



Successes and Failures of the Bologna Process

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Bologna Declaration 1999 (I)

- Preceded by the Sorbonne Declaration, May 25, 1998 (800 years of Paris University):
„The European process has very recently moved some extremely important steps ahead....Europe is not only that of the Euro, of the banks and the economy....An open European area for higher learning....requires...efforts to remove barriers and.... a framework....which would enhance mobility and an ever closer cooperation“
The Sorbonne Declaration already contains the key elements of the Bologna Process , initiated by the French Minister Claude Allègre
- Bologna Declaration, June 19,1999, 31 signatures (2 from Belgium 2 from Germany, current EU-28, not: Croatia+Cyprus, yet: plus Iceland, Norway, Switzerland), Belarus member in 2015, see Magna Charta Universitatum 1988 (mentioned in the Declaration)

Bologna Declaration (II)

Key elements of the EHEA:

- easily readable and comparable degrees
- system based on two main cycles (Bachelor, Master)
- Establishment of a system of credits („such as the ECTS system“), as a means of promoting student mobility
- Promotion of mobility of staff and students
- European „cooperation“ in quality assurance
- European dimension in HE (curricula development, interinstitutional cooperation, mobility schemes, integrated programs)

„We expect universities....to respond promptly and positively and to contribute actively to the success of our endeavour.“ The use of the term „our“ indicates that universities are not perceived as the subjects of this endeavour.

Bologna Process: 3 levels

- European level: ministerial meetings at Prague 2001, Berlin 2003, Bergen 2005, London 2007, Leuven 2009, Budapest/Vienna 2010, Bucharest 2012, Yerevan 2015 (+France 2018) Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG), BFUG working groups, conferences, meetings of the general directors of HE (DGHE), Trends reports etc.,
- National level: autonomy of member states to implement structural reforms . Yet, Yerevan communiqué: „implementation is uneven and the tools are sometimes used incorrectly or in bureaucratic and superficial ways“.
- Institutional level: University /HEI - autonomy varies from member state to member state



Bologna Process: European level

- Due to a weak institutionalization the Bologna Process, first a purely intergovernmental initiative, has been more and more driven by the EU Commission and stakeholders (EUA, ESU, ENQA) since Prague 2001
- Example 1: Standard and guidelines for quality assurance, Bergen 2005, ENQA with EUA
- Example 2: EQAR-cross border accreditation , DGHE May 2003: „quis custodiet ipsos custodes“,
London 2007, EUA (rather opposed by ENQA)
- Example 3: PhD education, Berlin 2003 – London 2007,
Salzburg Recommendations (Salzburg Feb. 2005, Nice conference Dec. 2006), EUA
- Example 4: Modernisation Agenda for Universities, EU Commission (trying to align EHEA with ERA, „Europe of Knowledge“), now „Enhancing the quality and relevance of learning and teaching“ (Yerevan communiqué)
- Example 5: Portability of grants and loans, ESU



Bologna Processes: national and institutional level

- pursuit of national goals by member states: program accreditation in Germany, UK: master programs of 60 ECTS-points, recognition of short cycle qualifications , rejection of the original Commission ´s modernisation agenda (2006)
- institutional level: conflicts with Humboldtian ideas of Bildung (unrest of students in 2009/10), opposition to new study architectures by various professional groups, e.g., in law, pharmacy, medicine, existing decision making structures in faculties (curricula, recognition of studies abroad)

Successes of the Bologna process

- Harmonization of study architectures. Yet, check the national implementations, see Yerevan Communiqué 2015
- PhD education: EUA – CDE, EUA: „Principles and Practices for International Doctoral Education“ (Brussels 2015), PhD education not mentioned in the Yerevan Communiqué 2015, but its issues pursued by EUA and Eurodoc.
- Re-engineering of curricula development at the Bachelor’s and Master’s level: modularization (makes the recognition of short cycle qualifications easier and of prior informal and non-formal learning), student-centered learning (ECTS, linked to learning outcomes?), introduction of Diploma Supplement
- Awareness of establishing an institutional quality assurance (overcoming the fragmentation of institutions)
- Mobility of staff, academic and non-academic

Ambivalences and failures of the Bologna Process

- Ambivalent effect of the introduction of a two-tier-system on the credit mobility of students, credit mobility vs. degree mobility, degree mobility perceived by some member states as „brain drain“
- No clear profile of Bachelor programs, neither at the European, national and institutional level
- Relationship between the new study architecture for higher education and labour markets unclear: public employment not used for signalling the value of a Bachelor education, see Germany: Coalition Agreement CDU/CSU-SPD vs. Innenministerium (SZ December 29, 2015, p.5)
- Mutual trust among HEIs not yet reached, see, e.g., the forthcoming report on the compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention 1997 (effective on Feb 1, 1999)
- The Bologna Process did not increase institutional autonomy, intra-European competition, institutional efficiency, links to social goals and to labour markets (but see modernisation agenda of 2006), national fragmentation of the market for higher education continues, yet: see the Sorbonne Declaration („to remove barriers“)
- No clear vision of the future of the Bologna Process (Europe – North America)



**„It takes all the running you can do,
to keep in the same place“.
(Lewis Carroll)**