



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
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Spanish non-paper on the document The Bologna Process revisited

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Spain welcomes the non-paper by Belgium French Community, Belgium Flanders, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, European Commission, European University Association, European Students Union and the Council of Europe on the relevance of the Bologna process asking for the evaluation/revision of the process.

This is a relevant paper coming from some Bologna countries and observers of the Bologna process and certainly deserves further discussion and consideration.

We do agree in considering the Bologna Process as a successful instance of pan-European cooperation based on the voluntary collaboration of governments to make our Higher Education systems more comparable and compatible so decreasing barriers to mobility of students and staff. The worldwide recognition of the existence of the European Higher Education Area EHEA officially launched in 2010 is a proof of this success, even if we can agree that some problems have arisen during the implementation.

The intergovernmental and voluntary nature of the process without any International Treaty compiling member countries to implement the common and agreed objectives, explains most of the limits pointed out in the non-paper on the deployment of the process. However, the soft governance associated to the process should not be considered as a drawback but as the only real possibility to advance towards more convergence in the pan-European higher education sector, where the competences are at national and even regional level.

On the political relevance of the process we consider as normal that after the official launching of the EHEA in 2010 achieving formally the political objective, there is now time for the follow up and continuous updating of the real implementation of the EHEA and therefore we welcome the non-paper asking for the need to update the process but not necessarily to put it high again in the political agenda but to do real work at the most effective decision-making and operative level, maybe senior officials level.

Though new objectives and policy goals at European level can be added to the Bologna process, i.e. trans-border quality assurance, portability of accreditation decisions and of grants and loans, etc., we do believe in the added value of the process allowing not only the setting up of common and agreed policy goals and objectives but a forum to exchange views and practices facilitating international comparison and benchmarking of our higher education systems.

On the methodology to assess the progress the present method based on the independent analysis of the replies to an agreed and detailed questionnaire is somehow similar to that used in other voluntary joint intergovernmental fora. It is based on the mutual trust and

confidence among the members and though it can be refined we consider it has the potential to give a sound picture of the progress in the implementation.

It is somehow inherent to the concept of the EHEA as a voluntary intergovernmental process that its deployment be uneven between countries and regions, but this is still compatible with the concept and objectives of the EHEA as a process not to harmonize the national higher education systems towards a unique pan-European system but to make them more comparable and compatible, but still with country specific differences due to the different national contexts.

To conclude we support the convenience of having an extraordinary meeting to discuss these relevant issues for the continuous updating and revision that a living process like the Bologna Process always needs.