

Pavel Zgaga

Looking out!

The Bologna Process in a Global Setting

On the “External Dimension” of the Bologna Process

DRAFT



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Preface

The Bologna ministers stated in the Bergen Communiqué in 2005 that the European Higher Education Area should be open and attractive to other parts of the world. In order to share experiences with non-European countries within a satisfactory framework, they asked the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG) to develop a strategy on the so-called “external dimension” of the Bologna Process. A BFUG Working Group with representatives from 11 Bologna states and 8 organisations was set up to prepare a strategy document to the BFUG. The BFUG Working Group is chaired by Norway.

In addition to the discussions and written contributions by the BFUG Working Group, three official Bologna seminars was arranged in 2006; the Vatican Seminar in March/April, the Greek Seminar in Athens in June and the Nordic Seminar in Oslo in September.

Professor Pavel Zgaga at Ljubljana University was appointed by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research to be rapporteur and to follow the strategy work process. A first draft report was published in advance of the Nordic Seminar. The present report is Professor Zgaga’s final document before the BFUG Working Group make their proposal for a Strategy document on the external dimension of the Bologna Process. In addition to conclusions and recommendations from the BFUG Working Group and the seminars mentioned above, Professor Zgaga has also contributed with his own analysis and reflections as well as a significant historical background for the Bologna Process.

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Executive summary

This report concerns the elaboration of a strategy for the external dimension as called for by ministers in the Bergen Communiqué (2005).

The report is organised in four chapters that cover:

1. *Introduction* – the mandate to elaborate a strategy on the external dimension and the composition of the Working Group;
 2. *The “External Dimension”: what is this?* – roots and historical perspective of the concept, the issue of extending the Process to other parts of the world and the agendas of the “external dimension”;
 3. *The “External Dimension”: Echoes of the Bologna Process from world regions* – the nature of echoes; echoes from different world regions and their messages;
 4. *Conclusions* – why does the “external dimension” matter, findings from the three Bologna seminars, elements of the External Dimension Strategy,
- as well as *three annexes* with related documents and an extended *bibliography*.

The **Introduction** starts from the Ministerial mandate on elaborating a strategy as defined in the Bergen Communiqué which was considered in detail at the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) meeting in October 2005. The importance of this theme within the BFUG work programme for the period 2005 – 2007 is reflected in the fact that an extended Working Group was established to work on these issues and that, in addition, three seminars on the subject (in the Vatican, Athens and Oslo) were agreed. At the beginning of its work, the Working Group agreed to prepare two documents: an *analytical report* (this document) and a *draft External Dimension Strategy* (to be ready by late 2006). The report has been prepared in two steps: as a background document to support the drafting process within the Working Group, as well as the Oslo seminar (“Report A” – September 2006), and as a final report (“Report B” – October 2006).

Chapter two examines the roots and the nature of the term *external dimension of the Bologna Process*. The genuine aims of the Sorbonne and Bologna Declarations already contain fairly clear statements on raising “the attractive potential of our systems”, increasing “the international competitiveness of the European systems of higher education” and ensuring “a world-wide degree of attraction”. However, considerations on the international or global role and influence of European higher education can be found even earlier, namely in pre-Bologna contexts, e.g. in discussions on European integration and on the role of higher education. The establishment of the EU programmes Erasmus and Tempus, on the one hand, and the signing of the Magna Charta Universitatum and Lisbon Recognition Convention, on the other, characterise these contexts and discussions very well.

The chapter gives an analysis of the context and genesis of what has been named the “external dimension” since shortly after the Prague Ministerial summit in 2001. Yet this issue has not been addressed solely from a European point of view - there has been growing interest also in other world regions. The “opening” of the Bologna Process has led to the question – *could or should the Bologna reforms be extended to other parts of the world?* Thus, horizons for discussing the “external dimension” were moulded and opened. The ongoing discussion on

the “external dimension” has shown so far that it is not only about international competitiveness, attractiveness and recognition but also about partnership and cooperation, policy dialogue and, last but not least, clear information on processes in European higher education.

Chapter three explores echoes of the Bologna Process from world regions. There had been no previous systematic review of this kind; through a survey of a huge amount of heterogeneous documents and information, this chapter tries to outline the main trends and questions that have been arising as the waves of the Bologna Process have been spreading around the globe. The frequency of these echoes is astonishing; yet they differ very much one from another. Bologna reverberates in many ways, depending on “regional points of view”. Countries in transition, for example, warn against a practice of imposition and argue in favour of two-way cooperation. It has also been heard from the South Mediterranean that »it takes two to tango«.

Further east, China declares its readiness to »learn the useful foreign experience« but also to »promote the reform and development of our higher education and enhance mutual understanding«. Everywhere, there are many cases of good inter-institutional cooperation which has been importantly enhanced through the European Commission’s – but also “the national” – international agreements and programmes for higher education and research. This can be clearly seen, for instance, in the ASEAN countries. In Africa, in addition to cooperation with single institutions and organisations, there have been proposals to look at “the big picture”- to build a system approach and to try to »benefit from initiatives outside Africa, avoiding mistakes made by others and building on their gains«.

Francophone and lusophone countries are not geographically homogenous but there are several excellent initiatives to exchange good practices from Europe and to support developments in national higher education systems in different countries of the world. In Latin America, “the homogenisation of European universities” has not always been welcome due to some – most likely bad – experiences with the commercially-oriented cooperation policy from Europe. Yet, the Tuning project has been successfully spread all over the continent. Institutional cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, and ministerial cooperation in parts of Asia and Oceania (the Brisbane Communiqué, 2006) seem to be the most interesting parallels to processes in Europe. In a public consultation in the spring of 2006, Australia openly stressed the benefits of “Bologna compatibility” and the risks of “Bologna incompatibility”, but it also doubted »that full compatibility with the Bologna Process is the only option«. In autumn 2005, the U.S. Secretary of State formed the Commission on the Future of Higher Education which deals with similar issues, albeit without referring to European examples. The U.S. are proud of their »share of the world’s best universities« but »a lot of countries have followed our lead«. A major issue with regard to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) seems to be the recognition of new first cycle degrees.

Almost everywhere it was possible to register a fairly significant lack of information on the Bologna Process and on the emerging EHEA. At one recent conference it was warned that systems that develop without due regard to the outside world run a high risk of failure. This refers to Europe in a double regard: there is an obvious need to provide clear and comprehensive information on the Bologna Process and the emerging EHEA for interested audiences worldwide but also to consider seriously world echoes to European reforms and to learn from them.

Chapter four discusses why the “external dimension” really matters; it provides a recapitulation of the three Bologna seminars on this subject and draws some conclusions. Clear and *direct* echoes, comments and messages on the Bologna Process have been identified but also tacit and *indirect* ones. Many issues, which could probably be perceived in the eyes of Europe as “the typical Bologna issues” have been discussed also in other parts of the world, but they could also be addressed without necessarily referring to the Bologna Process. Bologna certainly has its own character and context – higher education policies in other parts of the world likewise. However, there is a “general” higher education modernisation agenda which is common to all world regions and to all countries of today – broadening access, diversifying study programmes, quality enhancement, employability, links to economy, mobility, international students, recognition of study periods and degrees, etc.

Echoes captured and presented in the third chapter prove again that “the external dimension” is far from being a simple phenomenon. In general, there are two main levels at which these echoes appear: at the (national or international) *policy development level* and at the *level of institutions*. In certain environments outside Europe, the Bologna “policy message” has received more attention; in other parts it has been a case of the “cooperation message” from universities and academic institutions taking an active part in the Bologna Process. These two levels are more often than not linked together. The Bologna Process has been developing the virtues of higher education policy development in partnership; this could probably be an important Bologna “message” which may help in linking together both levels in various environments. Who responds to this message is not that important – policy-makers or academic institutions. Either of them alone, but also both of them together would be welcome. Yet it is for the EHEA to understand that national contexts may differ and that potential echoes will always depend on these differing contexts. Acting upon the principle of higher education policy development in partnership may gradually contribute to more balanced echoes from both target levels.

The national higher education systems within the EHEA are also diverse. Not only should the External Dimension Strategy take into account that the various target world regions and countries, as well as the different target levels in these regions and countries might require specific approaches, but the EHEA as such should also take account of its own existing diversities. The Bologna “philosophy” has always argued in favour of diversity and this attitude should not be forgotten here either. Yet an EHEA “external dimension” strategy is only possible if a “common denominator” is found or established – similarly to the case of searching for an overarching framework for qualifications of the EHEA or in the case of developing standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the EHEA.

Recapitulating recent discussions, but without prejudicing final steps in drafting the External Dimension Strategy, the following themes seem to belong among its key issues:

- *attractiveness* of the EHEA depends on its distinctiveness from higher education provision in other regions: transparent quality, accessibility, recognition, mobility enhanced by structural (transparency, compatibility, recognition, etc.) and social means (support and scholarship schemes, visa regulations, etc.), non-exclusiveness, cultural diversity (but without the obstacles of a linguistic Babylon), etc. The promotion of intercultural and inter-religious understanding, traditional values of European universities and higher education institutions in general are of particular importance;

- *competitiveness* among European countries and third countries as well as among individual higher education institutions is needed to strengthen the quality of higher education, research and teaching potentials in order to broaden access and to promote flexible learning paths, to attract more international students, to make higher education more efficient, etc. On the other hand, higher education should substantially contribute to the competitiveness of the European economy, trade and centres of excellence as the point where academic, economic and political interests should coincide;
- *cooperation* aims firstly at the mutual potential benefits of the EHEA and other world regions and should be based on traditions of academic cooperation between Europe and these regions. It is also dependent on promoting the two-way flow of information and knowledge, as well as two-way mobility. It should aim at achieving higher critical mass through incentives for international research teams and joint study programmes. The improvement of mutual recognition of study and study periods on a global scale, solidarity and support for higher education systems in less developed parts of the world and the political importance of global higher education cooperation are also high on the cooperation agenda;
- *information on the EHEA and promoting its image in a wider world* demands a common information system (e.g. common portal; European higher education fairs, coordinated information campaigns, etc.), which should not be seen in opposition to specific national (institutional) information systems. Guidance for students and staff from third countries (other regions), institutions and institutional frameworks, capacity-building, language policy, etc. are also on this list.

In **Annex 1**, fragments of the “external dimension” from various European documents (time span from 1987 to 2006) are presented, drawing the lines from e.g. the decision on establishing the *Erasmus* programme (1987) and *Magna Charta Universitatum* (1988) via the Sorbonne and Bologna Declarations to various relevant documents developed within the Bologna Process, as well as relevant EU documents within the Lisbon strategy. **Annex 2** contains conclusions and recommendations from all three official Bologna seminars on the “external dimension”. **Annex 3** contains a proposal for a BFUG Working Group on the external dimension of the Bologna Process from autumn 2005.

Bibliography includes a list of reference texts on the “external dimension” of the Bologna Process, other relevant papers as well as related official documents (Bologna documents, EU documents, other related European and international documents) and other materials. It also contains a list of institutions, associations, networks, etc., referred to in the report, their abbreviations and Internet websites used in the report.

1. Introduction

1. The Bergen Communiqué (20 May 2005), under the heading “The attractiveness of the EHEA and cooperation with other parts of the world”, included the following two paragraphs:

The European Higher Education Area must be open and should be attractive to other parts of the world. Our contribution to achieving education for all should be based on the principle of sustainable development and be in accordance with the ongoing international work on developing guidelines for quality provision of cross-border higher education. We reiterate that in international academic cooperation, academic values should prevail.

We see the European Higher Education Area as a partner of higher education systems in other regions of the world, stimulating balanced student and staff exchange and cooperation between higher education institutions. We underline the importance of intercultural understanding and respect. We look forward to enhancing the understanding of the Bologna Process in other continents by sharing our experiences of reform processes with neighbouring regions. We stress the need for dialogue on issues of mutual interest. We see the need to identify partner regions and intensify the exchange of ideas and experiences with those regions. We ask the Follow-up Group to elaborate and agree on a strategy for the external dimension.

2. The Ministers’ mandate was considered in detail at the Bologna Follow-up Group meeting on 12-13 October 2005. Proposals for three seminars on this theme were presented: the Holy See seminar foreseen for March/April 2006, Greece seminar in June 2006 and a seminar arranged by the Nordic countries in September 2006. In the Terms of Reference, prepared by the Nordic countries Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, it was proposed to link all these three seminars to an overarching Working Group with the mandate to elaborate upon a strategy for the external dimension, as asked for by ministers in Bergen.

Seminars were accepted on a list of official Bologna events of the period 2005-2007 and it was also agreed to establish the External Dimension Working Group chaired by Norway. Membership of the working group encompassed the wide range of interests in the external dimension. The Working Group was composed of BFUG-representatives from 11 countries: Norway, Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, The Holy See, Malta, Portugal, Spain and Sweden as well as of 7 consultative members: Academic Cooperation Association (ACA), Council of Europe (CoE), Education International (EI), National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB), European Commission (EC), European University Association (EUA) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO-CEPES). The Working Group was later extended to include a member from the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE).

Permanent members of the Working Group are as follows:

Toril Johansson (Norway) Chair
Barbara Weitgruber (Austria)
Mogens Berg (Denmark)
Eric Froment (France)
Birgit Galler (Germany)

Athanasios Kyriazis (Greece)
 Padre Friedrich Bechina (the Holy See)
 Joseph Mifsud (Malta)
 Pedro Lourtie (Portugal)
 Felix Haering Pérez (Spain)
 Annika Persson Pontén (Sweden)
 Bernd Wächter (ACA)
 Sjur Bergan (CoE)
 Monique Fouilhoux (EI)
 Daithí Mac Síthigh (ESIB)
 Anita Līce, ESIB
 Alan Smith (EC)
 Peter van der Hijden (EC)
 Michael Gaebel (EUA)
 Lesley Wilson (EUA)
 Stefan Delplace (EURASHE)
 Jan Sadlak (UNESCO-CEPES)

Yvonne Clarke joined the group on behalf of the Bologna Secretariat from London and Pavel Zgaga was invited to be the Rapporteur of the group. The Working Group has also been supported by Foteini Asderaki (Greece), Hélène Lagier (France), Søren Nørgaard (EURASHE), Rolf Larsen (Norway) and Alf Rasmussen (Norway).

3. This Report fulfils a part of the mission. It has been prepared in two steps: a preliminary version (“*Report A*”) was presented at the last of three “external dimension” seminars – the one in Oslo (28-29 September) and the revised version (“*Report B*”) will be presented at the BFUG meeting in October 2006.

At its various stages, the report has been used as a basis for the preparation of the Strategy document. The report also takes into account various readers’ needs from Bologna as well as non-Bologna countries and tries to offer comprehensive references on the so-called “external dimension” in its various aspects (history, overview of echoes from various parts of the world, bibliography, Internet links, etc).

The author would like to sincerely thank the colleagues from the External Dimension Working Group for their essential help in their continuous discussions and comments on the text, as well as to the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research for its support. Needless to say, any remaining inaccuracies and mistakes are exclusively on the author’s account.

2. The “External Dimension” – what is it?

4. *What in fact is to be understood under the “external dimension of the Bologna Process”?*

This question may seem a bit unusual at the beginning of a report which is expected, first and foremost, to give answers. Even though such expectations have been taken into account it is, nevertheless, necessary to start with this basic question.

5. In modern times, we use the word “dimension” quite often in our languages. Yet, it is not always used in a traditional way, e.g. as a size or a measurement of a length, etc. At the very beginning of the Bologna Process we started to talk about the “*structural*” dimension of European higher education systems and, today, this term denotes not only three cycles, but a whole array of related issues – credit systems, learning outcomes, frameworks of qualification etc. Soon after the Prague meeting, the “Bologna language” continued to differentiate it from the “*social*” dimension, since it is impossible, in a European context to reduce higher education to either abstract system “architectures” or to a “private good”. A very frequent term, although not born within the Bologna Process but within the much broader European integration processes, is also the “*European*” dimension (e.g. within national education systems in general) and this is another serious issue. Last but not least, since the Prague Ministerial Summit, the term “*external dimension*” of the Bologna Process has also entered European higher education vocabularies.

When reflecting on the “Bologna language” (in fact, it could apply to any other similar modern slang as well) it seems that the term “dimension” is used in the same way as in mathematics: a number of “unknown quantities” contained as “factors in a product” (a product named the Bologna Process). At least, it could be said that there have been a lot of rather similar entities not analysed in the finest detail, and our language has classified them as a cluster, as a “dimension”. Later on, people always come to question what precisely these entities are and if these entities exist – are they really linked together, why do they produce certain paradoxes, etc.

The “external dimension” and its roots

6. Roots of the term *external dimension of the Bologna Process* can be found already in the genuine Sorbonne and Bologna aims: the Sorbonne Declaration stressed “the international recognition and attractive potential of our systems” while the Bologna Declaration looked “at the objective of increasing the international competitiveness of the European systems of higher education” and claimed to ensure “a world-wide degree of attraction”. However, considerations on the international role and influence of European higher education can be found earlier: in pre-Bologna contexts, e.g. in discussions on European integrations and on the role of higher education. Ann Corbett in her recent study, “both a detective story of the early attempts to Europeanise higher education and an academic study of policy change”, says: “The aims are external to Europe, and internal. The goal is not only to make the European higher education area (EHEA) attractive enough to the rest of the world to draw in more of the best foreign students and scholars, but also to boost quality within Europe itself, as a way of making universities more effective within the knowledge-based economy which the

world's richest nations regard as the sine qua non of economic growth.” (Corbett, 2005, p. xii; 4).

Europe has sentiments about its “attractiveness” and attractiveness is measured most often, of course, in “external mirrors”. However, Europe has also a lot to do with self. This is what produces certain paradoxes, whether the observation is made from outside or inside. Ulrich Teichler justly noted that “[i]n the early 1990s, external observers could come to the conclusion that higher education in Europe ‘Europeanised’ rather than ‘internationalised’. [...] 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 relationship between higher education in Europe and higher education in the wider world.” (Teichler; in: Muche, 2005, p. 114).

7. This shift was a result of a much longer process. In Europe, at least in Europe prior to 1990, internationalisation could refer both to Europeanisation (from outside probably seen as European “internal” internationalisation) as well as internationalisation in “wider” terms. Internationalisation itself could have various meanings,¹ depending first of all on political alignments (e.g. links with previous colonies, limited but existing academic cooperation over the “iron curtain”, academic cooperation between countries of the “non-alignment movement”² etc.), but also on cultural traditions and linguistic links, on the size of the national higher education system and support institutions, etc. Students and academic staff have always been coming from other countries and continents, but the proportions of students received by the different countries varied widely. At the early stages of internationalisation – as well as “Europeanisation” – “the prime movers of such initiatives in the different countries tended to be mainly individual academics whose enthusiasm and personal commitment sustained and build up the networks” (Eurydice, 2000, p. 160).

A systemic support to gradual internationalisation of higher education was appearing rather slowly and in different ways in different countries. “These disparities in the proportion of students sent and received were reflected by differences in the internationalisation support structures in place in the participating countries and often also by differences in the amount of collaborative international research undertaken. Those countries which had a relatively high level of internationalisation before 1980 (Denmark, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom) primarily had links with non-industrialised, developing countries, often ex-colonies, which were associated with development aid programmes. These links consisted mainly of the reception of students from and the secondment of teaching staff to these countries as well as joint research projects. International links with other industrialised countries were primarily focused on collaborative research and exchanges of academic staff.” (Eurydice, 2000, p. 157).

¹ On certain horizons, internationalisation of higher education can be understood in Europe differently from e.g. USA. The 2003 Transatlantic Dialogue focused on the theme “Higher Education in a Pluralist World”; it is very interesting to see how participants approached the defining of pluralism. There were strongly shared views as well as some divergences, both related to academic values and contexts that provide values. Understanding pluralism as *openness to different intellectual perspectives* or as *safe space for debate* was common to all. On the other hand, a difference appeared in relation to “an insistence by the Europeans on *internationalization* as a dimension of pluralism. The Bologna process has provided enormous energy and visibility for an agenda that will increase the cultural and linguistic diversity of European higher education institutions by enabling students to move freely among those institutions and bringing students from around the world in Europe.” (Green, Barblan, 2004, p. 6).

² For example, former Socialist Federal Yugoslavia had been receiving a lot of students from Africa and Asia during the late 1950s to the 1980s; but after 1990 these traditional streams almost ceased to exist.

In the mid-1980s, European “internal” internationalisation of higher education was strongly encouraged – with the establishment of the European Commission’s action programmes for research and student mobility for the first time in a systemic way. Indirectly, it was important also for “external” internationalisation: Europe was both an “internal” EU and a “larger” Europe, strongly divided during the cold war but coming closer and closer in a period before and after the fall of the Berlin wall. In the west, government initiatives relating to internationalisation entered legislation and policy documents and went further to establish support agencies, special funding for institutions, support measures to promote student exchanges, etc.

After 1990, stimulated first by the European Commission’s *Tempus*³ programme and, for a number of countries, by a wish to join *Erasmus*⁴ programme as soon as possible,⁵ similar changes occurred also in central and eastern Europe. The Eurydice study of two decades of reforms in European higher education concludes “that internationalisation has certainly become a component of planning and administration in higher education institutions in all participating countries”. (Eurydice, 2000, p. 168-169). This was an extremely important step towards understanding the “external dimension” of what happened in European higher education policy debates.

8. These trends were only strengthened by the “globalisation challenges” starting to be discussed in the economy and in politics but later also in higher education during the nineties worldwide. Here we are. At the beginning, four countries, ever followed by new ones to make up a group of 45, agreed to move “the European process”, not only to Europe “of the Euro, of the banks and the economy” but towards “Europe of knowledge” as well: “We must strengthen and build upon the intellectual, cultural, social and technical dimensions of our continent”. (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998). Eight years later we probably understand this message a bit differently, but inherently it was obviously from the beginning a reference to “us” as well as to the “others”.

The very beginning of the Bologna Process was characterised by the belief that changes in the structure of European higher education systems could be the main vehicle for raising attractiveness worldwide. Few weeks before Prague, the *Trends II Report* made an interesting note with regard to “indications and directions for the future”: “The marked growth of the attention given to the ‘external’ dimension of the process and to the development of tools/plans to make national higher education more attractive at home, in Europe and in the world should continue. The fact that this process could be made easier and more successful if it had a European dimension has not yet been acknowledged: European degrees will not be generally accepted in the world if they are not generally accepted in Europe.” (Haug and Tauch, 2001, p. 7).

³ See section 15 for some details on the Tempus programme.

⁴ *Erasmus* is the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students, established already in 1987. It contains a wide range of measures designed to support the European activities of higher education institutions and to promote the mobility and exchange of their teaching staff and students. Readopted in 2000 within the Socrates II programme and spanning the period until the end of 2006, its actions are now open to the participation of 31 countries: the 25 Member States of the European Union, the 3 European Economic Area countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) and the 3 candidate countries (Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey). – For details see <http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/erasmus/what_en.html>.

⁵ Many Central and East European countries joined Erasmus already in the second half of the 1990s.

Indeed, Europe still has to agree on so many details; it has to stand up from sharp shards of the past and to grow up as *Europe*. As studies show, the perception of European higher education outside Europe is still very weak: there are rather British, French, German etc. systems and universities and not “European” ones.⁶ The long way from Prague via Berlin to Bergen has led to a growing consensus in a number of issues: an overarching framework for qualifications of the European higher education area (EHEA), standards and guidelines for quality assurance, etc. Parallel to “internal” developments, an awareness of the “external” dimension of the Process increased and concrete issues were raised. Firstly, one of them was a geographical issue: if the “Bologna club” is enlarging what could/should be the limits of membership? What could/should be the confines of the EHEA?

9. In Prague, eligibility for the Bologna Process was still limited to the “countries for which the European Community programmes Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci or Tempus-Cards are open” (Prague Communiqué, 2001). It soon became clear that this is too narrow a definition and at the Berlin Conference it was agreed that “Countries party to the European Cultural Convention shall be eligible for membership of the European Higher Education Area provided that they at the same time declare their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the Bologna Process in their own systems of higher education. Their applications should contain information on how they will implement the principles and objectives of the declaration” (Berlin Communiqué, 2003). While referring to “Countries party to the European Cultural Convention” the “internal” vs. “external” delineation of the emerging Higher Education Area was drawn. Could it be more than delineation? A new border? To whom and why?

Sjur Bergan warned once that “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” (Bergan; in: Muche, 2005, p. 43). This warning should again be taken seriously.

Should the Bologna reforms be extended to other parts of the world?

10. In May 2002, on the way from Prague and Berlin, the Bologna Follow-up Group “approved that a specific point for debate of the external aspect of the Bologna Process should be added to the agenda of the next meeting”.⁷ A special working group was formed, but it took more time than originally envisaged: the final report was given in June 2003, already close to the Berlin Conference. Contrary to *competitiveness* – a term from the Bologna Declaration – the report exposed *attractiveness*, *openness* and *cooperation* as three main entities of the “external dimension”. *Attractiveness* “depends on many factors of which the most important are quality, transparency, diversity and visibility”. *Openness* was interpreted on the basis of the principle that “European higher education should be open to students from all over the world”. The working group strongly recommended that existing “scholarship

⁶ “Overall, Europe is not perceived as a union as regards higher education. There is a perception of Europe as an ‘entity’ in general terms and as an economic union. However, when it comes to cultural aspects and higher education, most students rather saw Europe as a range of very different countries. An important share of Chinese and Indian respondents and of staff members saw large differences between the quality of education provided in individual EU member states. Beyond this, respondents saw the most substantial discrepancies regarding cost-related issues (both tuition fees and living costs) and student support.” (ACA, 2006, p. 10-11).

⁷ See Bologna Follow up Group, *Attractiveness, Openness and Co-operation. The European Higher Education Area and third countries*. Report by the Danish Presidency. 4th draft, Athens, 20 June 2003 (1st draft, Copenhagen, 4 November 2002; 2nd draft, Athens, 18 February 2003).

programmes should be further developed” and that visa and entry requirements and procedures should be simplified.

Finally, when *cooperation* entered the agenda, the working group made the following introductory statement: “Accomplishing the objectives in the Bologna Declaration is a huge task for the signatories. This task should not be complicated further by associating non-European countries to the process at this stage. Instead the Bologna-countries should cooperate in an open way with regions and countries in other parts of the world by promoting the idea and practice of regional cooperation and through practical cooperation and dissemination of experiences.”

The main aims of cooperation between Bologna-countries and other regions was focused on promoting the “Bologna idea” and to regional cooperation “à la Bologna” (e.g. strengthening cultural contacts and mutual understanding, enhancing quality in higher education, creating a coherent regional labour market with transparency in qualifications, etc.). Conditions for such cooperation were also discussed; as effective operative ways, the existing cooperative frameworks and contacts to UNESCO regions were mentioned. The Report also tried to identify regions of priority interest for a new type of cooperation and mentioned Middle Eastern and Southern Mediterranean countries, SNG/CIS countries, Caribbean and Latin America as well as South-East Asian countries.

The report on attractiveness, openness and cooperation found a sound echo in the Berlin Communiqué.⁸ Ministers welcomed “the interest shown by other regions of the world in the development of the European Higher Education Area” and agreed that “the attractiveness and openness of the European higher education should be reinforced. They confirm their readiness to further develop scholarship programmes for students from third countries”. They also declared that “transnational exchanges in higher education should be governed on the basis of academic quality and academic values, and agree to work in all appropriate fora to that end”. Last but not least, they encouraged “the cooperation with regions in other parts of the world by opening Bologna seminars and conferences to representatives of these regions” (Berlin Communiqué, 2003).

11. Interestingly, since the Sorbonne meeting in 1998 the “external dimension” has been constantly – implicitly or explicitly – on the Bologna agenda, but there were no focused official seminars or conferences on these issues until recently. The first seriously prepared conference was only in 2004,⁹ but it was not yet on the prioritised list of the so-called Official Bologna Follow-up Seminars. At the conference, Ulrich Teichler made some challenging comments: “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 on 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?” (Teichler; in: Muche, 2005, p. 116).

⁸ See three paragraphs under the heading “Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area”.

⁹ *Opening up to the Wider World: the External Dimension of the Bologna Process*. A Conference organised by the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) in collaboration with the University of Hamburg. Hamburg, 18 and 19 October 2004.

12. After the Berlin Summit, there were more and more warnings and contributions of this kind – not only from Europe, but Europe received the first messages on the “external dimension” from “outside”. Thus, at the EUA Glasgow Convention prior to the Bergen Conference,¹⁰ Goolam Mohamedbhai, President of International Association of Universities (IAU), asked “*whether the Bologna Reforms should be applied internationally*”. It is not a purely rhetorical question. On the contrary, it is a far-reaching question. He argued: “I fear that the Bologna reforms could lead to an isolation of HEIs in some parts of the world. With globalisation what is needed is greater international collaboration among universities in different parts of the world, not just among those in one region only. It is international collaboration among universities that can truly bring about inter-cultural dialogue and world understanding and peace. [...] Generally speaking the Bologna reforms (the 2-cycle degree programmes, the establishment of a credit transfer system, the introduction of quality assurance, the introduction of student-centred and problem-based learning) are in line with, for example, the conclusions of the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education. They can bring about important and positive changes in higher education. The question then is: should the Bologna reforms be extended to other parts of the world?” (Mohamedbhai, 2005).

Indeed: *should the Bologna reforms be extended to other parts of the world?*

Probably it is not a right question, but it is provocative and demands that all these issues be addressed seriously and that any Euro-centrism be put aside. The problem could probably be whether the “Bologna reforms” or the “Bologna idea” should be extended to other parts of the world? The “Bologna club” itself has argued firmly and several times in favour of flexibility and respect for (national) differences. If “the Bologna reforms” were understood as recipes, their extension to other parts of the world could be very questionable. However, it could be quite the opposite if the extension was more about ways of thinking, cooperating and performing as developed within European higher education (the “Bologna idea” or “philosophy”). Goolam Mohamedbhai is obviously well aware of the different contexts which could profoundly affect the “extension”: “There has so far been limited organised debate on the effects or the applicability of Bologna reforms on HEIs in other parts of the world. But it is imperative that debate gets properly structured. What is not clear is whether the debate should be national, regional or international. And whether it should be started by universities, by associations of universities or by governments.”¹¹ (Mohamedbhai, 2005).

13. This has been also one of the issues that the present (2005-2006) External Dimension Working Group addressed in discussions at meetings and in ongoing virtual contacts. In these discussions, on the one hand, reactions from “outside” of the Bologna Process and echoes of various kinds were collected and carefully analysed; these are the contents of the next, third chapter. On the other hand, attention was also given to the “history of ideas”; more precisely, to the development of understanding the “external dimension” related to European higher education policy debates within the last fifteen or twenty years. In *Annex 1*,¹² an effort was made to collect relevant quotations from various documents that appeared between 1988 and 2006 and that illustrate this development best. WG ED was convinced that the attempt to draft and agree on the “External Dimension” Strategy should take into account previous

¹⁰ The 3rd EUA Convention. *Strong Universities for Europe*. Glasgow, 31 March – 2 April 2005. Materials from the Convention are available at <<http://www.euaconvention.org/index.asp>>.

¹¹ See e.g. also L. Rivero’s differentiation between “European” and “Latin American dream”; chapter 2, note 25.

¹² Excerpts from documents are edited chronologically and classified into three categories: relevant *pre-Bologna documents*, genuine “*Bologna documents*” (produced within the Bologna Process) and the *European Union documents*.

developments: either to continue and to expand logic and argumentation elaborated so far or to revise it and to change.

The “external dimension” in a historical perspective: documents 1988 – 2006

14. In *Annex 1*, the historical overview starts with a remarkable *pre-Bologna document* – the *Magna Charta Universitatum* (1988). It is a document which obviously cannot be classified as a proper “Bologna document”. However, the Magna Charta has had a huge influence on European higher education policy debates and this influence has been particularly important when approaching the Bologna Process from an institutional point of view.¹³ It was signed at the meeting of European rectors who met to celebrate the 900th anniversary of the University of Bologna in 1988, that is, “four years before the definitive abolition of boundaries between the countries of the European Community” and, as it can be added today, two years before the fall of the Berlin wall. Among its fundamental principles it inscribed that “[A] university is the trustee of the European humanist tradition” – this is a principle which has been common to the Bologna Process as well. It also referred to “the mutual exchange of information and documentation, and frequent joint projects for the advancement of learning, as essential to the steady progress of knowledge”, and encouraged “mobility among teachers and students; furthermore, they consider a general policy of equivalent status, titles, examinations (without prejudice to national diplomas) and award of scholarships essential to the fulfilment of their mission in the conditions prevailing today” (*Magna Charta Universitatum*, 1991).

Thus, the Magna Charta approached some of the most important Bologna policy objectives already ten years before the Sorbonne Declaration was signed. Internationalisation of higher education and its openness was one of them, observed from an academic values point of view. This is an aspect which has remained important in Bologna discussions until today, and there seems to be no reason why it should not remain so also in the future.

Another document can be also found within the category of pre-Bologna documents that deeply influenced the Bologna Process and its “external dimension” as well. This is the *Lisbon Recognition Convention*. Today, it is sometimes stressed that this is the only legal document within the Bologna Process. As this is true, a note is necessary here: it was signed *before* the Sorbonne and Bologna initiatives. Therefore, it could be probably said that the Convention was developed and signed in a similar “spirit of the time” as the Magna Charta – announcing “new times” in the internationalisation of higher education – but the initiative came this time from international organisations (Council of Europe and UNESCO) and it was signed by government representatives of European as well as some non-European states.¹⁴ A particular feature of contemporary European higher education policy discussions has been that governmental and institutional – as well as student – engagements run more or less in parallel.¹⁵ Last but not least, the composition of the Councils of Europe’s Steering Committee

¹³ For details see *Magna Charta Observatory* website <<http://www.magna-charta.org/home.html>>.

¹⁴ The Lisbon Recognition Convention has been signed and/or ratified also by the following “non-Bologna” countries: Australia, Belarus, Canada, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and U.S. – For details see <<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=165&CM=8&DF=9/7/2006&CL=ENG>>.

¹⁵ “The university Europe of the Bologna process may be running in parallel with the Lisbon process, at any rate for the governments of the EU member states. But the Bologna process, in working for means of convergence which will allow the creation of a common academic ‘space’, gives universities a political voice. Governmental decisions have been significantly shaped by an academic input. Governments are committed to respecting the fundamental characteristics of universities qua universities and not simply seeing them as economic engines. The Bologna process is explicitly underpinned by a university ‘Magna Carta’, the Magna Charta Universitatum, which combines both aspirations and a process to challenge governments taking action to infringe their autonomy.” (Corbett, 2005, p. xii; 10).

for Higher Education and Research (CDESR) reflects this particularity: its members are representatives both from Ministries responsible for higher education and the academic community.

The Convention does not say much about internationalisation in general or about the “external dimension” in particular. Nevertheless, it addresses one of the key issues of higher education policy in a context of internationalisation – *the recognition issue*. This is why this document achieved such an important position after the Bologna Process was launched. In the Preamble, it also stated some important principles which have remained valid and important until today: the Convention considers that “higher education should play a vital role in promoting peace, mutual understanding and tolerance, and in creating mutual confidence among peoples and nations”, it approaches also “other Regions of the world” and stresses “the need for an improved exchange of information between these Regions” (Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications..., 1997). Even without these concrete statements, this is clearly a document which is legitimately built in the basements of the Bologna Process and its “external dimension”.

15. Another cluster of influential statements on the “external dimension”, which partly precede and partly go in parallel with the “proper” Bologna documents, can be found in policy documents from the EU institutions. However, higher education and general education policy had very little to do with these institutions until the late 1980s. During this period, policy and legal responsibilities remained firmly with national country states. Anne Corbett presents the key phases of the transformation of this trend in her – already quoted – excellent study on EU higher education policy 1955-2005: “On the higher education front, the received view is that the Community had nothing to do with universities, or education in general, before the 1970s. The policy sector was ‘taboo’, according to Guy Neave, author of the earliest account of EC education policy, because national governments had not given the Community competence for education when they signed the Treaties of Rome” (Corbett, 2005, p. 10).

This trend had been gradually changed and “the period from 1985 to 1993 is seen as the period of transformation which put education policy on the road to Maastricht. [...] This led to the formal adoption of a number of EC programmes in the late 1980s and early 1990s [...]”.¹⁶ The Community’s subsidiary competence in education was defined for the first time by the Treaty of Maastricht in 1991 after which new and reorganised programmes could be developed by the EU institutions. [...]”.¹⁷ By the 1990s, and in Shaw’s much-cited phrase, education had moved from the margins to the centre of Community policy-making concern.” (Ibid., p. 11).

Some reflections on the “extra-European Community dimension” – a remote predecessor of the “external dimension” – can be found within the popular debates on the “European dimension in higher education” at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. The

¹⁶ Comett (Community Programme for Education and Training in Technology), Erasmus (European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students), Lingua (to fund and promote training and skills in foreign languages), Tempus (Trans-Mobility Programme for University Students) and Jean Monnet (the system of chairs to promote teaching and research on European integration).

¹⁷ See Article 126 of the Maastricht Treaty, e.g.: “1. The Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity. [...] 3. The Community and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the field of education, in particular the Council of Europe.” The emphasis placed on “cooperation with third countries” is particularly important for developing the “external dimension”.

Erasmus programme (European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) has been one of the key results of these discussions, and within its objectives the Council's Decision of 1987 stated a need "to harness the full intellectual potential of the universities in the Community [...] with a view to securing the competitiveness of the Community in the world market" (Council..., 1987, Article 2, iii). On the other hand and a few years later, in the *Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community* (1991), it was stated that besides the "European dimension in higher education" there are also "historic linkages and relationships between higher education institutions in the different Member States and various countries of the world".

It was also said that an enhanced role for education and training in the external relations of the Community is evolving for a number of reasons and that there has always been an "extra-European Community dimension" in the relationships between higher education institutions. The Memorandum brought some important conclusions: »While it is vital to the future of the Community that the European dimension in higher education be emphasised and strengthened, this extra-EC dimension is of fundamental importance to an open European Community, deriving strength from cooperation and interaction across the world". Europe must not only strengthen its own identity, but it must do so in a political, economic and cultural equilibrium with the rest of the world« (Commission..., 1991).

Approximately at the same time, the *Tempus programme* (the "Trans-European mobility scheme for university studies") was launched (Council..., 1990) in an enthusiastic spirit of political change in Central and East Europe as well as in a readiness to share – at least indirectly – the Erasmus "spirit" with other parts of the "opening" Europe. The Council's Decision placed at the top of its list the objective "to facilitate the coordination of the provision of assistance to the eligible countries in the field of exchange and mobility, particularly for university students and teachers". The Decision also stated that "Joint European projects" (JEPs) within Tempus "may be linked, as appropriate, to existing networks, notably those funded in the framework of the Erasmus, Comett and Lingua programmes" and "grants may be awarded for a wide range of activities according to the specific needs of the institutions concerned, including notably for curricular development and overhaul, integrated study courses, development of teaching materials, training and retraining of teachers, particularly in the field of modern European languages, the provision of short, intensive programmes, the development of language and area studies and of distance learning. Support equipment and documentation necessary for the implementation of a joint European project could also be eligible for funding"(ibid.).

Tempus has undergone steep development, and today it is the widely-known EU flagship programme for higher education cooperation between Member States and the countries which are its "neighbours". Over time, the programme's geographical scope has evolved. Established initially in 1990 following the fall of the Berlin Wall, as a programme for cooperation with Central and Eastern European countries which have subsequently joined the Union, Tempus has been renewed three times (Tempus II, Tempus II-bis and Tempus III for the period 2000 to 2006) and now enables universities from EU Member States to cooperate with those in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Mediterranean partner countries.¹⁸ In addition to reforming higher education systems in the partner countries surrounding the EU, Tempus contributes – notably through its mobility activities for teachers, students and faculty – to enhancing understanding between cultures. Its projects fall into three categories: the main type, *Joint European Projects* (JEPs), aim to increase cooperation and

¹⁸ For details see <http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/tempus/index_en.html>.

network-building between actors in higher education in EU Member States and partner countries. *Structural and Complementary Measures* are short-term interventions designed to support national higher education reforms and strategic policy frameworks; projects within this category address typical Bologna issues such as quality assurance, accreditation systems and good university management practices. *Individual Mobility Grants* help staff in participating partner countries to take part in training and conferences abroad, and assist European teachers deliver training courses in partner countries.

Over time, Tempus has also become the main source of information on Bologna developments in Bologna signatory countries that are outside the EU, but also in neighbouring countries that are not yet formally involved in the Bologna process. Tempus provides a platform for exchanges and transfer of experiences on issues such as quality control, accreditation, credit system, or mobility issues. In addition to introducing these innovative practices at university and faculty level, most Tempus Partner countries are incorporating the Bologna principles as part of their overall efforts to modernise their higher education systems, and align them with current international developments, in order to become part of a larger higher education community (Smith, 2006-b).

16. The importance of the “extra-European Community dimension” was only enhanced during the 1990s and it found sound echoes also in the Lisbon strategy and related policy documents after 2000. Of course, this is already a period of certain parallelism between the Bologna Process (enlarging from 29 member countries in 1999 to 45 since 2005) and the EU Lisbon Process (also enlarging from 15 countries in 2000 to 25 since 2004). The famous Lisbon “new strategic goal” contains implicitly the whole array of issues closely connected to higher education and research policy. The Lisbon Strategy explicitly addressed only one, related to the European Research Area – to “take steps to remove obstacles to the mobility of researchers in Europe by 2002 and to attract and retain high-quality research talent in Europe” (Council of the EU, 2000). However, a number of documents which elaborate Lisbon objectives into details also develop many aspects on the “extra-EU dimension”.

Thus, the Concrete Future Objectives of Education Systems stressed “an openness of spirit towards foreign countries, Europe and the wider world” (Commission..., 2001-a). The Detailed Work Programme made it even more clear, saying that “Europe will be open to cooperation for mutual benefits with all other regions and should be the most-favoured destination of students, scholars and researchers from other world regions” (Council..., 2002-b, 3.2); yet, it put at the top of the agenda that “the highest quality will be achieved in education and training and Europe will be recognised as a world-wide reference for the quality and relevance of its education and training systems and institutions” (ibid.).

Approximately at the same time, international cooperation among European universities and encouragement “to integrate new cooperation with third countries into a wider partnership framework” (Commission..., 2001-b) was addressed in a Communication on Strengthening Cooperation with Third Countries in the Field of Higher Education. The document stressed that “[t]his effort is also needed because there is an ever-increasing demand for international education and student mobility” but also noted that students “flock mainly to the US”. It is made clear that “there may be healthy competition between Member States countries to attract international students”; yet, “the role of the EC should be primarily to encourage cooperative approaches so that the benefits can be shared more widely within the EC and partner countries.” The document concludes that the Community “should ensure that its education activities include the international dimension in a more systematic way” and “should give greater visibility to its action in this field in order to promote Europe as a centre of excellence, and to attract students seeking an international education” (ibid.).

17. A soundly echoed step forward in the implementation of the Lisbon strategy in higher education was the launch of the *Erasmus Mundus programme* (Commission..., 2002-b). Its overall aims (“to enhance the quality of European higher education by fostering cooperation with third countries in order to improve the development of human resources and to promote dialogue and understanding between peoples and cultures”) as well as specific objectives (to promote a quality offer in European higher education and attractiveness “both within the European Union and beyond its borders”, “to encourage and enable highly qualified graduates and scholars from all over the world, to obtain qualifications and/or experience in the European Union”, “to improve accessibility and enhance the profile and visibility of higher education” in EU etc.) are highly important for developing the “external dimension” of higher education in EU and broadly in Europe.

The current programme spans the period 2004-2008 with a budget of 230 million Euro, plus considerable complementary funds for additional student grants which are being channelled through Erasmus Mundus with the help of funds from the External relations, Development cooperation and Enlargement budgets of the EU. The Erasmus Mundus programme comprises four concrete actions: Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses (Action 1 of the programme), Erasmus Mundus scholarships (Action 2), Erasmus Mundus Partnerships (Action 3) and support for projects aimed at enhancing the attractiveness and interest in European higher education worldwide (Action 4).¹⁹ By 2008 Erasmus Mundus will be supporting about 100 Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses of outstanding academic quality, providing grants for some 5,000 graduate students from third countries to follow these Masters Courses, and for 4,000 EU graduate students involved in these courses to study in partner countries across the world. The programme will also offer teaching or research scholarships in Europe for over 1,000 incoming third-country academics and for a similar number of outgoing EU scholars. Close to 100 partnerships will have been developed between European universities and their partners worldwide, and the attractiveness of European higher education will have been promoted through around 40 projects under Erasmus Mundus Action 4. In 2006-2007, an evaluation of the programme will pave the way for planning the future further development of the programme beyond 2008 (Smith, 2006-b).

18. It is impossible to overlook the role and contribution of individual European countries in developing cooperation in higher education and research with other countries of the world. However, analysing these contributions would be extremely extensive.²⁰ On the other side, Article 149 of the Treaty establishing the European Community provides that “[t]he Community and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the field of education”. Erasmus Mundus is an excellent example of this cooperation. Yet concrete modes of cooperation between higher education institutions in the EU Member States and in countries from other world regions are much more diverse and cannot be reduced to Erasmus Mundus at all. The general framework for strengthening cooperation with third countries in the field of higher education (already mentioned above) and the special framework on education and training in the context of poverty reduction in developing countries²¹ include several elements of the “external dimension”.

¹⁹ For details see <http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/index_en.html>.

²⁰ On bilateral aid from EU Member States to developing countries see e.g. Commission..., 2002-a, Annex 4: Member States policies in the education and training sector.

²¹ See <<http://www.europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/s19006.htm>>.

The Tempus programme – focusing on “neighbourhood” regions as far off as Mongolia – has already been mentioned (see section 15), and the ALFA programme offers a similar framework for cooperation between higher education institutions of the European Union and Latin America (see section 35). There is also extensive support for cooperation with Asian developing countries (see section 41) and plans to create a new Erasmus Mundus “window” for ACP countries (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) are under discussion (see section 32). There is also growing cooperation with industrialised countries. Since 1995 the European Commission has been running joint cooperation programmes in the field of higher education and vocational training with the US and Canada. The overriding idea of the programmes, based on multi-annual agreements with partner countries, is to promote cooperation between equals and enable European institutions to work together on a long-term basis with their peer institutions in highly developed countries so as mutually to improve transparency, understanding and the quality of their educational offer. More recently cooperation activities have been extended to other industrialised countries. In 2002 pilot projects were launched with Japan and Australia and in 2004 with New Zealand. A new 8-year agreement (2006-2013) has been signed with the US at the EU-US summit on 21 June 2006 and the new agreement with Canada for the same period will be adopted by the end of 2006.²²

The cooperation programmes include three main categories of activities. As the transposition of the “Erasmus” approach to relations with industrialised countries, the so-called *consortia implementation projects* provide support to multilateral partnerships of institutions from several EU member states and from the partner countries for the implementation of joint study programmes and a framework for mobility of students and faculty with full recognition of the study periods spent abroad. *Transatlantic Joint/Double Degrees* activities support a multilateral partnership of EU and US higher education institutions developing and implementing joint study programmes leading to the award of double or joint degrees, students spending at least one year of study on the other side of the Atlantic and receiving a double or joint degree upon successful completion of their studies. *Policy Oriented Measures* support multilateral projects addressing comparative higher education and vocational training issues with particular emphasis on the recognition of qualifications and issues of accreditation. So far the cooperation programmes have funded over 150 projects involving several hundred institutions and some 6000 exchange students. Approximately two thirds of all the activities concern EU-US cooperation (Smith, 2006-b).

European cooperation programmes with industrialised countries – in addition to helping cement overall relations with the partner countries concerned – have proven to be highly beneficial for the institutions, students and faculty involved. By collaborating on joint innovative study programmes the EU institutions and those from partner countries pull together their best resources, compare and modernise their curricula, improve transparency and portability of credits and qualifications. Faculty and administrators learn from each other, allowing their institutions to improve the overall quality of their academic offer for the benefit of current and future generations of learners. The exchange students improve their educational record, develop their international and cross-cultural skills, and generally become more adaptable, confident and capable of operating successfully in an increasing global market place.

19. Research is also one of the key issues of the Lisbon strategy and a *Communication on the European Research Area* of 2002 (Commission..., 2002-c) already reported on “several

²² For details on cooperation with industrialised countries (USA, Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand) see http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/eu_others/index_en.html.

initiatives [...] undertaken to take account of, benefit from and exploit the international dimension of the European Research Area and its openness to the world”. These initiatives were obviously not sufficient, and critical voices and urgencies²³ could be heard later. Thus, with regard to research, Wim Kok’s Report ascertained that “[t]he EU needs to draw more of the best and brightest researchers in the world by raising its attractiveness” and recommended that “[f]ast-track work permit and visa procedures should be introduced for researchers and the mutual recognition of professional qualifications must be improved” (Kok, 2004). A Communication on Mobilising the brainpower of Europe noted further on that “[r]aising quality and attractiveness requires major transformation at universities” (Commission..., 2005-b). The document stressed flexibility and “openness to the world in teaching/learning” as important factors to raise attractiveness of European universities.

In more recent debates, the idea of establishing a European Institute of Technology (EIT) raised several questions on the “external dimension” as well: “The EIT must act as a pole of attraction for the best minds from around the world” and “as a model for promoting change across the European Higher Education Area” (Commission..., 2006-b). However, the global attractiveness of the EIT to non-EU students and researchers depends on “the academic credibility of the courses, degrees and research programmes” as well as on “the ease with which it would be possible for foreign Masters or Doctoral candidates and researchers to join the EIT and for the EIT to employ third country citizens in the Knowledge Communities” (ibid.). Concrete measures are needed “to simplify and accelerate legal and administrative procedures for the entry of non-EU students and researchers” (Commission..., 2006-a). “Building an attractive image for European universities in the world also calls for a serious effort to make European degrees more easily recognised outside Europe. However, first, cross-recognition has to be fully achieved within the EU itself.” (Ibid.) This is a point where the “internal” (“structural”) and “external” dimension cross each other; last but not least, this is a point which is essential for the Bologna Process in general

20. It is time to draw some attention to genuine Bologna documents from the “external dimension” point of view. As was already briefly mentioned in one of the introductory paragraphs, *recognition* and *attractiveness* – terms discussed at the end of the previous paragraph – were also among the key words of the *Sorbonne Declaration* (1998). A debate on the “external dimension” was actually launched here: “The international recognition and attractive potential of our systems are directly related to their external and internal readabilities. A system, in which two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate, should be recognised for international comparison and equivalence, seems to emerge”. In the same line, the language of the *Bologna Declaration* (1999) added *international competitiveness* as well: “We must in particular look at the objective of increasing the international competitiveness of the European systems of higher education. The vitality and efficiency of any civilisation can be measured by the appeal that its culture has for other countries. We need to ensure that the European higher education system acquires a world-wide degree of attraction equal to our extraordinary cultural and scientific traditions”.

²³ E.g., while referring to the Lisbon strategy, a Communication on European values in a globalised world (Commission..., 2005-c), prepared for the Hampton Court Meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the EU, stressed: “[...] what is different five years on is the added sense of urgency. Global competition, particularly from Asia, has intensified. Cutting-edge knowledge is no longer confined to Europe or North America. Indian universities are turning out more than a quarter of million engineers every year. Research spending in China is set to catch that in the EU by 2010”.

In fact, the concept of the “external dimension of the Bologna Process” was not yet born at this time; however, it was certainly conceived. The initial “Bologna push” in combination with discussions that accompanied, on the one hand, the launching of the Lisbon strategy (2000) and, on the other hand, the Salamanca European convention of universities (2001) additionally contributed to the fact that, during their Prague follow-up meeting, “Ministers agreed on the importance of enhancing attractiveness of European higher education to students from Europe and other parts of the world. The readability and comparability of European higher education degrees world-wide should be enhanced by the development of a common framework of qualifications, as well as by coherent quality assurance and accreditation/certification mechanisms and by increased information efforts.” (Prague Communiqué, 2001). The next paragraph of the Communiqué added: “Ministers particularly stressed that the quality of higher education and research is and should be an important determinant of Europe’s international attractiveness and competitiveness. Ministers agreed that more attention should be paid to the benefit of a European Higher Education Area with institutions and programmes with different profiles. They called for increased collaboration between the European countries concerning the possible implications and perspectives of transnational education.” (Ibid.)

Several horizons of the “external dimension”

21. Thus, horizons for discussing the “external dimension” were moulded and opened. The work of the first Working Group on External Dimension (2002-2003) has already been presented and the relevant parts of both subsequent (Berlin and Bergen) Communiqués have already been quoted as well. Further on, the documents attached into *Annex 1* can speak for themselves. Discussion on the “external dimension” has shown that it is not only about international competitiveness, attractiveness and recognition.

One of the findings of the present/second Working Group on External Dimension (2005-2006) has been that it is not possible to define the “external dimension of the Bologna Process” using a single definition: there are several elements interlinked in this expression. Passing through several discussions, it has identified several horizons, agendas and approaches in which the “external dimension” appears in Bologna documents and which could be synthesised into four main clusters:

- (a) *a competitiveness and attractiveness agenda*, which is to result in an inflow of non-European students and scholars into European higher education; complemented by
- (b) *a partnership and cooperation agenda*, in which collaborative activity will democratically benefit both European and non-European higher education, and from which notably commercial motives should be absent (“academic values”);
- (c) *a dialogue approach*, by means of which the EHEA would foster the exchange of experience and ideas on higher education reform issues with representatives of other world regions; and which would develop concrete mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of the “partnership and cooperation agenda” (see b) between the EHEA and the respective country/region;
- (d) *an information (didactic) approach*, by means of which the EHEA would be correctly presented and explained in other world regions.

These horizons can be also perceived while searching for echoes of the Bologna Process from world regions. This is the objective of the next chapter.

3. The “External Dimension”: echoes of the Bologna Process from world regions

22. This chapter is intended to capture and present the main echoes of the Bologna Process from world regions. It was not possible to lean on any previous systematic review of this kind; thus, entering on the issue was possible only through surveying a huge amount of heterogeneous documents and information. In order to reflect developments at the present stage of the Bologna Process, as well as to facilitate preparation of the “external dimension strategy”, such an enterprise seems necessary. Yet, the ambition is not – and cannot be within the limits of a given mandate – to provide a comprehensive, all-embracing review but rather to present the most characteristic facts and events, as well as to outline the main trends and questions that have been arising as the waves of the Bologna have been spreading around the globe.

From today’s point of view it is really curious how deep the “Bologna family” was occupied with itself during its “childhood” years. The “international competitiveness of the European systems of higher education” and “a world-wide degree of attraction equal to our extraordinary cultural and scientific traditions” (Bologna Declaration, 1999) were on the agenda, but it seems that in the given circumstances of European “coming together” of the 1990s there was not much time to enhance “the understanding of the Bologna Process in other continents by sharing our experiences of reform processes with neighbouring regions” (Bergen Communiqué, 2005). However, documents prove that the “external” importance of the Process was perceived among higher education experts in all world regions but it had taken a lot of time, so that information and communication with representatives of these regions became a matter of organised and systematic work.

The ACA Conference on the “external dimension” (Hamburg, 2004) was one of the early opportunities to articulate this issue: “Speakers from other world regions confirmed that the reform agenda was being perceived outside of Europe, though at different degrees by the different target academic groups. While higher education leaders and managers were probably best informed, there were clear deficiencies on the side of the faculty. The fact that word about the reforms had travelled beyond the confines of Europe does not mean, however, that non-European observers had a detailed knowledge of the aims and the elements of the reform process. There was therefore a clear need for the provision of targeted information on the Bologna Process outside of Europe.” (Recommendations for inclusion..., 2004).

The appeal depends on relations

23. Why is it so important to consider these echoes seriously? Is it just to improve European self-esteem? Are there more substantial reasons?

Yes, there are. It has been stressed several times that structural reforms alone will not suffice to increase the appeal for other countries, if we may paraphrase known words from the Bologna Declaration. The appeal ceases to exist if there is no *relation*: no tension between the “internal” and the “external dimension”. Even Narcissus had his “external” mirror. Yet, to understand the relation – and to avoid either autism or centrism of any kind – it is necessary to understand the other; last but not least, this is the best way to understand self. However, as

always in human learning and understanding it takes time to understand. Impatient readers can immediately turn the pages to the end of this chapter and read its very last sentence. But hopefully they will most probably decide to start from the beginning again.

24. The review will run as a “geographical tour” – normally starting from the neighbourhood. Since this is not Marco Polo’s long-lasting expedition but rather an intensive Phileas Fogg’s “*le tour du monde*”, there will be no time to visit just all interesting places and present just all valuable views on the issue. Firstly, it seems that such a tour could be structured only according to world geography; yet, this is not easy, after some consideration. When cultural, political and similar issues are elaborated we often find that there is no clear-cut division between “continents”, “world regions” etc. For example: how to delineate Russia from Kazakhstan, or the north and the south shore of the Mediterranean, when discussing the “geography” of the European Higher Education Area? What “geography” could argue that certain parts of South America, Africa and Pacific form a common “region”, namely the “lusophone region”? Are there “trans-regions” etc?

These issues will soon be tackled. Discussions within the External Dimension Working Group have shown that the term (*world*) *region* should be used very carefully and with due respect to cultural and political contexts when referring to the internationalised higher education of today.

Bologna and “countries in transition”

25. Between Berlin and Bergen, the emerging European higher education area expanded even further to the east; after applications from Moldova, Ukraine and three Caucasus countries to join the Bologna Process, interest was noticed also from the Central Asia countries. Eligibility for membership (the European Cultural Convention) put these countries in a special position: traditionally they were most closely connected to universities in e.g. Russia or Ukraine, but the Bologna Process put them on its “external” side. Interestingly, the Bologna Process entered also a forum which initially has nothing to do with comprehensive reforms of higher education systems.

It was at the 12th OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) Economic Forum where Per Nyborg, head of the Bologna Secretariat under Norway’s coordination (2003-2005), was invited to present the Bologna opportunities to a broad range of countries, broader than the circle of signatories. He stressed at the beginning of his speech that “the principles and objectives of the Bologna Process may be used for reforms in any country and they may be a very good basis for international cooperation in higher educations also outside the European Region” and added: “I shall be very interested in what the next speaker, Rector Kuznetsova from Kazakhstan, is going to say about university reforms in the light of the Bologna Process.” (Nyborg, 2004).

The theme of the conference was “New Challenges for Building up Institutional and Human Capacity for Economic Development and Cooperation” and higher education reforms found a sound place on the agenda. As it is recorded in the summary of the conference, the importance of the Bologna Process and the Lisbon Convention as a framework for educational reform was highlighted, “particularly, but not exclusively, in transition countries”. The goal of the reform process is “to promote the achievement of four objectives: employability, competitiveness, mobility, and regional and international cooperation”. Speakers presented the reform processes in the field of education in some countries and regions of the OSCE area. “In this vein, Ms. Olga Kuznetsova, Rector of the International Academy of Business in

Almaty, also focused her contribution on analysing the context, trends and challenges in educational reform in Kazakhstan, particularly in the field of business education. She drew our attention to the need to strike a balance between standardisation and flexibility when it comes to developing degrees and curricula.” (OSCE, 2004, p. 46).

According to the summary of the conference, there was a broad consensus among participants that any reform process in the field of education “is not to be considered as an imposition but as a two-way cooperation” (ibid., p. 48). The importance of such cooperation was obviously taken into account when recommendations were made. At the top of a long list of recommendations we can find a proposal that “in promoting educational reform, the OSCE can encourage and help in the implementation of the Bologna Process on a voluntary basis” as well as that “the OSCE could assist in facilitating mobility and regional and international co-operation among educational institutions by several means, particularly by backing the establishment of regional and international accreditation centres, and quality evaluation systems” (ibid, p. 49).

Euro-Mediterranean partnership

26. Another “trans-region” with traditional international academic ties is the Mediterranean. Its historical and cultural context enables universities to play a very active role in international cooperation in general. On the one hand, the Mediterranean as such is the meeting point of various world regions, economies and cultural influences; on the other hand, in today’s political circumstances the “European part” of the Mediterranean provides more and more opportunities also to non-Mediterranean European countries to take part in the cooperation activities also with “non-European” Mediterranean countries. Today, this is particularly true in the field of higher education and research.

Most countries of the “European part” of the Mediterranean are today EU Member States and it can be no surprise that the European Union strongly supports several cooperation programmes and promotes various concrete actions. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership²⁴ (“Barcelona Process”: Partnership and Cooperation or Association Agreements; 1995) and the decisions taken by the EuroMed Committee and the Conference of Ministers, along with the Neighbourhood Policy,²⁵ led to a complex programme of Euro-Mediterranean “co-development” in the economic, political, cultural, environmental and security fields.

Two transversal issues are of fundamental importance: to encourage interaction and cooperation between the social agents from the north and the south, and to generate an image of Europe in the Mediterranean that makes it possible, as stated by the Advisory group named by Romano Prodi in 2003, “to construct in the Mediterranean area, and starting from the Mediterranean, a friendly neighbourhood with a human dimension.”²⁶ Today, higher

²⁴ See <http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/euomed/index.htm>.

²⁵ “The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was developed in the context of the EU’s 2004 enlargement, with the objective of avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and our neighbours and instead strengthening stability, security and well-being for all concerned. [...] Originally, the ENP was intended to apply to our immediate neighbours – Algeria, Belarus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine. In 2004, it was extended to also include the countries of the Southern Caucasus with whom the present candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey share either a maritime or land border (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia). Although Russia is also a neighbour of the EU, the mutual relations are instead developed through a Strategic Partnership covering four ‘common spaces’.” – See <http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index_en.htm>

²⁶ See <<http://www.unimedforum.net/index.htm>>.

education institutions from most countries around the Mediterranean cooperate also in EU education and training programmes, e.g. Tempus projects covered through Meda Programme,²⁷ similarly as through Cards and Tacis in the Western Balkans Eastern Europe and Central Asian region.

There have been visible intergovernmental higher education activities in the region. Recently, in January 2006, the Ministers of Education from 12 Mediterranean countries²⁸ met in Italy and signed the *Catania Declaration*, further proof of the dissemination of the Bologna spirit. In the preamble, Ministers referred to the Barcelona Declaration of 1995 and to two other conferences held in Catania (2003, 2005) that have set forth the proposal to create a “Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education Area”. Further on they agreed, among others, to “activate a structured cooperation in order to promote the comparability and readability of higher education systems in the Euro-Mediterranean Area, though preserving each country’s individuality”, as well as to “establish common education and training paths based on a system of transferable credits and on easily readable qualifications and exploitable as well by the labour market, by sharing criteria, evaluation methods and quality assurance schemes in order to facilitate the mobility of students, researchers and professors”. As priorities Ministers stressed also the promotion of doctoral programmes and the encouragement of scientific and technical collaboration, the establishment of Centres of Excellence, strengthening distance learning system and developing vocational expertise and diplomas in higher education. Finally they agreed “to meet regularly to assess progress and to promote further collaboration through the establishment of a Follow-up Group, in which each participant Country will be represented, and who will report to the next ministerial meeting to be held in 2008” (*Catania Declaration*, 2006).

27. Activities have not remained on a political level alone. Recently, an influential higher education action has been launched within this agenda – the *Mediterranean University Forum*, a part of the European Commission's Jean Monnet project. After careful preparation, at the 2nd Forum, held in Tarragona (Spain) in June 2005, the basic policy document was signed – the *Tarragona Declaration*. So far, 137 signatory universities from 30 countries (out of altogether 35 so-called Euro-Med countries) have joined the initiative. Its main aims are to promote academic thinking about the key elements required to create an open Mediterranean area, to define the role of the university in the social, cultural, economic and scientific aspects of the Mediterranean area and to gradually build a Mediterranean area of higher education and research.

The declaration estimates that “the participation of the universities to the construction of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership appears to be much necessary and urgent, given that the most consistent obstacles encountered for the completion of this process are also of a cultural nature”. It also expressed the awareness of EU universities “that the Mediterranean issue is one of the priorities in order to define the political and cultural future of Europe. They are interested in developing a dynamic and functional concept of inter-university cooperation that fits the growth of efficiency and competitiveness within the European Higher Education system. They can offer the partner countries a valid contribution to acquire a variety of necessary skills for their economic, social and institutional development. The universities of the partner countries not only expect an improvement of the economic and political relations

²⁷ See <http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/euromed/meda.htm>. The MEDA programme is the principal financial instrument of the European Union for the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

²⁸ Algeria, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Malta, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey.

from the Barcelona Process and its outcome, but also an increase in cultural and technological exchange. They shall contribute to the renewal of the European university system by means of encouraging the great cultural traditions and contributing with academic institutions of great prospective growth”.

The declaration identifies several fields in which cooperation is much urgent, and declared “their particular interest in the promotion of the various components of the Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Heritage.” Finally, it ascertains that the time has come “to create a ‘Euro-Mediterranean area of Higher Education and Research’, to contribute to the promotion of a knowledge society, to encourage collaboration and dialogue among the educational institutions, to increase their management efficiency, the quality of teaching and research, a non-discriminatory education and the involvement of civil society in a knowledge society. More specifically, a ‘Higher Education Network’ should be established and made up of universities and research centres in the Mediterranean, supported by the community, national and regional political institutions of the countries involved” (Tarragona Declaration, 2005).

28. The 3rd Forum, held in Malta in June 2006, gathered already more than 300 representatives from universities as well as national and international institutions and organisations from 38 countries. Participants discussed the possibilities and problems of direct cooperation and exchange between universities in Europe and the whole Mediterranean region. The main objective of the Malta Forum was to create a common platform for the discussion of Euro-Mediterranean issues through an academic approach. In particular, it focused on the development of activities that can set in motion the Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education Area - the development of programmes for staff mobility, the strengthening of joint research structures, the identification of structural needs for specific countries, etc. One of the principal objectives was also to enhance the attractiveness and visibility of European higher education.

In his speech at the Forum, Giuseppe Giliberti from Italy stressed the importance and mutual character of cooperation: “The universities of the EU countries and the associated states – even those geographically distant from the sea – can help the countries of the Eastern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean upgrade the capacity of their scientific and educational system. They are conscious that this is their own interest. The European universities are able to help the countries on the other shore acquire a wide range of competences necessary to development. They can, in their turn, receive significant cultural impulses from them.” (Giliberti, 2006). On the other hand, A. Touhami from Syria addressed the issue of quality assurance and warned about obstacles and special contexts that Europe is not always aware of. “It is needless to say that the higher education system in the South is archaic and it is now in a critical situation, and I cannot exclude those countries in the process of development that have already started the implementation of Bologna process (Tunisia, Morocco²⁹) since the outcome is not yet evaluated. For some other countries, reform is mere ink on paper. [...] In a situation such as this, the simple act of concentrating on, or thinking about quality assurance can be difficult.” He concluded that the South alone cannot achieve the required quality but “‘It takes two to tango’ as they say, and North-South cooperation is vital.” (Touhami, 2006).

²⁹ See, for example, A. Bencherifa speech at the EUA Glasgow Convention (2005): “Degree transparency, the pooling of resources and collaboration instead of stark competition are as much ingredients of the novel university system in Morocco as it is the hallmark of the Bologna recommendations. [...] The on-going European Process of University changes has provided the Moroccan experience with an additional factor of legitimacy. More decisively, however, this process has also established a benchmark along which the long time, French-based, Moroccan University system could adhere to a more Universal academic system.” (Bencherifa, 2005).

The Forum agreed on three priority activities: the development of international cooperation and exchange offices, especially at universities in the Arab countries, to facilitate the mobility of students and staff, the enhancement of North-South and South-South research cooperation and the establishment of a network of networks of Euro-Mediterranean universities. It was also agreed that the next Forum would be held in June 2007 in Alexandria (Egypt), hosted by the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures.³⁰

29. Looking at the other shore of Mediterranean, one could also find broader academic events presenting higher education developments in North Africa and the Middle East. As an interesting case, we can take the *Academia Conventions*. Since 2003, Academia Conventions hold annual academic conferences in Beirut and Cairo³¹ on pertinent higher education issues in concurrence with its mission of integrating the regional education market in an increasingly challenging global environment and contributing to building a knowledge society in the Arab World. In last few years, themes like “Access to Knowledge in the 21st Century” and “Quality Management and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions in the Arab World” have been organised. In December 2005, a “Conference on Partnering for Knowledge: Policies of Higher Education Reform” was organised. The agenda addressed almost all key issues of contemporary higher education policy: Quality Assurance in Higher Education, International Partnerships, Career Development and Lifelong Learning as well as ICT in Education.

The conference officially declared the establishment of the Arab Society for Quality Assurance in Education (ASQAE)³² and this could be particularly interesting for an outside observer. The ASQAE is a product of the recommendations of Academia Egypt 2004 Conference on Quality Management and Accreditation of Higher Education, which called for the creation of a steering committee to work on the regional accreditation project, mandated to prepare the required studies and procedures to create an Arab NGO (Society) for quality assurance in higher education with open membership to experts and organisations from the Arab region.

What could Bologna say to Africa and what could Africa ask of Bologna?

30. Moving further South, the context changes even more. When discussing international cooperation in higher education, Africa today seems to be too much at the margins of interest, if not altogether forgotten.³³ Public higher education in Africa still has strong links to European education, but during the era of colonialism the influence of diverse European systems left substantial traces in African systems. This is a legacy of “the past Europe”: today, European systems are coming together and the Bologna Process will soon make old differences and incompatibilities part of history. However, here too Africa still displays inherited divisions from “the past Europe”. There are national higher education systems, in particular in South Africa, or, as just mentioned, there are some countries on the southern shores of the Mediterranean that are implementing important reforms and making progress. However, in general, there are many problems and sometimes even signs of worry.

³⁰ See <<http://www.euromedalex.org>>. The Foundation is the first common institution jointly established and financed by all 35 members of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

³¹ See <<http://www.academiaegypt.com>> and <<http://www.academicalebanon.com>>.

³² See <<http://fathielnadi.blogspot.com/2005/12/mandate-arab-society-for-quality.html>>.

³³ See for example Ulf Lie, *Africa – the forgotten continent?* (In: Muche ed., 2005).

In a recent study on World Bank policies on higher education in Africa, prepared for the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge, authors openly say: “The past two decades have indeed been difficult for Africa’s universities. Deteriorating economic conditions, pressure from external founders and internal constituencies to reduce costs 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. In many countries staff salaries stagnated or declined, requiring second jobs and increasing the attraction of overseas opportunities. Book purchases, journal subscriptions, laboratory equipment, facilities maintenance, and research support also suffered.” (Samoff and Carrol, 2003; Samoff and Carrol, 2004). Authors examine “the pressure of World Bank policies” as one of multiple causes for the distress of African universities. Within the framework of our analysis it is necessary to examine whether European higher education changes could contribute to the multiplicity of these causes or whether they can contribute to a positive future scenario.

31. With regard to this dilemma, Goolam Mohamedbhai, made an interesting point in his (already mentioned)³⁴ speech at the 2005 EUA Glasgow Convention when reflecting “on what could be the effects of the Bologna Process on the rest of the world”. Generally speaking, “there is no doubt that the Bologna reforms will have an effect on higher education in other parts of the world.” Yet, this statement only raises new questions: “It is well known that most of the universities in countries which were former colonies of Europe were patterned on the institutions in the respective colonising country. In Europe these countries are mainly the UK, France, Spain and Portugal. The former colonies, mostly developing countries, are mainly in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Pacific. There has always been very close collaboration in teaching and research between universities in Europe and those in the south.” (Mohamedbhai, 2005).

If a strong European Higher Education Area holds strong promises from a European point of view, it does not mean that it cannot raise concerns when observed from other perspectives. Of course, one potential concern could be more intensive global *competition* in higher education markets. Yet this is not necessarily the only option. There could also be concern about future *cooperation*: “there is the danger that European universities will now prefer to collaborate with their counterparts in Europe rather than with those in the south. This would have a negative impact on the latter” (ibid.).

The consolation that this is purely a subjective view and that now “Bologna is looking out” is obviously not enough. Higher education institutions in Africa, for example, are coping with developmental tensions just like higher education institutions everywhere in the world, but their situation is characterised by a context which makes the problems much more severe – in particular if traditional ties and cooperation paths with institutions from other world regions grow weak. Mohamedbhai says: “I believe that the universities in the south which currently have links with European ones, will be inclined to align themselves with those in the north. In the case of Sub-Saharan Africa, which is the region I know best, this may not be too difficult in Anglophone countries where the 2 cycle degree structure, as proposed under Bologna, is already in use, and most universities now adopt a modular and credit system. But this may not be true for francophone and lusophone countries where the institutions may have to undertake major changes as are taking place in Europe”(Mohamedbhai, 2005).

³⁴ See section 12 (Ch. 2).

32. There are some clear signs that the Bologna Process, as an example of good practice in the field of policy development, is now entering Africa. An interesting reference was recently made at the African Union meeting of experts on revitalisation of higher education in Africa.³⁵ Among other issues discussed at the meeting, the importance of system approach in higher education was stressed “as opposed to dealing with single institutions, organisations or even countries. This is important in view of the need for collective responsibility and mutually supportive action, towards the integration agenda of the African Union. We should be looking at ‘the big picture’, to consider how we can benefit from initiatives outside Africa, avoiding mistakes made by others and building on their gains. The Bologna Process for harmonisation of higher education certificates was cited as an example worth studying”.

Similarly, the *Communiqué* of the International Conference on Accreditation, Quality Assurance and Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education in Africa (February 2006)³⁶ stresses in its preamble the awareness “of the development in Europe of the Bologna process which seeks to harmonise the higher education space in the region thus bringing together such issues as quality assurance, student mobility, recognition of degrees, diplomas and certificates» as well as a conviction »that higher education in Africa will benefit from the adoption of the model of the Bologna process especially in fostering regional collaboration in the three areas of focus of the Conference” (Communiqué, 2006).

Further on, in the framework for priority action, the *Communiqué* continues: “On the strength of the merit of the European example of the Bologna process in fostering regional collaboration in quality assurance, accreditation and recognition of qualifications, the model should be recommended for the Africa region. In achieving this goal, a taskforce should be set up with UNESCO and AAU as lead agencies to develop a strategic plan for the consideration of the Conference of African Ministers of Education and the African Union on how Africa can model the Bologna process. Other members of the task force should be drawn from southern Africa, central Africa, west Africa, east Africa and northern Africa. The taskforce should submit its interim report for discussion at a regional meeting on the subject to be convened by UNESCO during the fourth quarter of 2006” (ibid.).

Policy development action plans in combination with systemic possibilities to start concrete cooperation projects at the institutional level could importantly improve the situation and give punctual support to develop these initiatives to sustainable results. There are good prospects that a similar possibility, as has been already made for a large group of other countries, will be soon available also for Africa. In a recent (28 April 2006) proposal for a Council Decision on the position to be adopted by the Community within the ACP [Africa, Caribbean, Pacific] – EC Council of Ministers regarding a decision to reassign part of the reserve of the 9th European Development Fund envelope for long-term development, it is also envisaged to support “the creation of a Erasmus Mundus ‘window’ for the ACP States (about EUR 5 million)”.³⁷ The proposal is currently under discussion between the EU and the African Union for probable implementation in 2007.

³⁵ Revitalising Higher Education in Africa. Report of First Experts’ Meeting. Held on 27th –28th October 2005, Johannesburg. See <http://www.aau.org/au_experts/docs/midrand_rep.pdf>.

³⁶ Communiqué (2006). International Conference on Accreditation, Quality Assurance and Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education in Africa. Nairobi, Kenya, 6-8 February 2006. See <<http://www.unesco-nairobi.org/documents/highereducation.pdf>>.

³⁷ See <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0185en01.pdf>.

The case of francophone and lusophone countries

33. So far, cooperation between countries linked by a language and/or a similar tradition of higher education systems proves an advantage in informing other countries of the world about higher education changes in Europe. This is, for example, the case when higher education in countries of the *Afrique francophone* is discussed. The progress that France achieved in implementing “*architecture du LMD*” facilitated approaching the “spirit” of the Bologna Process in other – not only African – countries. Since 2002, a series of international meetings has been organised that have addressed various aspects of higher education reforms in Africa, enabling an exchange of good practices between universities from different regions and, by avoiding a mere transfer of ready-made recipes from North to South, have stimulated a discussion of possible adaptations of general principles in a concrete African context. The most recent event in this series was the International colloquium on university reforms in African Countries³⁸ held in Morocco in May 2006 (Éducation & Politiques, 2006).

34. A similar process is characteristic not only for *francophone* but also for *lusophone* countries.³⁹ The Community of the Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP),⁴⁰ established in 1996, constitutes a formal forum with regular meetings of Ministers of Education and also with higher education issues on the agenda. There is also the Association of the Portuguese Speaking Universities (AULP)⁴¹ with an already well-established tradition of cooperation. At the 12th Annual Meeting of the AULP in Luanda (Angola) in 2002, a paper on the Bologna Process was given by Pedro Lourtie and, in conclusion, it was proposed to use the experience of the Bologna Process to develop a special project within the AULP.

Thus, the Lusophone Higher Education Area (ELES – *Espaço Lusófono de Ensino Superior*) has been established. The project involves four clusters of issues: endeavours to establish quality assurance systems that may be mutually recognised, improvement of the mutual recognition of qualifications (an initiative for a recognition convention), development of common principles, taking into account the national legal frameworks, in order to facilitate exchange of students, recognition of qualifications and double degrees and, last but not least, strengthening mobility of students and graduates. The project was presented at the next Annual Meeting of AULP (Macao, 2003); as the actions proposed implied the involvement of the CPLP Governments, these were approached in order to obtain their engagement.

³⁸ See *Les réformes universitaires dans les pays d'Afrique*. Présentation du colloque international «Les réformes universitaires dans les pays d'Afrique» qui aura lieu à l'Université Chouaib Doukkali à El Jadida au Maroc du 23 au 25 mai 2006. <http://ep.inrp.fr/EP/r_a_venir/colloque_reformes_universitaires_afrique/>.

“Le débat qui s'est par le passé focalisé sur la question des cycles d'études est aujourd'hui confisqué par d'autres sujets épineux. Ceux de la qualité, de l'organisation de diplômes conjoints, des masters recherche et des écoles doctorales, de la gestion des universités et des pôles d'excellence, parmi les plus discutés en Europe, sont de première importance. Des idées ont été émises pour aider les pays d'Afrique à progresser dans ces matières, notamment lors de la rencontre de Marseille (2004) qui visait l'échange de pratiques entre les pays du Nord et du Sud. Suite aux évolutions mondiales, les états d'Afrique francophone ont pris des initiatives importantes dans certains de ces domaines dont la plus forte à ce jour est sans doute l'adoption par les pays de l'UEMOA (Union économique et monétaire Ouest africaine), d'une directive (décembre 2005) qui vise à faciliter la mobilité par l'installation des mêmes droits d'accès à une institution d'enseignement supérieur à tous les étudiants des pays de l'Union.” (Éducation & Politiques, 2006).

³⁹ The following paragraphs are based mostly on Pedro Lourtie's contribution to the External Dimension Working Group. See Lourtie, 2006.

⁴⁰ See <<http://www.cplp.org/>>. Its members are Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guiné-Bissao, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe and, since its independence, East Timor.

⁴¹ See <<http://www.aulp.org/>>.

In May 2004, the 5th Meeting of the CPLP Ministers of Education was held in Fortaleza (Brazil). At this meeting, a text for a convention on the recognition of qualifications, prepared by the AULP on the basis of the Lisbon Convention was presented and proposed. The peak point of the meeting was the adoption of a resounding policy document, *Declaração de Fortaleza*. The Declaration aims at building the CPLP Higher Education Area and indicates a number of priorities: (1) “the fostering of the quality of the formations offered in the CPLP and their mutual and international recognition”, (2) “the promotion of the mobility of students and teaching, research and technical staff”, (3) “the cooperation in the field of the structure of higher education formation”, (4) “the incentive to the participation of the institutions of the CPLP in relevant programmes of other communities of countries.” The Declaration also establishes a Follow-up Group, composed of “a representative of each of the ministries responsible for higher education” and “a representative of the Association of the Portuguese Speaking Universities” (Declaração de Fortaleza, 2004).

On this basis, the Follow-up Group was established and the following Meeting of the Ministers (December 2005) approved a work plan. A two-year plan deals with several topics. The establishment of a network of information centres about higher education systems and the recognition and mobility of students and teaching staff has been proposed, capable of providing relevant, reliable and timely information so as to promote elements of convergence with the European Bologna Process. Cooperation among national systems of evaluation within the framework of the quality of higher education will be encouraged, as will the promotion of inter-institutional cooperation through the development of networks involving activities of teaching and research, including the mobility of students and teaching staff. It is also envisaged that the existing obstacles to the mobility of students and staff will be identified and that proposals to overcome these obstacles will be presented to CPLP Governments (Lourtie, 2006).

The EU-LAC Common Area of Higher Education

35. Over the last decades, bi-regional relations between Europe and Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) have been substantially improved on a political level. EULAC countries (or “EULAC Process”) consist of EU Member States and two Acceding Countries and of 33 countries of LAC. Two main forums for political dialogue exist: a dialogue between the EU and the Rio Group at Foreign Minister level and Summit Meetings of EU and LAC Heads of State and Government. The first Summit was held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1999. The 2002 Madrid Summit accepted a political declaration (the Madrid Commitment). In this document, a commitment was made, among others, “to create more opportunities in our regions for education, culture and access to knowledge as keys to success in the twenty-first century”.⁴² In the final declaration of the last Summit, which was held in Vienna in May 2006, Heads of State and Government attached “priority to the creation of the EU-LAC Common Area of Higher Education, geared towards mobility and cooperation.”⁴³

Strengthened cooperation in higher education between the EU, on the one hand, and LAC on the other, (UEALC) is a particularly good result of this political process. The EULAC higher education framework emanated from the Ministerial Conference held in November 2000 in

⁴² The Madrid Commitment. Political Declaration. [Heads of State and Government of the EU and of LAC]. Madrid, 17 May 2002. See <http://ec.europa.eu/comm/world/lac/conc_en/decl.htm>.

⁴³ *Declaration of Vienna*. IV EU-LAC Summit. Vienna, Austria, 12 May 2006. See <<http://www.uealc.at/includes/images/EULAC/EU-LACViennaDeclarationEN.pdf>>.

Paris.⁴⁴ Ministers declared “the need for an action framework for cooperation on specific themes to foster the emergence of a ‘European Union – Latin America – Caribbean Higher Education Area’ (EULAC) as one of the key elements of the strengthening of bilateral and multilateral relations among States, with the mission of facilitating the sharing of knowledge, the transfer of technologies and the mobility of students, teachers, researchers and administrators, while paying particular attention to the links between training, employment and scientific knowledge in the countries concerned”.

The Action Framework for the EULAC Higher Education Area foresees encouragement towards better comparability of degrees and the establishment of compatible credit systems. Priority themes were identified for the first period, and it was agreed to redefine them in the future. Main areas include science and technology training, exchanges of successful experience in managing, assessing and administering higher education systems, the information society, competitive growth and environment, sustainable development and urbanisation, cultural heritage and regional integration. The declaration concludes that “the ministers or the authorities responsible for higher education, supported by the higher education institutions, will meet regularly and at least every four years to assess progress made in implementing the objectives”.

36. A plan of action was subsequently established for the period 2002-2004⁴⁵ and later extended until 2008. It also gives an interesting definition of the EULAC common space for higher education which includes quite a number of elements also known from the Bologna Process:

“The construction of a common space for higher education in the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean (EULAC) will allow the building of a framework open to a plurality of cultures, which will offer the chance to train and work in a plurilingual environment governed by an equal opportunities based policy.

The countries in these regions, firm in the belief that higher education is a public asset that falls within the sphere of state responsibility, consider that the said framework can offer an alternative to globalisation, help to overcome North/South differences and develop further collaboration, from the point of view of equality and solidarity. This belief is based on a mutual acknowledgement of the differences and similarities in these regions, in the diversity of languages and the variety of university systems. Therefore, it implies the need to work within a system of collaboration, cooperation, exchanges of good practices and reciprocity.

Lastly, this framework stresses the right for all those who are integrated into the common ground of EULAC higher education to have equal access to information regarding the opportunities that these regions offer them (programmes, regulations of each country, university studies etc). Moreover, the new technologies and distance learning constitute fundamental aspects that should be intrinsic to academic programmes.”

The proposed projects for the period 2002-2004 focused mainly on activities to encourage mobility and assessment of quality. Here, the document set the task “to promote a study on

⁴⁴ The European Union - Latin America-Caribbean Ministerial Conference on Higher Education. [Including Declaration of Ministers.] Paris, 3 November 2000. See <<http://www.columbus-web.com/en/partb/archivo/paris.html>>.

⁴⁵ Plan of Action Project 2002-2004 to build common ground for higher education in the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean. See <http://www.aneca.es/present/docs/plan_accion_0204_ing.pdf>.

the current accreditation systems or recently drawn up in the regions within the common ground. To achieve this, the Bologna process that is taking place in Europe will be taken into account. To help communication between both processes (Bologna and the EULAC common ground) the EULAC Common Space Follow-up Committee should participate in the preparatory meetings for Berlin 2003". As it is well known, the Berlin Communiqué recorded the fulfilment of this task: "Ministers welcome the interest shown by other regions of the world in the development of the European Higher Education Area, and welcome in particular the presence of representatives from European countries not yet party to the Bologna Process, as well as from the Follow-up Committee of the European Union, Latin America and Caribbean (EULAC) Common Space for Higher Education as guests at this conference" (Berlin Communiqué).

37. The EULAC Higher Education Area provides a firm political framework to the ongoing concrete cooperation on the institutional level. Here, an important role is played by two academic associations: *Iberoamerican University Council* (CUIB),⁴⁶ an institutional group of networks of universities in the Iberoamerican countries, and *European University Association* (EUA). CUIB was established in Cartagena (Colombia) in November 2001. It is a non-governmental organisation which operates in the form of a network of networks of Iberoamerican Universities. In an Iberoamerican context, it should be noted that CUIB has a cooperation agreement with the OEI (*Organisation of Iberoamerican States for the Education, Science and Culture*) and is integrated in RIACES (*Iberoamerican Network for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education*). After the XV Summit of Iberoamerican Heads of State and Government, the Iberoamerican General Secretariat, OEI and CUIB were asked to promote the necessary process of political agreement to move forward in the creation of an Iberoamerican Area of Knowledge, Higher Education and Research.

CUIB is made up of national organisations representing universities and other higher education institutions of the Iberoamerican countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Spain, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela. CUIB has, among others, the objectives of promoting the creation and consolidation of an Iberoamerican Area of Higher Education and Research and fostering cooperation between Iberoamerican universities and universities from other areas of the world.

38. In May 2004, CUIB and EUA signed in Guadalajara (Mexico) a cooperation framework agreement.⁴⁷ Six action lines are oriented to reinforce cooperation in higher education and research between both regions. The Plenary of CUIB and the Council of the EUA met again in Oviedo (Spain) in April 2006 and reviewed the state of cooperation and proposed new measures in order to revitalise it. The results of the meeting are presented in the final declaration (Asturias Declaration)⁴⁸ which sent a message from universities to the EU-LAC Summit that took place in Vienna in May 2006.

⁴⁶ The description of CUIB (*Consejo Universitario Iberoamericano*) is based on Félix Haering Pérez contribution to the External Dimension Working Group. See Pérez (2006).

⁴⁷ *Framework Cooperation agreement* between the Consejo Universitario Iberoamericano (CUIB) and the European University Association (EUA). Guadalajara, Republic of Mexico, 27 May 2004. See <http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/Convenio_CUIB-EUA_EN.1103218276011.pdf>.

⁴⁸ *Asturias Declaration*. Oviedo, 11 April 2006 [EUA and CUIB]. See <http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/EUA_CUIB_Asturias_Declaration_210406.1146834606320.pdf>.

The priorities section of the Declaration comprises a paragraph which is particularly important for the “external dimension” of the Bologna Process: “Mutual knowledge and understanding is crucial for building successful partnerships. Thus EUA and CUIB will promote and facilitate information-sharing on convergence processes in Europe, in particular the Bologna reforms, and similar processes underway in Latin American and Caribbean higher education systems.”

At the end, in the recommendations section, the Declaration stresses the development of joint programmes as a priority area for collaboration, as well as facilitating academic staff, researchers and student exchange. It also addresses Governments, the European Commission and private funding bodies to “allocate increased funding to promote enhanced cooperation in higher education and research as a matter of priority. The European Commission is encouraged to strengthen existing initiatives open to universities in Latin American and Caribbean countries such as Alpha, Alban and Erasmus Mundus – for example through the opening of a Latin-American and Caribbean ‘window’ in Erasmus Mundus along the lines of the recently agreed ‘Asian window’ – in the priority areas identified, as well as to increase opportunities for involvement in the 7th Framework Programme for Research. All such initiatives should take account of Latin American and Caribbean realities and favour endogenous growth. Governments should ensure that the appropriate legal frameworks are modified to allow LAC countries that are part of the ACP group to participate in all EU-LAC higher education and research initiatives.”

39. Despite significant developments there are many signs that concrete institutional level cooperation is still in an early phase. Last but not least, social and political contexts are quite different.⁴⁹ Information on the developments in European higher education seems to be inadequate, yet questions and dilemmas have also appeared. The ACA Perception Study refers to this situation in the following way: “The Bologna Process and Erasmus Mundus were specifically addressed in Mexico and Brazil. Although they were very interested in European higher education reform and in European programmes, Latin American interviewees (experts and rectors/international officers) had doubts vis-à-vis the potential of the Bologna Process and of Erasmus Mundus to enhance Europe’s attractiveness. However, their doubts concerned not the concepts but the way they were implemented: interviewees feared that cooperation would be unilateral and lacking transparency. Therefore, they recommended that any approach or new programme should be as little bureaucratic and as transparent as possible, and that it should emphasise cooperation and reciprocity.” (ACA, 2006, p.168).

A lack of information is proven also in two ACA Country Reports. Authors of the Brazil Report say that “the homogenisation of European universities is not always welcome either, as important decision makers at the state agencies criticise openly the Bologna Process (due to mixing up the commercial orientated cooperation policy of some countries, e.g. Spain, with the whole EU)” (Brazil, in: ACA 2006, p. 19).

⁴⁹ Luis A. Riveros, Rector of the University of Chile and Executive Vice-president of the Chilean Council of Rectors, made an interesting comment at the EUA Glasgow Convention (2005): “The transformation of European Universities along the lines of the Bologna process has largely depended upon the political will of governments to nurture what it has been called the European dream. This has to do with a common view of the future, the attainment of a regional-based globalisation, and a political will to reach a strong international presence of the region as an entity. We still do not have anything similar in the form of a Latin American dream, and consequently universities do not count on a political mandate to produce changes in the academic structure and on the duration and design of the curricula.” (Riveros, 2005).

The Mexico Report comes to a similar outcome: “The European programmes ALBAN, ALFA, Tuning, Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus often are not known, even not among representatives of the exchange bureaucracy and even less within universities. Therefore, there is high interest in receiving information on the Bologna Process and on all usual programmes, as well as specifically on accreditation and recognition of graduate studies. Credit recognition is to a certain degree under way with the start-up meeting of the UEALC project (formation of common academic standards between the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean, which took place in Guadalajara, Mexico, in April 2005)” (Mexico, in ACA 2006, p. 26). The study also ascertains: “Furthermore, it would motivate more students to study in Europe if they would get information on specific details on the effects of the Bologna-Process within Europe and for national education systems in Europe and the advantages of joint degree programs. The promotion of a common European internet platform with national corners could facilitate this information process.” (Ibid., p. 43).

40. There is a resounding case of good practice in this area which deserves to be mentioned here. It is about concrete institutional cooperation in modernising structures, contents and approaches to study. After the progress that the *Tuning project*⁵⁰ has made in Europe since 2001 (as one of the most visible Bologna implementation activities running jointly at more than 135 universities and in 9 different study areas) it has been successfully implemented also in the LAC academic environments. Similarly to the “European Tuning”, the ALFA⁵¹ *Tuning Latin America Project (Tuning América Latina)*⁵² seeks to “fine tune” the educational structures that exist in Latin America, initiating a debate whose aim is to identify and improve co-operation between higher education institutions, so as to develop excellence, effectiveness, and transparency.

The *Tuning Latin America* website gives its short history: “During the 4th follow-up meeting of the UEALC in Cordoba (Spain) in October 2002, the representatives of Latin America who took part, after listening to a presentation of the results of the first phase of Tuning, suggested the possibility of developing a similar project in Latin America. From this moment, the project began to be prepared, and was presented to the European Commission by a group of European and Latin American at the end of October 2003. It can be said that the Tuning proposal for Latin America is an inter-continental idea, a project that has been nurtured by both European and Latin American academic contributions. The search for consensus is inter-continental too, and unique and universal; the things that change are the people involved and the special situations that arise as a result of each new challenge.”

Tuning Latin America is an independent project, promoted and coordinated by universities in many different countries, both Latin American and European. There are 181 LAC universities involved in the project so far, as well as 18 national Tuning Centres. The main work of the project goes on in the twelve subject groups (Architecture, Business, Chemistry, Civil Engineering, Education, Geology, History, Law, Mathematics, Medicine, Nursing and Physics). In June 2006, members from both Tuning projects gathered at a joint conference in

⁵⁰ Tuning Educational Structures in Europe. See <<http://tuning.unideusto.org/tuningeu/>>.

⁵¹ ALFA (América Latina - Formación Académica) is a programme of cooperation between higher education institutions of the European Union and Latin America. Participant countries are the Member States of the European Union and the following 18 countries of Latin America: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

⁵² See <<http://tuning.unideusto.org/tuningal/>>.

Brussels.⁵³ Academic colleagues from Europe and from Latin America and the Caribbean presented their work and results so far and had a chance to talk to one another about many details of the modernisation of higher education study today in different contexts. This seems to be the best way to overcome the existing lack of information and to strengthen academic cooperation to mutual satisfaction.

A positive message about EULAC cooperation and the possible impact of the Bologna Process was given by the Rector of the University of Chile Luis Riveros at the EUA Glasgow Convention: “The Bologna process is considered a key conceptual background for the change that it is being implemented in several Latin American traditional universities. The observation of the Bologna process has pointed out the importance of more flexible programmes to foster student mobility both across universities and disciplinary fields. The process is also important to make labour mobility easier in order to adapt to changing market conditions. The occurrence of an ‘undergraduate reform’ in several Latin American institutions has been originated from those issues, as a key instrument to attain more flexible and efficient formative programmes. Bologna has been an intellectual input to it, as well as the Tuning initiative to create a more compatible system of credit assignment across the region.” (Riveros, 2005)

Broad views through “Asia windows”

41. Quite often, “third countries” – a term used frequently in the “Brussels slang” – and other world regions in general are observed from European (only European?) higher education horizons primarily as reservoirs of potential international students. In China, India and the rest of Asia an incredible further growth is expected in the demand of higher education. Australian, North American and European higher education institutions put a lot of attention to recruiting students from various Asian countries and enter various cooperation schemes. In Europe, UK traditionally has had an important share of students from Asia. The Bologna Process now makes also continental Europe more compatible with Anglo-Saxon systems which are characteristic also for India, Pakistan and much of Asia. Yet, it is also broadly known that Europe is not the principal destination of students from Asia; Australia and in particularly the U.S. seem to be still “most interesting”. An important support to probably change these trends has been given by the European Commission.

In 2002, the Commission launched (under the EU budget line for “Political, economic and cultural cooperation with Asian developing countries”) the so-called *Asia link*.⁵⁴ It was set up to promote regional and multilateral networking between higher education institutions in all EU Member States and eligible countries in Asia. Its programme activities include partnership projects that support human resource development, curriculum development activities, and programme support activities (capacity-building, studies, European higher education fairs, information etc.). Since 2002, the programme has funded 155 partnerships with over 700 higher education institutions both from Asia and Europe. During the 2006 – 2008 period, the Asia-Link Programme is also financing seven European higher education fairs in Asia. The events – in Thailand, India, Malaysia, China, Vietnam, The Philippines and Indonesia – will provide a platform for European higher education institutions to promote their courses to

⁵³ Curricular Reform Taking Shape. Learning outcomes and Competences in Higher Education. Brussels, 16 June 2006 <http://www.tuning.unideusto.org/tuningeu/index.php?option=com_docman&task=view_category&Itemid=59&subcat=12&catid=20&limitstart=0&limit=5>.

⁵⁴ See <http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/asia-link/index_en.htm>.

Asian students, and for a symposium on the EU's higher education cooperation with Asia in general and with the respective countries in particular. Asia-Link does not offer scholarships to individuals, but there are other opportunities such as, for example, through the Erasmus Mundus programme and the so-called Asian Windows within it.⁵⁵

42. At the sub-regional level, interesting higher education initiatives can be found, e.g. in the Southeast Asia. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), established in 1967 to promote co-operation among countries of this region, put co-operation in the fields of higher education and human resource development on its agenda in 1992. The principal idea to strengthen the existing network of universities and higher education institutions was developed into *ASEAN University Network* (AUN), established in 1995. So far, the AUN has noted important developments. In 1998, the creation of AUN-Quality Assurance (AUN-QA) Networking was initiated.⁵⁶ An important step further was achieved at the meeting of Ministers for education in ASEAN countries held in Bangkok in 2005. An agreement was achieved to establish an ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Education as a new ASEAN mechanism to serve as policy body on education.

The meeting concluded with important conclusions: “To build a solid ASEAN socio-cultural community and promote ASEAN-ness among ASEAN citizens, cultural diversity as well as multi-cultural and multi-religious understanding was addressed. The strategies of utilising education to foster better understanding, identifying ASEAN's niche and enriching the ASEAN brand for education were also highlighted. Exchanges of teachers, academic staffs and students in the region will also be an integral part of the capacity-building process of the region's human resource development. Preparing our peoples for globalisation and technological advancement was also identified as a top priority for the region”.⁵⁷

AUN activities do not focus only to ASEAN countries but also to the ASEAN “dialogue partners” South Korea, Japan, India, China, Russia and EU. Cooperation with EU has been developing within the *ASEAN-EU University Network Programme* (AUNP) which was officially launched with the signing of the Financing Agreement between the European Commission and the AUN in 2000. It aims at enhancing co-operation between higher education institutions in the two regions, to promote regional integration within ASEAN countries, and to strengthen the mutual awareness of European and Asian cultural perspectives. It also aims at strengthening the capacity of universities in Southeast Asian region through the transfer of European expertise and knowledge, to facilitate, through the provision of grants, the joint projects of ASEAN and the European universities in order to strengthen coordinated and sustainable relations in higher education, and to promote academic collaboration between ASEAN and the EU universities through a range of networking activities in the field of higher education.

AUNP is about to terminate in 2006 with obviously fruitful results. The programme supported two major types of activities: the Partnership Projects aimed at improving cooperation between higher education institutions in ASEAN and EU (three components/areas: Human Resource Development, Curriculum Development and Common Applied Research) and the Network Initiatives which aimed at bringing universities together to share experiences. Thus,

⁵⁵ See <<http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/asian.pdf>>.

⁵⁶ See <<http://www.aun.chula.ac.th/Quality%20Assurance.htm>>.

⁵⁷ See a brief report on the Meeting of Ministers for Education in ASEAN countries at the AUN website: <<http://www.aun.chula.ac.th/The%20Meeting%20of%20Ministers%20for%20Education%20in%20ASEAN%20countries.htm>>.

joint ASEAN-EU Rectors' Conferences have been organised (on Higher Education and Sustainable Development at the University of Malaya in October 2004 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; on Borderless Education in November 2005 at the University of Leuven, Belgium) as well as focused round table meetings on Quality Assurance (2003), on Autonomy in Higher Education (2005) and on Regional Cooperation in a Globalising World (2005). Technical assistance on Quality Assurance and on Credit Transfer System was also assured (2005). These activities indicate that Southeast Asia could be one of those regions where the emerging EHEA could develop successful partnerships.

43. One of ASEAN members, Singapore, has been developing a particularly ambitious policy objective: to make this city-state located at a strategic place of the Southeast Asia “a global Education hub of quality”. Kris Olds, an American analyst of Singapore’s moving towards knowledge based economy, noted “that Singapore has single-mindedly sought to fashion education as a tool for economic development over all other objectives”. From mid-1980s to mid-1990s “the Singaporean higher education system experienced the massification drive that continues to the present. For example, student participation rates in Singaporean universities rose from 5% in 1980 to 21% in 2001 (Lee and Gopinathan, 2004, p. 117). Singaporean universities also initiated the launch of endowment funds, though university governance and financing was still firmly controlled by the Ministry of Education. The era of ‘academic capitalism’ (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004) had yet to seriously emerge” (Olds, 2006, p. 5).

Already in 1998, the Singapore’s government launched, through the Economic Development Board (EDB), the World Class University (WCU) programme to attract up to 10 world class institutions to set up a significant presence in Singapore.⁵⁸ These institutions would be centres of excellence in education and research with strong linkages to industries (e.g. business, medicine, logistics, engineering and the sciences). “EDB will now broaden its promotion efforts to develop in Singapore a mix of education and training institutions of good global standing and rich course offerings at all levels of education, targeting the student, corporate and continuing education markets both local and foreign. This will build diversity and create an ecosystem that is anchored by the core of world class universities already in Singapore” (EDB, 2002). Needless to say that majority of attracted universities have been coming from USA. Yet, since 2001, two distinguished European universities also established their institutes in Singapore: Technische Universiteit Eindhoven (Design Technology Institute) and Technische Universität München (German Institute of Science and Technology).

44. Asia as a whole, as well as through its sub-regions is growing into an important provider of international higher education. Parallel to economic development and growth, national higher education systems are expanding. The case of India and China is probably most convincing. Asia Times recently reported not only on »[E]xamples of world-renowned academics choosing China as their new home abound« but also on ambition to attract foreign students: “‘For a world-class university, it’s necessary to attract the best students and faculty internationally. Eventually we don’t just want the best Chinese students, but the best from around the world,’ said Zhang [assistant president of Peking University]. As a result, Chinese universities are increasingly offering courses wholly taught in English and in collaboration with internationally recognized partners. The Guanghai School of Management offers a dual-degree program in English with the National University of Singapore. In addition, undergraduate courses and an MBA program in English wholly administered by Guanghai are on offer.” (Aiyar, 2006).

⁵⁸ See <http://www.sedb.com/edb/sg/en_uk/index/news_room/news/2002/economic_development5.html>.

There are more and more warnings that traditional exporters of higher education can soon get serious competitors. »As China and India have emerged to be economic powerhouses, they have expanded their higher education offerings. [...] As educational opportunities improve in less-developed countries, they become more attractive to international students, especially given the far lower costs of tuition, room and board.« (Sadat Hussain, 2006). Indeed, these are potential new Higher Education Areas which should be seriously taken into account, not only by the emerging EHEA in Europe, but also by Australia or U.S. Is there any visible influence or impact of the Bologna Process – in terms of policy development, not in terms of student exchange as already mentioned – in these countries?

One would be rather disappointed if searching for this kind of influences and impacts. Knowledge about the Bologna Process as such is probably even less widespread than in Latin America, Australia or U.S. Not only a lack of information; comments can be also found that could make a European confused.⁵⁹ On the other side, there are well informed people who send very positive messages, as it was possible to hear at the EUA Glasgow Convention from T.P. Leung, Vice President the Hong Kong Polytechnic University: “Students of Hong Kong and China Mainland would most likely welcome the change of the European tertiary system to ‘3+2’, i.e. 3-year Bachelor Degree plus 2-year Masters Degree, since it would cost them less to study a first degree in Europe. Furthermore Chinese parents like to have their children go home as soon as possible. Students of Hong Kong and China Mainland interested to study first degrees in European countries would benefit from a common European system.” (Leung, 2005).

But there are also other parallels to higher education policy which can be, as in the case of China, very persuasive. An interesting overlapping – no doubt, totally coincidental⁶⁰ – can be found; in mid-June 1999, at the very same time as European Ministers gathered in Bologna to sign the Declaration, more precisely, on “June 15-18, 1999, the Communist Party of China and the State Council of China held the Third National Congress on Education since the open-door policy was carried out” (Li, 2004, p. 16). The main aim of the meeting was to ensure that important policy directives of 1998 (just not to forget: in Europe this was the year of the Sorbonne Declaration) were implemented throughout the nation.

45. The recent developments of Chinese higher education usually make an outside observer sincerely surprised.⁶¹ This surprise would be even greater if one takes into account the last

⁵⁹ See e.g.: “Another potential threat to the maintenance of Korean studies in Europe is the ‘Bologna Process’, whereby European Union members agreed to set up a common education curriculum and higher education system by 2010. The process includes the integration and abolition of certain academic studies that are regarded as ‘scholastically unpopular.’” (Choi Jie-ho, 2005).

Two comments should be made here. First, the quotation is the best proof that Europe should find better and more effective ways to present what the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area are all about. Secondly, and even more importantly, a serious analysis is needed on the cultural effects of “international concerting” of higher education. Last but not least, respect for cultural identities has several times been confirmed within the Bologna Process as being basic values in higher education. This principle is important also in the light of the “external dimension”.

⁶⁰ It is out of the question that there was no “coordination between Beijing and Bologna” in 1999 at all. However, philosophers have shown several times that coincidence is not an easy idea to understand and that the line between coincidence and necessity is a thin one. The 1990s brought in generally and worldwide similar – and obviously unavoidable – challenges (not only) to higher education systems. These challenges have been met in different ways and from different cultural backgrounds, but a common “spirit” – at least the “spirit of time” – could be recognised behind them.

⁶¹ “The Chinese education sector is in a state of radical growth and change. China practices a system of 9 years compulsory (basic) education, which has largely been realised. The illiteracy rate is low. There are over 110

three or four decades of modern Chinese history. “Chinese economic system used to be very highly centralised. To adapt to that, the former higher education system was also centralised, with education provided by the central and local governments respectively and directly under their administration.” (Higher Education in China [2006]). Only at the end of the 1970s when the Cultural Revolution was over and opening up to the outside world was announced (1978) were the disadvantages of this system seriously addressed. China started to write its modern higher education pages almost from scratch. During the Cultural Revolution, “the numbers of postsecondary students dropped precipitously from 674,400 to 47,800.” (Robinson, 2005) At this time, everywhere in Europe higher education already waded deep into the process of “massification”.

China reached an important turning point in the process of modernisation of the higher education system in 1998.⁶² This is a period “when China faced the challenges of the information technology revolution and the intense competition of economic globalisation of the new century, the situation has changed substantially. China’s higher education appeared so obsolete that some form of ‘major operation’ needed to be immediately performed. Thus, the Zhu Rongji Administration carried out a new round of educational reforms.” (Li, 2004, p. 14). In European eyes one of most fascinating features of these reforms is a strengthened ambition to increase university participation rates and to found world-class universities (so-called *Project 985* of 1999).

46. Important results have been achieved so far. “Firstly, the participation rate of the relevant age cohort in higher education has been raised to 15.0% in 2002. In other words, the goal that was to be realised by 2010 has been achieved 8 years ahead of schedule.” (Li, 2004, p. 18). On the other hand, administrative structures and higher education governance in general have been importantly modernised, primarily through decentralisation, by giving more attention to institutional autonomy but also by considering the issue of critical mass and quality of the sector through merging previously weak institutions into more university-like new institutions.⁶³

Today, the Chinese government attaches great importance to international cooperation and exchanges in higher education. In the last ten years international cooperation and exchanges of higher education have increased significantly. As already mentioned, there are many Chinese students in European higher education systems today, and many tools of mutual cooperation have also been established so far. “Most experts agree that educational cooperation between China and Europe will increase in the future. They refer to better

million students in primary and secondary education and 11 million in higher education. Around 19% of the age group 18 – 24 years has access to (post-secondary) higher education, which includes both higher vocational and university education. Higher education has been reformed rapidly, with a focus on both an expansion of capacity and improvement of quality. Enrolment of new HE students has increased from approx. 2 million in 2000 to 4.7 million in 2005. These are impressive statistics, but they still reflect under-capacity. Thus Chinese education – which is also very examination driven – and its students are very competitive.” (Country Report China, in: ACA 2006, p. 3).

⁶² “On 29 August, 1998, the 4th conference of the 9th standing committee of National Congress passed the ‘Higher Education Law of People’s Republic of China’ which is implemented from 1 Jan, 1999. Higher Education Law is the first complete higher education legal document in terms of legislature. It is a law, which standardizes the internal and external complicated social relationship of higher education and its own activities.” (Higher Education in China [2006]).

⁶³ “According to a summary made on December 20, 2000 by Chen Zhili, Minister of Education of China at that time, 556 HEIs had been merged or adjusted into just 232, and the administration system of 509 HEI had been transformed or adjusted. As a result, the structure, distribution and function of China’s higher education were much improved through ‘joint construction, readjustment, cooperation, and mergers.’” (Li, 2004, p. 16).

acceptance of Chinese degrees at European universities, better connections between the Chinese and European education and degree systems, more transparency in European higher education as a result of Lisbon and Bologna and lower risk for brain drain as important drivers of this trend.” (Country Report China, in: ACA 2006, p. 29).

However, in a brief statement of the Chinese Ministry of Education we can find an element which is even more important for the future, in particularly from the point of view of the “external dimension”: “By opening to the outside world, we broadly learn the useful foreign experience, promote the reform and development of our higher education and enhance mutual understanding and friendship between China and other countries.”⁶⁴ (Higher Education in China [2006]).

Yet, we should make it clear that this sentence does not refer to Europe alone!

“The Bologna Process and Australia: Next Steps”

47. Another important initiative has been recently launched in Australia which could be of particular interest for European higher education and for the Bologna Process as a whole. In the spring, Australia hosted the International Education Forum, attended by delegates from around the world, and parallel to it, on 3-4 April 2006, altogether 27 Ministers from across the Asia-Pacific region met in Brisbane, chaired by the Australian Education Minister Ms. Julie Bishop. The main theme of the ministers’ discussion was: What actions on education and training can be agreed that will strengthen good relations in the region and underpin its social and economic development, through the international mobility of students and research collaboration?

The political result of the ministerial meeting is the *Brisbane communiqué*. In this document, they “recognised the diversity of economies, resources, political structures and socio-cultural context, as well as significant differences in education systems” and “agreed that internationalisation is a necessary and critical element for all education systems within the region”. They also “agreed on the common goal of increasing greater student and academic mobility and transferability of qualifications, and greater integration or exchangeability of education frameworks”. Mobility and exchange “are seen to provide the basis for friendship, mutual respect and understanding, just as education is the key to prosperity, security and peace in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond”. In technical terms, the Ministers agreed to collaborate on quality assurance frameworks, recognition of qualifications, common competency-based standards for teachers, and the development of common recognition of technical skills. At the end, “the Ministers agreed to continue the Asia-Pacific Education Ministers’ Meeting as a biennial meeting that will become a new forum to consider common education issues at ministerial level, throughout this extended region”. They established an Officials’ Working Group⁶⁵ which will provide an interim report to the Ministers in twelve months. “Ministers also agreed to invite other nations from the Asia-Pacific region that have

⁶⁴ “Hosted by the Chinese Government and Ministry of Education, this most recent EU-China Forum on higher education policy took place in Beijing from 28 November – 1 December 2005. The Forum brought together experts from government and academia from both Europe and Asia and focused on four main themes: the Bologna Process and the interface with Chinese higher education; the internationalisation of research; quality assurance, regulation and accountability; and the socio-economic role of higher education.” – See http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/client/item_view.jsp?type_id=1&item_id=2962.

⁶⁵ “The Officials’ Working Group will maintain cognisance of future possibilities for compatibility with initiatives already in development such as the European Bologna and Copenhagen processes.” (Brisbane communiqué, 2006).

expressed interest in the work programme but were unable to attend this meeting to join the working group” (Brisbane communiqué, 2006).

It is obvious that the *Brisbane communiqué* is an important document for signatory countries but it is also important for the “external dimension” of the Bologna Process. Ministers met to discuss how to respond to the Bologna challenge and create stronger regional links. The method used reminds a little of the early days of the “Bologna Club” and there are some clear ties between this group⁶⁶ and the EHEA – for example, Turkey is a member of the Bologna Process (since 2001) and Australia signed the Lisbon recognition convention (in 2000; ratification in 2002). Yet, the context is different. The host Minister referred to global changes affecting “Australia's fourth biggest export industry”, international education. The economic development of India and China, the increase of students, the expansion of education systems, and a growing trend for universities everywhere to teach in English bring new dimensions into discussions.

48. At the same time, there was another, even more important event – important in particular in the “external dimension” perspective. Parallel to the International Education Forum in Brisbane, the Australian Minister released a discussion paper prepared by the Australian federal Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) and entitled *The Bologna Process and Australia: Next Steps* (Australian Government, 2006). *The Australian* reported on 5 April 2006 that “Minister Julie Bishop warns that if Australia does not align itself with the changes taking place in 45 European countries under the Bologna Agreement, it will be left out of the tent” (Illing, 2006).

Indeed, the Minister begins her *Preface* with the following sentence: “The Bologna Process, whereby a significant number of European countries are working towards greater consistency and portability across their higher education systems, is likely to influence developments in higher education in many parts of the world including our region. It will have important implications for Australian higher education providers as we work to enhance our existing success and reputation as a provider of world-class education to both domestic and international students.” Then she continues: “The purpose of the paper which I am releasing today is to initiate discussion on the significance of Bologna for Australia and possible Australian responses. The issues must be considered in a broader context – the long-term vision for higher education in Australia.” The Bologna Process⁶⁷ “is an important process that is receiving considerable attention, not only within Europe, but from a range of other countries. It presents challenges to, and opportunities for Australia’s relationship with Europe as well as Asia and raises the importance of developing effective multilateral dialogue with Australia’s key Asian education partners about future directions in higher education”. She concludes: “Developing an effective Australian response to the Bologna Process requires a national dialogue to develop a degree of common understanding of the key benefits and outcomes Australia seeks through alignment with Bologna initiatives.” (Australian Government, 2006, p. 1-2).

⁶⁶ “This was the inaugural meeting of this group, with representatives from Turkey through to the Pacific Islands.” (Ibid.)

⁶⁷ “The Bologna Process provides a series of opportunities and challenges, and is an opportunity for Australia to better align its frameworks with international standards and benchmarks. The challenge is how to achieve this and retain an Australian higher education sector that meets both domestic and international expectations of quality.” (Ibid., p. 2).

49. The 15-page discussion paper aims to stimulate debate within the Australian Higher Education sector about the Bologna Process “which is driving reform within and between the 45 European signatory countries” (ibid., 3). The document says that “Australian institutions already have a range of relationships with European universities, including joint programmes. While students and academics move between Australian and European universities, and Australian qualifications are recognised in Europe, impediments resulting from differences in systems and basic structures still exist. [...] Bologna compatibility would closely align key features of the Australian higher education system with the university systems of 45 European countries and would allow broader cooperation, facilitate the movement of students between Australian and European higher education institutions and aid recognition”. The document informs that there are currently some 32,000 European enrolments in Australia and anticipates that the adoption of credit transfer systems and a diploma supplement will be “as valuable to Australian students seeking to study in Europe as it will be for European and other students seeking to study in Australia” (ibid., p. 7).

Besides stressing the benefits of the “Bologna compatibility” it also warns about the risks of “Bologna incompatibility”. It stresses that other countries or regions already follow the Bologna route. “The Latin American countries, for example, have expressed interest in emulating the Bologna Process and had observers at both the Berlin and Bergen meetings and [...] there has also been interest in the process in Asian countries.” The authors estimate that Europe will become a more attractive destination for overseas students at the expense of Australia and foresee that “post-Bologna European higher education may offer a very attractive package for many foreign students, particularly those in traditionally strong markets for Australia”. Finally, they see Europe as focusing on Europe: “Issues of European integration may as a result loom far larger in European eyes than those of cooperation with non-European countries”. However, “the Bergen ministerial meeting made specific acknowledgement of the need for European higher education to look outward, not only inward. There were views articulated about the importance of engaging in constructive cooperation with other regions of the world, but much of any external focus will be on the position of the EHEA relative to the USA, emerging competitors such as China, and the impact of the reforms on less-developed countries such as those in Africa” (ibid. 9-10). The discussion paper ends with a series of questions for discussion and with an invitation for submissions and responses (to be sent to the DEST by the end of April 2006).

50. As far as we can see from the European perspective, the debate on the important issues outlined in the discussion paper was very lively and it still ongoing. Until the summer of 2006, the Working Group on External Dimension collected extensive documentation with responses (submissions) to the Australian DEST from important academic organisations and associations as well as from individual universities.⁶⁸ A thorough analysis of these documents would demand much more time and space than available here. In the continuation, we shall limit ourselves to only a few of them.

51. In its response, *Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee* (AVVC) focuses “around the issues and opportunities presented in the paper”. In the introduction, it comments critically:

⁶⁸ Documents were received from DDOGS – Australian Council of Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies; ACED – Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations; Australian Council of Engineering Deans; Australian Technology Network of Universities; IRU – Innovative Research Universities Australia; the University of Adelaide, Deakin University, Edith Cowan University, the University of Melbourne, the University of New England, University of Tasmania, Victoria University, Australian Catholic University and the Australian National University.

“Whilst the paper focuses on aspects such as the ‘benefits of Bologna compatibility’ and ‘risks of Bologna incompatibility,’ it does not examine the possible risks of Bologna compatibility”, concluding that “[I]t is acknowledged that the Australian international education industry must understand the changes occurring in Europe and engage in a dialogue about its implications for Australia. But it is equally important that Australia does not assume that full compatibility with the Bologna Process is the only option. Any engagement by Australia with Europe through the Bologna Process must not result in a diminution of the diversity of the Australian university system nor in its collaboration and cooperation with countries around the world especially those in the Asia-Pacific region, nor in any approximation to a one-size fits all approach” (AVVC, 2006, p. 1). In European eyes, in particularly from an academic point of view, this is a perfect “Bologna” statement.

There are many interesting comments in the AVVC Response. One of the key concerns seems to remain the same as during the early stages of Bologna debates in Europe – uneasiness with any kind of standardisation in higher education as a result of international alignments: “The AVVC propose that the meaning given to alignment is *comparability*. This will ensure that the diversity of the Australian education system will be able to be maintained and does not infer standardisation which is clearly an element implicit in harmonisation.” On the other hand, “Australia should examine the global compatibility and all aspects of portability and recognition of the Australian Qualifications Framework using Bologna as a reference point to drive regional discussions about an Asia Pacific Higher Education space.” Analysing future demographics, “harmonisation within the Asian region may be much more important than with Europe.” The AVVC recommends, among others, to “review the implications of Australia’s engagement with the Bologna process from a regional perspective” (ibid, p. 2, 3).

AVVC made a series of other recommendations which can be very interesting from a European point of view. Any engagement with the Bologna Process should be based “on the precepts of university autonomy, flexibility, distinctive nature and diversity”; “a risk analysis of the risk from losing European market share as well as the risk associated with aligning Australia closely with European systems in the context of the Asia Pacific region and North American markets” is proposed, as well as to “consider the repercussion on resources, professional courses, research and the Australian Qualifications Framework of engagement with Bologna”, to “undertake a survey of European country compliance with Bologna” and to “undertake discussions with the United Kingdom and Asia-Pacific Governments to determine if these countries are looking at implementing the Bologna structure, or if they intend adopting a model more aligned with the USA/Canadian model”. The AVCC also recommends “that DEST liaise with all relevant stakeholders including employers, business, the AVCC and higher education providers regarding developments in and implications of the Bologna Process, taking into account timelines for consultation, an appropriate communication strategy, and risk and mapping exercises” (ibid, p. 3, 4, 5, 7).

52. Another important higher education stakeholder, *National Union of Students* (NUS), also welcomed the opportunity to discuss possible implications of Australian compliance with the Bologna Process but also noted that it was “a little surprised that a DEST discussion paper would come out looking towards a unified, mainly social democratic Europe for inspiration. The Commonwealth Government over the last decade has generally been looking to America for its reform agenda to replace the traditional English-Scottish models. However, with Asia, South America and North America watching the Bologna process carefully the government is perhaps worried that Australia will be left behind what could become the global model for degree structure. Another factor that could be driving this debate is the University of Melbourne and University of Western Australia graduate school proposals where some

Australian universities are already moving towards a degree of Bologna compliance.” (NUS, 2006, p. 2) Similarly as ESIB in Europe (it is obvious that NUS and ESIB have developed good communication), NUS is also pointing out the issues of “the globalisation of education as a commodity” (and a set of questions on the social dimension) as well as “pedagogical issues rising from a squeeze on bachelor courses creating questions as to whether they are sufficient for initial professional qualification” (ibid, p. 2-3).

Answering the question of what are the implications for the autonomy of Australian institutions and the diversity of the sector in becoming Bologna compatible, NUS provisionally estimates “that a minimalist approach to Bologna-compliance would not have a large negative impact on the autonomy and horizontal diversity of Australian higher education. [...] However, a move to the 3+2 graduate school model could lead to quite profound changes to the vertical diversity, and because of the peculiar demand saturation features of many prestigious fee markets, could lead to a narrowing of horizontal diversity.” (Ibid., p. 7) Among other issues, NUS also stresses the importance of stakeholders’ involvement in a policy debate (as a characteristic “Bologna feature”): “As the Bologna process has itself shown it is important that the voices of those who do the teaching/research and those who are being taught or trained are heard through the inclusion of bodies like NUS, CAPA and the NTEU in the Australia’s discussion of Bologna implications. [...] European student organisations have played a critical role in the development of the Bologna proposal, and NUS hopes that the Australian government will similarly recognise the importance of student input into the development and implementation process.” (Ibid., p. 9).

53. Last but not least, the response from *National Tertiary Education Industry Union* (NTEU), the *Education International* affiliate in Australia, could probably summarise the different views of stakeholders. The NTEU, representing the professional and industrial issues of over 28,000 staff employed at Australian universities, is “very supportive of the overall objectives of increasing staff and student mobility and increasing transparency in relation to degree structures as well as quality assurance in the higher education sector both in Australia and internationally” and agrees with the Government discussion paper “that many of the changes proposed for the Bologna process have already been implemented to varying degrees within Australia”. As an important (past) development NTEU stresses “Australia’s signing of the Lisbon Convention on recognition of qualifications within Europe.” Yet, there is also “a second, and highly influential, development” namely “the degree to which China (and other important markets in Asia) have become interested in aligning with developments in Europe. China is the number one market for Australian, European, and North American transnational education initiatives, and if China chooses the Bologna roadmap, then the chief exporting nations such as Australia will want to align themselves with these developments.” (NTEU, 2006, 2-3).

NTEU is not without concerns about imposing the Bologna three-degree cycle structure in Australia and the first concern relates to relative cost-benefits of developing and implementing such a radically new structure. A number of major issues of concern has been identified in the document, including “the potential impact on institutional autonomy and academic freedom”, “student access and government support for students wishing to enrol in Masters degree programs”, “the role and function of the Honours year”, “the transition from existing degree structures to the new structure”, and “the role of research and research education under the new degree structure” (ibid., 10). NTEU would also oppose (again in the eyes of Europe, in a good “Bologna spirit”) any initiative “to impose common curricula, assessment or grading or marking standards across the higher education sector, as these would be seen as a direct infringement on institutional autonomy and academic freedom” (ibid., p.

5). On the other hand, NTEU is aware of the benefits that arise from further international integration and “strongly supports Australia playing an active role”. At the same time it stresses that “the Bologna Process has been a very resource-intensive exercise” and adds: “If Australia is to play a leading role, then it is important that there is extensive consultation among the academic community and other relevant stakeholders on how we would proceed to embrace elements of the Bologna process.” (Ibid., p. 8-9). Here, a critical remark on stakeholders’ representation cannot be overlooked - the DEST discussion paper “fails to acknowledge that staff organisations are also formally involved in the [Bologna] process. Education International (EI) has ‘consultative member’ status and is currently actively involved in three separate working parties addressing issues of mobility, external dimensions and qualifications. The NTEU has also been monitoring the development and implementation of the Bologna process through our involvement with EI.” (Ibid., p. 3).

Is there a European challenge to USA?

54. It will be very interesting to follow future debates initiated by the Australian federal Department of Education, Science and Training - not only for Australians and not only for the partners from the new “Asia-Pacific Higher Education Area”. These debates are of extreme importance for the debates on the “internal” as well as “external” dimensions of the European Higher Education Area as well. Australia is often taken as the second largest competitor in global higher education market, but what is the situation for the largest one,⁶⁹ the U.S.?

Higher education in the U.S. is a special issue in many respects - also from the perspective of the “external dimension” of the Bologna Process. It is a large, diverse and decentralised system with many characteristics very different from European national higher education systems. “As with the U.S. higher education system in general, the international component of postsecondary education in the United States is large, diverse, decentralised and competitive. The recent decline in foreign student enrolments has stimulated academic institutions, higher education groups and the U.S. Government to take pro-active steps to reverse the decline and to ensure that the United States retains its position as a destination of choice for internationally mobile students.” (Country Report USA, in: ACA, 2006).

Of course, in various ways, global challenges to higher education knock on all doors today – and also that of the U.S. Secretary of State. The federal Government is engaged in many activities related to promoting U.S. higher education abroad but, from point of view of this report, systemic policy developments are more interesting. Thus, in September 2005, U.S. Secretary of State Margaret Spellings announced the formation of the *Secretary of Education’s Commission on the Future of Higher Education*. As we can read on the Commission’s official website, it “is charged with developing a comprehensive national strategy for postsecondary education that will meet the needs of America’s diverse population and also address the economic and workforce needs of the country’s future. [...] Through public hearings to be held around the country, the Commission will attempt to answer questions as: What skills will students need to succeed in the 21st century? How can we make sure America stays the world’s leader in academic research? And, how can we make sure opportunities for quality higher education and best jobs are open to all students?”⁷⁰

⁶⁹ “Of the nation’s nearly 14 million undergraduates, more than four in 10 attend two-year community colleges. Nearly one third are older than 24 years old. Forty percent are enrolled part-time.” (Draft Commission Report, 2006, p. 2-3)

⁷⁰ See <<http://www.ed.gov/print/news/pressreleases/2005/09/09192005.html>>.

55. The main task of the Commission is to develop “a comprehensive national strategy”. Its work is not about the “external dimension”, yet developing a national strategy today, even in the U.S, it is not possible to ignore the “external dimension”. It should be borne in mind that governmental responsibilities for higher education in the U.S. differ substantially from European traditions. Nevertheless, it is interesting to check what position the federal Government takes against present challenges of internationalisation of higher education. In the Secretary’s speech at the meeting of the Commission in September 2005, there is only one, yet interesting sentence on this issue: “The good news is that we still have the finest system of higher education in the world. But we’re at a crossroads. The world is catching up. In 1970, America produced more than 50 percent of the world’s science and engineering doctorates. But if current trends continue, by 2010, we will produce only around 15 percent.”⁷¹ In fact, the discourse used in this sentence is not that far from what we heard from Brisbane and, last but not least, what we used in our own European discussions, namely how to position the further (future) development of higher education in the fast-changing circumstances of today?

In the summer 2006, the Commission published its Draft Report (8/9/06 Draft). Surprisingly, from a European perspective, and probably from a non-American perspective in general, the document does not make any detailed reference to the issue of internationalisation and globalisation of higher education, which is high on agendas in other world regions! There is a notion – but only very general and similar to what the Secretary of State already stated – that there are other higher education systems in the world and that global competition is increasing: “We may still have more than our share of the world’s best universities. But a lot of countries have followed our lead, and *they are now educating more of their citizens to more advanced levels than we are*. Worse, they are passing us by a time when education is more important to our collective prosperity than ever.” (Draft Commission Report, 2006, p. 1).

Later in the draft document, summing up findings regarding the issue of innovation, we can find another interesting – and slightly more detailed – sentence: “It is fundamental to U.S. economic interests to provide world-class education while simultaneously providing an efficient immigration system that welcomes highly educated individuals to our nation. Foreign-born students represent about half of all graduate students in computer sciences, and over half of the doctorate degrees awarded in engineering. Almost 30 percent of the actively employed science and engineering doctorate holders in the U.S. are foreign-born. However, current limits on employer-sponsored visas preclude many U.S. businesses from hiring many of these graduates, which may discourage some talented students from attending our universities.” (Ibid., p. 17).

56. There are 9 pages of recommendations in the document and the last one (the sixth) is clearly oriented to the questions we are searching for: “The United States must ensure the capacity of its universities to achieve global leadership in key strategic areas such as science, engineering, medicine, and other knowledge-intensive professions. We recommend increased federal investment in areas critical to our nation’s global competitiveness and a renewed commitment to attract the best and brightest minds from across the nation and around the world to lead the next wave of American innovation.” It continues: “The need to produce a globally literate citizenry is critical to the nation’s continued success in the global economy. The federal government has recently embarked on an initiative to dramatically increase the number of Americans learning critically needed foreign languages from kindergarten through

⁷¹ See <<http://www.ed.gov/print/news/speeches/2005/09/09192005.html>>.

postsecondary education and into the workforce. Higher education, too, must put greater emphasis on international education, including foreign language instruction and study abroad, in order to ensure that graduates have the skills necessary to function effectively in the global workforce.” In addition to competitiveness trends, the Commission draws attention to “capable students from diverse populations” and to low-income and minority students, and then addresses an important “external dimension” issue: “In an effort to retain the best and brightest students and professionals from around the world, the federal government must address immigration policies specifically aimed at international students. [...] The Commission also recommends eliminating the requirement that in order to receive a student visa, all students must prove that they have no intent to remain in the United States after graduating. After all, talented graduates with sought-after advanced training represent precisely the kind of intellectual capital our nation needs.” (Ibid., p. 25).

57. This is more or less all what the document says about issues reviewed in our paper. One might probably just ask why there is no *direct* reference to the emerging European Higher Education Area and to the Bologna Process? Why such a huge difference in this regard between Australian and American strategic documents? Americans as well could ask these questions. C. Stimpson from the New York University’s Graduate School of Arts and Science began her contribution to the ACA Hamburg Conference on the external dimension of the Bologna Process (2004) with a provoking statement: “Ignorance is always dangerous, but the United States ignorance of the Bologna Process – outside of some educational experts – may be particularly dangerous” (Stimpson, in: Muche, 2005, p. 79).

However, this sentence should be understood primarily as a warning. On the one hand, it is true that the Bologna Process is well known only to interested circles of educational experts,⁷² on the other hand, the challenges of globalisation of higher education are seriously considered

⁷² “Thirty percent of the admissions professionals at American and Canadian higher education institutions are not familiar with the Bologna Process; another 35 percent have heard about it but do not know exactly what it is about. This is one of the outcomes of a survey on the admission of European students at U.S. and Canadian institutions conducted by Educational Credential Evaluators and the Institute of International Education. From a European point of view, this is a problem. For, when European Ministers of Education convened in Bologna in May 1999 and decided to create a single European Higher Education Area by 2010, one of their major motivations was to enhance the attractiveness of Europe’s universities and colleges on a global scale.” (Wächter and Muche, 2004). – See also Schatzman, 2005: “34% of respondents are familiar with the Bologna Declaration and understand its general goals. Another 35% have heard of it, but do not know much about it. The remaining 30% are not familiar with the Bologna Declaration.” The survey was completed in spring 2004.

by American higher education institutions⁷³ and partner organisations.⁷⁴ Last but not least, transatlantic cooperation is increasing and brings new incentives.⁷⁵

58. Specialised American media have been informing about the development of the Bologna Process continuously. For example, *World Education News and Reviews* (WENR)⁷⁶ brought several analytical articles on the Bologna Process starting from 1999. It is interesting to follow them and to track the logics of their presentation. In January 1999, WENR published information on the implementation of ECTS at a selection of European universities, and in January 2000 R. Sedgwick, the editor, wrote a comprehensive report on the Bologna Declaration. “On one hand, the Bologna Declaration is part and parcel of the ongoing trend to achieve greater cultural and economic unity in the region. At the same time, however, there is a tangible need to redesign and harmonise academic programmes to better prepare students for emerging on regional and international labour markets. [...] In addition, the signatories of the Bologna Declaration expressed the need to enhance international competitiveness in the overseas student market through the creation of a more viable and unified European system of higher education. [...] The trend towards globalisation, the utilisation of new technologies in distance learning programmes, the predominance of English as the world's lingua franca and intensified competition for international students all represent formidable challenges to European systems of higher education.” (Sedgwick, 2000).

59. From the perspective of early 2000, Sedgwick establishes that “Europe is attempting to meet these challenges through concerted efforts aimed at recruiting more international students, while expanding campuses and programmes to other parts of the world. Many

⁷³ See David Ward speech at the EUA Glasgow Convention (2005): “The Bologna process has not attracted great interest in the United States until quite recently. As you move forward to the maturing of this process, there will be an increasing interest on the part of the higher education community in the United States. I think there is also a growing admiration for the amount of progress that has been made in something which we thought initially would be a heavy handed government directed process. The EUA has provided effective bottom-up institutional responses and I have witnessed healthy discussions of the role of governments and the role of institutions in the delivery of higher education.” (Ward, 2005)

⁷⁴ NAFSA (Association of International Educators), an organisation promoting international education and providing professional development opportunities to the field, has established a Task Force on the Bologna Process to assist international education professionals who are looking for information on changes in European education. The purpose of the Task Force is to respond to NAFSA members’ needs for more information on the Bologna Declaration and the resulting changes that will impact transatlantic exchange. In addition to developing plans for collecting and sharing information on the Bologna Process, the Task Force has been charged with promoting dialog between the U.S. and the European exchange communities. See NAFSA Task Force website <<http://www.nafsa.org/practiceres/bologna/bologna-taskforce.htm>>. See also Schatzman, 2005.

⁷⁵ There has been a long-standing cooperation programme in higher education between the EU and U.S. At the EU-US summit in Vienna in June 2006, a new eight-year (2006 – 2013) education agreement was signed. The new agreement will promote further exchanges of students, teachers and researchers, strengthen the Schuman-Fulbright Programme and encourage greater institutional collaboration. It also includes innovative *Transatlantic Degree programmes* which could be a particularly important incentive for growing institutional cooperation in future years: “The idea of the new Transatlantic Degree Programme is to stimulate the creation of truly joint or double degrees by providing support to multilateral consortia with a minimum configuration of 2 EU higher education institutions located in different Member States and 1 US institution. The partner institutions will have to create an integrated joint study programme, with students from the two sides spending a period of study both in the EU and in the US institutions and getting either a joint degree (issued jointly by two institutions) or a double degree (two degrees, one from an EU institution, the other from the US institution) encompassing the whole period of study. At the core of the programme is the enhancement of student mobility, innovation and joint curriculum development and academic recognition between the EU and the US.” For details see <http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/eu-usa/index_en.html>.

⁷⁶ See <<http://www.wes.org/ewenr/>>.

European countries are already offering academic programmes in English to attract foreign consumers of higher education, particularly from Asia. But while Europeans need to consolidate their diverse systems of higher education and become more like the rest of the world in terms of curricula and degree structures, the real challenge will be whether or not Europe can adapt to the changes engendered by globalisation without losing its identity” (ibid.). A year later, he didn’t hide a bit of surprise: “Only two years later and many countries have already implemented groundbreaking reforms that not long ago would have met with severe opposition from governments and universities alike. Indeed, the breakneck speed at which some of these educational changes are occurring has taken many observers and especially sceptics by complete surprise.” (Sedgwick, 2001).

Then he asks an important question: “Why, after years of intransigence, have Europeans suddenly agreed to unify their diverse systems of higher education?” A part of his answer is also marked by the “external dimension”: “Although the unified system of higher education proposed under the Bologna Declaration is mainly intended to benefit European students, increased competition in the international student market is also pushing Europeans towards convergence. Countries that used to send large numbers of students to Europe are now sending them elsewhere to earn degrees. [...] Moreover, by the early 1990s it was revealed that for the first time ever there were more Europeans studying in the United States than there were Americans studying in Europe. [...] Hence, Europeans see in the Bologna Declaration not only an opportunity to increase the region's share of the international student market, but also a chance to make higher education more attractive to their own students.” (Ibid.)

60. Immediately after the Berlin conference, the WENR editor commented the development of events again: “The reforms, known collectively as the Bologna Process, will no doubt impact Europe in many ways, but they also hold significant implications for international educational exchanges in the United States. [...] If Europe wants to attract more students from abroad it must offer degrees and programmes that are compatible with international structures. Newly reformed higher education in the EHEA, along with relatively low tuition fees, will hopefully make Europe a viable option for many international students who cannot or will not pay the high cost of education in North America or Australia.” (Sedgwick, 2003). This of course opens several questions on how the existing relations in international higher education could change in future. “For the United States the effects of the Bologna Process are difficult to predict, but a few things are clear. At the moment, the biggest challengers to the U.S. in the international student market are Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom. In the future, with its transparent and flexible higher education system, Europe will offer an attractive alternative. The EHEA may end up challenging American dominance in international higher education, in much the same way that the European Union has become a counterweight in international trade vis-à-vis the U.S. and Japan.” (Ibid.)

Yet, the whole future scenario could not be about *competition* alone. Sedgwick makes clear that these developments provide a chance also for renewed and enhanced *cooperation*. “There will also be greater convergence between the U.S. and Europe as European higher education adopts aspects of the American system. There is a long tradition of academic exchange programmes between European and American institutions of higher education. A more transparent and flexible European higher education system will undoubtedly enhance the number of student exchanges between the two continents. This is important for both sides. There are currently 64,811 European students studying in the US -14 percent of the total international enrolment. Germany, the U.K., France Spain and Greece are the top sending

countries, but the number of students from the former eastern bloc countries like Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary is on the rise.”⁷⁷ (Ibid.)

Finally, Sedgwick says that “Europe and the United States are not the only actors here”. At least after the Berlin conference it has become clear that the discussion is far from being solely “transatlantic” – it is definitely a global one. “While the reforms are being implemented within the signatory countries, the planners of the EHEA are beginning to look beyond Europe. At the last follow-up meeting held in Berlin (Sept. 2003), the Ministers of Education advocated the need to encourage cooperation with other parts of the world, and to open up future Bologna events to representatives of non-European countries. In particular, they declared the necessity to actively promote the new EHEA abroad to attract students and researchers from non-participating countries.” (Ibid.)

61. Early in 2004, when the first new Bologna graduates were already expected in Europe, WENR asked a very concrete question which has most probably remained the central question of the Bologna Process in the U.S: “How will the Bologna bachelor's degree be viewed on this side of the Atlantic?” (Assefa and Sedgwick, 2004-a) This question produced a lot of uneasiness that has yet to subside.⁷⁸ Already the following WENR issue brought an analytical article on evaluating the Bologna Degree in the U.S. written jointly by the editor Sedgwick and Mariam Assefa, the Executive Director of the World Education Services (WES). The key question of the article was: “How then does this new degree compare with the traditional American bachelor's degree?” The authors give the following introductory statement: “Even though the Bologna Process has resulted in shorter degree programmes that are defined in terms of required credits and introduced a two-tiered (undergraduate/graduate) system, the new European bachelor's is still quite distinct from its U.S. counterpart. Based on the sample “Bologna” bachelor's degrees we examined from Austria and Italy (see previous issue of *WENR*), it is apparent that the European degrees are more heavily concentrated in the major – or specialisation – and that the general education component which is so crucial to U.S. undergraduate education is absent. The new degrees, awarded by traditional European institutions, are undeniably European in character. [...] The main differences between the two programmes – the number of years of study, the amount of coursework devoted to the major, and the absence of general education from the Italian curriculum – reflect the distinct characteristics of each educational system.” (Assefa and Sedgwick, 2004-b).

Taking into account previous case analyses and credential evaluation criteria (and asking primarily whether the new “Bologna Bachelor” constitutes sufficient preparation for graduate

⁷⁷ Similar thoughts were presented again in one of 2005 WENR issues: “Although this trend can be seen to represent a challenge to U.S. institutions of higher education in terms of international student recruitment, the Bologna Process also presents future recruitment opportunities. A recent report by GMAC (Graduate Management Admission Council), a global business school association, assessed the possible implications of the structural changes of the Bologna Process in the context of graduate management education. The report concluded, in part, that the reforms will result in a huge increase in the number of post-Bologna bachelor graduates, many of whom will be seeking entry to master's-level programmes. If the findings of the report can be extended beyond the domain of management education to all fields of study, then, from the perspective of U.S. universities and colleges this newly enlarged pool of European bachelor graduates can be seen as a possible boon to recruitment opportunities.” (Clark, 2005).

⁷⁸ According to the already quoted survey from spring 2004, “the new three-year bachelor's degree was greeted with greater caution. While some indicated that the three-year degree would be readily accepted for admission to graduate programmes, many more expressed reservations. Tentative approaches and temporary solutions were mentioned, including experimenting with test cases, considering secondary education credentials when evaluating three-year degrees, handling students presenting the new degrees on a case-by-case basis, and having discussions with colleagues about how to evaluate these credentials.” (Schatzman, 2005)

admission in the U.S.) and referring also to the Lisbon Recognition Convention and to the category of “substantial differences”,⁷⁹ authors say very clearly that “WES regards the new three-year Italian *laurea* as functionally equivalent to a U.S. bachelor's degree.” They add: “The number of years of study is merely one of the elements that define the structure of a programme. In this particular case, the discrepancy in the number of years between the Italian and U.S. bachelor's degrees is outweighed by the similarities between the two programmes.”⁸⁰ (Ibid.)

“Systems that develop without due regard to the outside world run a risk of failure”

62. This question was discussed in quite some detail also at the ACA Hamburg conference (October 2004). Sjur Bergan approached this issue very closely and argued in the following manner: “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 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.”⁸¹ (Bergan, in: Muche, 2005, p. 45).

Actually, this discussion is important not only for the “external dimension” but also to resolve dilemmas and settle internal European disputes. Bergan recommends what seems to be a most important direction for the “external” as well as for the “structural” dimension of the Bologna Process, a view that is shared also by some American authors: “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.” Further discussions should help “to reach agreement that the recognition of qualifications is far more than counting years, and that learning outcomes are more important than learning procedures” (ibid., p. 51).

⁷⁹ “Academic credentials serve as recorded proof of an individual’s itinerary and accomplishments within a coherent and unified system of education. Credential evaluation exists first and foremost to facilitate the international mobility of students, scholars and professionals. This ideal is codified in the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region, adopted in 1997 and signed by 41 countries including the United States. The Convention calls on member states to promote, encourage and facilitate the recognition of credentials earned outside of their borders to encourage the mobility of students and professionals. It also specifies that ‘Each country shall recognise qualifications as similar to the corresponding qualifications in its own system unless it can be shown that there are substantial differences.’” (Ibid.)

⁸⁰ Authors make also a warning, addressed in particular to the American public but not less interesting to hear on the other side of the ocean: “Failure to recognise the Bologna bachelor's degree solely because it is a three-year qualification would leave U.S. graduate schools no choice but to reject candidates who apply for admission using these degrees, even when their records demonstrate that they have completed more than enough subjects in their discipline, have achieved the same skills and level of knowledge as their U.S. counterparts, and would very likely succeed at the graduate level. Such decisions would not only lack any academic merit, but they would also have profound and negative implications for international academic mobility.” (Ibid.)

⁸¹ Within this context, it is impossible to overlook his brief comment: “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.” (Ibid., p. 51).

63. The Bologna Process has so far offered methods as well as concrete tools to facilitate a change of paradigm – and this is an important aspect of how it impacts international and global developments in higher education. In this context we can understand Nick Clark when he says that “the Bologna Process is impacting the way in which U.S. admissions offices evaluate European credentials. Their work, however, is being made much easier by the abundance of information that is being made available as European nations increase the attractiveness and transparency of their tertiary-level credentials. Furthermore, the speed with which information is being made available both online and in hard copy means that the evaluator in the United States more than ever has the tools necessary to make informed decisions when assessing the new European degrees.” (Clark, 2005).

These discussions are still far from firm conclusions. New questions are constantly cropping up⁸² and time is needed to make them clear and to answer them. But one thing is certain - if we address these questions in a broad international arena and if we draw upon the best practice of so-called “international concerting” we will come much closer to productive results. “The ‘external dimension’ of the Bologna Process is therefore of key importance to its overall success, and now is the time to address it.” And we should not forget: “Systems that develop without due regard to the outside world run a high risk of failure.” (Bergan, in: Muche, 2005, p. 51).

⁸² E.g.: “If the aim of Bologna is to standardise European higher education, then the expectations will be that all degrees at the same level are equal, and we, in the U.S., will be pressured to respond accordingly. One wonders if the U.S. joined the spirit of Bologna, and changed all its bachelor degree programmes to three years, how the Europeans might respond. [...] If we say, for example, that general education (to whatever extent) is required for a U.S. degree and, therefore, any degree that does not offer this cannot be equivalent, we’ve lost most of the world. What, then, are our basic standards? Are we able to articulate them in terms sufficiently inclusive that we don’t eliminate well-qualified international students because we are engendering agoraphobia as we fear moving from one safe niche to a more global perspective?” (Margolis, 2006, p. 21).

4. Conclusions: the “External Dimension” – does it matter?

64. Considerations on the roots and the essence of the “external dimension” of the Bologna Process from the second chapter and the overview of “echoes” given in the third chapter have shown that the Bologna Process has been building on a bunch of ideas and concepts about relations to “non-Bologna countries” and that it has reverberated with numerous echoes from various parts of the world. Many of them, unfortunately, had to remain outside the scope of this report. Nevertheless, the question from the beginning of the second chapter (*What in fact is to be understood under the “external dimension of the Bologna Process?”*) is now – hopefully – partly answered. Before concluding, it is time to raise yet another question: *the “external dimension” – does it matter and why does it matter?*

The “external dimension” matters: “externally” as well as “internally”

65. Indeed, many messages have been received through echoes presented in the previous chapter. Countries in transition warn against a practice of imposition and argue in favour of two-way cooperation. It has also been heard from the Mediterranean that “it takes two to tango”. China declares readiness to “learn the useful foreign experience” and to “promote the reform and development of our higher education and enhance mutual understanding”. Everywhere, there are many cases of good inter-institutional cooperation which has been importantly enhanced through the European Commission’s international agreements and programmes for higher education as well as through national bilateral agreements and activities conducted by most of the Bologna countries. This can be clearly seen, for instance, in the ASEAN countries. In Africa, in addition to cooperation with single institutions and organisations, it has been proposed to look at “the big picture”: to build a system approach and to try to “benefit from initiatives outside Africa, avoiding mistakes made by others and building on their gains”. Francophone and lusophone countries are not geographically homogenous but there are several excellent initiatives to exchange good practices from Europe and to support developments in national higher education systems in different countries of the world. In Latin America, “the homogenisation of European universities” has not always been welcome due to some – likely bad – experiences with the commercially oriented cooperation policy from Europe. Yet, the Tuning project has been successfully spread all over the continent. In a recent public consultation, Australia openly stressed the benefits of “Bologna compatibility” and the risks of “Bologna incompatibility”, but it also doubted »that full compatibility with the Bologna Process is the only option«. Last autumn, the U.S. Secretary of State formed the Commission on the Future of Higher Education which deals with similar issues, albeit without referring to European examples. The U.S. are proud of their »share of the world’s best universities« but »a lot of countries have followed our lead«. A major issue with regard to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) seems to be the recognition of new first cycle degrees.

There have been clear and *direct* echoes, comments and messages to the Bologna Process but also tacit and *indirect* ones. Many issues, which could be probably perceived in European eyes as “the typical Bologna issues” have been discussed also in other parts of the world, but they could also be addressed without a necessary reference to the Bologna Process. Bologna certainly has its own character and context - higher education policies in other parts of the

world likewise. However, there is a “general” higher education modernisation agenda which is common to all world regions and to all countries of today - broadening access, diversifying study programmes, quality enhancement, employability, links to economy, mobility, international students, recognition of study periods and degrees, etc.

When dealing with these issues today and in the near future, Bologna can be an interesting case for other world regions, but also experiences – problems as well as solutions – from other world regions can be interesting for the EHEA (even if there is no reference to Bologna as such). Therefore, the emerging European higher education area, preparing its External Dimension Strategy, should not only seek *direct* echoes (not only to improve self-esteem but to verify if its claimed “readability” and “transparability” works outside the EHEA, if its “international competitiveness” and “degree of attraction” are really on the rise and if EHEA degrees are recognised abroad) but should consider these experiences as potential *indirect* responses to what Europe is actually doing or what it is planning to do in the near future. There can be no doubt that *the “external dimension” does really matter*. It matters directly and indirectly; “externally” as well as “internally”.

66. Differing and heterogeneous echoes captured and presented in the third chapter prove again that “the external dimension” is far from being a simple phenomenon – as it was already stated in the second chapter when dealing with contexts, roots and concepts. They primarily appear at two distinctive levels: at the (national or international) *policy development level* and at the *level of institutions* (and/or their associations). In certain environments outside Europe, the Bologna “policy message” has received more attention; in other parts it has been a case of the “cooperation message” from universities and academic institutions taking an active part in the Bologna Process. The “policy message” can be, on the one hand, more interesting and useful for ministries of education, for governments and public policy-makers in general. Academic institutions within the same national environment do not necessarily always have to share this interest; contexts can differ widely. However, it is also possible to discern that interest in the Bologna issues of academic institutions sometimes considerably precedes that of ministerial or governmental policy makers. So far, the Australian ongoing public discussion on the Bologna benefits and risks and the future of the national higher education seems to establish the most balanced relationship between these two levels.

Europe of the last fifteen years – and particularly the Bologna Process – has been developing *the virtues of higher education policy development in partnership*. It should not be immediately taken for granted; at least not if reflecting on the long and winding history of Europe. It takes a long time for occasional virtues to transform into traditional values. Nevertheless, this could probably be an important Bologna “message” which may help in linking together both levels mentioned above. It is not that important who responds to this message – *policy-makers* or *academic institutions* from other parts of the world. Either of them alone but also both of them together would be welcome. Yet, it is for the EHEA to understand that national contexts may differ and that potential echoes will always depend on these differing contexts. Acting upon the principle of higher education policy development in partnership may gradually contribute to more balanced echoes from both target levels. The EHEA should raise it awareness that, while building its relationships with other parts of the world upon the Bologna partnership principle, it can strengthen this important virtue for itself and enhance its transformation into one of the traditional academic values.

Finally, at this point one should not overlook the fact that national contexts differ, not only “externally” but also “internally”. It is well-known that the national higher education systems within the EHEA are diverse: their traditions, to some degree their organisation (still), their

size, etc. Of course, the “internationalisation needs” of the countries of the Bologna Process are equally diverse. Not only should the External Dimension Strategy take into account that the various target world regions and countries, as well as the different target levels in these regions and countries might require specific approaches, but the EHEA as such should also take account of its own existing diversities. Last but not least, the Bologna “philosophy” has always argued in favour of diversity and this attitude should not be forgotten here either. However, an EHEA “external dimension” Strategy is only possible if a “common denominator” is found or established – similarly as in the case of searching for an overarching framework for qualifications of the EHEA or in the case of developing standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the EHEA (Bologna Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks, 2005; ENQA, 2005).

Most probably, no such common denominator may be established to *substitute* national internationalisation agendas – their needs are simply too diverse – but to “*tune*” them according to certain common principles and to *enhance* them in doing so could be an alternative. These principles can lead the EHEA approaches to “external” world higher education areas in the future, but they can also strengthen the “internal” dimension of the Bologna Process. In June of this year, during one of the External Dimension Working Group in-depth debates, Eric Froment formulated an important dilemma: “opening up the process or building a European strategy for internationalisation?” He sharpened it into “the central question – can we discuss the external dimension without being sure that governments agree on the internal dimension of the Bologna Process, i.e. on the core element of Bologna?” (Froment, 2006). Considerations related to this question have been very helpful to subsequent work. Clarifying this and other possible dilemmas and open questions is a necessary part of drafting a strategy.

Some of issues discussed in this section have been openly and systematically addressed through the “external dimension” official Bologna follow-up seminars; it is time to focus briefly also on them.

Messages from the Bologna seminars on the “external dimension”

67. As already mentioned in the introduction, BFUG placed on the list of official Bologna Follow-up Seminars for the period between Bergen and London three “external dimension” seminars. All of them have already been held: the Holy See seminar at the end of March and beginning of April,⁸³ the Greece seminar in June⁸⁴ and the Nordic countries seminar at the end September 2006.⁸⁵ The conclusions and recommendations from the three seminars can be found in *Annex 2*.

⁸³ The Bologna Process Official Seminar. “The Cultural Heritage and Academic Values of the European University and the Attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area”. Organised by the Holy See in collaboration with: Rectors’ Conference of Pontifical Universities, Pontifical Academies of Sciences, *UNESCO-CEPES*, Council of Europe. Under the patronage of the European Commission. New Synod Hall, Vatican City, 30 March – 1 April 2006. – Papers and interventions presented during the meeting will be published in a special issue of *Higher Education in Europe*.

⁸⁴ Bologna Process Official Seminar. The External Dimension of the Bologna Process. “Putting European Higher Education Area on the Map: Developing Strategies for Attractiveness”. Organised by Hellenic Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs and Managing Authority of the Operational Programme for Education and Initial Vocational Training. With the collaboration of the Academic Cooperation Association and Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency. Athens, 24–26 June 2006.

⁸⁵ The Nordic Bologna Process Official Seminar. “Looking out! Bologna in a global setting”. The External Dimension of the Bologna Process. Organised by the Nordic Countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and

68. The seminar on cultural heritage and academic values focused mainly on the issue of the *attractiveness of the EHEA* and, at least partly, it exceeded the “external dimension” in the strict sense of the term by addressing such important issues as e.g. the identity of European university, cultural heritage, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, understanding and respect etc. Around 200 participants from almost all Bologna countries as well as from some other parts of the world participated at this event, offering a rainbow of views and arguments. Two keynote addresses on European cultural heritage opened perspectives from historical, philosophical and cultural perspectives, while a panel of experts focused on the actualisation of the academic values of European Universities. Further on, in five discussion groups participants discussed the following issues: basic values and academic freedom, foundations of interdisciplinary dialogue, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue and scientific research and ethical responsibility.

With regard to issues followed within this review, the seminar clearly showed and confirmed that the *attractiveness of the EHEA* – a frequently emphasised “external dimension” aspect – is not separable from the rich European cultural and academic heritage and values. Archbishop J. Michael Miller, the rapporteur of the seminar, synthesised this aspect in his final summary in the following way: “This particular Bologna Follow-up Seminar was planned in light of the recognition that the process of globalisation entails ever more competition, interconnection and interdependence. Europe cannot turn in on itself if it wishes to play a leading role in the world of higher education in the future. From the outset, European universities were ‘international’ institutions to which students from various nations went to study and academics travelled widely to pursue their scholarship. But today new challenges face the European university: the integration of the world economy, open market competition, mass culture, the desire for life-long education, and advanced technology – to name just a few. To ensure that European universities maintain their competitive advantage, many speakers pointed to their distinctive, if not unique, qualities. This led to some discussion on the ‘essence’ of the European university – its identity as an institution which embodies the ‘memory’ of a continent and its curiosity. It also led some to express concern about how the university can find new ways to transmit the core of this heritage, a patrimony which is a living tradition.” (Miller, 2006, p. 3).

Some discussants stressed that now is the time to make cultural heritage and academic values more visible on the Bologna agenda. Until Bergen, they argued, structural issues and the “Bologna tools” (QF, ECTS, DS, etc.) have been mostly finalised; now, after Bergen, we should focus more on the “Bologna values”. If we did not know who we are, what particular identities we share etc., we cannot explain what is meant by “the attractiveness of European higher education for the wider world”. Today, nobody disagrees on the highest importance of academic values. Yet the real question is the implementation of honest aims and principles. The Bologna Process should also contribute to answering this question. At this point, participants expressed a conviction that the European university is in a position to offer an original contribution to the future. At the very beginning of the recommendations from the seminar the following statement can be read: “The participants in this Seminar are convinced that the commitment of the Bologna Process to strengthening the external dimension of European higher education depends in large measure on reaffirming the relationship between Europe's cultural heritage and its universities and on fostering its common academic

values”.⁸⁶

These views were accentuated also in a special address by His Excellency Francis Campbell, H.M. Ambassador of the United Kingdom to the Holy See, at the conclusion of the seminar. He argued that “the challenge for today’s higher education is both functional and moral.” The Bologna Process addressed this challenge as a voluntary action of European countries and their achievements are primarily based on learning from one another. “This learning from one another cannot be confined to Europe; it must also look outside. By looking to the outside we can not only learn, but we also show a responsiveness to the needs of the rest of the world.” (Campbell, 2006, p. 7, 4).

69. *Post festum* discussions in the External Dimension Working Group confirmed the importance of the values aspect of the External Dimension Strategy. Academic values as developed throughout the history of the university have been taken over as the underlying principles of European higher education policy discussions. The *Magna Charta Universitatum* of 1988 stressed this aspect in relation to the changed social and political environment and ever progressive internationalisation of higher education; it has remained an important document until today. Besides the traditional set of values as e.g. institutional autonomy, freedom of teaching and research, service to society etc., new values have also been emerging, e.g. equity in higher education, inclusiveness, partnership in policy and governance (mentioned above), etc. It is possible to trace the values’ aspect in the Bologna documents edited so far; however, as has already been argued, the real question is the implementation of these honest aims.

Therefore, this could be an important integral fibre of the External Dimension Strategy, but the implementation issue cannot be reduced to this dimension alone. Certainly, some of the values issues should be approached precisely from the point of view of the “external dimension”, as for example the potential tension between the potentially “egoistic” and “cooperative” agendas of internationalisation. Thus, Peter Scott noted very clearly at the ACA conference on the “external dimension” that in today’s circumstances, “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 creatively with those of others (without demonising them as the ‘other’).” (Scott, in: Muche, 2005, p. 22).

70. The second (Athens) seminar on the “external dimension” approached the developing of strategies for attractiveness from a different angle and again, in a very international audience. The Greek Ministry of National Education as the main organiser effectively made use of the presence of delegates from the OECD conference, which started when the Bologna seminar ended. Thus participants from a wider world joined over one hundred participants from most of the Bologna countries. At the first plenary session, there were, on the one hand, presentations focusing on information about the Bologna Process, its achievements and potentials to make links and interaction with other regions of the world, and, on the other, the perception of speakers coming from these regions of the EHEA. The second plenary focused exclusively on the issues of quality assurance, international trends and European responses. There was also a plenary on the strategic management of higher education internationalisation and, last but not least, several workshops addressing the questions of what national practices

⁸⁶ For details and for the final recommendations see Annex 2, cha. 5.2.

can teach us in a global context and how higher education institutions can develop strategies and policies to attract international students.

Participants at this seminar were fully aware of the complexity of the “external dimension”. Evidence was given that the existing national “external dimension” strategies can promote – and in certain cases do already promote – the attractiveness of the emerging common European Higher Education Area. However, “external dimension” strategies at a national level and at a common EHEA level cannot be the same. An understanding was shared that the Bologna Process needs a common strategy on the external dimension on top of national “external dimension” strategies. Nevertheless, certain hesitation was expressed among some participants that a common EHEA “centre” and/or a common internet portal could widen the already existing gap between countries that are already close to the final goal and those just started on the Bologna road.

On the other side, it was stressed that “internal dimension” and “external dimension” agendas should not be divided, in particular not mechanically. Developing an “external dimension” strategy should not be a simple repainting of a façade; this would definitively turn foreign students and academics away and jeopardise the “internal dimension” as well. For that reason, reinforcing the “internal dimension” (e.g. “transparability”, compatibility, quality, recognition etc.) of the Bologna Process is the best approach to strengthen the attractiveness of European higher education and its “external dimension” as a whole. Parallels were made also between the Bologna Process and the Lisbon Strategy – not always without polemic elements – that crossed in various issues dealing with modernisation of European universities and problems of their (under)performance.

Quality issues were not at the very forefront of the Bologna Process during its first years but after the Berlin conference, they have deserved continuously increasing attention. It is interesting to note that in 2005, two important documents were agreed: one within the Bologna Process and the other in OECD/UNESCO cooperation. Both documents were discussed at the seminar and, in addition, some aspects from the U.S. Accreditation System were also presented. Several parallels were made between the *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (adopted in Bergen) and the *OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education*. These parallels are particularly visible if they are observed in the light of the “external dimension”. Neither document is binding; both aim at voluntary implementation and both have been developed by the educational community. Yet, it is particularly important that similar trends that have led individual European national higher education systems towards adopting common “Bologna” standards and guidelines characterise global higher education context as well.

The seminar considered the “external dimension” also in relation to the role of universities and other institutions as well as students. Fast internationalisation of European universities has brought many new opportunities as well as responsibilities. Thus, international strategies have entered also institutional agendas. To respond to new opportunities, institutions should define strategies that correspond to their specific roles, profiles, ambitions and environments. There is broad consensus among universities that international cooperation brings, first of all, an increased opportunity for mobile students but also benefits for all students studying now in a more international environment. Also here, it is evident that promotion and attractiveness of an individual institution depends mostly on an efficient implementation of the “internal dimension”: e.g. quality, transparency, autonomy and funding. In addition, European students – very active at this seminar again – stressed also the specific values of internationalisation

like multicultural experience and more reach learning and research environments “affected” by international students, teachers and researchers.

As was stated in the *Berlin communiqué*, “the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself”. It could be also argued on the basis of this discussion that the primary responsibility for attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area lies with higher education institutions themselves. However, it is far better if they act as academic networks and not alone – fragmented and separated. Of course, systemic (e.g. legislative) and financial support within national environments is decisive for their success. Yet, there are also other important levers of a successful promotion in a global arena who presented themselves at the seminar: these are students and their associations (e.g. ESIB, AEGEE, ESN, etc.)⁸⁷ as well as international associations (e.g. EAIE, ACA, NAFSA, thematic networks etc.). As was argued, their potential is not fully used yet and the foreseen Strategy should take this aspect into account as well.

The seminar agreed on a list of conclusions and recommendations that are included in the *Annex 2* (see Ch. 5.2).

71. The third and concluding Nordic seminar on the “external dimension” of the BFUG working plan 2005–2007 put “Bologna in a global setting”. Similarly to the previous two seminars, it attracted a very international audience. In Oslo, about 150 participants from 24 countries of the Bologna Process, representing ministries as well as universities and other institutions and organisations, welcomed guests coming from a further 15 countries of the world: Australia, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Costa Rica, Ghana, Kenya, Japan, Mexico, Mozambique, Pakistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda and South Africa. This has been the most “internationalised” official Bologna follow-up seminar so far.

The seminar consisted of an introductory plenary, of discussions in six smaller working groups and a concluding plenary. The introductory speech was given by the Norwegian Minister Øystein Djupedal and the concluding one by the Swedish Minister Leif Pagrotsky. Participants acquainted themselves with the first report on the “external dimension” (Zgaga, 2006-b) during the first plenary and followed an interesting panel discussion with speakers from two European countries and seven countries from various parts of the world, chaired by Markku Mattila (Finland, EU Presidency). Working groups dealt with the key issues of the “external dimension” agenda: conditions for institutional cooperation between European and non-European higher education institutions, international mobility vs. transparency and recognition, recognition of different study programme structures, strategy for international cooperation, relations between attractiveness vs. competitiveness and brain drain vs. capacity building and, last but not least, tried to answer the question – what makes the EHEA attractive. Reports by rapporteurs from the working groups were presented in the final plenary. On this basis, final conclusions and recommendations from the seminar were made (included in the *Annex 2*; see Ch. 5.3).⁸⁸

In his welcoming speech, Minister Djupedal welcomed the interest from countries outside Europe for the Process. Its “external dimension” should be about openness and attractiveness, he said, and repeated a statement from Berlin that “in international academic cooperation and

⁸⁷ For an extended list of international organisations and associations as well as their websites see Bibliography (F. *Links used or referred to in the text*).

⁸⁸ The Nordic Seminar Website has been set up with main information, including presentations, reports and conclusions and recommendations: <<http://www.bolognaoslo.com>>.

exchanges, academic values should prevail” (Berlin Communiqué, 2003). He stressed the progress achieved within the Bologna Process in the last few years and its importance for European countries. He also said: “Through the Norwegian Quality Reform, Norway has become a leading country in Europe when it comes to fulfil the Bologna goals. The most important now is to contribute to find the best possible models for cooperation with the non-Bologna countries/areas. In order to do so, Norway wants to give input for a balanced strategy when it comes to competitiveness, attractiveness, cooperation and capacity building. A Strategy must be seen in relation to which area of the world Europe is approaching.” (Djupedal, 2006).

Indeed, the seminar focused on many aspects of possible cooperation with non-Bologna countries and areas. European participants were particularly interested on what colleagues from non-Bologna countries had to say. In the panel as well as in the working groups, they had ample opportunity to learn about the various perceptions of the Bologna Process worldwide. John Mallea presented Canadian – and in particular Quebec – perceptions. Canada signed the Lisbon Convention on Recognition already in 1997. On the other hand, today the EU-Canadian cooperation framework in higher education helps to increase concrete institutional cooperation. In general, awareness of the Bologna Process exists but a full understanding of its details is still limited. Sometimes it is seen as an administrative burden to higher education institutions. The undergraduate Bologna is not a real issue of discussion but the three years doctoral programmes provoked several doubts at universities. Keiko Momii reported on Japanese perceptions and underlined that a broader discussion on the internationalisation of higher education is still limited mainly to cross-border provision from some countries. Yet another question was raised as to how to use emerging “international vibrations” on higher education issues. A certain confidence that has been built within Europe ensures that a sound minimum quality is guaranteed. For this reason, the Bologna Process is seen as important, but there is an obvious lack of information. Major national higher education systems in Europe are rather well known, but information from most other countries is missing.

Penina Mlama (Tanzania; FAWE – Forum for African Women Educationalists) stressed principles like partnership, respect and dialogue and addressed the historical disadvantages of Africa in relation to cooperation agendas which are now on the increase. In this respect, the Bologna Process offers another opportunity for cooperation – in particular as a platform for dialogue between Europe and Africa. There is broad scope for such a dialogue: the Bologna Process and current challenges to African higher education, including the role of higher education in democratisation processes, cross-border provision in higher education and responding to globalisation challenges, financing higher education, enhancing institutional cooperation, brain-drain issues, gender equality in higher education, etc. Pinit Ratananukul (Thailand; ASEAN University Network) presented a case of good regional cooperation in higher education in South East Asia as well as the importance of the ASEAN-EU University Network programme⁸⁹ for increasing inter-institutional cooperation. He stressed human resource development as the key issue and the importance of technical support from the EU for further developments within the University Network. Yorleni Aguilar Castillo (University of Costa Rica) made an effective contribution to the issue of attractiveness, information and the importance of two-way cooperation while asking how many seminar participants know details about Costa Rican higher education. Within this context, her reporting that the Bologna Process is not much known in Costa Rica acquired a quite different accent.

⁸⁹ See also Ch. 3, section 42.

Nevertheless, she also stressed well-established traditions of cooperation with Europe and positive recent sounds of the Tuning project. On this basis, Bologna could be important for institutions in Costa Rica as well.

Australian echoes of the Bologna Process attracted a lot of attention at the seminar. Colin Walters from the Australian Department of Education, Science and Training presented recent consultations on the Bologna process in Australia and reported on responses obtained that indicate a number of attractions, chiefly in relation to increased mobility. In particular, he mentioned the progress of the Australia Diploma Supplement, a potential to refine credit transfer systems to ensure ease of translation between countries and institutions and, last but not least, opportunities for further cooperation in quality assurance. However, there are many open issues like e.g. in regard to credit transfer that raise a number of difficulties (some Australian respondents were concerned that ECTS is not the preferred model) or in regard to degree structures where differing interpretations are given and where the role of international professional associations should be made clear (e.g. related drive to masters level for professional entry). In general, the main focus of the global cooperation should be on students and staff, and research collaboration should also be placed at the forefront.

The seminar was an excellent occasion for European participants to round up the discussions on the “external dimension” while reflecting simultaneously on the comments from colleagues from non-Bologna countries. Several statements from previous meetings were confirmed again and, on some points, new details were developed. Some previous dilemmas turned to shared answers but some questions remained – or were raised anew – that will be requiring further work. As a “*file rouge*”, strategies and conditions for future international cooperation at the regional, national and institutional levels prevail as the main topic of discussions. The need for a common strategy on the “external dimension” was expressed again, but its specific features were made even more concrete than at previous seminars. What could/should be the main aim of a common EHEA strategy in this field? It was argued that the EHEA can only issue recommendations, e.g. to signatory countries, organisations and institutions, but the Bologna “*acquis*” must be clear and information widely available. Opinions were also expressed that cooperation within the EHEA itself requires some form of permanent organisation as well as that Ministers could recommend to the parties to the EHEA to include the Bologna “*acquis*” as an issue in their cooperation networks. Yet, it was confirmed again that approaches to different partnerships always depend on the partners.

At the conclusion of the Nordic seminar, Minister Pagrotsky made several reflections on the progress of the Bologna Process, in particular after the Bergen Conference, including the first assessment of the seminar work: “This seminar has shown that we are all equally committed to eliminate obstacles to academic cross-border cooperation and mobility, and to safeguard the values of higher education. In order to ensure their competitiveness and attractiveness, the Bologna countries also have a joint interest in improving the legal and social framework conditions for international scholars and students before, during and after their stay in Europe and to respond to their specific information needs. A prerequisite of the success of the Bologna Process is that the conditions that will make it easy for students to come to the decision to study abroad are in place.” In his last words, he admonished that the time is now approaching “when we should become ready to make up our minds when it comes to some important policy choices. We should choose the policy that maximises the opportunities for our students. We should choose the policy that stimulates quality in our universities. We should choose the policy that strengthens our links with other parts of the world.” (Pagrotsky, 2006).

Not much could be added to these three synthetic sentences. Yet, there was another issue raised during this seminar - the issue of a suitable name to be used when the “attractiveness / competitiveness / cooperation dimension” is being discussed. It was obvious that many participants find the term “invented” at early stages of this discussion – “the external dimension” – inadequate. It is noted in the final Conclusions and Recommendations of the seminar (see Ch. 5.3) that “[a]s the discussion on the ‘external dimension’ is advancing, it seems that the Bologna Process is in need of a better term to describe relations between attractiveness, competitiveness and cooperation. [...] There was no final agreement on this issue at the seminar but some concrete proposals which need more time to be considered were formulated, e.g. to move from the ‘external’ to the ‘global dimension’ or to the ‘dimension of global cooperation’”. Within the process of drafting starting points for the London communiqué, the BFUG and its working bodies could consider this issue and make an appropriate decision.

Towards the elements of the External Dimension Strategy

72. All three Bologna seminars but also other conferences⁹⁰ on the “external dimension” and/or related issues prove that this term cannot be reduced to one key word only. Nevertheless, the most frequent key word used in discussions on the “external dimension” has undoubtedly been – *attractiveness*. As already mentioned, the Sorbonne Declaration referred to the “attractive potential of our systems” and the Bologna Declaration even stressed “the appeal that its [European] culture has for other countries” and aimed at “a world-wide degree of attraction” for the European higher education system. Since that time, the frequency of reference to attractiveness has increased very rapidly.

As in similar cases, it is very important to differentiate between “honest aims” and the so-called “constraints of reality”, as well as the implementation of these aims. One of the first insights into the issue was given just before the Berlin Summit in 2003. The *Trends III* survey contained for the first time a section on the *attractiveness of the EHEA to the rest of the world*. Among its key findings it was stated that “[e]nhancing the attractiveness of the European systems of higher education in the rest of the world is a driving force of the Bologna Process, ranked third after improving academic quality and preparing graduates for a European labour market”. Interestingly, respondents from different parts of Europe attached high priority to the attractiveness of their – national and/or institutional – higher education provision mainly to attract Europeans! “The EU is by far the highest priority area for most institutions (mentioned by 92%)”. Then come other world regions: “The second priority is Eastern Europe (62%), followed by US/Canada (57%), Asia (40%), Latin America (32%), Africa and Australia (24% and 23%) and the Arab World (16%).”⁹¹ (Reichert and Tauch, 2003, p. 39).

Despite stressing attractiveness as the driving force of change, “[o]nly 30% of HEIs mention the use of targeted marketing for recruiting students, the notable exceptions being Ireland and the UK where more than 80% of universities conduct targeted marketing” (ibid). As it is

⁹⁰ The ACA 2004 Conference in Hamburg has been already mentioned. The ACA 2006 conference “Destination Europe? Players, goals and strategies in enhancing the attractiveness of European universities” (Bergen, 20 June 2006) addressed the attractiveness of European higher education on a global scale as well. For details see <http://www.aca-secretariat.be/04news/SingleNewsletterDetail.asp?c_year=2006&c_month=06&news_id=537>

⁹¹ On the other hand, “about 40 percent of the foreign students from outside the EURODATA region have an Asian nationality, about 31 percent of them have an African nationality, 15 percent have another European nationality, eight percent have a Latin American nationality, and only six percent have a northern American nationality.” (Kelo, Teichler, Wächter, eds., 2006, p. 7).

possible to learn from an excellent recent study on student mobility in European higher education,⁹² there are huge differences between countries: “A close look, however, reveals that for the majority of individual EURODATA countries, many of them small countries, the number of national students enrolled abroad exceeds the number of foreign students at institutions of tertiary education at home.” (Kelo, Teichler, Wächter, eds., 2006, p. 11).

73. Obviously, the European countries alone as well as their emerging EHEA need to establish concrete action plans to move from “honest aims” to effective coping with the “constraints of reality”. Yet, and as already said, attractiveness is not the only horizon where such coping should take place. *Attractiveness* is often understood in a dual relationship to *competitiveness* and *cooperation*. What could enhanced attractiveness be good for? On the one hand, it can strengthen international – but also national – *competitiveness*: higher education systems in general and institutions in particular should perform better in terms of mobile as well as international students, teacher and researchers, programmes obtained, etc. This issue is, first of all, related to quality assurance and quality enhancement aspects. Alan Smith said so very clearly at the ACA 2006 conference in Bergen: “The attractiveness agenda must, to be successful, also be an agenda for genuine improvement” (Smith, 2006) and admonished that it is a double task: improving the quality of European higher education as such, as well as the quality of the international dimension of European higher education. In this latter sense – the quality of the international dimension – much should be done to improve information on European higher education in general and the EHEA in particular.

On the other hand, enhanced attractiveness can also strengthen international *cooperation* in higher education. This issue is closely related to the promotion of partnerships in higher education – nationally and internationally, in particular close relationships that could be built through joint programmes of teaching and/or research among institutions with a strong mobility aspect, but also through dialogue and mutual learning from good practices. In this sense, cooperation can also increase competitiveness but by diminishing the “egoistic” character mentioned above. As there is no one sole key word on the “external dimension” agenda but rather a list of them, all these aspects are somehow related to one another and linked together. As a cross-cutting issue, a need for enhanced information has been clearly identified in findings and discussions so far.

74. A possible External Dimension Strategy should be developed integrally from the four horizons mentioned in the second chapter (see section 21). These horizons require concrete actions. They should be taken by all key Bologna partners: at the institutional level, by universities and other higher education institutions as well as student organisations, at the national level, by national governments and in particular responsible ministries, and at all relevant European levels, that is, by “‘Europe’, however defined” (Smith, 2006).

Why do we need a common strategy? Discussions within the External Dimension Working Group showed that a common strategy on the external dimension of the EHEA can be justified *where and when it can provide 'value-added'*, that is, where and when, by acting together in the Bologna Process, the participating countries and consultative members the Bologna Process can achieve more than if they were to act alone. It is important to take into account in what ways the *participating countries* and *consultative members* of the Bologna Process have already been developing their own “external dimension strategies”. On the other hand, intergovernmental and other international organisations have been already contributing to “external dimension strategies” that exceed the “narrow horizons” of an individual country or institution.

⁹² 32 countries of the so-called EURODATA region are only included and not all 45 Bologna countries.

75. A long list of possible concrete targets has been discussed at the “external dimension” seminars and within the External Dimension Working Group. Until early October 2006, the Group had already drafted initial variants of a strategy document.

So far, there has been broad consensus that a Strategy document should be concrete, specific and ambitious. It should be based on the key principles that have been developed within the Bologna Process so far. It should also include measures to be taken in e.g. the next two to three years (e.g. improving accessibility of the EHEA, including such issues as visa regulation, work permits, etc.), primarily at the national level, as well as a limited number of clear benchmarks (e.g. "every country should have designated by 2008 an organisation as having responsibility nationally for the coordinating the promotion of the country's higher education across the world") to make it possible to check progress in this field in the remaining period until 2010. Different contexts and aspects should be taken into account, as argued already above, and recommendations to the different Bologna partners and stakeholders are also a necessary part of such a document.

The foreseen Strategy would form a part of the Bologna higher education policy; therefore, policy implementation – an implementation in partnership – will be a crucial issue in the following years. It is important to consider that higher education policy influences other policy measures and that the implementation of the External Dimension Strategy will demand the close cooperation of not only Bologna partners and stakeholders but also within national governments, intergovernmental organisations as well as international non-governmental organisations. Some demanding issues have also been opened that should not remain unanswered if the Strategy is really intended to be implemented - increasing the attractiveness of the EHEA is not possible without funding. There was a lot of debate on this issue within the Working Group and despite certain dilemmas the Group always came to the conclusion that this issue deserves appropriate attention in the further process of drafting the Strategy.

In addition to all that has already been said and without prejudicing further steps in drafting the External Dimension Strategy, the following themes seem to belong among its key issues:

- *attractiveness* of the EHEA depends on its distinctiveness from higher education provision in other regions: transparent quality, accessibility, recognition, mobility enhanced by structural (transparency, compatibility, recognition, etc.) and social means (support and scholarship schemes, visa regulations, etc.), non-exclusiveness, cultural diversity (but without the obstacles of a linguistic Babylon), etc. The promotion of intercultural and inter-religious understanding, traditional values of European universities and higher education institutions in general are of particular importance;
- *competitiveness* among European countries and third countries as well as among individual higher education institutions is needed to strengthen the quality of higher education, research and teaching potentials in order to broaden access and to promote flexible learning paths, to attract more international students, to make higher education more efficient, etc. On the other hand, higher education should substantially contribute to the competitiveness of the European economy, trade, and centres of excellence as the point where academic, economic and political interests should coincide;
- *cooperation* aims firstly at the mutual potential benefits of the EHEA and other world regions and should be based on traditions of academic cooperation between Europe and these regions. It is also dependent on promoting the two-way flow of information

and knowledge, as well as two-way mobility. It should aim at achieving higher critical mass through incentives for international research teams and joint study programmes. The improvement of mutual recognition of study and study periods on a global scale, solidarity and support for higher education systems in less developed parts of the world and the political importance of global higher education cooperation are also high on the cooperation agenda;

- *information on the EHEA and promoting its image in a wider world* demands a common information system (e.g. common portal; European higher education fairs, coordinated information campaigns, etc.), which should not be seen in opposition to specific national (institutional) information systems. Guidance for students and staff from third countries (other regions), institutions and institutional frameworks, capacity- building, language policy, etc. are also on this list.

76. A number of far-reaching statements on the end goal of the External Dimension Strategy have been collected while compiling this report. Let us conclude it with just one of them:

“This must 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 a dialogue and cooperation with partners – and competitors – on all continents.” (Bergan; in Muche, eds., 2005, p. 52).

5.3 ANNEX 1

The “External Dimension” in a historical perspective

A selection of pages on the “External Dimension” from documents 1987-2006

Excerpts from documents are edited chronologically and classified into three categories: relevant pre-Bologna documents (see light blue shadowed headings), documents produced within the Bologna Process (see light yellow shadowed headings with a Bologna logo) and the European Union documents (see headings with a European flag). Short bibliographical references are added. – See also Chapter 1, sections 14. - 20.

1. Magna Charta Universitatum, 1987 – 1988

Magna Charta Universitatum. Bologna, 18 settembre 1988. Roma: [Universita di Bologna], 1991.

Fundamental Principles

[...] 4. A university is the trustee of the European humanist tradition; its constant care is to attain universal knowledge; to fulfil its vocation it transcends geographical and political frontiers, and affirms the vital need for different cultures to know and influence each other.

[...]

The Means

[...] 4. Universities – particularly in Europe – regard the mutual exchange of information and documentation, and frequent joint projects for the advancement of learning, as essential to the steady progress of knowledge. Therefore, as in the earliest years of their history, they encourage mobility among teachers and students; furthermore, they consider a general policy of equivalent status, titles, examinations (without prejudice to national diplomas) and award of scholarships essential to the fulfilment of their mission in the conditions prevailing today.

2. Erasmus programme, 1987



Council of the European Communities. Council Decision of 15 June 1987 adopting the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (Erasmus). *Official Journal L 166, 25/06/1987 P. 0020 – 0024 (87/327/EEC)*

Article 1

1. This Decision hereby establishes the programme for the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (ERASMUS) in order to increase significantly such mobility in the Community and to promote greater cooperation between universities. [...]

Article 2

The objectives of the ERASMUS programme shall be as follows:

- (i) to achieve a significant increase in the number of students from universities as defined in Article 1
- (2) spending an integrated period of study in another Member State, in order that the Community may draw upon an adequate pool of manpower with first hand experience of economic and social aspects of other Member States, while ensuring equality of opportunity for male and female students as regards participation in such mobility;
- (ii) to promote broad and intensive cooperation between universities in all Member States;
- (iii) to harness the full intellectual potential of the universities in the Community by means of increased mobility of teaching staff, thereby improving the quality of the education and training provided by the universities with a view to securing the competitiveness of the Community in the world market;
- (iv) to strengthen the interaction between citizens in different Member States with a view to consolidating the concept of a People's Europe;
- (v) to ensure the development of a pool of graduates with direct experience of intra-Community cooperation, thereby creating the basis upon which intensified cooperation in the economic and social sectors can develop at Community level.

3. Tempus programme, 1990



Council of the European Communities. Council Decision of 7 May 1990 establishing a trans-European mobility scheme for university studies (Tempus). *Official Journal L 131, 23/05/1990 P. 0021 – 0026 (90/233/EEC)*

The objectives of Tempus are the following:

- (a) to facilitate the coordination of the provision of assistance to the eligible countries in the field of exchange and mobility, particularly for university students and teachers, whether such assistance is provided by the Community, its Member States or the third countries referred to in Article 9;
- (b) to contribute to the improvement of training in the eligible countries, and to encourage their cooperation with partners in the Community, taking into account the need to ensure the widest possible participation of all the regions of the Community in such actions;
- (c) to increase opportunities for the teaching and learning in the eligible countries of those languages used in the Community and covered by the Lingua programme, and vice versa;
- (d) to enable students from the eligible countries to spend a specific period of study at university or to undertake industry placements within the Member States of the Community, while ensuring equality of opportunity for male and female students as regards participation in such mobility;
- (e) to enable students from the Community to spend a similar type of period of study or placement in an eligible country;
- (f) to promote increased exchanges and mobility of teaching staff and trainers as part of the cooperation process.

4. Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community, 1991



Commission of the European Communities. *Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community*. Brussels: Commission of European Communities, December 1991.

Higher Education and External Relations

35 There are historic linkages and relationships between higher education institutions in the different Member States and various countries of the world. These relationships are reflected in student and staff exchanges, joint projects with counterpart institutions, the enrolment of foreign students and the participation of the European higher education sector in the provision of technical assistance to projects in many developing countries. In a number of European institutions there are departments devoted to the special study of languages, cultures, economies, political systems and developmental needs of third countries. *These historic relationships provide an excellent basis through which the Community can build its relationships with the countries concerned.* There is also a growing interest in European studies courses in institutions outside the Community. [...]

37 An enhanced role for education and training in the external relations of the Community is evolving for a number of reasons:

- *education and training, through interactive exchanges at staff and student level and through study abroad schemes, help to cultivate the mutual understanding, respect and knowledge on which successful political and trading relationships can be based;*
- *education and training provide an instrument for wider dissemination of knowledge concerning the European Community and its institutions and policies and help therefore in defining its position on the world scene;*
- *education and training must provide the skills that are necessary for economic development and for political and social progress;*
- *no nation, or group of nations, has a monopoly of ideas and knowledge and learning from and drawing comparisons with other countries is an important component of the Community's own development and that of its Member States;*
- *educational institutions of the Member States of the Community are the custodians of much that is valuable in European culture and civilization and they can become, therefore, the instruments of cultural exchange on a global basis.*

[...]

The International Role of Higher Education

148 [...] There has always been an extra-European Community dimension in the relationships between higher education institutions. An illustration of the scale of this relationship may be gleaned from the fact that in all Member States (Luxemburg excluded) the percentage of extra-Community foreign students enrolled for full courses of higher education is greater than that of other EC nationals and in some cases many times greater. Evidence of these relationships is also found in the substantial movement of students to the United States for postgraduate studies. *While it is vital to the future of the Community that the European dimension in higher education be emphasised and strengthened, this extra-EC dimension is of fundamental importance to an open European Community, deriving strength from cooperation and interaction across the world.* It is necessary, too, to consider its importance in the overall interests of higher education.

149 In the field of higher education and training *European expertise is widely recognised and appreciated and this is an asset which can and should be used to support the growing world role of the Community.* European culture is highly valued throughout the world and the institutions of

higher education should be deeply involved in programmes of cultural exchange with extra-Community countries. Europe's global role and the necessity for the European economy to interact with the world economy requires a two-way flow of information and knowledge. *Europe must not only strengthen its own identity, but it must do so in a political, economic and cultural equilibrium with the rest of the world.*

5. Lisbon Recognition Convention, 1997

Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region [Lisbon Recognition Convention] (11 April 1997).

The Parties to this Convention,

[...]

- Considering that higher education should play a vital role in promoting peace, mutual understanding and tolerance, and in creating mutual confidence among peoples and nations; [...]
- Having regard also to the International Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Arab and European States bordering on the Mediterranean (1976), adopted within the framework of Unesco and partially covering academic recognition in Europe;
- Mindful that this Convention should also be considered in the context of the Unesco conventions and the international recommendation covering other Regions of the world, and of the need for an improved exchange of information between these Regions [etc.].

6. Sorbonne Joint Declaration, 1998



Harmonisation of the architecture of the European higher education system. Joint declaration of four ministers in charge of higher education in Germany, France, Italy and United Kingdom on the occasion of the 800th anniversary of the University of Paris [Sorbonne Declaration]. Paris, Sorbonne, 25 May 1998.

The international recognition and attractive potential of our systems are directly related to their external and internal readabilities. A system, in which two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate, should be recognized for international comparison and equivalence, seems to emerge. [...]

Most countries, not only within Europe, have become fully conscious of the need to foster such evolution. The conferences of European rectors, University presidents, and groups of experts and academics in our respective countries have engaged in widespread thinking along these lines.

A convention, recognising higher education qualifications in the academic field within Europe, was agreed on last year in Lisbon. The convention set a number of basic requirements and acknowledged that individual countries could engage in an even more constructive scheme. Standing by these conclusions, one can build on them and go further.”

7. Bologna Declaration, 1999



The European Higher Education Area. Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education. [Bologna Declaration.] Convened in Bologna on the 19th of June 1999.

The European process, thanks to the extraordinary achievements of the last few years, has become an increasingly concrete and relevant reality for the Union and its citizens. Enlargement prospects together with deepening relations with other European countries, provide even wider dimensions to that reality. Meanwhile, we are witnessing a growing awareness in large parts of the political and academic world and in public opinion of the need to establish a more complete and far-reaching Europe, in particular building upon and strengthening its intellectual, cultural, social and scientific and technological dimensions. [...]

The Sorbonne Declaration of 25th of May 1998, which was underpinned by these considerations, stressed the Universities' central role in developing European cultural dimensions. It emphasised the creation of European area of higher education as a key way to promote the citizens' mobility and employability and the Continent's overall development. [...]

European higher education institutions, for their part, have accepted the challenge and taken up a main role in constructing the European area of higher education, also in the wake of the fundamental principles laid down in the Bologna Magna Charta Universitatum of 1988. This is of the highest importance, given that Universities' independence and autonomy ensure that higher education and research systems continuously adapt to changing needs, society's demands and advances in scientific knowledge. [...]

We must in particular look at the objective of increasing the international competitiveness of the European systems of higher education. The vitality and efficiency of any civilisation can be measured by the appeal that its culture has for other countries. We need to ensure that the European higher education system acquires a world-wide degree of attraction equal to our extraordinary cultural and scientific traditions.

8. Towards a European Research Area, 2000



Commission of the European Communities. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Towards a European research area. Brussels, 18 January 2000 COM(2000) 6 final

Even more so than the century that has just finished the XXI st century we are now entering will be the century of science and technology. More than ever, investing in research and technological development offers the most promise for the future.

In Europe, however, the situation concerning research is worrying. Without concerted action to rectify this the current trend could lead to a loss of growth and competitiveness in an increasingly global economy. The leeway to be made up on the other technological powers in the world will grow still further. And Europe might not successfully achieve the transition to a knowledge-based economy. [...]

It cannot be said that there is today a European policy on research. National research policies and Union policy overlap without forming a coherent whole. If more progress is to be made a broader approach is needed than the one adopted to date. The forthcoming enlargement of the Union will only increase this need. It opens the prospect of a Europe of 25 or 30 countries which will not be able to operate with the methods used so far. [...]

6.3. Making Europe attractive to researchers from the rest of the world

Research institutes do not have the same magnetic attraction on researchers from all over the world that American laboratories, companies and universities do. Europe does not offer researchers from third countries particularly advantageous (material and administrative) conditions.

The formalities to be completed are generally unwieldy. The regulations and languages also vary from one country to another. And the "brain drain", which some have claimed is being held in check, has not stopped. Between 1988 and 1995, 8760 Europeans students took a doctorate in the United States. Five years after obtaining their diplomas about half of them were still in the United States.

To attract the best researchers from all over the world to European laboratories a European system of grants for scientists from third countries might be set up. National and European research programmes could also be more open to researchers and teams from countries outside the Union.

In the case of developing countries, to guarantee the development of local research potential, this system should be such as to encourage the beneficiaries to return to their countries in order to take advantage of their experience and to spread the knowledge they have acquired.

Measures should be taken at national and European level to encourage the return to European laboratories of researchers who have left to complete their training or pursue their careers in the United States.

The possibilities provided by the science and technology cooperation agreements between the Union and a number of third countries should be maximised in these respects.

Finally, it is especially necessary to improve appreciably the environment provided for researchers in Europe. An effort should be made in particular to simplify and harmonise regulations and administrative conditions more. Rules have recently been adopted in France, for example, to shorten the procedures for granting visas to researchers from third countries.

9. Lisbon Strategy, 2000



9.1 Council of the European Union. *Presidency Conclusions*. Council of European Union, Lisbon, 23-24 March 2000.

5. The Union has today set itself a ***new strategic goal*** for the next decade: *to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion*. [...]

13. The European Council asks the Council and the Commission, together with the Member States where appropriate, to take the necessary steps as part of the establishment of a European Research Area to: [...]

- take steps to remove obstacles to the mobility of researchers in Europe by 2002 and to attract and retain high-quality research talent in Europe.

9.2 Commission of the European Communities (2001). *Report from the Commission. Concrete Future Objectives of Education Systems*. Brussels: Commission of European Communities, 31 Jan. 2001.

4.4. Openness

Most Member States stress the need for schools, training centres and universities to be open to the world: to increase their links with the local environment (with businesses and employers in particular, so as to increase their understanding of the needs of employers and thus to increase the employability of learners); to ensure an openness of spirit towards foreign countries, Europe and the wider world (e.g. through foreign language learning and mobility).

9.3 Council of the European Union. *Detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of educational and training systems in Europe.* Brussels, 20 February 2002.

3. Pursuing ambitious but realistic goals

3.1 Beyond answering the invitation of the European Council to work on common objectives for education and training systems and to present a joint detailed work programme, the Council and the Commission are determined to take all initiatives required for a comprehensive response to the challenges of the knowledge society and globalisation, as well as of EU enlargement.

3.2 The Council and the Commission therefore set themselves ambitious but realistic goals which should also be shared by the countries joining the EU in the coming years. For the benefit of citizens and the Union as a whole the following should be achieved in education and training by 2010:

- 1) the highest quality will be achieved in education and training and Europe will be recognised as a world-wide reference for the quality and relevance of its education and training systems and institutions;*
- 2) education and training systems in Europe will be compatible enough to allow citizens to move between them and take advantage of their diversity;*
- 3) holders of qualifications, knowledge and skills acquired anywhere in the EU will be able to get them effectively validated throughout the Union for the purpose of career and further learning;*
- 4) Europeans, at all ages, will have access to lifelong learning;*
- 5) Europe will be open to cooperation for mutual benefits with all other regions and should be the most-favoured destination of students, scholars and researchers from other world regions.*

**10. Strengthening cooperation with third countries
in the field of higher education, 2001**



Commission of the European Communities. *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on Strengthening Co-operation with Third Countries in the Field of Higher Education.* Brussels: Commission of European Communities, 18 July 2001. COM(2001) 385

5. Community programmes in education, and particularly ERASMUS, have had a substantial impact in boosting the capacity for international co-operation among European universities. In addition to changes in the design of education programmes and new possibilities offered for study in other Member States, many universities have set up or reinforced their offices for international relations. To a large extent this is a response to the increased volume of international activities that has resulted from their involvement in Community programmes. A further effort is required at EC level, to encourage institutions systematically to integrate new co-operation with third countries into a wider partnership framework.

6. This effort is also needed because there is an ever-increasing demand for international education and student mobility. The number of international exchange students has never been greater; but they flock mainly to the US (over 500,000 international students in 1999/2000). Over 3/4 of the approximately 400,000 students from non-European countries studying in the EC go to the UK, France and Germany.

7. While there may be healthy competition between Member States countries to attract international students, the role of the EC should be primarily to encourage co-operative approaches so that the benefits can be shared more widely within the EC and partner countries. In doing so, the EC must

acknowledge that Europe's status as a centre of excellence in learning is not always appreciated or understood by third country universities, or by students looking for an international education.

8. [...] Increasing the attractiveness of our universities requires an assurance of quality that is widely understood in the world. The absence of such an assurance means that Europe will not perform as well as the other leading providers of education services. From another angle, Europe's political and commercial success in the world is dependent on future decision-makers in third countries having a better understanding of, and closer ties with, Europe.

9. Many third countries see potential benefits in systematic co-operation with European higher education institutions, especially within multilateral networks involving institutions from more than one Member State. Such co-operation enhances the value of bilateral education arrangements with individual Member States. This is the reason why in almost all agreements between the EC and third countries, education is mentioned as a field for potential co-operation. In practice the follow-up to these commitments is contingent on availability of resources.

10. The following conclusions can be drawn:

- * The Community should ensure that its education activities include the international dimension in a more systematic way;
- * The Community should give greater visibility to its action in this field in order to promote Europe as a centre of excellence, and to attract students seeking an international education.

11. Education and training in the context of poverty reduction in developing countries, 2002



Commission of the European Communities. *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on Education and Training in the Context of Poverty Reduction in Developing Countries*. Brussels: Commission of European Communities, 6 March 2002. COM(2002) 116

1. Education and training play an essential role in reducing poverty and in development. This is borne out by a series of undertakings made by the international community.

The Dakar Forum ("Education for All") in April 2000 reaffirmed and broadened the international community's commitment to compulsory primary education for all by 2015.

Under the Millennium development objectives for education, all children (boys and girls) should complete at least primary education by 2015.

In their Joint Statement of November 2000, the Commission and the Council affirmed that the main objective of Community development policy must be to reduce and, eventually, to eradicate poverty. The Commission and the Council noted, in this context, that the promotion of equitable access to social services, i.e. health and education services, is a vital dimension of poverty reduction.

2. The purpose of this Communication is therefore to present a new framework of guidelines for the Community which specifies the role that support for education [...] and training can play in combating poverty in the developing countries. [...]

3. Higher education

a) Support for higher education is a key component of the "Education for All" strategy. Teachers and planners are trained in higher education institutions which are also centres for educational research.

Support for higher academic, technical and vocational education is just as necessary as support for primary education.

Support for higher education is also necessary for countries' institutional development. Institutional capacity-building is an essential component of programmes in all sectors of development cooperation.

In this context, information and communication technologies can improve the management, implementation, content and quality of education services throughout the world. These technologies - which are a tool and not a priority in themselves – can help greatly to improve the organisation of education systems, access to these systems (support for teacher training, access to foreign languages, overseas training, etc.) and quality (access to a wider range of knowledge, inter-institutional network assistance). This applies, for instance, to distance learning methods for teacher training.

b) Cooperation in the area of higher education between European and third-country institutions seems to be a useful way of supporting higher education in these countries. This cooperation is to be promoted at the regional level in particular.

c) The Community must be more vigilant in regard to the impact on these countries of a brain drain to the developed countries and must ensure greater taking into account of other Community policies. It must also ensure that development cooperation policies do not unfairly limit the ability of these countries to provide for their own development at a time when the brain drain from the south to the north has reached unprecedented levels.

The Commission will also ensure coherence between other Community policies and development cooperation.

d) It sees its own measures in this field as a necessary contribution to institutional and administrative capacity-building in recipient countries. The Commission's Common Cooperation Framework for Higher Education places this approach on a practical footing (Annex 7). [...]

Annex 7 – Common Framework for Cooperation with third countries on higher education

The Common Framework defines the main guidelines for establishing a frame of reference for cooperation in the field of higher education between the European Community and developing countries, as well as with emerging economies and countries in transition. It proposes harmonising the methods of implementing Commission programmes/projects with a view to improving the effectiveness and impact of existing cooperation in the field as part of a strategy to focus efforts.

The Common Framework rests on the following principles:

- * Support for institutionalised networks, based on structured and sustainable cooperation between countries/regions and designed to contribute to the development of local capacity through the transfer of know-how. The Common Framework also recognises the importance of projects to encourage mobility, both for students and teachers.

- * A flexible approach that respects the priorities set for each country/region and the differences between them in terms of cooperation policy. Projects/programmes defined on the basis of the Common Framework will include features specific to the regions/countries concerned: for example, priority thematic areas for cooperation, eligible establishments, network membership and financing levels. Flexibility in the cooperation objectives pursued will ensure the consistency of these actions with the two Communications mentioned above.

- * Use of the existing legal basis for each geographical area (for example, the Cotonou Agreement, budget headings, and so forth). Financial resources will be allocated by the DG's responsible for

programming, on the basis of the priorities laid down and following standard programming procedures.

The typology of actions covered by the Common Framework may cover various aspects, such as:

- * updating of administrative and academic management (management of academic and administrative staff, management and development of curricula, management and development of university teaching careers, etc.);
- * developing human capital by means of training and mobility (training and mobility schemes for university students and professional managers, training and mobility for university teachers and instructors, networking of high-level experts);
- * financial and technical assistance for institution-building.

The Common Framework envisages the setting up of a regular system of "calls for proposals" by region or country. These calls for proposals will be intended for final beneficiaries, i.e. higher education, research and vocational training establishments recognised by the respective authorities, organised in networks around a joint project. Other partner institutions (public or private institutions/organisations, companies, associations and organisations representative of civil society) will be able to form part of the networks by participating in the preparation and implementation of projects. High level teachers and instructors, students and administrators of the beneficiary establishments are the final recipients of the projects resulting from the Common Framework.

12. Message from Salamanca, 2001



Message from the Salamanca Convention on European Higher Education Institutions. Shaping the European Higher Education Area. Salamanca, 29-30 March 2001.

Attractiveness

European higher education institutions want to be in a position to attract talent from all over the world. This requires action at the institutional, national and European level. Specific measures include the adaptation of curricula, degrees readable inside and outside Europe, credible quality assurance measures, programmes taught in major world languages, adequate information and marketing, welcoming services for foreign students and scholars, and strategic networking. Success also depends on the speedy removal of prohibitive immigration and labour market regulations.

European higher education institutions recognise that their students need and demand qualifications which they can effectively use for the purpose of study and career all over Europe. The institutions and their networks and organisations acknowledge their role and responsibility in this regard and confirm their willingness to organise themselves accordingly within the framework of autonomy.

Higher education institutions call on governments, in their national and European contexts, to facilitate and encourage change and to provide a framework for co-ordination and guidance towards convergence, and affirm their capacity and willingness to initiate and support progress within a joint endeavour

- to redefine higher education and research for the whole of Europe;
- to reform and rejuvenate curricula and higher education as a whole;
- to enhance and build on the research dimension in higher education;
- to adopt mutually acceptable mechanisms for the evaluation, assurance and certification of quality;

- to build on common denominators with a European dimension and ensure compatibility between diverse institutions, curricula and degrees;
- to promote the mobility of students and staff and the employability of graduates in Europe;
- to support the modernisation efforts of universities in countries where the challenges of the European Higher Education Area are greatest;
- to meet the challenges of being readable, attractive and competitive at home, in Europe and in the world; and
- to keep considering higher education as an essential public responsibility.

13. Prague Communiqué, 2001



Towards the European Higher Education Area. Communiqué of the meeting of European Ministers in charge of Higher Education [Prague Communiqué]. Prague, May 19th 2001.

Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area

Ministers agreed on the importance of enhancing attractiveness of European higher education to students from Europe and other parts of the world. The readability and comparability of European higher education degrees world-wide should be enhanced by the development of a common framework of qualifications, as well as by coherent quality assurance and accreditation/certification mechanisms and by increased information efforts.

Ministers particularly stressed that the quality of higher education and research is and should be an important determinant of Europe's international attractiveness and competitiveness. Ministers agreed that more attention should be paid to the benefit of a European Higher Education Area with institutions and programmes with different profiles. They called for increased collaboration between the European countries concerning the possible implications and perspectives of transnational education.

14. Towards European Research Area, 2002



14.1 Commission of the European Communities. Communication from the Commission. *More Research for Europe. Towards 3% of GDP.* Brussels, 11.9.2002. COM(2002) 499 final

The analyses contained in this communication confirm that it is necessary not only to improve the effectiveness of the European R&D and innovation system, but also to address the EU's under-investment in R&D. The current trends in R&D investment must be reversed urgently in order to approach 3 % of GDP by 2010, with an increased share of business funding that should reach two thirds of total R&D expenditure. Such a change is essential to reach the Lisbon objective of making Europe the leading knowledge economy in the world. It will require joint efforts involving the European institutions, all Member States and the Candidate Countries, as well as the enterprise sector.

14.2 Commission of the European Communities. Communication from the Commission. *The European Research Area: Providing New Momentum. Strengthening - Reorienting - Opening up new perspectives.* Brussels, 16 October 2002 COM(2002) 565 final

4.9. *The international dimension of the European Research Area*⁹³

Following on from the Commission Communication on this topic, several initiatives had been undertaken to take account of, benefit from and exploit the international dimension of the European Research Area and its openness to the world.

Developments in this field include in particular:

- In the Sixth Framework Programme, the unrestricted opening up of the "thematic" part to all third countries, with possible access to the relevant funding in some cases, the introduction of a double fellowship scheme for researchers coming from third countries to the EU and for EU researchers going to third countries, and the redefinition of EU research activities in the field of nuclear fusion on the basis of full EU participation in the ITER (International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor) project;
- The creation of an electronic information system on entry and residence requirements for researchers from third countries going to Member States;
- In addition to the integrated action concerning co-operation with Russia, undertaken in the framework of the INTAS association and the international ISTC⁹⁴ initiative, the development of concerted and coordinated approaches between the Community and the Member States in the EU's scientific and technological dialogue with the major regional groupings of third countries: Mediterranean countries, Latin American countries and ASEAN countries;
- Closer ties between the EU and the ACP countries in the field of research, with an ACP-EU Forum on research into sustainable development held in Cape Town in July 2002.

Actions planned or for consideration

- The setting up, based on the model of the European Forum on Infrastructures, of a Concertation Forum on international scientific cooperation, which will make it possible to strengthen the coherence and coordination of Member State participation in international cooperation initiatives at world level: international programmes on global change and to support the Kyoto agreements; actions undertaken in the framework of the G8; international initiatives on ethical matters.
- Putting in place more powerful mechanisms for the exchange of information and concertation on international scientific cooperation policies, e.g. networks linking scientific and technological attachés posted to Member State (or, where appropriate, EU) representations in third countries, drawing on the model of the initiatives taken in some third-country capitals, such as the FEAST Forum in Australia.⁹⁵
- Exploration of the scope for the combined use of national and EU financial support schemes for the mobility of researchers from third countries coming to the EU: one possibility could be the payment of an extra EU grant to top up national fellowships for a period of attachment to laboratories in several EU countries, for example, making it possible to attract particularly high-calibre researchers while strengthening the ties between the laboratories concerned.

14.3 Commission of the European Communities. Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. More Research and Innovation - Investing for Growth and Employment: A Common Approach. Brussels, xxx COM(2005) 488 final{SEC(2005) 1253}

⁹³ European Commission, Communication entitled "The international dimension of the European Research Area", COM(2001) 346, 25.6.2001.

⁹⁴ International Science and Technology Centre.

⁹⁵ Forum for European-Australian Science and Technology Cooperation.

World-wide competition to attract research and innovation investment is growing. In addition to attractive locations such as the US and Japan, new competitors have emerged, such as China, India and Brazil. For the EU to remain competitive and sustain its model of society, far-reaching reforms are needed urgently. Moreover, the scale of competition is such that no Member State can succeed in isolation. Transnational synergies should be fully exploited. This is the only way to boost research and innovation performance and to turn it effectively into more growth and jobs in the EU. A high level of R&D spending and a good innovation performance contribute to more and better jobs. In addition research and innovation are needed to make the EU economy more sustainable, by finding win-win solutions for economic growth, social development and environmental protection.

15. ESIB and the Bologna Process, 2003



[ESIB]. *ESIB and the Bologna Process – Creating a European Higher Education Area for and with students.* Berlin, 18-19 September 2003.

8. *Promoting the Attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area*

ESIB believes that the shift of focus towards attractiveness is a positive development, as the term competitiveness can have a very negative meaning, especially when it comes to competing at all costs, which undermines academic values such as co-operation.

ESIB further believes that attractiveness can best be reached by a high quality of education and research and by a good international network of co-operation with various partner institutions around the globe.

When discussing the attractiveness of the EHEA, the problems of brain drain need to be tackled and resolved. Although ESIB believes in the freedom of each student, researcher and member of teaching staff to choose their place of study, work and life, special attention must be paid to the following points. Making Europe one of the most attractive higher education areas, countries have to act responsibly in relation to the problem of brain drain, both between Bologna signatory countries and outside. Since a lot of talented students, researchers and teaching staff in developing countries and countries in transition are emigrating, the creation of a cohesive higher education area is endangered, as is the economic and social development of the countries encountering brain drain. Signatory countries should respond to the fact that the process of brain drain also has highly negative implications for the development and quality of higher education and research. Guaranteeing safe employment and working conditions for students, staff and researchers in the qualification phase can reduce the problem of brain drain and enhance the attractiveness of the EHEA. This also means that PhD candidates should be employed by the universities, and enough full time jobs have to be provided for young researchers to make the academic workplace an attractive option for them.

With regards to the GATS, ESIB reaffirms its strong opposition against making any further commitments in education. ESIB calls upon governments to not make further commitments in education while at the same time reviewing existing commitments and legally assessing their impact on the public system. ESIB further calls upon governments to engage in a constructive dialogue with teachers, students and universities about the issues surrounding trade in education services, as the existing trade in the framework of TNE arrangements has to be steered to make it beneficial. Generally, ESIB reaffirms its commitment to education as a public good not a tradable commodity.

16. BFUG Working Group on the External Dimension, 2003



Bologna Follow up Group. *Attractiveness, Openness and Co-operation. The European Higher Education Area and third countries. Report by the Danish Presidency. 4th draft, Athens, 20 June 2003.*

The idea of regional cooperation in higher education “a la Bologna” should be promoted to other parts of the world. It is the European experience or conviction that quality in higher education can be enhanced through regional cooperation. Higher education systems in other parts of the world should have the same opportunity to make the same experience. For Europe this means stronger partners.

It has to be said that not all regions in the world may be prepared for this kind of cooperation.

In the first place the countries in the region should have an interest in the benefits of regional cooperation “a la Bologna”:

- Mobility for cultural contact, mutual understanding and confidence building
- Mobility for enhancing quality in higher education
- Creation of a coherent regional labour market with transparency in qualifications

In the second place such cooperation can only be established under certain conditions:

- Possibility for peaceful governmental cooperation in the region
- Existence of a civil society with free associations of students and academics
- Autonomous institutions of higher education (in line with the European Magna Carta Universitatum of 1988)
- Acceptance of a lingua franca, existence of a common language or a common ability to work in several languages
- Commitment of governments and institutions to reform

There are of course many ways to promote the Bologna idea and they should all be used.

- Existing cooperative frameworks whether they are regional organisations as such or partnerships between Europe and the region
- Contact to UNESCO regions
- Inviting a leading country as promoter in the regions
- Organising regional conferences about the Bologna Process
- General information in publications and on the internet [...]

Conclusions

The Berlin communiqué should contain the following elements:

- Ministers agree that the attractiveness and openness of the European higher education should be reinforced through cooperation with regions in other parts of the world.
- They confirm their readiness to further develop scholarship programmes for students from third countries.
- They undertake to win acceptance, within the relevant frameworks, for the need to base all international cooperation as any trade in higher education on academic values and on clear and transparent standards for quality.
- They encourage the promotion of the idea and the good practice of the Bologna Process by inviting representatives of other regions of the world to Bologna seminars and conferences.

17. Berlin Communiqué, 2003



Realising the European Higher Education Area. [Berlin Communiqué]. Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Higher Education in Berlin on 19 September 2003.

Ministers welcome the interest shown by other regions of the world in the development of the European Higher Education Area, and welcome in particular the presence of representatives from European countries not yet party to the Bologna Process as well as from the Follow-up Committee of the European Union, Latin America and Caribbean (EULAC) Common Space for Higher Education as guests at this conference. [...]

Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area

Ministers agree that the attractiveness and openness of the European higher education should be reinforced. They confirm their readiness to further develop scholarship programmes for students from third countries.

Ministers declare that transnational exchanges in higher education should be governed on the basis of academic quality and academic values, and agree to work in all appropriate fora to that end. In all appropriate circumstances such fora should include the social and economic partners.

They encourage the co-operation with regions in other parts of the world by opening Bologna seminars and conferences to representatives of these regions.”

18. Erasmus Mundus Programme (2003)



Decision No 2317/2003/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 December 2003 establishing a programme for the enhancement of quality in higher education and the promotion of intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries (Erasmus Mundus) (2004 to 2008), OJ L345/1 of 31 December 2003.

Objectives of the programme

1. The programme's overall aim is to enhance the quality of European higher education by fostering cooperation with third countries in order to improve the development of human resources and to promote dialogue and understanding between peoples and cultures.
2. The programme's specific objectives are:
 - (a) to promote a quality offer in higher education with a distinct European added value, attractive both within the European Union and beyond its borders;
 - (b) to encourage and enable highly qualified graduates and scholars from all over the world, to obtain qualifications and/or experience in the European Union;
 - (c) to develop more structured cooperation between European Union and third-country institutions and greater European Union outgoing mobility as part of European study programmes;
 - (d) to improve accessibility and enhance the profile and visibility of higher education in the European Union.

19. ACA Conference: Opening up to the Wider World (2004)



Recommendations for inclusion in the Bergen Communiqué. Opening up to the Wider World? The External Dimension of the Bologna Process. ACA Conference, Hamburg, Germany, 17 to 19 October 2004.

The conference “Opening up to the Wider World: The External Dimension of the Bologna Process” took place in Hamburg, Germany from 17 to 19 October 2004. The event was organised by the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA), in cooperation with the University of Hamburg, and supported by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the European Commission. The conference was guided by the overarching question if and in which way exactly the Bologna reforms would help to improve the reputation and attractiveness of European higher education in the world. The impact of the Bologna reforms on cooperation and competition between Europe and other world regions was addressed and investigated by both European and non-European experts. The conference attracted about 200 participants from higher education institutions, governments, and associations active in the field of internationalisation of education and training.

What are the outcomes of the conference?

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 the continent’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 or to keep these high achievers critically depended on whether or not it was able to provide them with the resources and working conditions they needed.

Speakers from other world regions confirmed that the reform agenda was being perceived outside of Europe, though at different degrees by the different target academic groups. While higher education leaders and managers were probably best informed, there were clear deficiencies on the side of the faculty. The fact that word about the reforms had travelled beyond the confines of Europe does not mean, however, that non-European observers had a detailed knowledge of the aims and the elements of the reform process. There was therefore a clear need for the provision of targeted information on the Bologna Process outside of Europe.

Recommendations to the Bergen Ministerial Meeting:

- *Ministers should encourage the provision of better and more comprehensive information about the Bologna Process to the relevant academic stakeholders outside Europe.*
- *Structural reforms alone will not suffice to make Europe a global higher education leader. Ministers should therefore ensure adequate resources and working conditions, in order to keep or attract high-quality teachers and researchers.*

20. Mobilising the brainpower of Europe (2004-2005)



20.1 Kok, Wim (2004). *Facing the Challenge. The Lisbon Strategy for growth and employment*. Report from the High Level Group chaired by Wim Kok. November 2004 [pp. 20-21].

Attracting and retaining world-class researchers

Europe needs to dramatically improve its attractiveness to researchers, as too many young scientists continue to leave Europe on graduating, notably for the US. Too few of the brightest and best from elsewhere in the world choose to live and work in Europe.

Further developing a system of mutual validation of national quality assurance and accreditation processes would be an important step in the right direction. It would reduce the administrative obstacles to mobility within the EU that European researchers continue to face. Obstacles relate to social security entitlements and the recognition of qualifications. More also needs to be done to

facilitate the entry of researchers and their dependants from outside the EU through simplified, fast-track work permit and visa procedures.

In order to increase attractiveness, there are also financial questions requiring attention. Member States need to urgently address the problem of funding for universities. If Europe wants to attract more of the world's best researchers, the question of improving their research environment and remuneration needs to be addressed now.

Creative interaction between universities, scientists and researchers on the one hand and industry and commerce on the other, which drives technology transfer and innovation, is necessarily rooted in the close physical location of universities and companies. There is already ample evidence around the world that high-tech clusters are built on this interaction, but 'ideopolises' – for example, Helsinki, Munich and Cambridge – go further. They have an array of other supporting factors – notably a sophisticated communications and transport infrastructure, financial institutions willing to provide the necessary risk capital to entrepreneurs and specialists in technology transfer, supportive public authorities that facilitate the network structures driving creative interaction – and are attractive environments for knowledge workers. 'Ideopolises' are emerging as the cities at the heart of dynamic, high-growth knowledge-based regions.

Key recommendations

The EU needs to draw more of the best and brightest researchers in the world by raising its attractiveness. Therefore, the 2005 Spring European Council should agree to prepare an action plan to reduce the administrative obstacles for moving to and within the EU for world-class scientists and researchers and their dependants.

This action plan should be implemented by spring 2006.

Fast-track work permit and visa procedures should be introduced for researchers and the mutual recognition of professional qualifications must be improved.

20.2 Commission of the European Communities (2005b). Communication from the Commission. Mobilising the brainpower of Europe: enabling universities to make their full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy. SEC(2005)518. Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 20 April 2005.

3.1. Attractiveness: the imperative of quality and excellence

Raising quality and attractiveness requires major transformations at universities. Those who drive these transformations within universities require specific support (including funding) from their environment. Universities failing to undertake these changes - for want of drive, power to act or available resources – will create a growing handicap for themselves, their graduates and their countries. [...]

3.1.2. Factors to raise attractiveness to learners

More flexibility and openness to the world in teaching/learning

If universities are to become more attractive locally and globally, profound curricular revision is required - not just to ensure the highest level of academic content, but also to respond to the changing needs of labour markets. The integration of graduates into professional life, and hence into society, is a major social responsibility of higher education. Learning needs to encompass transversal skills (such as teamwork and entrepreneurship) in addition to specialist knowledge. European and interdisciplinary aspects need to be strengthened. The potential of ICT should be fully exploited in teaching/learning, including for lifelong learning. The bachelor-master divide allows more diverse programme profiles and learning methods (e.g. research-based learning and ICT delivery).

Broader access

With new types of learners, greater programme diversity and more mobility across Europe, improved guidance and counselling (before and during higher education), flexible admission policies and customised learning paths are of growing importance. They are key determinants for broadening access, supporting student commitment and increasing success and efficiency -whether admission is competitive or not. Grant/loan systems, affordable accommodation and part-time work or assistantships are also important for universities to be attractive and accessible to a suitably wide range of learners – thus breaking the link between social origin and educational attainment.

Better communication

While academia tends to assume that good quality is its own advertisement, attractiveness is about perceptions. The development of a coherent structure of degrees, ECTS credits, the Diploma Supplement and trustworthy quality seals will enhance the recognition of European degrees. But it will not suffice: universities need better to communicate with society about the value of what they produce, and to invest more in their presence and marketing at home and abroad. Not all are well prepared for this. [...]

Annex

54. The comparative analysis of higher education has shown that the EU is a world quality reference as concerns total number of PhD graduates as well as number of graduates in mathematics, science and technology. It also performs well as regards public investment in higher education.

55. However, the analysis also shows that the EU needs to improve access to higher education, to increase higher education attainment levels, and increase total investment in higher education.

21. A Framework for qualifications of the EHEA, 2005



A Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. Copenhagen: Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, 2005.

There are significant direct and indirect connections between the full Bologna agenda and the creation of effective systems for the description and location of qualifications in Europe. The overarching framework for qualifications should play a vital role in the EHEA. The majority of the ten action lines identified in the policy documents of the Bologna Process will be affected fundamentally and positively by the development of clear, outcomes-focussed qualifications frameworks that share common methodological descriptors. The adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, that aids recognition, requires these common and clear descriptors. Links to the action lines are provided through:

[...]

> Promoting the attractiveness of the European higher education area would be made easier as the transparency and comparability of European higher education degrees is made real by the development of a common framework of qualifications. Refining of ways to describe degrees and levels in higher education is fundamental to the Bologna Process.

> A transparent and well-articulated overarching framework, supported by national frameworks, will also be of considerable importance to the recognition, in other parts of the world, of qualifications resulting from the Bologna reforms.

The development of conceptual approaches for describing qualifications is currently an important priority for many countries as they undertake educational reforms in the light of the Bologna process. These developments are not restricted to Europe, or indeed to higher education, and can be seen in other areas of education and training and in other parts of the world as shown by the experiences in, for example, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Unfortunately, the situation is complicated by the existence of several alternative and competing approaches. Some stakeholders in the European higher education sector have been aware of the problems associated with the current situation and there are a number of ongoing national and international attempts designed to resolve these problems and move towards a more common understanding.

22. Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA, 2005



Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. Helsinki: European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Quality assurance in higher education is by no means only a European concern. All over the world there is an increasing interest in quality and standards, reflecting both the rapid growth of higher education and its cost to the public and the private purse. Accordingly, if Europe is to achieve its aspiration to be the most dynamic and knowledge-based economy in the world (Lisbon Strategy), then European higher education will need to demonstrate that it takes the quality of its programmes and awards seriously and is willing to put into place the means of assuring and demonstrating that quality. The initiatives and demands, which are springing up both inside and outside Europe in the face of this internationalisation of higher education, demand a response. The commitment of all those involved in the production of these proposals augurs well for the fulfilment of a truly European dimension to quality assurance with which to reinforce the attractiveness of the EHEA's higher education offering.

The proposals contained in this report are underpinned by a number of principles which are described in more detail in the two chapters which cover the two parts of the Berlin mandate. However, some fundamental principles should permeate the whole work:

- the interests of students as well as employers and the society more generally in good quality higher education;
- the central importance of institutional autonomy, tempered by a recognition that this brings with it heavy responsibilities;
- the need for external quality assurance to be fit for its purpose and to place only an appropriate and necessary burden on institutions for the achievement of its objectives.

The EHEA with its 40 states is characterised by its diversity of political systems, higher education systems, socio-cultural and educational traditions, languages, aspirations and expectations. This makes a single monolithic approach to quality, standards and quality assurance in higher education inappropriate. In the light of this diversity and variety, generally acknowledged as being one of the glories of Europe, the report sets its face against a narrow, prescriptive and highly formulated approach to standards. In both the standards and the guidelines, the report prefers the generic principle to the specific requirement. It does this because it believes that this approach is more likely to lead to broad acceptance in the first instance and because it will provide a more robust basis for the coming together of the different higher education communities across the EHEA. The generic standards ought to find a general resonance at the national level of most signatory states. However, one consequence of the generic principle is that the standards and guidelines focus more on what should be done than how they should be achieved. Thus, the report does include procedural matters, but it has given a priority to standards and guidelines, especially in Chapter 2.

23. Bergen Communiqué, 2005



The European Higher Education Area – Achieving the Goals. [Bergen Communiqué]. Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, Bergen, 19-20 May 2005.

The attractiveness of the EHEA and cooperation with other parts of the world

The European Higher Education Area must be open and should be attractive to other parts of the world. Our contribution to achieving education for all should be based on the principle of sustainable development and be in accordance with the ongoing international work on developing guidelines for quality provision of cross-border higher education. We reiterate that in international academic cooperation, academic values should prevail.

We see the European Higher Education Area as a partner of higher education systems in other regions of the world, stimulating balanced student and staff exchange and cooperation between higher education institutions. We underline the importance of intercultural understanding and respect. We look forward to enhancing the understanding of the Bologna Process in other continents by sharing our experiences of reform processes with neighbouring regions. We stress the need for dialogue on issues of mutual interest. We see the need to identify partner regions and intensify the exchange of ideas and experiences with those regions. We ask the Follow-up Group to elaborate and agree on a strategy for the external dimension. [...]

Preparing for 2010

Building on the achievements so far in the Bologna Process, we wish to establish a European Higher Education Area based on the principles of quality and transparency. We must cherish our rich heritage and cultural diversity in contributing to a knowledge-based society. We commit ourselves to upholding the principle of public responsibility for higher education in the context of complex modern societies. As higher education is situated at the crossroads of research, education and innovation, it is also the key to Europe's competitiveness. As we move closer to 2010, we undertake to ensure that higher education institutions enjoy the necessary autonomy to implement the agreed reforms, and we recognise the need for sustainable funding of institutions.

24. European Institute of Technology, 2006



22.1 Commission of the European Communities. Commission Staff Working Document. Annex to the Communication from the Commission to the European Council Implementing the renewed partnership for growth and jobs. Developing a knowledge flagship: the European Institute of Technology. Results of the Public Consultation on a Concept of a European Institute of Technology. Brussels, 13.3.2006. SEC(2006) 368

The idea of establishing a European Institute of Technology (EIT) was put forward by the Commission in its Mid-Term Review of the Lisbon Strategy. Subsequently, the March 2005 European Council asked the Commission to explore the idea further. To support this process, a public consultation was held from 15 September to 15 November 2005. The questionnaire, which did not directly address the relevance of an EIT, comprised four questions on what the mission, added value, structure and priorities of the EIT should be.

22.2 Commission of the European Communities. Communication from the Commission to the European Council. The European Institute of Technology: further steps towards its creation. Brussels, 8.6.2006 COM(2006) 276 final

Further to a first Communication on the European Institute of Technology (EIT) adopted on February 22, 2006, the March 2006 European Council recognised that the European Institute of Technology will be an important step to fill the existing gap between higher education, research and innovation, and invited the Commission to submit by mid June 2006 a proposal on further steps to undertake.

As a European organization able to promote excellence, to attract talent globally, and to provide a European working environment to students, researchers and innovation managers, the EIT will constitute a European symbol of a renewed effort towards the creation of a competitive, knowledge based society. [...]

1. Introduction

The Commission first drew attention to the need for a European Institute of Technology in its Spring Report 2005. The European Council took note, and the Commission launched a process of reflection and consultation, which resulted in its presenting on 22 February 2006 a first Communication on the European Institute of Technology (EIT).

The conclusions of the March 2006 European Council state that:

“The European Council notes the significance of the Commission's communication on the European Institute for Technology and will further examine the ideas in order to enhance together with other actions networking and synergies between excellent research and innovation communities in Europe. The European Council recognises that a European Institute for Technology – based on top-class networks open to all Member States – will be an important step to fill the existing gap between higher education, research and innovation, together with other actions that enhance networking and synergies between excellent research and innovation communities in Europe. The European Research Council should have a guiding role in this context. The European Council invites the Commission to submit a proposal on further steps by mid June 2006.”⁹⁶ [...]

4. Degrees

The EIT should be able to award degrees and diplomas. They would constitute a visible manifestation of the EIT brand and an incentive to attract students and researchers to participate in its programmes. The EIT must act as a pole of attraction for the best minds from around the world. Awarding high quality degrees would strengthen its identity and help it to become widely recognized, and thus to act as a model for promoting change across the European Higher Education Area. [...]

7. Global Attractiveness

One objective of the EIT is to be attractive to students and researchers worldwide. Only by establishing a global reputation will it attract students and researchers from across Europe and act as a flagship for change. Experience also shows that institutions with a global reputation can attract a significant proportion of students and researchers from outside the EU. This would be both a measure of success and a chance for the EU to benefit from the skills which non-EU citizens bring with them – in much the way that the US has done. However, the EIT should be conscious of the need to avoid triggering a brain drain from less developed countries and aim instead to promote research and innovation in third countries through appropriate links.

Two main issues would drive the global attractiveness of the EIT to non-EU students and researchers at all stages of their careers. The first is the academic credibility of the courses, degrees and research

⁹⁶ Presidency conclusions, par. 25.

programmes. The way its degrees are recognised internationally, the quality of the research, outcomes and the innovation developed would be major elements to attract students and researchers from abroad. The second is the ease with which it would be possible for foreign Masters or Doctoral candidates and researchers to join the EIT and for the EIT to employ third country citizens in the Knowledge Communities. Accelerated and simplified national admission and visa procedure for non-EU students and researchers have been agreed⁹⁷ and should be rapidly transposed. Special visa agreements might also be needed. Providing financial support for non-EU students and researchers would reinforce the global attractiveness of the EIT. The EIT Governing Board should consider the issue of bursaries and research grants to outstanding students and researchers from abroad. The criterion, as always for the EIT, should be the excellence of outcome.

25. Modernisation agenda for universities (2005, 2006)



25.1 Commission of the European Communities. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. *European values in the globalised world. Contribution of the Commission to the October Meeting of Heads of State and Government. Brussels, 03.11.2005 COM(2005) 525 final/2*

Europe must reform and modernise its policies to preserve its values. Modernisation is essential to continue keep Europe's historically high levels of prosperity, social cohesion, environmental protection and quality of life.

The need for change is widely recognised; for example in the reform process launched in Lisbon in March 2000. But this analysis has not yet been fully translated into action. Europe can no longer afford to wait; because what is different five years on is the added sense of urgency. Global competition, particularly from Asia, has intensified. Cutting-edge knowledge is no longer confined to Europe or North America. Indian universities are turning out more than a quarter of million engineers every year. Research spending in China is set to catch that in the EU by 2010.

25.2 Commission of the European Communities. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. *Interim report on the follow up to the informal meeting of Heads of State and Government at Hampton Court. Brussels, 7.12.2005 COM(2005) 645 final*

1. Introduction

At Hampton Court on 27 October 2005 the Heads of State and Government of the European Union had a fruitful discussion on Europe's response to globalisation. The Communication of the Commission 'European values in the globalised world' helped to focus the discussion on the challenges and opportunities ahead of us. All agreed that Europe needs economic reforms and social modernisation to safeguard its values. At the end of the informal meeting the Commission was asked to take the lead in further work on research and development, universities, demographic challenges, energy, migration and security. It was agreed that this work will not lead to new processes or structures but will be mainstreamed into existing channels. President Barosso announced that he will present a concept paper on the external projection of the European Union in the world. Swift and firm efforts in all these areas are essential to boost Europe's response to globalisation. [...]

⁹⁷ The directive on specific procedures for admitting third country nationals for the purpose of scientific research (Directive 2005/71/CE, 12 October 2005) and the two recommendations on short-stay visas and on admission of researchers from third countries traveling within the community for the purpose of carrying out scientific research (Recommendations 2005/761/CE and 2005/762/CE) were published in OJ L 289 of 3 November 2005.

PART 2

1. The Hampton Court work streams

Building on the information already provided in the Information Note of 9 November, the following paragraphs describe the state of play regarding the main issues to be addressed in every Hampton Court work stream. They list the main initiatives at European level recently tabled or planned for 2006.

2. Research and Development

A new impetus is needed to increase significantly Europe's research and development and innovative capacity. It is especially important to have more leading companies working in areas like ICT, space, biotechnology, and nanotechnology. A major impetus will be given if we have agreements on the 7th Research Framework Programme and the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme. However, more needs to be done if Europe is to become a more attractive place to invest in research and development. It is crucial to get the financing for small high-potential companies right and to address the brain drain of Europe's best and brightest.

The Commission is working on a number of initiatives which are directly relevant to the above issues. Building on the 7th Framework Programme, the communication on state aid, i2010, the strategic guidelines for cohesion policy, etc., the Commission will table a communication in the first quarter of 2006 identifying priority actions to increase investment in R&D financing, to create attractive markets and to contribute to growth of European innovative firms, in particular SME's. The Commission will try to specify concrete examples of public R&D funding where it has been possible to facilitate access to finance, to remove obstacles to cross-border investments, to increase the leverage effect on private sector R&D financing and to foster public-private partnerships. In this respect, the Commission will look into aspects of the application of state aid legislation and competition rules in order to facilitate R&D and innovation. The Commission will also present a Communication on defence industries and markets, aiming to encourage the competitiveness of the European defence sector through appropriate market legislation and R&D programmes.

3. Universities

Universities are the locus where education, research and innovation meet. The conditions must be put in place to enable them to maximise their potential. This means addressing questions on funding levels and sources, on regulatory frameworks and management systems, on ensuring access to higher education and, crucially, on how universities transfer innovation and skills to the market. Universities now operate in a global market for higher education and research. European universities stand a good chance to benefit from the opportunities this market offers, for example through partnerships with higher education and research centres in third countries as well as with business. European universities could reinforce their position if they can attract and keep the best brains – in terms of teachers, students and researchers – and better exploit the knowledge they generate. Specifically, more needs to be done to improve the training of post-graduates. Also, better and more diversified funding and closer university/business cooperation is needed.

Building on the work done so far, the Commission will seek the views of experts on the concrete steps that must now be taken.

In this context, the Commission intends to come forward with a Communication on European higher education systems and in particular universities. It will look into ways of enhancing the research and innovation performance of European Universities. Further to its recent public consultation, the Commission will table a proposal in the first quarter of 2006 to establish a European Institute for Technology with the aim of enhancing Europe's top-rank university capacity.

25.3 Commission of the European Communities. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. *Delivering on the Modernisation Agenda for Universities: Education, Research and Innovation*. Brussels, 10.5.2006 COM(2006) 208 final

Introduction

Modernisation of Europe's universities, involving their interlinked roles of education, research and innovation, has been acknowledged not only as a core condition for the success of the broader Lisbon Strategy, but as part of the wider move towards an increasingly global and knowledge-based economy. The main items on the agenda for change have been identified and given added momentum by the European Council: at the informal meeting at Hampton Court in October 2005, R&D and universities were acknowledged as foundations of European competitiveness; the 2006 Spring European Council agreed on stronger action at European level to drive forward this agenda in universities and research, which should be implemented by the end of 2007 in the context of the renewed partnership for growth and employment. In the National Reform Programmes based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, Member States refer generally to these issues, but few address them as a national priority. Yet these changes are necessary to regenerate Europe's own approach, not to replicate any imported model. They are equally necessary in order to reinforce the societal roles of universities in a culturally and linguistically diverse Europe. [...]

9. Make the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area more visible and attractive in the world

The development of extensive cooperation, mobility and networks between European universities over the past decades has created the right conditions for broader internationalisation. Most universities now have experience with multilateral consortia and many are involved in joint courses or double degree arrangements. The Erasmus Mundus Masters have demonstrated the relevance of these initiatives - which are unique to Europe - in the global arena. Continuing globalisation means that the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area must be fully open to the world and become worldwide competitive players.

This will, however, only be possible if Europe makes a serious effort to promote the quality of its universities, and to increase their attractiveness and visibility worldwide.

One possibility, at European and Member State level, would be to develop more structured international cooperation, supported by the necessary financial means, with the EU's neighbouring countries and worldwide, through bilateral/multilateral agreements. This also entails that Member States, acting within the EU's commitment not to promote brain drain, should open up their funding schemes to non-Europeans and provide opportunities for interuniversity staff exchanges as well as opportunities for non-European researcher and academic staff to carry out professional activities. "Brain circulation" should also be promoted for European students, teachers and researchers who have decided to spend part of their working life outside Europe.⁹⁸ People undertaking a temporary assignment abroad are both an asset for the sending and/or hosting country as they constitute a reserve of professional contacts abroad, acting as bridgeheads for sharing knowledge. This in turn, will increase Europe's visibility in education and research and as a reliable partner in the development of third countries' human capital.

One fundamental point is to simplify and accelerate legal and administrative procedures for the entry of non-EU students and researchers. Concerning admission and residence of third country researchers, the "researchers' visa" package – a directive and two recommendations on the admission of third-

⁹⁸ See European Researchers Abroad (ERA-Link) pilot initiative, <<http://www.eurunion.org/legislat/st/eralink.htm>>.

country nationals to carry out scientific research in the European Community⁹⁹ was adopted in 2005 and will have to be transposed into national law during 2007.

Building an attractive image for European universities in the world also calls for a serious effort to make European degrees more easily recognised outside Europe. However, first, cross-recognition has to be fully achieved within the EU itself; the recent Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications has already made it simpler for professional purposes. More effort is still necessary as far as academic recognition is concerned. The coherent framework of qualifications and of compatible quality assurance systems currently under development¹⁰⁰ will contribute to this. The existence of more “European” courses, offered jointly by consortia of universities and leading to joint or double degrees at Master or Doctorate level, would also help to make Europe more attractive to students, teachers and researchers from the rest of the world. [...]

Universities are key players in Europe’s future and for the successful transition to a knowledge-based economy and society. However, this crucial sector of the economy and of society needs in-depth restructuring and modernisation if Europe is not to lose out in the global competition in education, research and innovation. [...]

The Hampdon Court meeting also called for urgent action to promote excellence in both research and education, particularly world-class universities with adequate funding streams and closer links with business. (Moving up a gear; 2006, p. 9 – point 3.1).

26. Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education, 2005

Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education. Paris: OECD 2005; UNESCO 2006.

The Guidelines aim to support and encourage international cooperation and enhance the understanding of the importance of quality provision in cross-border higher education. The purposes of the Guidelines are to protect students and other stakeholders from low-quality provision and disreputable providers as well as to encourage the development of quality cross-border higher education that meets human, social, economic and cultural needs. [...]

The challenge faced by current quality assurance and accreditation systems is to develop appropriate procedures and systems to cover foreign providers and programmes (in addition to national providers and programmes) in order to maximise the benefits and limit the potential drawbacks of the internationalisation of higher education. At the same time, the increase in cross-border student, academic staff, researcher and professional mobility has put the issue of the recognition of academic and professional qualifications high on the international cooperation agenda. [...]

The quality of a country’s higher education sector and its assessment and monitoring is not only key to its social and economic well-being, it is also a determining factor affecting the status of that higher education system at the international level. The establishment of quality assurance systems has become a necessity, not only for monitoring quality in higher education delivered within the country, but also for engaging in delivery of higher education internationally. As a consequence, there has been an impressive rise in the number of quality assurance and accreditation bodies for higher education in

⁹⁹ The three instruments were published on 3 November 2005 in the Official Journal O.J. L 289 of 3 November 2005. The two recommendations immediately entered into force, while the Member States will have two years (e.g. by November 2007) to implement the directive as well as Council Directive 2004/114/EC of 13 December 2004 (OJ L 375, 23.12.2004).

¹⁰⁰ For example, through the recent European Parliament and Council Recommendation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (OJ L64 of 4.3.2006) and through the consultations on a European Qualifications Framework.

the past two decades. However, existing national quality assurance capacity often focuses exclusively on domestic delivery by domestic institutions.

The increased cross-border mobility of students, academic staff, professionals, programmes and providers presents challenges for existing national quality assurance and accreditation frameworks and bodies as well as for the systems for recognising foreign qualifications. Some of these challenges are described below:

a) National capacity for quality assurance and accreditation often does not cover cross-border higher education. This increases the risk of students falling victim to misleading guidance and information and disreputable providers, dubious quality assurance and accreditation bodies and low-quality provision, leading to qualifications of limited validity.

b) National systems and bodies for the recognition of qualifications may have limited knowledge and experience in dealing with cross-border higher education. In some cases, the challenge becomes more complicated as cross-border higher education providers may deliver qualifications that are not of comparable quality to those which they offer in their home country.

c) The increasing need to obtain national recognition of foreign qualifications has posed challenges to national recognition bodies. This in turn, at times, leads to administrative and legal problems for the individuals concerned.

d) The professions depend on trustworthy, high-quality qualifications. It is essential that users of professional services including employers have full confidence in the skills of qualified professionals. The increasing possibility of obtaining low-quality qualifications could harm the professions themselves, and might in the long run undermine confidence in professional qualifications.

5.2. ANNEX 2

Recommendations from the Bologna Official Seminars on the “External Dimension”

Vatican seminar (Vatican City, 30 March – 1 April 2006)

**The Cultural Heritage and Academic Values of the European
University and the Attractiveness of the Higher Education Area**

*From Archbishop J. Michael Miller’s Summary and Synthesis of the seminar;
Synod Hall, Vatican, 1 April 2006*

II. Recommendations of Discussion Groups

The participants in this Seminar are convinced that the commitment of the Bologna Process to strengthening the external dimension of European higher education depends in large measure on reaffirming the relationship between Europe's cultural heritage and its universities and on fostering its common academic values.

Now is the time to hear directly from the discussion groups which met yesterday morning. The reporters of the various discussion groups will read a summary of their conclusions and recommendations. All of these suggestions will be integrated into a few specific recommendations to be handed over, as the fruit of our labours, to those preparing for the Ministerial Meeting in London in May of next year. Before each of the four topics, I will make a few observations drawn from our general discussion.

1. *Basic Values of Academic Freedom*

The theme treated in the first two discussion groups was academic freedom. Proper to a university's institutional autonomy is the guarantee of academic freedom that it offers its members. In the great European tradition, freedom in research and teaching have been recognized and respected according to the principles and methods of each discipline. Academic freedom guarantees that scholars may search for the truth wherever analysis and evidence lead them. Moreover, it ensures that they may teach and publish the results of this research, keeping in mind the need to safeguard the common good of the community. It is not only *freedom from* undue constraint and interference, but *freedom for* service to society. The European university should ensure that all teachers are accorded a lawful freedom of inquiry and of thought, and of freedom to express their minds humbly and courageously about those matters in which they enjoy competence.

In the past, this value was often threatened by totalitarian regimes of left and right. Sadly, the European university itself has, at times, complied with such bullying and compromised its institutional autonomy and thus the academic freedom of the professoriate. As was noted by more than one intervention, today there are still threats to the university's autonomy but they usually come from other quarters, such market and technological forces or the widespread cultural presupposition which regard teachers and researchers as "producers" and students as "consumers."

I would now ask each of the groups, in turn, to present their recommendations to the assembly. [...]

2. *Foundations for Interdisciplinary Dialogue*

The second theme dealt with in the Seminar's discussion groups was that of interdisciplinary dialogue. In his introduction to the second session, Dr. Jan Sadlak spoke about the vocation of the European university to be a kind of open forum - an *agora* - where scholars from all disciplines "can actively meet and match their ideas against one another." While honouring the integrity and method of each

academic discipline, interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary conversations based on a common search of truth enrich the Academy, enabling it to become a community of wisdom rather than a cacophony of competing individual voices.

One practical consequence of insisting on interdisciplinary dialogue is the space it creates within the university community to meet the challenges posed by increasing fragmentation and specialization. In many instances we have a high level of compartmentalized information but little capacity for synthesis.¹⁰¹ Indeed, we now face the possibility that the university will be reduced to a complex group of academic areas that produce only factual results which in the end are unrelated. Whenever this is the case, then the university will be able to offer an adequate professional formation, but will no longer be able to attain the purposes of a rich and full human formation.¹⁰²

According to several of our speakers, Europe's universities, in line with their origins and heritage, are called to meet the challenge of integrating knowledge. This is an ever more difficult process given contemporary scepticism about the possibility of such an undertaking, coupled with the explosion of information now made available to anyone connected to the internet. Nonetheless, the university has the task of fostering a synthesis of knowledge, resisting the fragmentation of knowledge into merely quantifiable and commodifiable information.

To this "horizontal" inter-disciplinarity, which relates the various disciplines, the European university will promote what might be called a "vertical" inter-disciplinarity. Such verticality asks that the academic community be engaged in a constant effort to determine the relative place and meaning of each of the various disciplines within the context of a vision of the human person and the world inspired by transcendent values. An organic vision of reality, a higher synthesis of knowledge, is what is proposed.

I now ask the second discussion to present us their conclusions and recommendations as ways to foster the "external dimension" of the Bologna Process. [...]

3. *Inter-cultural and inter-religious Dialogue*

As we heard in this Hall, the increasing pluralism of European societies and globalization has brought intercultural and inter-religious dialogue to the fore as topics of concern to institutions of higher learning. Such topics are no longer taboo. Indeed, it was asserted from this podium that the ability of Europe's universities to attract students and professors in the future will depend to no small extent on how well they foster such dialogue within their communities and in society at large. It is an intrinsic value, an essential factor of Europe's heritage that the university aims, as John Henry Newman wrote, "to effect the intercommunion of one and all."¹⁰³

By its very nature, the European university develops culture through its research, helps to transmit its local culture to each succeeding generation through its teaching, and fosters cultural activities in diverse ways. As a learning community, the university is open to all human experience and is always ready to dialogue with, and learn from, any culture.¹⁰⁴ Given today's circumstances, the European university must become more attentive to different cultures, especially to the various cultural traditions within Europe, so that it can promote a profitable dialogue within modern society, and receive those from other cultures who wish to study and carry out research in the various countries which adhere to the Bologna Process.

In the climate of increased cultural and religious pluralism which increasingly marks Europe at the beginning of the 21st century, it is clear that this dialogue will be especially important in establishing a sure basis for stability and warding off the dread spectre of those wars of religion which, in the past,

¹⁰¹ Cf. Congregation for Catholic Education, Pontifical Council for the Laity, and Pontifical Council for Culture, *The Presence of the Church in the University and in University Culture* (1994), I: 2, 8.

¹⁰² Cf. John Paul II, *Address to the Third International Meeting of Catholic Universities and Institutions of Higher Learning* (25 April 1989), 4.

¹⁰³ John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University* (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1931), 457.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, 43.

have stained the continent's history.¹⁰⁵ It was observed that the university, precisely as a community of scholars, cannot remain on the sidelines of such dialogue. A university's identity, whatever its particular inspiration, is *strengthened* when it fosters inter-religious dialogue by introducing students to knowledge of religious traditions unfamiliar to them and by encouraging research in this field. The way of dialogue is the way of the European university.

Respectful conversation and cooperation enables the academic community to be enriched by the insights of others, challenged by their questions, and impelled to deepen their knowledge of their own convictions truth. Within Europe's universities such dialogue involves concern, respect, and hospitality toward those of other religions. Every university, which receives students of all faiths, should honour their identity, modes of expression, and values.

In order to strengthen the attractiveness of the European university, two groups discussed both intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, reached the following conclusions and made the recommendations which we shall now hear. [...]

4. *Scientific Research and Ethical Responsibility*

The last discussion group dealt with the pressing question of scientific research and ethical responsibility. Unfortunately, as Peter Scott recently remarked - and this was echoed in different ways by many of our Seminar participants - "ethical issues are in danger of becoming second-order issues in the modern university - or, to be more accurate, ethical issues have tended to be redefined essentially procedural issues rather than as fundamental issues directly connected to the core mission of the university. This shift can easily be observed in the context of research. Research ethics are no longer debated in terms of the morality of military or commercial sponsorship of research programmes; [...] Instead research ethics concentrate on much narrower, often technical, issues such as exposing research malpractice and upholding the rigour of research methodologies (including the need to avoid exploitation of, or unnecessary intrusion into the lives of, research subjects)."¹⁰⁶

The participants in this discussion group, however, were convinced that scientific research in the European university should always be carried out with a concern for the ethical and moral implications of its methods and its discoveries. In reaching this conclusion they affirmed, perhaps unknowingly, what Pope John II said in an address to UNESCO in 1980: "It is essential that we be convinced of the priority of the ethical over the technical, of the primacy of the person over things, of the superiority of the spirit over matter. The cause of the human person will only be served if knowledge is joined to conscience. Men and women of science will truly aid humanity only if they preserve 'the sense of the transcendence of the human person over the world and of God over the human person'".¹⁰⁷

The flourishing of the European university will depend on its ability to reclaim the ethical high ground in its research and programmes. We hope that we will not be accused of "knowing the price of everything and the value of nothing."

The recorder of the last discussion group will now present their conclusions and recommendations about how the ethical responsibility entailed in scientific research can promote the attractiveness of the European university. [...]

Final Recommendations

Convinced as we are that the external dimension of the Bologna Process must take seriously its responsibility to make the European university attractive to its own nations as well as the rest of the world, we suggest that intelligent marketing strategies be adopted to ensure that this take place.

This Seminar, therefore, would like to propose that, in creating the European Higher Education Area as a driving force in making Europe strong, stable and sustainable and taking a leading role in the

¹⁰⁵ Cf. John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 55.

¹⁰⁶ Peter Scott, "Ethics 'in' and 'for' Higher Education," *Higher Education in Europe* 29:4 (December 2004), 439-440).

¹⁰⁷ John Paul II, Address at UNESCO (2 June 1980), 22: *AAS* 72 (1980), 750.

world of higher education, the Ministers at the 2007 London meeting affirm:

1. the indispensable and irreplaceable role played by the European university, despite the increasing presence of other instruments of education, in contributing to the integration of Europe and the formation of a wisdom society;
2. their commitment to the cultural heritage of Europe as a living and expanding tradition which the university receives, enriches and transmits to succeeding generations; moreover, this tradition is rich in humanistic values that go together with, and do not contradict, the scientific and technological demands of advanced democratic societies;
3. the need to foster increased accessibility in order to increase capacity, without sacrificing excellence, especially in research, an excellence proper to not just a few elite institutions but distributed in numerous centres of excellence in different areas of study and research;
4. the core values of institutional autonomy, academic freedom, collegiality/community and cooperation among institutions as necessary components of the European university's competitive advantage in the global marketplace and thus instruments at the service of society;
5. the positive value of unity and diversity and diversity in unity - the humus of the European university - as a way to foster interaction and dialogue among different cultural and religious traditions;
6. due recognition be given to the fact that religious faith marks the various 'national cultures of Europe in their literature, architecture, approach to human rights and other crucial matters, and that questions of meaning and ultimate significance should be recognized within the university's programs and research projects;

I would like to add one personal recommendation: that every Minister and staff member entrusted with developing and implementing the strategies for creating the EHEA purchase and read John Henry Newman's *Idea of University*!

Such affirmations will enable the EHEA to make a significant impact on the world of higher education on this continent and around the world.

Athens seminar (Athens, 24-26 June 2006)

Putting European Higher Education Area on the Map: Developing Strategies for Attractiveness

From Pavel Zgaga's *Report on the seminar*;
Athens, 26 June 2006

Conclusions and Recommendations of the Seminar

On bases of reach plenary discussions and reports from working groups (these reports include an even more extended list of proposals and recommendations), the following conclusions and recommendations were synthesized:

A) The possible contents of the *external dimension strategy* (in 7 points), drafted by the Working Group on the External Dimension of the Bologna Process and presented to participants of the Seminar, is seen as a very good basis for elaboration of "the external strategy for the EHEA".

B) Further on, BFUG and the Working Group on the External Dimension of the Bologna Process are asked to consider the following recommendations and to include them into working documents for the London ministerial conference in 2007:

1. *At the competitiveness and attractiveness horizon*, actions should be taken to improve the performance of European higher education. Competitiveness in higher education aims at developing diverse, quality, efficient and well performing universities; only such universities can really attract European and international students. Competition should not be necessarily seen in opposition to cooperation: a firm academic cooperation, e.g. through quality networks and projects that strengthen critical mass of higher education institutions, can importantly increase the competitiveness of European higher education as a whole. On the other side, competition in a global context should be also seen as an incentive to strengthen institutional cooperation further.

Concrete measures should be taken to attract international students as for example to organise European higher education fairs and media campaigns on one side as well as to create European study centres and centres of excellence on the other. Good practice from some countries suggests that extra budget provided for international students' scholarships as well as for accommodation of international students and researchers could slightly improve the existing situation. On the systemic side, a European standard of acceptance for international students should be developed and a code of good conduct for dealing with visa problems. Europe also needs to strengthen its alumni-networks worldwide. Last but not least, a network of ambassadors of European higher education or »Europe promoters« in major third countries could be established.

2. *At the partnership and cooperation horizon*, different aspects and approaches – also the regional ones – have to be developed and supported because Europe is not a homogenous whole and it can't be understood as such in other world regions. Approaches with the developed world have to differ from approaches to the developing countries. Cooperation with the developing world regions should be based on partnership and solidarity and be considered in particular with the goal of sustainability.

European universities have a long tradition of partnership and cooperation with universities in other parts of the world; today, the European Commission's programmes (e.g. Erasmus Mundus, Jean Monnet etc.) along the existing national schemes enable universities to open new pages in the history of their international cooperation. Existing networks should be used to connect European Higher education Area and higher education areas in other parts of the world. The creation of consortia of universities and higher education stakeholder organizations in the EHEA and third countries for

systematic and integrated cooperation activity would be an important improvement of existing practices. Activity to take place inside such consortia could be the joint delivery of graduate-level study programmes with integrated mobility phases of study in the other continent (joint and double degrees, etc.), measures aiming at institutional development and capacity building, human resource development, and curriculum development. Joint research activities should be an integral part of this agenda. Last but not least: the complex area of mutual recognition of higher education qualifications within a global context should be also addressed within this horizon.

3. *At the dialogue horizon*, countries of the Bologna Process can share their practice and experiences with other regions of the world which encounter similar challenges and tendencies in the development of higher education systems. Interested countries and/or organizations from abroad should have possibility to join Bologna events and to use European good practices as well as to share their comments as well as their own good practices in a common global forum. Enhanced cooperation with other world regions can be a new stimulus for a greater integration.

Wherever possible, the policy dialogue should be based on existing fora, such as the EU-LAC Follow-up Committee or the EU-China Policy Dialogue. Policies should be tailor-made for each region and take due account of relevant EU policy (for example the EU Neighbourhood Policy). In addition, new concrete measures can be taken to open further possibilities, e.g. to create a “Bologna Visitor Programme” (to fund participation in selected Bologna-related conferences and seminars in Europe) or a higher education policy forum, involving representatives of European and third-country governments and higher education stakeholders; etc.

4. Last but not least, *at the information horizon*, the establishment of a comprehensive EHEA portal is unanimously recommended, under certain rules and conditions which should be carefully considered and developed. The content should be general and easy to understand. Different target groups (students, academics, policy makers, other higher education stakeholders) should be addressed in different ways. Working Group on the External Dimension could make a first investigation on this issue. Greece, through the Minister of Education, has already expressed its willingness to host such a portal. In addition, a concise description of the Bologna Process for other parts of the world is needed (prepared by the BFUG) as well as a set of Bologna information points could be established worldwide.

Oslo seminar (Oslo, 28-29 September 2006)
“Looking out! Bologna in a global setting”
The external dimension of the Bologna Process

Conclusions and recommendations by Pavel Zgaga
 Oslo, 29 September 2006

Presentations and discussions at the seminar in general, but in particular at a panel discussion with speakers from two European and seven countries from various parts of the world, followed by intensive discussions in six parallel working groups, resulted in a number of statements, conclusions and recommendations related, in a direct or indirect way, to the foreseen strategy on the “external dimension”. Presentations, discussions and conclusions from working groups have been presented in greater detail in the reports by rapporteurs (available at the seminar website)¹⁰⁸. On this basis, the next paragraphs aim at presenting a recapitulation of the seminar in a form of synthesized conclusions and recommendations.

1. Discussing a range of issues on a possible strategy for EHEA international cooperation, the elementary but fundamental fact that *cooperation presupposes at least two willing partners* was stressed several times. The “external dimension” cannot be carried out by Europeans alone, and this requires consultations with partners from all other parts of the world. However, there are still a vast number of issues which should be agreed, elaborated and solved within the Bologna Process.
- 1.2 The seminar dealt at length with the questions *by whom* and *toward whom* a strategy should be developed. On the one hand, there was a consensus that strategies may be elaborated for several actors, from institutions through national public authorities to the European level. Yet, it was also made clear that institutions are not all alike and countries are not all in the same position. A differentiation of their needs is a fact and any strategy should strictly avoid a one-size-fits-all approach. Discussing a strategy at European level opens also the question of “what Europe”? It is not always easy to delineate between “EU-25” and “EU-45”, but to make EHEA cooperation strategy really work, it is necessary to ensure that there will be no “A group” and “B group” within the Bologna Process.
- 1.2 Regarding the question *toward whom* a strategy should be developed, it was agreed that stimulating “Bologna-like” developments in other areas seems to be the most realistic scenario. It could improve compatibility of higher education systems and policies and could also be a valuable exercise in capacity-building.
- 1.3 A further question was also raised at the seminar about whether the *organisational model of the Bologna Process* is fit to *promote* the EHEA after 2010 and to *stimulate* broad cooperation with other parts of the world. A warning against institutionalising an informal process so far was opposed by advocating the necessity of a firmer, more permanent organisational structure. While this structure should be as light as possible, some kind of funding and organisational structure would be necessary. Therefore, the organisation of the EHEA after 2010 must be placed on the agenda as a matter of urgency – also from the “external dimension” point of view.
- 1.4 The EHEA must provide *a framework that facilitates inter-institutional cooperation*. For that purpose *information* on the EHEA, linked to information on national systems and institutors, is necessary. There is a growing consensus on the need to establish an EHEA portal, providing clear information on the EHEA and providing links to sites of both national public authorities and individual institutions. However, there are a number of details which still remain to be settled.

¹⁰⁸ See <<http://www.bolognaoslo.com>>.

- 1.5 Global cooperation in higher education, partnership agreements between higher education institutions from different part of the world and mobility of students and staff depend to a large degree on recognition matters. For that reason, UNESCO should be encouraged to continue its work on revising its *regional conventions on the recognition of qualifications*. These issues are also closely related to quality assurance provision in various countries and to transnational higher education provision. It is a vital interest of the EHEA that these issues are openly discussed between partners in higher education cooperation worldwide.
 - 1.6 As a particularly good case of international cooperation, the seminar pointed out *Lusophone* cooperation and *Francophonie*, encompassing both members and non-members of the Bologna Process and illustrating the great potential for cooperation between groups of countries. In higher education, this cooperation should be placed within the overall *acquis* and strategy of the EHEA.
2. Considerations on *conditions for inter-institutional cooperation* between the EHEA and other parts of the world – in particular with regard to complex relations between *mobility, transparency and recognition* – as a particularly necessary element of an “external dimension” strategy have demonstrated that improving the quality of mobility and reducing barriers is what is most required. Looking either from an institutional or national point of view, cooperation with the outside world in higher education and research is, first of all, linked to enhancing quality development: mobility, internationalisation and the “external dimension” are means; quality education and research are ends in all systems. This position presumes the following focuses, actions and measures:
- 2.1 All EHEA partners at all levels need to *improve information flows and dissemination*. The proper involvement and consultation of the stakeholders in order to be able to cope with mobility and internationalisation (e.g. student unions that need to deal with management and support of mobile students) should be ensured. Visibility of national assessments regarding the quality of higher education as well as general decisions regarding recognition are needed, as are their availability in more than one language. There is also a need to be clear concerning the terminology used. The lack of appropriate informational, linguistic and cultural preparation for mobile students and staff should also be addressed.
 - 2.2 It is also necessary to promote further and better *understanding and use of existing recognition and transparency tools* within the EHEA as well as in relation to the rest of the world, as it will also benefit international exchange and mobility (e.g., the use of frameworks improving compatibility of higher education systems and regulating recognition; exchange of good and bad practices; working towards the recognition of each others’ recognition decisions, etc.). On the other hand, multilateral and bilateral agreements should stimulate the growth of inter-institutional frameworks and partnership agreements that make institutions committed to recognising periods of study abroad for mobile students as well as degrees awarded abroad.
 - 2.3 Strengthening mobility and removing obstacles should not be regarded as “purely higher education issues” but efforts should be increased so that *all relevant national ministries and other responsible authorities* (especially immigration authorities) are cooperating in solving them. Increased efforts are particularly necessary to solve visa issues and work permits for students and staff.
 - 2.4 In developing international exchanges, the EHEA institutions as well as authorities in regions and countries might also consider having *special policies for developing countries* and projects for developing regions, in addition to special information campaigns. Institutional capacity-building activities are a particularly important area of international cooperation within such networks.
 - 2.5 In most of these issues, there is no clear divide between the EHEA and non-EHEA countries and institutions. Hence, conditions for international cooperation should be improved outside as well as within the EHEA.
3. Considerations on the envisaged strategy for EHEA international cooperation may open partly differing perspectives depending on general (systemic) or institutional points of view, but it is clear that cooperation should be among its key elements. However, discussions at two previous as well as at

the present “external dimension” seminar have proved that *cooperation* should be carefully considered together with two other important “key elements” – namely *attractiveness* and *competitiveness*.

- 3.1 The seminar confirmed and underlined that there is no inherent contradiction between *cooperation* and *competition*: they coexist in the academic world, where institutions must cooperate to be competitive, but they must also be attractive to find cooperation partners. *Attractiveness* is a broader concept than *competitiveness*, since it extends to non-economic aspects as well.
- 3.2 *The value of higher education* and *values in higher education* are an important aspect of the “external dimension”; technical cooperation totally divorced from values could easily lead the EHEA astray. A technically perfect solution might be counterproductive if the solution does not enhance genuine higher education values and purposes. There is broad consensus within the Bologna Process that cooperation aims and strategies should be adapted to prospective partners. Nevertheless, there should be a minimum of core values – like academic freedom and institutional autonomy – that should be maintained to make cooperation “Bologna-compatible”. Of course, other modes of (technical) cooperation are also possible, but “external” to the Bologna Process in terms of objectives and values and not in terms of geography.
- 3.3 The member countries of the Bologna Process need to agree upon a set of *principles and concrete actions to enhance the EHEA’s attractiveness and competitiveness* as well as to strengthen mutual cooperation, e.g.:
 - existing national and European schemes for students and staff mobility should be further developed;
 - more educational programmes are needed in international languages;
 - the awareness of the importance of investment in higher education and the social dimension through improved access and participation should be increased; the use of development funds (0.8%) for broad educational reforms, including capacity-building in HEIs, is strongly recommended;
 - capacity-building through the education of teachers can be particularly effective;
 - different policies are needed for different regions and sectors and all types of higher education should be included in the planned activities (diversity);
 - measures to stimulate continuous partnerships and networks in research and education as well as in capacity-building should be prepared at national and European level;
 - special attention should be given to countries with one-way (either predominantly in-coming or predominantly outgoing) mobility and measures should be agreed to minimise the risk of brain-drain (internally within the EHEA as well as externally - in particular in relation to developing countries) and to maximise sustainability.
- 3.4 The discussion on *what makes the EHEA attractive* has only started; it is necessary for this discussion to continue, also in the period after the London conference. A proper response to the question of what makes the EHEA attractive depends to a large extent on a common and clear picture of what the Bologna aims really mean to its actors. On the other hand, attractiveness requires making substantial progress in quality assurance and recognition issues. It also requires communicating on the Bologna “philosophy” and content and making it clear that its aims are not limited to formal changes of structures. Yet, it is very important that this message matches with what is being done in all Bologna countries.

4. Finally, it is necessary to mention the topic – at first sight only marginal – that was also discussed at the Nordic seminar on the “external dimension”. It is about terminology and, as always in such cases, about meaning and understanding. As the discussion on the “external dimension” is advancing, it seems that the Bologna Process is in need of a better term to describe relations between attractiveness, competitiveness and cooperation.

In one of the working groups it was stressed that the “external dimensions” is certainly about how European higher education is perceived by the rest of the world, but it is in equal measure about how we, as Europeans, perceive the rest of the world. Only if we include how we view the Other as an element of the “external dimension” of the Bologna Process as well as how the Other views us, can we

move beyond the “external dimension” of interaction between “them” and “us” to the global dimension – to how we can work together in a healthy interaction of cooperation and competition.

There was no final agreement on this issue at the seminar but some concrete proposals which need more time to be considered were formulated, e.g. to move from the “external” to the “global dimension” or to the “dimension of global cooperation”.

5.3 ANNEX 3

PROPOSAL FOR A BFUG WORKING GROUP ON THE EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

A. Bergen Communiqué

In the Bergen communiqué the following is said on the external dimension under the headline “*The attractiveness of the EHEA and cooperation with other parts of the world*”:

“The European Higher Education Area must be open and should be attractive to other parts of the world. Our contribution to achieving education for all should be based on the principle of sustainable development and be in accordance with the ongoing international work on developing guidelines for quality provision of cross-border higher education. We reiterate that in international academic cooperation, academic values should prevail.

We see the European Higher Education Area as a partner of higher education systems in other regions of the world, stimulating balanced student and staff exchange and cooperation between higher education institutions. We underline the importance of intercultural understanding and respect. We look forward to enhancing the understanding of the Bologna Process in other continents by sharing our experiences of reform processes with neighbouring regions. We stress the need for dialogue on issues of mutual interest. We see the need to identify partner regions and intensify the exchange of ideas and experiences with those regions. We ask the Follow-up Group to elaborate and agree on a strategy for the external dimension.”

There are proposals for three seminars on this theme in the period Bergen – London: The Holy See seminar in April 2006, Greece in June 2006 and seminar arranged by the Nordic countries in September 2006 (see separate documents). In *this* document, the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), propose to link these three seminars to **an overarching Working Group** with the mandate to elaborate upon a strategy for the external dimension, as asked for by ministers in Bergen.

B. Terms of Reference

The Working Group are responsible for developing a strategy document on the external dimension of the Bologna Process. To be in a best possible position to do so, three seminars will be arranged during 2006 in order to give significant input to their work.

1. A seminar in April 2006 with focus on attractiveness, hosted by the Holy See
2. A seminar in June 2006 with focus on information, hosted by Greece
3. A seminar in September 2006, discussing the draft report, with emphasis on areas that has not been focused on in the previous seminars, e.g. competitiveness and capacity building. The seminar is hosted by the Nordic countries.

An expert will, in collaboration with the Working Group, prepare a report to the Nordic seminar in September. This report must be available to the seminar participants in August 2006 at the latest. The outline of the report is proposed to be as follows:

A. European students into the world

B. Competitiveness/attractiveness of European Higher Education

- C. Capacity building**
- D. Cross border provisions**
- E. Bologna Process as such**
- F. Role of EU**
- G. Role of other international organisations (CoE, OECD, UNESCO)**

(for more details, see Annex 1 [see p. 91])

Together with the outcomes from the three seminars, the report will found the basis for the strategy work of the Working Group.

The Working Group will report regularly to the Bologna Follow Up Group. Before it finalises its work, a draft strategy document shall be discussed in a full BFUG-meeting.

The Working Group will be provided with secretarial assistance from the Bologna secretariat and from the country chairing the group.

C. Members of the Working Group

The Bologna Follow Up Group are invited to approve the establishment of a working group to develop and report on a strategy for the external dimension of the Bologna process.

Members of the Working Group are BFUG-representatives from the following countries:

1. Norway (chair)
2. Denmark
3. Sweden
4. The Holy See
5. Greece
6. Germany
7. Portugal
8. France
9. Spain
10. Malta
11. Austria

Consultative members:

1. EUA
2. EU
3. ESIB
4. UNESCO
5. The Council of Europe
6. ACA

The Working Group will submit progress reports to BFUG and a final proposal for a strategy on the external dimension of the Bologna process to the London Conference through BFUG.

Annex 1: Working Group on the External Dimension: The outline of the discussion paper in more detail:

H. European students into the world

- a) Transparency
- b) Recognition abroad

I. Competitiveness/attractiveness of European Higher Education

- a) High quality
- b) Transparency, understanding and information
- c) Diversity
- d) Scholarship schemes

J. Capacity building

- a) Information
- b) Recognition
- c) Quality
- d) Competences

K. Cross border provisions

- a) Sustainability
- b) Public responsibility
- c) Academic values
- d) European HE outside Europe

L. Bologna Process as such

- a) Promoting the idea of regional cooperation
- b) Collaboration between regions
- c) Information

M. Role of EU

- a) Erasmus Mundus
- b) Interregional agreements

N. Role of other international organisations (CoE, OECD, UNESCO)

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<http://www.ac21.org/Portal/>

Established June 2002 at the first International Forum at Nagoya University, the Academic Consortium 21 (AC21) plans active exchanges of students, faculty members and administrative staff, provides shared access to information on research interests and academic activities, develops cooperative education programs and supports international exchange of culture between local communities.

AC21 – International Forum 2006: Global Education Universities in the 21st Century

<http://www.warwick.ac.uk/go/globaled/>

An international platform for discussion and debate on some of the most challenging issues facing universities across the world.

ARWU – *Academic Ranking of World Universities*

<http://ed.sjtu.edu.cn/ranking.htm>

The Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) has been published by the Institute of Higher Education, Shanghai Jiao Tong University (IHE-SJTU).

The ASEAN University Network (AUN)

<http://www.aun.chula.ac.th/home.htm>

AUN was established in November 1995 under the mandate of *Association of Southeast Asian Nations* (ASEAN) Ministers responsible for higher education; it operates under the umbrella of ASEAN, as a mechanism to help promote human resource development in the region.

ASEAN-EU University Network Programme

<http://www.deltha.cec.eu.int/aunp/>

The ASEAN-EU University Network Programme (AUNP) is a higher education co-operation programme, jointly financed and implemented by the *ASEAN University Network* (AUN) and the European Commission

ASEF Asia-Europe Foundation

<http://www.asef.org/>

The Asia-Europe Foundation was launched in February 1997 for the purpose of promoting better understanding between the peoples of Asia and Europe.

Asia-Link (European Commission)

http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/asia-link/index_en.htm

The Asia-Link Programme is an initiative by the European Commission to promote regional and multilateral networking between higher education institutions in Europe and developing countries in Asia.

AULP – Associação das Universidade de Língua Portuguesa

<http://www.aulp.org/>

The Association of the Portuguese Speaking Universities.

AVVC – Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee

<http://www.avcc.edu.au/>

The Council of Australia's University Presidents

Barents Education Network

<http://www.arcticcentre.org/?deptid=19576>

Barents Region Higher Education network.

The Bologna Secretariat

Berlin to Bergen (2003 – 2005)

<http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/>

Bergen to London (2005 – 2007)

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna/>

CEPES – The European Centre for Higher Education

<http://www.cepes.ro/>

CEPES was established in 1972 with a view to promoting co-operation in higher education among Member States of the UNESCO Europe Region (the countries of Europe, North America, and Israel).

Council of Europe – Higher Education and Research

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/Default_en.asp

The work of the Council of Europe in the field of higher education and research focuses on issues related to the recognition of qualifications, public responsibility for higher education and research, higher education governance and other fields relevant for the establishment of the European Higher Education Area by 2010.

CPLP – Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa

<http://www.cplp.org/>

The Community of the Portuguese Speaking Countries, established in 1996; its members being Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guiné-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe and, since its independence, East Timor.

CUIB - Iberoamerican University Council

<http://www.cuib.org/>

CUIB is an institutional group of networks of universities in the Iberoamerican countries.

La documentation Française

<http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/rapports/actualite/etudiants-etranagers.shtml>

L'accueil des étudiants étrangers en France : la sélection de la Bibliothèque des rapports publics.

EAIE - European Association for International Education

<http://www.eaie.org/>

The EAIE is a non-profit organisation whose main aim is the stimulation and facilitation of the internationalisation of higher education in Europe and around the world, and to meet the professional needs of individuals active in international education.

EDB – The Economic Development Board

http://www.sedb.com/edb/sg/en_uk/index/about_us.html

The EDB is Singapore's lead agency responsible for planning and executing strategies to sustain Singapore's position as a compelling global hub for business and investment.

EHEF – European Higher Education Fairs

<http://www.ehefs.org/>

Implemented by EduFrance, DAAD, Nuffic and British Council; funded by the European Commission's Asia-Link Programme.

EI – Education International

<http://www.ei-ie.org/>

Education International represents more than 29 million teachers and education workers; 348 member organisations operate in 166 countries, from pre-school to university.

Education New Zealand

<http://educationnz.org.nz/>

The site for the NZ Export Education Industry

Éducation & Politiques

http://ep.inrp.fr/EP/r_a_venir/colloque_reformes_universitaires_afrique/

L'Unité Mixte de Recherche "Éducation & Politiques" rassemble des chercheurs de l'Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique et des chercheurs de l'Université Lumière Lyon2. Elle travaille dans le domaine de la recherche en éducation et formation, avec une perspective de sociologie politique.

ENQA – the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

<http://www.enqa.eu/>

ENQA disseminates information, experiences and good practices in the field of quality assurance (QA) in higher education to European QA agencies, public authorities and higher education institutions.

ESIB – the National Unions of Students in Europe

<http://www.esib.org/>

ESIB is the umbrella organisation of 44 national unions of students from 34 countries and through these members represent over 10 million students.

EUA – The European University Association

<http://www.eua.be/>

The European University Association, as the representative organisation of both the European universities and the national rectors' conferences, is the main voice of the higher education community in Europe.

EURASHE – The European Association of Institutions in Higher Education

<http://www.eurashe.be/>

Members of EURASHE are national and professional associations of colleges and polytechnics and individual institutions.

Eurocadres – Council of European Professional and Managerial Staff

<http://www.eurocadres.org/>

Eurocadres is a recognised and active social partner uniting more than 5 million professional and managerial staff in Europe.

EUROMED, Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures

<http://www.euromedalex.org>

The Foundation, based in Alexandria, Egypt, is the first common institution jointly established and financed by all 35 members of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

Europe – Gateway to the European Union

http://europa.eu/index_en.htm

EC – European Commission

http://ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm

EC – Education and Training

http://ec.europa.eu/education/index_en.html

EC – Research

http://ec.europa.eu/education/index_en.html

European Neighbourhood Policy

http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index_en.htm

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was developed in the context of the EU's 2004 enlargement, with the objective of avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbours.

ERASMUS-MUNDUS

http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/index_en.html

The Erasmus Mundus programme is a co-operation and mobility programme in the field of higher education which promotes the European Union as a centre of excellence in learning around the world.

TEMPUS

http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/tempus/index_en.html

The trans-European mobility scheme for university studies enables universities from EU Member States to cooperate with those in Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and the Mediterranean partner countries in higher education modernisation projects.

EURYDICE – The Information Network on Education in Europe

<http://www.eurydice.org/>

Eurydice has since 1980 been one of the strategic mechanisms established by the European Commission and Member States to boost cooperation, by improving understanding of systems and policies.

FAWE – the Forum for African Women Educationalists

<http://www.fawe.org/about/about.fawe.asp>

FAWE was formed in 1992 and registered in Kenya as a pan-African NGO (32 countries); it supports women and girls' education for development as a direct response to the declaration on Education for All as articulated at the 1990 United Nations sponsored meeting in Jomtien in Thailand.

GMAC® Bologna Project Blog. Looking at progress towards the Bologna Accord

<http://www.gmacbolognaproject.com/>

In 2003, GMAC (the Graduate Management Admission Council) established a task force of education and business leaders to study the potential effects of the Bologna Accord on European graduate management education.

IAU – International Association of Universities

<http://www.unesco.org/iau/>

UNESCO-affiliated organization which was formally established in 1950 to encourage links between universities throughout the world.

IHEC - International Higher Education Clearinghouse

http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe/ihec/

IHEC provides scholars and practitioners with sources of current online resources and research in the field of international higher education.

IIE – Institute of International Education

<http://www.iie.org/>

An independent non-profit founded in 1919, IIE is among the world's largest and most experienced international education and training organizations. See also:

<http://atlas.iienetwork.org/> - Atlas of Student Mobility. It tracks migration trends of the millions of students who pursue education outside of their home countries each year. Data are collected on global student mobility patterns, country of origin, as well as leading destination for trans-national higher education.

INHEA – International Network for Higher Education in Africa

http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe/inhea/

The purpose of this Network is to strengthen and foster interest in African higher education through information sharing.

The Magna Charta Observatory

<http://www.magna-charta.org/home.html>

The Magna Charta Observatory of Fundamental University Values and Rights is a non-profit organisation based in Bologna, founded by the University of Bologna and the European University Association (EUA).

Mercosur Educativo

<http://sicmercotel.mec.gov.br/>

Mercosur higher education network; the initial phase of this concept foresees the establishment of a higher education institutions network in the border regions of Brazil and Argentina. The next step would be to transfer the idea to Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela.

moveonnet - the European Forum for International Relations Offices

<http://www.moveonnet.eu/>

moveonnet aims to supply useful information in the area of internationalisation and simplify the exchange of information among International Relations Offices throughout Europe.

NAFSA Bologna Web Site

<http://www.nafsa.org/practiceres/bologna/bologna-Background.htm>

NAFSA Bologna Process Task Force

<http://www.nafsa.org/practiceres/bologna/bologna-taskforce.htm>

NTEU – National Tertiary Education Industry Union (Australia)

<http://www.nteu.org.au/home>

NTEU is a specialist national union solely representing staff in tertiary education.

NUS – National Union of Students (Australia).

<http://www.unistudent.com.au/>

The National Union of Students (NUS) is the peak body for higher education students in Australia.

OSCE – The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

<http://www.osce.org>

The OSCE is the world's largest regional security organization whose 56 participating States span the geographical area from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

El Proyecto 6x4 UEALC / The 6x4 EULAC project

<http://www.6x4uealc.org/english/index.htm>

The 6x4 EULAC Project is a specific project that seeks to analyze six professions in four axes with the goal of suggesting operative conditions that foster a stronger compatibility and convergence of the higher education systems in Latin America and the Caribbean and their comparison and closer relationship to those in the European Union.

Tuning Latin America Project / Projeto Tuning América Latina / Proyecto Tuning América Latina

<http://tuning.unideusto.org/tuningal/>

The ALFA Tuning Latin America Project seeks to 'fine tune' the educational structures that exist in Latin America, initiating a debate whose aim is to identify and improve co-operation between higher education institutions, so as to develop excellence, effectiveness, and transparency. It is an independent project, promoted and co-ordinated by universities in many different countries, both Latin American and European.

UNICE – *Union des Industries de la Communauté européenne*

<http://www.unice.org/>

In 2006 there are 39 members from 33 countries, including the EU countries, the European Economic Area countries, and some central and Eastern European countries.

Universitas 21 – The International Network of Higher Education

<http://www.universitas21.com/>

Universitas 21, established in 1997, is an international network of 20 leading research-intensive universities in eleven countries.

The U.S. Secretary of Education's *Commission on the Future of Higher Education*

<http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/index.html>

The new commission (formed on September 19, 2005) is charged with developing a comprehensive national strategy for postsecondary education that will meet the needs of America's diverse population and also address the economic and workforce needs of the country's future.

WUN – Worldwide Universities Network; the global research alliance

<http://www.wun.ac.uk/>

WUN is an international alliance of leading higher-education institutions.

7. Index

Note: An index will be added to the final edition to make reading and cross-references easier.