously powerful: the introduction of a stage system of study programmes and degrees is the single most important measure to reach the goals under consideration.

- The mechanism under consideration is designed to serve two objectives: making European universities substantially more attractive to students from outside Europe and facilitating student mobility within Europe.

Thinking critically again, after our visit to esoteric and ideological territories, two main sets of questions need to be addressed:

- What impacts can we expect from the core mechanism, i.e. the introduction of stages of study programmes and degrees? What does this single mechanism promise? Is it expected to be embedded in other mechanisms, and if so, how many? Which of these other mechanisms are of the most important for realising the potential of the stage structure of study programmes and degrees?
- How do the two objectives noted above relate to each other? Are they equally important, or is one more important than the other? Are these objectives intertwined or can they be pursued separately? Are they likely to be pursued in a harmonious way, or are conflicts and needs for priority choices likely to arise in the process of implementation?

The prior success story of ERASMUS

The historical context in which the Bologna Declaration was formulated suggests that it would never have come into being if it was not preceded by the ERASMUS programme. ERASMUS paved the way for Bologna both procedurally and substantially.

Procedurally: the ERASMUS programme, established in the late 1980s and put under the umbrella of a larger programme, SOCRATES, in the late 1990s, was a relatively simple mechanism which turned out to have an enormous impact. It provided supplementary funds for temporary study abroad under the condition that home and host institutions and scholars cooperate academically and administratively. This triggered dramatic changes in the climate of European higher education. A “reform movement” emerged from ERASMUS, prone to vocabulary which an external observer might consider more appropriate to esoteric sects than to knowledge organisations. It showed us how much knowledge organisations also like concepts and vocabulary which might stir up emotions in favour of reform efforts.

Substantially: learning through contrasting experience abroad became the norm rather than the exception. The international dimension was no longer a marginal element in most higher education institutions in Europe, but rather was “mainstreamed”. All major activities were scrutinised in terms of how they serve the internationalisation of higher education, and all activities emphasising international dimensions of higher education were expected to serve the core activities.

Thus, the “secret” of the “success story” of ERASMUS might have reinforced the view that another simple mechanism – this time a stage system of study

programmes and degrees – was likely to create an even more ambitious reform movement – this time the Bologna Process.

Beyond Europe

In the early 1990s, external observers could come to the conclusion that higher education in Europe "Europeanised" rather than "internationalised". Obviously, ERASMUS supported intra-European mobility, and was expected to reinforce the "European dimension of higher education", whatever that might be. Some external observers considered ERASMUS to be a component in the development of a "fortress Europe".

A second glance, however, points to different conclusions. We noted that the previously least internationalised higher education institutions talked most frequently about "Europe", whereas the previously internationally active higher education institutions considered the Europe-focussed activities as just another component of their overall activities. The European programmes, though emphasising the European dimensions as well as intra-European cooperation and mobility, did not comprise elements contradictory to a worldwide scope. It was international cooperation and mobility at the regional level, between neighbouring states, and would be more difficult to apply across continents. The Bologna Declaration would not have come about if there had not been a reconsideration of the European emphasis of internationalisation. In the mid-1990s, attention shifted towards the relationships between higher education in Europe and higher education in the wider world.

Most academics felt uneasy where moves towards internationalisation focussed too much on the European neighbours. Politicians were shocked to note that continental European countries hardly figure when students from newly emerging economies chose the location of study abroad (they might have been ill-informed: statistics showed that Western European universities had increased their share of foreign students, while this share had remained constant for the four major English-speaking host countries of foreign students). Some managers from continental European universities hoped that they could be as successful as Australian, British, and US universities in attracting wealthy students from other continents as cash-cows for their ailing budgets. Obviously, other more noble motives played a role as well, and everybody agreed that higher education was becoming more globalised in terms of the blurring borders, increased commercialisation and instrumentalisation of higher education, worldwide search for new knowledge, and increasing opportunities for worldwide cooperation and mobility in higher education. A more worldwide view of European higher education was imperative for a multitude of causes and objectives. The Bologna Declaration promised to take care of both Europeanisation and worldwide relationships in higher education.

Stages of study programmes and degrees: a magic tool for internationalisation?

The Sorbonne Declaration and the Bologna Declaration suggest that the variety of structural models of higher education systems in Europe were a barrier to intra-European student mobility and that models other than Bachelor-Master models were a deterrent for students from outside Europe. Consequently, the introduction of a stage system of study programmes and degrees would facilitate student mobility in Europe and make higher education in Europe more attractive for students from other parts of the world.

Was the variety of structures really such a key barrier to student mobility in Europe? There are many good reasons to challenge this assumption. If there was trust in the quality and substance of study programmes, it did not matter much whether the student was a fourth-year student in a long-study programme or a first-year student in an advanced programme having completed a preceding three-year programme. Evaluation of recognition within the ERASMUS programme did not suggest that the structural variety was a major barrier. Can a break-through really be expected in facilitating student mobility through the introduction of identical and similar structures?

And what determined the country choice of students from outside Europe wishing to study abroad? Were the structure of the study programmes and degrees a major deterrent? Or did the language of structure, the presumed quality of the programme, ways of communication, counselling and student-friendly administration, and the highly structured doctoral programme play a major role? How much can the attractiveness of continental-European higher education grow as a consequence of structural reform?

The tool might work less magic than expected and new barriers to attractiveness and mobility might surface in the implementation process:

- Do the new Bachelor's and Master's curricula become so highly constrained by the cramming of courses and a highly regulated examination and credit regime that intra-European student mobility is discouraged and recognition is endangered?
- Does the dominant model of three-year Bachelor's programmes reach world-wide acceptance?
- Does the option for "convergence", i.e. the persistence of a certain degree of variety between the European countries, create similar problems of transparency and recognition as the preceding variety?
- Are efforts to stimulate a more competitive climate among institutions of higher education in the wake of establishing a European Higher Education and Research Area likely to trigger an enormously increased differentiation between European universities – in terms of quality and curricular profiles? If that happens, the levels of programmes and degrees would

become increasingly irrelevant as indicators of quality and substance of knowledge, intra-European student mobility would be restricted, and the transparency of higher education in Europe for students from other regions of the world would be diminished.

- Or does structural convergence eventually lead to such a high degree of convergence of curricula and methods of teaching and learning that intra-European mobility will lose appeal because the basic rationale of student mobility in Europe is undermined: to be intellectually stimulated by a significantly contrasting experience.

In short, do we overestimate the impact a stage system of study programmes and degrees is likely to have on enhancing Europe's attractiveness worldwide, and on facilitating intra-European student mobility? Do we overlook possible counteracting factors in the Bologna implementation process?

The shaky balance of the European and the worldwide scope of Bologna

The "Bologna Message" attempts to strike a balance between a worldwide scope and a European scope: the introduction of a stage system of study programmes and degrees. But many observers have concluded that attention is increasingly paid in the Bologna Process to intra-European matters. Lists of objectives pursued in all the activities of establishing a European Higher Education and Research Area become longer, while links to the wider world remain a single item of these lists. Are the students from other parts of the world the "forgotten half" of the key target population of the Bologna Declaration? Is the Bologna Process overshadowed by Euro-centrism?

One could argue that the greater attention to European matters in the Bologna Process does not imply a loss of balance as far as the regional and worldwide internationalisation objectives are concerned. The process of implementation of a new stage system of study programmes and degrees cannot be driven exclusively by internationalisation objectives. Attention also has to be paid to the general goals educating all students according to their motives and talents, academic rationales, and cultural, societal, and labour market objectives. This explains a dominance of universalistic, national, and European perspectives in the curricular and didactic reasoning in the Bologna Process. Yet the question remains open: what measures are needed to ensure that the worldwide perspective is not lost?

The converging stage model: a superior option for European countries?

The Sorbonne Declaration and the Bologna Declaration both call for the establishment of a stage system of study programmes and degrees in all European countries. While the Sorbonne Declaration advocates the harmonisation of the "architecture" of the higher education system, the Bologna Declaration favours a convergent solution; i.e. leaves some room for variety.

The structures of the higher education systems in the European countries have been quite varied in the past, and the variety has persisted for decades in spite of many national and international efforts of search for optimal structural models. We know that since the 1960s this heated debate has considered the role of economic needs, the diversity of students' motives, talents and job prospects as well as the opportunities for socio-biographically disadvantaged students and mature students. We also know that internationally context-specific views regarding modernisation, political priorities, and the aim to make use of the strengths of national traditions affected structural options. Moreover, we know that structural developments were affected by specific dynamics such as "academic drifts" or "vocational drifts" by individual higher education institutions or sectors wishing to upgrade their status. New factors have also gained in momentum in recent years, such as the system of steering and management, the spread of virtual communication and other new technologies and media – and internationalisation of higher education!

Did the multitude of arguments favouring structures of higher education other than a stage model of study programmes turn out to be so irrelevant and contradictory that they might be buried? Or is the strength of the stage model for the internationalisation of higher education so impressive that it overrides any other considerations? Is internationalisation so important that the stage structure is a superior option even if it contributes to internationalisation only moderately? Or do we observe a conflicting setting: will higher education serve other needs, such as those of the labour market and the diversity of students, to a substantially lesser extent in the future in order to serve mobility in a better way? Or will the "convergence" be so limited that the transparency and comparability of systems will turn out to be an illusion? Will all these other factors undermine the complete implementation of the Bologna model?

There is clearly a bias in many studies aiming to assess the Bologna Process. As a rule, the question of how the Bologna Process serves internationalisation is raised, but too little attention is paid to the consequences of the new structure of the higher education system for all the tasks and functions of higher education.

From a lean and targeted reform programme to a long reform shopping list?

The original "Bologna Message" was lean and targeted: a convergent system of study programmes and degrees ought to be introduced throughout Europe to increase the worldwide attractiveness of European higher education and facilitate intra-European mobility. In the meantime, the agenda of the Bologna Process has broadened and is now expected to serve every conceivable and fashionable reform objective in higher education: improving quality,

increasing “employability”, revising the examination system, emphasising curricular flexibility, stimulating creative competition, reducing drop-out, etc.

- Did we increase the complexity of the instruments of the reforms to realise the initial objectives, having lost confidence that the initial structural reforms that were envisaged were insufficient?
- Or is the Bologna Process so exciting that the advocates of any area of higher education reform try to ensure that their own hobby horse is added to the increasingly long lists of bullet points of the communiqués published at the end of the ministerial conferences succeeding the Bologna Declaration (Prague, Berlin, Bergen, etc.)?

Certainly, the Bologna Declaration was not confined solely to the measure of establishing a stage system of study programmes and degrees; it also addressed additional measures, such as the spread of the European credit system ECTS. The lists of reform measures addressed in each Communiqué are still of only moderate length. The most recent communiqué, the Berlin Communiqué of 2003, clearly sets three priorities.[50]

The Bologna Declaration has triggered – or at least enormously contributed to – the climate of reform in higher education in Europe. Much more is on the move than in the preceding two decades. The Bologna Process seems to be a success story in a similar way as ERASMUS had been a decade earlier. A lean “top-down” programme initiated by governments or supra-national governmental bodies provides ample room for “bottom-up” reforms and triggers a wealth of innovative concepts and activities as well as ample crowds of imitators. There are Bologna enthusiasts who hope that concerted efforts to reform the structure of study programmes, the curricula, the examination system and to establish qualifications frameworks and a European accreditation and quality assurance system, will lead to a coherent system of higher education excelling in quality and relevance.

Nonetheless, is the Bologna Process really the great catalyst for higher education reform in Europe? Or has it become an over-complex reform agenda covering up the weaknesses of the initial reform programme? Is it increasingly losing coherence and a targeted pursuit of objectives?

Ambivalent benefits of Bologna for the wider world?

The stocktaking of the worldwide scope and implications of the Bologna Process deserves to be reinforced. We can call for a stronger emphasis to be placed on the “external dimension of the Bologna Process” for three reasons.

First, most of the stocktaking activities and the proposals for the next steps of the Bologna Process focus on intra-European aspects. In some respects, this

50 Note from the editor: cf. the papers by Christian Tauch and Peter van der Hijden.

might be justified because, as pointed out above, the core Bologna reforms will affect Europe more than the wider world. However, we need to better understand of how the "wider world" perceives and assesses the Bologna Process, and of how the Bologna reforms affect the attractiveness of European higher education. We need to pay sufficient attention to the external perceptions to ensure that the potential of the Bologna Process to increase the worldwide relevance of European higher education is fully utilised.

Second, there are ample indications that the introduction of a stage system of study programmes and degrees does not automatically guarantee an increasing attractiveness of continental European higher education for students from outside Europe. As already pointed out, three-year Bachelor's programmes and the remaining variety in a "converging" Europe are often perceived worldwide with some degree of irritation. Language problems, lack of service-orientation, and lack of confidence in the quality of education come into play as well. The expected outcomes from the introduction of a stage system of study programmes and degrees have to be examined more carefully. Which of the accompanying measures are promising and what alternatives are worth pursuing? If things are left as they stand, Europeans will continue to overestimate the impact of reforms on the structure of study programmes and degrees – and thus on the worldwide attractiveness of European higher education – and continue to underestimate the diversity of measures needed to make European higher education attractive on a worldwide scale.

Third, increasing attractiveness of continental higher education study programmes for students from outside Europe is only one element of the relationship between higher education in Europe and higher education in the wider world. Are the Europeans aware how the image of European higher education changes in the wake of efforts to establish a European Higher Education and Research Area? Observations and comments such as those put forward in the Hamburg round table discussion illustrate the range of impressions current European higher education policies evoke outside Europe.

- Do those responsible for higher education reforms really believe that their jargon-driven, multi-facetted, "convergent", over-complex higher education reforms contribute to transparency without any serious efforts at further explanation?
- Do Europeans really believe that structural policies are more crucial than reforms in the domains of knowledge, curricula, didactics, services to students etc., as the key signals regarding the Bologna Process suggest? Is this not an obsessive focus on structures?
- Do European higher education institutions and academics, historically known for proudly defending academic freedom against intrusion hampering creative thinking, now just follow suit if governments prescribe the directions of reform?

- Does European higher education, in formulating policies, divide higher education in the world outside Europe into elite higher education in the US and low-level higher education in the rest of the world?
- Is Europe, in striving to attract students from outside Europe, only interested in one-way vertical mobility, thus completely neglecting other possible means of exchange and cooperation and overlooking the increasing potential for cooperation and exchange on equal terms?
- Does Europe want to give up its positive image of taking care of cultural values and social cohesion in higher education and turn to a turbo-capitalistic image in its new higher education strategies?
- Does European higher education really believe it will become attractive worldwide if it concentrates all its efforts on attracting rich and possibly bright students from newly emerging economies as cash cows for the ailing university budgets and as a talent pool, while simply claiming that this is likely to be beneficial for the rest of the world in the long run?
- What does the external dimension of the Bologna Process offer to the other side?

No matter whether the list of observations is representative or selective and whether these observations are accurate perceptions or “misunderstandings”. They are intended to make European higher education actors and experts aware that they should consider more carefully how the wider world perceives the European higher education reform processes, and assess the implications of the Bologna Process for the wider world.

Towards a global qualifications framework? Bologna as a model for global cooperation in higher education

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There is a story of three Peters who met at the ACA conference in Hamburg: Peter Scott, Pieter van Dijk and myself. I will start with Peter Scott who, as a former editor of the Times Higher Education Supplement, will surely remember an article from 1992 which carried the heading “Mobility narrows the mind”. It was the very first article I read when I started to work for the ERASMUS Mobility Scheme. This title seemed to confirm my gut feeling that it is better for people to “stay home and read good books”. Fortunately, I learned that while it may be true that short-term mobility confirms prejudice about the host country, longer stays broaden the mind. The second Pieter spoke about knowledge workers, and they are of course the raison d’être for the Bologna Process, and its external dimension that I have the honour to address.

Are we moving towards a global qualifications framework? I believe we are. Is Bologna a model for global cooperation? It is already happening. I will illustrate this view with a look at the map and a look at the main Bologna action lines: qualifications frameworks, recognition and the European Credit and Accumulation System (ECTS), and quality assurance.

A simple look at the map will tell us that Bologna is indeed going global. Starting with 29 countries in 1999 it has expanded to 40 signatory states in 2003 when the Process was joined by the Southern Balkans, Andorra, The Holy See (how global can you get), and Russia. Eight more countries in the wider Europe (as defined by the Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe) are eligible to join, provided they demonstrate commitment, have a good plan, and respect democracy and human rights. The Ukraine is a serious candidate to join in Bergen in May 2005.

However, a country does not do need to be a signatory state to introduce “Bologna-type” reforms in its higher education system. Paradoxically, non-members are sometimes keener to adapt to the new rules than “insiders”. The neighbouring countries of the Bologna area, North Africa and the countries in Central Asia, have already demonstrated their interest and written the Bologna reforms as priorities in their national higher education reform plans.

They have asked and received support from the European Commission through TEMPUS-TACIS and TEMPUS-MEDA.[51]

More distant but close to the heart is Latin America, with two ministers at the table in Berlin in September 2003 witnessing the Bologna Process at the ministerial level – "top-down" – but also Latin American universities directly involved in a project called "Tuning Latin America" – "bottom-up" – looking at convergence in curricula in partnership with their European colleagues, within the support of the European Commission ALFA (América Latina – Formación Académica) programme.

In Asia, credit systems based on ECTS are introduced through mobility schemes like University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP) and through joint projects supported by the EU programme Asia-Link.

Australia has joined the Lisbon Recognition Convention and is introducing the European Diploma Supplements, two important Bologna objectives. More broadly, it is worth noting that UNESCO and OECD experts gathered in Tokyo in October 2004, to come up with non-binding guidelines for transnational education focussing on recognition and quality assurance. The outcomes, I predict, will bear striking resemblance with the Bologna reform agenda.

Last but not least, a policy dialogue has been launched with the United States and Canada in order to explore the impact of Bologna on mobility both ways: a dialogue involving countries (notably Germany), university associations (the European University Association and the Council of Graduate Schools), and the European Commission and its counterparts in North America. This dialogue is present at conferences like the ones organised by NAFSA and the European Association for International Education (EAIE), where Bologna sessions and workshops increase in number and attendance each year.

Let us now consider the Bologna priorities and their likely impact on international relations beyond the Bologna hemisphere. I will concentrate on the core of the Bologna Process, which consists of the three priorities set by ministers in Berlin in September 2003: the qualifications framework, recognition and ECTS, and quality assurance.

Qualifications frameworks

Qualifications frameworks provide level descriptors from basic skills to PhD level. Qualifications frameworks describe workloads, levels, learning outcomes, competences, and profiles. Each country has one, implicit or explicit.

51 Note from the editor: TEMPUS stands for Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Studies. TEMPUS-TACIS (Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States) concerns the eligible countries of the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union; TEMPUS-MEDA is open to Mediterranean Countries.

When national frameworks are compared and looked at objectively, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) emerges. Work has started on defining an EQF for higher education in the Bologna context and for vocational education and training (VET) in the context of the Copenhagen Process. The European Commission will pull these initiatives together under the umbrella of the Lisbon Strategy and come up with a consultation document on a "European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning".

Sectors in VET are translating such general descriptions for the individual professions and fields of study and the same is happening in higher education, through the project "Tuning Educational Structures in Europe".

In a couple of years from now, it will be possible to search on the web for EQF, click on a given level, read the level description, click on a subject area and read the Tuning descriptor for that subject area, updated and validated by panels of academics, in dialogue with the world of labour. It will be possible to click on a town and an institution or two and read how these institutions have interpreted the level descriptor in their own particular way. A national and European qualifications framework is more than a series of level descriptors. In the broad sense of the word, a qualifications framework encompasses arrangements for quality assurance, guidance, and counselling. It also follows principles such as flexibility and fair recognition in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

The European Qualifications Framework will enhance the readability and attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area on a global scale. It might also lead to some degree of convergence in other world regions, which for a variety of reasons – pedagogical, economic, or political – feel attracted to the European model.

Recognition and ECTS

For the qualifications framework to facilitate recognition, it should encompass the use of commonly understood transparency tools like the Diploma Supplement and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System. The Diploma Supplement should be given automatically to all graduates, free of charge in a widely spoken language. ECTS requires clear descriptions of what is taught and learned, through the use of transcript records and learning agreements, and notably through the publication – on the web – of an institutional information package/course catalogue, written in the language of instruction and in English. A growing number of institutions are applying ECTS across the board: they publish their information in English and define course and module objectives in terms of learning outcomes and competences. In the near future these will be linked to the reference points provided by the level descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework. The European Commission awards an ECTS label to institutions which apply the systems to all first and second cycle degree programmes.

The wide use of ECTS-proof course catalogues in English is bound to have a positive effect on demand for study in Europe, notably at Master level. It will probably be followed in other world regions, where, apart from North America and Australia, such practice is not widespread.

Quality assurance

In October 2004 the European Commission published a proposal for a recommendation of the Council and of the European Parliament on further European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education. It says that member states:

I) should require all higher education institutions within their territory to introduce or develop rigorous internal quality assurance mechanisms;

II) are required to ensure that all quality assurance or accreditation agencies active within their territory are independent in their assessments and that they apply the features of quality assurance laid down in the Council Recommendation of September 1998 and apply a common set of standards, procedures and guidelines, for assessment purposes;

III) should encourage quality assurance and accreditation agencies, together with organisations representing higher education, to set up a "European Register of Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agencies" and define the conditions for registration;

IV) should enable higher education institutions active within their territory to choose among quality assurance or accreditation agencies in the European Register, an agency which meets their needs and profile;

V) should accept the assessments made by all quality assurance and accreditation agencies listed in the European Register as a basis for decisions on licensing or funding of higher education institutions, including such matters as eligibility for student grants and loans.

This EU recommendation, which builds on the Bologna agenda, is expected to foster mutual recognition of quality assurance systems and assessments both within Europe and beyond, thus enhancing, once more, the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area.

Bologna as a model for global cooperation

The Bologna Process is first and foremost a model for regional cooperation. The European region, from Reykjavik to Vladivostok, has embraced the Bologna reforms and engaged itself in an unprecedented reform adventure with remarkable speed and coherence, given the depth of the reforms required and diversity of the education systems. Governments and universities share a sense of urgency to modernise higher education systems. The (perceived) impacts of globalisation, combined with a strong bandwagon effect,

are most likely providing the motivation for this commitment. The cooperation process at the European level is organised in a light manner with bi-annual ministerial meetings, ministerial communiqués, the Bologna Follow-up Group (representatives of member states, the European Commission, universities, colleges, students, the Council of Europe, and UNESCO), and a small secretariat, provided by the country which will host the subsequent ministerial meeting. Global cooperation between the world regions might emerge on a multilateral or bilateral basis. An example of multilateral cooperation along the Bologna action lines is the upcoming UNESCO-OECD guidelines on cross border quality assurance and recognition. The Bergen Communiqué of 19/20 May 2005 is expected to signal strong European interest in bilateral cooperation with neighbouring and other world regions. Delegations from across the globe are expected to attend the Bergen summit.

In conclusion, it is my expectation that “Bologna-type” reforms will be emulated in other world regions; that Europe will cooperate more strongly with other world regions in higher education reform processes; that “Bologna-type” regional cooperation will emerge within other world regions; and that this will ultimately lead to more global cooperation on these issues. All this can only happen fruitfully if the reforms are flexible enough to allow for diversity and innovation, as is often stressed in the European context.

Epilogue: Life beyond Bologna

The Bologna reforms are useful. If well marketed worldwide, they will raise the visibility of institutions and facilitate exchanges and partnerships. Universities should, however, look beyond Bologna and address more fundamental questions. What kind of institution to be: international, local, or a mixture of both? Who are the existing or potential partners? What strategic alliances should be formed? Under which conditions can knowledge creation flourish in the institution? How best to stimulate creativity in students? Governments should give institutions more autonomy so that they can address these questions, and new models for university governance and funding should be considered. All these matters need urgent attention, next to the rapid implementation of the Bologna reforms. Universities should become more proactive players in the knowledge society, as called for in the EU Lisbon Strategy.

Annex

The authors

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Sjur Bergan is Head of the Department of Higher Education and History Teaching at the Council of Europe (Directorate of School, Out-of-School and Higher Education Directorate General IV – Education, Culture and Cultural Heritage, Youth and Sport). He joined the Council of Europe in 1991 and has since been involved in most of the Council's higher education activities, amongst other functions as Secretary to the Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research (CDESR) and as Council of Europe representative on the Bologna Follow-up and Preparatory Groups. He is responsible for the Council's activities on recognition and mobility, including the establishment of a joint programme with UNESCO in this area, and Co-Secretary of the European Network of Information Centres on Academic Recognition and Mobility (ENIC). Before joining the Council of Europe, Sjur Bergan worked in the administration of the University of Oslo from 1983 until 1991. He is the editor of *Recognition Issues in the Bologna Process* (2003) and, with Nuria Sanz, of *The Heritage of European Universities* (2002).

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Volker Gehmlich has been Professor of Business Management at the University of Applied Sciences in Osnabrück, Germany, since 1972. He is the course director of undergraduate and postgraduate double degree programmes. He was also the major initiator of the restructuring of the faculty and the whole institution in terms of modularisation and the introduction of a credit-based system that is coherent with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). Volker Gehmlich has been involved with EU programmes since 1978 in various roles: project co-ordinator, assessor of project applications (e.g. EU-US; EU-Canada); contributor to the design of new initiatives; evaluator and trainer of assessors; EU-expert. He is also active in the project "Tuning Educational Structures in Europe", and the author of various publications on the internationalisation of organisations, skill needs, and credit systems.

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Jochen Hellmann is Head of the International Department at the University of Hamburg, a post he has held since 2001. He was educated at the University of Hamburg in Romance and German Languages and Literature, where he was awarded a PhD in 1991. His main fields of studies are international

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Ulf Lie

Ulf Lie has recently become a Senior Advisor to Norway's Centre for International University Cooperation (SIU) in Bergen, having created this organisation and been its Director until 2004. Earlier on, he was the Director of the Bergen Student Welfare Organisation and Chairman of the Norwegian Student Welfare Organisations. In a different career, he was a Professor of American Literature at Bergen University, and a Vice-Dean. He held a research fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) to the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo and published books and articles on poetry, art and literature, discourse analysis and language competence in industry. His recent publications focus on internationalisation, commercialisation, and the globalisation of higher education. Ulf Lie also has a distinguished track record in educational development cooperation, in which field he championed many successful projects.

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Salvador Malo is the General Director of the National Evaluation Centre for Higher Education (CENEVAL), Mexico's centre for the assessment of higher education. With a degree in Physics from the Universidad Nacional de México (UNAM) and a doctorate in Physics from Imperial College, University of London, he first worked at the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna. He then held several positions at Mexico's Instituto Mexicano del Petroleo (an oil industry-related technical and research centre), including Vice-President of Research. He later joined the Mexican Department of Education and initiated several programmes to promote development of the sciences in Mexican state universities. His past positions at UNAM include Vice-President for Planning, professor in the School of Sciences and UNAM's Center for University Studies, as well as Secretary General and Vice-President of Administration. In addition to his duties in these positions, he has been actively involved in international activities. He was a member of the Mexican Task Force Group for Collaboration in Higher Education in North America, and he is a member of the board of the Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration.

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Courtney Peltzer-Hönicke coordinates an international higher education marketing project for the DAAD/GATE-Germany (German Academic Exchange Service/ Guide to Academic Training and Education) at the University of Hamburg. Within the framework of this multimedia project, German higher education institutions are encouraged to present study and research opportunities particularly suited for international students. In addition to marketing, her special fields of interest include the introduction of the Bachelor-Master system and the role of language in the international higher education arena. She studied Germanic Languages and Literatures at the Universities of Kansas, Bonn, and Hamburg, completing her B.A. and M.A. at the University of Kansas.

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Krishnapratap B. Powar has recently become Advisor to the Dr. D.Y. Patil Deemed University and President of the Edupro Foundation in Pune, India. From 1986 to 1992, he was Vice-Chancellor of the Shivaji University in Kolhapur. In 1993, he became Secretary General of the Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi. Immediately after his retirement from this position in 2002, he joined the Amity Foundation for Higher Learning as its Founder Director, a post he held until the end of 2004. For the last eighteen years, K.B. Powar has been an educational administrator, and has made significant contributions to research and policy planning in Higher Education. He has published fifty papers in this field and is the author of four books, including *Internationalisation of Higher Education: Focus on India* (2003). He has edited fifteen volumes dealing with different aspects of higher education, the last being *Private Initiatives in Higher Education* (2004). K.B. Powar is also a well-known earth scientist who has made important contributions to Himalayan Geology and Environmental Geology. He has been a past Sectional President of the Indian Science Congress and the past Vice-President of the Maharashtra Academy of Science. He is a Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences, India.

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Karel Reus is the Manager for International Cooperation at Monash University in Melbourne. Joining Monash University in 1993 as a senior administrator, Karel Reus took over the budding student exchange programme and built it up into the Monash Abroad programme. For three years, he also worked as a manager in the international marketing programme at Monash University, with particular responsibilities for Europe, the United States, and Indonesia. During 2001-2002 Karel Reus was the manager of the Monash University Centre in London. Before he joined Monash University, Karel Reus worked as a freelance consultant from 1987 to 1993. During this period, he worked

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Angelika Schade is the Managing Director of the Accreditation Council in Bonn, and has been in this position since 2001. She studied Law and Sociology in Münster and Bremen, as well in Lausanne, and Oñati (Spain). She earned her doctoral degree in 1991 at the University of Bremen, where she worked from 1986 until 1992 as a researcher. She then worked for the German Institute for International Educational Research (DIPF) in Frankfurt until 1999. During this time, she also spent nine months as a researcher at the European unit of Eurydice, the information network on education in Europe, in Brussels. From 1999 until 2001, Angelika Schade was head of the accreditation unit at the Central Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (ZEvA) in Hanover.

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Peter Scott is the Vice-Chancellor of Kingston University and the President of the Academic Cooperation Association. Prior to this he was Pro Vice-Chancellor for External Affairs at the University of Leeds, as well as a Professor of Education and the Director of the Centre for Policy Studies in Education. Before going to Leeds in 1992, he was for sixteen years Editor of the *Times Higher Education Supplement*.

Peter Scott was educated at the University of Oxford and at the University of California at Berkeley. He has honorary doctorates from the University of Bath, University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST), the (former) Council for National Academic Awards, Anglia Polytechnic University, and Grand Valley State University. He is also a Member of the Academia Europea and of the Academy of Learned Societies for the Social Sciences. His research interests are the governance and management of universities and colleges, non-standard access to higher education and the links between further and higher education. Among his publications are *The Meanings of Mass Higher Education* (1995), *Governing Universities* (1996), the *Globalization of Higher Education* (1998) and *Higher Education Re-formed* (2000), *University Leadership: The Role of the Chief Executive* (2000), *Ten Years On: Higher Education in Central and Eastern Europe* (2000) and *Re-Thinking Science: Knowledge Production in an Age of Uncertainties* (2001).

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Christian Tauch is the Head of the International Department of the German Rector's Conference (HRK), a post he has held since 1995. He is one of the authors of the Trends report on the progress towards the European Higher Education Area, a series of biannual reports produced for ministerial conferences of the Bologna Process, which maps out the Bologna implementation in each country. He also supported the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research in preparing the Berlin Conference of European Ministers of Higher Education in September 2003. Christian Tauch was born in Tettnang, Germany. He studied History, International Relations, and Literature at the University of Konstanz and at the University of Massachusetts, and taught German language and History at the University of Ulster. From 1988 to 1991, he was a researcher at the European University Institute in Florence. Prior to his current position, he was head of the international office at the Technical University of Dresden.

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Pieter van Dijk

Until his retirement in January 2005, Pieter van Dijk was the President of Nuffic, the Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education and Research, a post he has held since 1991. After completing a Masters degree at Amsterdam University in Development Sociology, Social Anthropology, Sociological Theory, and the History of the Arab World in 1968, his work in the following years concentrated on issues of development cooperation, in organisations such as the Nuffic, the Free University of Amsterdam, and the Netherlands Foundation for Scientific Research. Between 1978 and 1990, he was the Head of Policy Bureau Planning, Evaluation and Multi-Sectoral Programmes at the Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam, before he entered the services of OECD, where he served a 10-year term as a principal administrator in the Public Management Service. Before becoming the President of the Nuffic, he was the Director of the Institute for Social Science Research in Developing Countries in The Hague.

What is ACA?

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