

BOLOGNA PROCESS STOCKTAKING

DRAFT REPORT

Stocktaking Working Group
8 April 2005

[Executive Summary]

INTRODUCTION

General

At the Berlin meeting in September 2003, Ministers with responsibility for Higher Education agreed to the conduct of a stocktaking exercise, in order to establish the level of progress being made in the implementation of certain reforms within the European Higher Education Area. Specifically, the Berlin Communiqué stated:

“With a view to the goals set for 2010, it is expected that measures will be introduced to take stock of progress achieved in the Bologna Process. A mid-term stocktaking exercise would provide reliable information on how the Process is actually advancing and would offer the possibility to take corrective measures, if appropriate.

Ministers charge the Follow-up Group with organising a stocktaking process in time for their summit in 2005 and undertaking to prepare detailed reports on the progress and implementation of the intermediate priorities set for the next two years:

- quality assurance*
- two-cycle system*
- recognition of degrees and periods of studies*

Participating countries will, furthermore, be prepared to allow access to the necessary information for research on higher education relating to the objectives of the Bologna Process. Access to data banks on ongoing research and research results shall be facilitated”

On 9th March 2004 in Dublin, the Bologna Follow-Up Group agreed to the establishment of a Working Group (*hereinafter referred to as the WGS*) which would undertake this task. Its composition was agreed as follows:

Ian McKenna (Ireland), Chair
Jan Levy (Norway)
Aleksa Bjeliš, (Croatia)
Peter van der Hijden (EU Commission)
Germain Dondelinger (Luxembourg)
Marlies Leegwater (Netherlands)
Victor Chistokhvalov (Russia)

The terms of reference for the group are contained in Appendix A.

The WGS met on the following six occasions,

21st April 2004 – Amsterdam
15th June 2004 – Dublin
26th January 2005 – Brussels
17th– 18th February 2005 – Dubrovnik
30th – 31st March – Glasgow
18th April 2005 - Amsterdam

The meetings were also attended by Mirjana Polić Bobić, Deputy Minister for Higher Education, Croatia, Sverre Rustad, Norwegian Secretariat and Patricia Wastiau-Schlüter, Head of Unit, EURYDICE European Unit. In late 2004, an expert – Cynthia

Deane – was engaged by the Norwegian Ministry for Education and Research to assist the WGS to undertake the analysis which forms the basis of this report.

Methodology

At the outset, the WGS was anxious its work should build on many existing data resources, in a manner which would ensure that the completion of a questionnaire would not represent an overly bureaucratic task. It spent its first two meetings determining the benchmarks to be established. Once these were established, the WGS consulted with partners such as European Universities Association (EUA), The National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB) and EURYDICE in order to ensure that

- (a) the benchmarks did not repeat questions they intended to raise as part of their own surveys;
- (b) they (*the partners*) were willing to raise the questions with their constituents as part of their surveys;
- (c) in the event of similar questions being raised, it was agreed to share the results in order to build a complete picture of the benchmark.

Arising from these discussions, the WGS agreed responsibility for gathering data, as per Appendix B.

National Reports

Along with the material prepared by EURYDICE, the National Reports represented the main source of information for this exercise. In order to ensure clarity of response, a standard report template was developed, which was posted on the official Bologna website (http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/01BFUG/040614-B/BFUGB3_6_NReports-Template.doc). The National Reports offered the opportunity for members to offer more discursive or qualitative commentary on progress (*or otherwise*) on the priority action lines.

All 40 participating countries members of the Bologna Process completed the National Report in accordance with the required format.

EURYDICE Questionnaire

As part of the preparations of the Berlin Ministerial meeting in 2003, EURYDICE prepared a report “*Focus on the Structure of Higher Education in Europe*”. Its detailed and quantitative analysis was acknowledged by all as contributing an appreciation of the scale of reform taking place in the European Higher Education Area. Building on the success of the 2003 report, EURYDICE had planned a similar report for the 2005 Bergen meeting.

The WGS requested EURYDICE to extend their review beyond the 31 countries normally covered by its network in order to provide a uniform analysis of the European Higher Education Area. With due acknowledgement to the EU Commission, they generously agreed to undertake the analysis of data for the remaining 9 participating countries¹, by issuing similar questionnaires to the respective Bologna Follow-Up Group representatives. The WGS, through the Secretariat, supported the representatives in their efforts to complete the material. EURYDICE also has requested that a degree of caution must be exercised with the outcome of the analysis for these participating countries, given that they would not

¹ Albania, Andorra, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Holy See, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, and Switzerland.

have the same degree of familiarity with EURYDICE verification and other procedures.

All 40 participating countries of the Bologna Process completed EURYDICE questionnaires in the required format.

Procedures

At the outset, it was clear to the members of the WGS that the Ministers required an objective measurement of the scale of progress in the Bologna Process, which represented a very real challenge. The WGS was strongly of the opinion that sole reliance on statements of the National Reports would be misplaced, and perhaps create an overly optimistic picture. On the other hand, there are very few examples of the application of ‘scoring methodologies’ in the area. In resolving this task, the WGS had three overriding aims, viz:

- (a) the report must provide an **objective** basis for Ministers to gauge the level of progress within the EHEA;
- (b) Members of the BFUG must have the confidence that the procedures adopted are **fair** and **representative**;
- (c) The conclusions should be **independently** determined;

The WGS agreed that these objectives could be best achieved through the assignment of values based on benchmarks within each of the three priority action lines.

Against this backdrop, a series of benchmarks developed by Ms Cynthia Deane, which sought to measure progress on each of the three priority action lines. At its meeting in Dubrovnik, this work was brought to a conclusion. The methodology and procedure for the stocktaking process was agreed at the meeting of the Bologna Follow-Up Group at its February 2005 meeting in Mondorf, Luxembourg. The resultant criteria are discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

Based on an interpretation of the National Reports and EURYDICE questionnaires, scores were assigned to each country, by the expert engaged by the WGS. In March 2005, these were issued to each country, with a view to reviewing the material. Where a country sought to adjust its score, it was required to provide appropriate supporting material, and the expert made judgements on that basis. The WGS was only involved, where it was unclear whether the adjustment was merited. Thirty-four (34) participating countries submitted proposals for amendment. Of these, the expert referred 10 cases to the WGS for resolution. Seven of the cases were accepted by the WGS, and the remaining three were rejected.

Other Data Sources

As noted in Appendix B, ESIB agreed to pursue a number of issues on behalf of the WGS. However, the scope to use the results of their survey was limited on the basis that it only covered some 32 countries. Notwithstanding this, the results of the ESIB survey were issued to the relevant participating countries as part of the review stage.

The Council of Europe also provided the source for material on Lisbon Recognition convention. While the EUA did not directly contribute to Stocktaking, there were many issues in the *Trends IV* report (*prepared by the EUA for its convention in 2005 Glasgow*) which surface in Chapter 4 of this report. This also applies to the general conclusions of the survey conducted by ESIB.

It is important to note that with the diverse range of material presented to the Ministers at the Bergen meeting, it is quite possible that differences in outcomes may arise. Where this arises, it should be noted that the stocktaking exercise drew on a variety of data sources, representative of a broad stakeholder community. However, the WGS emphasise that such minor differences should not detract from the quality of outcome of any report.

Acknowledgements

This work was made possible, as a result of financial support from the European Commission through the Socrates Programme. Their support was not only financial, but was evident in their willingness to facilitate analysis of data from the ‘non-Socrates’ countries. In addition, the Council of Europe generously supported the participation of representatives from Croatia and the Russian Federation in the various WGS meetings. The WGS would like to pay particular tribute to Patricia Wastiau-Schluter, Head of Unit, EURYDICE European Unit who not only suffered from ‘constant adjustments’ to their questionnaire at our behest, but who provided invaluable assistance in the preparation of this exercise. Similarly, the WGS was fortunate to have an expert of the calibre of Cynthia Deane to assist in this process.

As chair of the WGS, I would like to pay tribute to my colleagues on the group whose contributions, energy and good humour made this innovative task easy. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the work of Sverre Rustad of the Secretariat, provided by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research.

I am confident that the WGS has produced a report which provides an objective statement of the level of progress made on the three priority action lines between Berlin and Bergen, and identified some key issues to address as we move forward to 2010. I also believe that, while this first exercise has been a learning experience for us all, the report provides a clear methodology for the conduct of the next phase of stocktaking.

Ian McKenna
Chair, BFUG Working Group on Stocktaking

April 2005

Chapter 2

NOTE ABOUT THE *BOLOGNA SCORECARD*

The focus of the stocktaking exercise is to take account of the position in relation to the main action lines at a specific point in time, that is early 2005. The data gathered in the stocktaking will provide a useful benchmark against which future trends and progress in the Bologna Process can be measured.

The scorecard is an effective methodology for establishing a broad comparative picture and according to objective criteria. The approach is based on similar models, for example the *Lisbon Scorecard* developed by the Centre for European Reform and the *Balanced Scorecard* of Kaplan and Norton, which combines qualitative and quantitative measures and is applied in a range of organisational contexts.

The scorecard was developed at a relatively late stage in the stocktaking process, and the scope of the criteria was in some cases limited by the data that were available from the range of sources mentioned in Chapter 1 above. However, the criteria were generally regarded as appropriate, with a small number of exceptions where there were comments from countries about specific aspects of the scorecard.

The data in the national reports and the Eurydice reports were not always sufficient to enable accurate determination of the scores, however sending out drafts for validation by the countries was an important part of the process. Not only did it ensure that the scores were valid, but it also addressed most of the countries' concerns of the methodology.

This Chapter includes the scorecard criteria and an explanation of the scoring system, which is based on colour coding. It also includes a summary table showing the scores of each country for each of the three action lines and ten criteria.

BOLOGNA PROCESS STOCKTAKING

Criteria for the Bologna scorecard

Quality assurance

1. Stage of development of quality assurance system
2. Key elements of evaluation systems
3. Level of participation of students
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking

The two-cycle degree system

5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle

Recognition of degrees and periods of study

8. Stage of implementation of diploma supplement
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS

QUALITY ASSURANCE	1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	2. Key elements of evaluation systems	3. Level of participation of students	4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking
<p>Green (5)</p>	<p>A Quality Assurance (QA) system is in operation at national level and applies to all Higher Education*, with responsibilities of bodies and institutions clearly defined</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fully functioning dedicated QA agency in place <p style="text-align: center;">or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing agencies have QA as part of responsibility <p>(*As defined in Lisbon Recognition Convention²)</p>	<p>The following five elements of evaluation systems listed in the Berlin Communiqué are fully implemented in all Higher Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>internal assessment</i> ▪ <i>external review</i> ▪ <i>participation of students</i> ▪ <i>publication of results</i> ▪ <i>international participation</i> 	<p>Students participate at all four levels of the evaluation process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In the governance of national bodies for QA ▪ Within teams for external review ▪ Consultation or involvement during external reviews ▪ Involvement in internal evaluations 	<p>International participation at three levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In the governance of national bodies for QA ▪ In teams for external review ▪ Membership of ENQA or other international networks
<p>Light green (4)</p>	<p>QA system is in operation, but it is not applied to all programmes</p>	<p>All of the above elements are in place, but are not in operation in all Higher Education</p> <p style="text-align: center;">or</p> <p>Four of the five elements are in operation</p>	<p>Students participate at three of the four levels</p>	<p>International participation at two of the three levels</p>

² The Lisbon Recognition Convention defines higher education as “All types of courses of study, or sets of courses of study, training or training for research at the post-secondary level which are recognised by the relevant authorities of a Party as belonging to its higher education system.”

QUALITY ASSURANCE	1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	2. Key elements of evaluation systems	3. Level of participation of students	4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking
<p><i>Yellow</i></p> <p>(3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legislation or regulations prepared, awaiting implementation <p style="text-align: center;">or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing system is undergoing review/development in accordance with Bologna action lines 	<p>Implementation of an evaluation system including two or three of these elements has begun</p>	<p>Students participate at two of the four levels</p>	<p>International participation at one of the three levels</p>
<p><i>Orange</i></p> <p>(2)</p>	<p>Preliminary planning phase</p> <p style="text-align: center;">or</p> <p>No QA system in place yet, but initial debate and consultation has begun</p>	<p>Implementation of an evaluation system including one of these elements has begun</p> <p style="text-align: center;">or</p> <p>Preliminary planning is in progress for implementing an evaluation system including these elements</p>	<p>Students participate at one of the four levels</p>	<p>Involvement in other forms of transnational co-operation in executing QA</p>
<p><i>Red</i></p> <p>(1)</p>	<p>No QA system in place and no plan to initiate</p>	<p>There is no evaluation system in place</p>	<p>No student involvement yet</p> <p style="text-align: center;">or</p> <p>No clarity about structures and arrangements for student participation</p>	<p>No international participation yet</p> <p style="text-align: center;">or</p> <p>No clarity about structures and arrangements for international participation</p>

TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	7. Access from first cycle to second cycle
<p>Green</p> <p>(5)</p>	<p>Two-cycle degree system is being implemented on a wide scale in 2005</p>	<p>81-100 per cent of students are enrolled in the two-cycle system in 2005³</p>	<p>There is access* for all students to at least one second cycle programme without major transitional problems (*Access means having the right to apply for admission)</p>
<p>Light green</p> <p>(4)</p>	<p>Two-cycle degree system is being implemented on a limited scale in 2005⁴</p>	<p>51-80 per cent of students are enrolled in the two-cycle system in 2005</p>	<p>There is relatively smooth access for a majority of students with minor structural or procedural problems</p>
<p>Yellow</p> <p>(3)</p>	<p>Legislation or regulations prepared, awaiting implementation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">or</p> <p>Existing system is undergoing review/development in accordance with Bologna action lines</p>	<p>25-50 per cent of students are enrolled in the two-cycle system in 2005</p>	<p>There are a number of first cycle programmes that do not provide access to the second cycle</p>

³ Data were requested for “autumn term of 2004”, i.e. beginning of 2004-2005 academic year

⁴ Note: A score of Light green (4) on this criterion can correspond to a score of 4, 3 or 2 on the next criterion

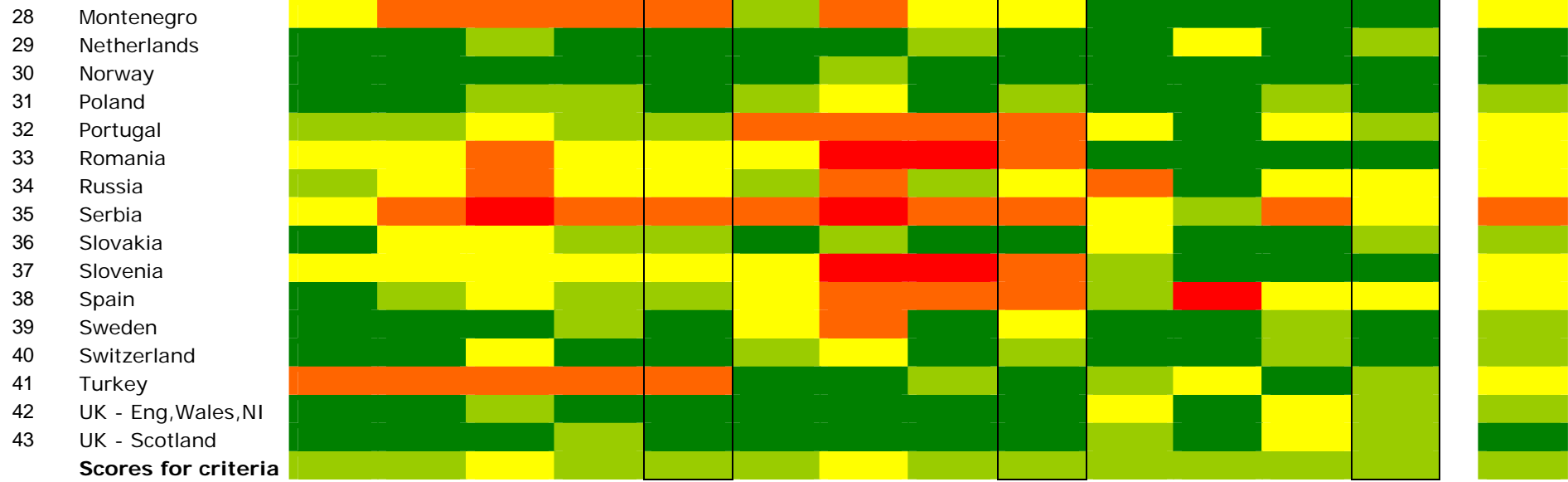
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	7. Access from first cycle to second cycle
<p><i>Orange</i></p> <p>(2)</p>	<p>Preliminary planning or pilot phase is being conducted</p>	<p>1-24 per cent of students are enrolled in the two-cycle system in 2005</p>	<p>Access is limited for the majority of students because of structural or procedural obstacles</p>
<p><i>Red</i></p> <p>(1)</p>	<p>Two-cycle degree system is not yet in place</p>	<p>No students are enrolled in the two-cycle system in 2005</p>	<p>There are currently no arrangements for access from the first cycle to the second cycle</p>

RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	8. Stage of implementation of diploma supplement	9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	10. Stage of implementation of ECTS
<p><i>Green</i></p> <p>(5)</p>	<p>Every student graduating in 2005 will receive the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge, issued in a widely spoken European language</p>	<p>Convention has been signed and ratified and a national information centre (ENIC/NARIC) is in operation</p>	<p>ECTS credits are allocated in the majority of Higher Education programmes, enabling credit transfer and accumulation</p>
<p><i>Light green</i></p> <p>(4)</p>	<p>Every student graduating in 2005 can receive the Diploma Supplement on request and free of charge, issued in a widely spoken European language</p>	<p>Convention has been signed and ratified but a national information centre is not yet in operation</p>	<p>ECTS credits are allocated in a limited number of programmes, enabling credit transfer and accumulation</p>
<p><i>Yellow</i></p> <p>(3)</p>	<p>The diploma supplement will be issued to some students or in some programmes in 2005</p>	<p>Convention has been signed and the process of ratification has begun</p>	<p>A national system for credit transfer and accumulation is in place, which is compatible with ECTS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">or</p> <p>The national credit transfer and accumulation system is being gradually integrated with ECTS</p>
<p><i>Orange</i></p> <p>(2)</p>	<p>There are plans to begin implementing the diploma supplement in 2006</p> <p style="text-align: center;">or</p> <p>Preliminary planning/pilot testing, or initial debate/ consultation has begun</p>	<p>Convention has been signed but the process of ratification has not begun</p>	<p>A national system for credit transfer and accumulation is in place, but it is not compatible with ECTS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">or</p> <p>There are plans for future implementation of ECTS</p>

<i>Red</i> (1)	There are currently no arrangements for implementing the diploma supplement	The Convention has not been signed	There is currently no credit system in place and no plans to introduce it
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Bologna Scorecard

		Quality Assurance				2-cycle				Recognition					
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		8	9	10			
Country		Deve- lop	Ele- ments	Stud- ents	Internat	Score QA	Imple- ment	Enrol- ment	Access	Score 2 cy	Dip. Supp.	Lisbon	ECTS	Score Rec	Total score
1	Albania														
2	Andorra														
3	Austria														
4	Belgium Flemish														
5	Belgium French														
6	Bosnia Herzegovina														
7	Bulgaria														
8	Croatia														
9	Cyprus														
10	Czech Republic														
11	Denmark														
12	Estonia														
13	Finland														
14	France														
15	FYROM														
16	Germany														
17	Greece														
18	Holy See														
19	Hungary														
20	Iceland														
21	Ireland														
22	Italy														
23	Latvia														
24	Liechtenstein														
25	Lithuania														
26	Luxembourg														
27	Malta														



Note on calculation of scores

The following 2 examples, country A and country B, show how the scores are calculated in the Bologna scorecard. The average for each of the action lines was computed using two places of decimals, and then the average of the three averages was calculated to determine an overall colour code for each country. This ensured that the weighting given to each criterion and each action line was equal.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Country A	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	4.75
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	5
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	5
3. Level of participation of students	5
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	4
	19/4=4.75
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	5.00
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	5
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	5
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	5
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	4.00
8. Stage of implementation of diploma supplement	4
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	5
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	3
TOTAL	4.58
	(4.75+5+4)/3=4.58~5

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Country B	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	4.75
11. Stage of development of quality assurance system	5
12. Key elements of evaluation systems	5
13. Level of participation of students	4
14. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	5
	19/4=4.75
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	5.00
15. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	5
16. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	5
17. Access from first cycle to second cycle	5
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	3.67 =(3+5+3)/3
18. Stage of implementation of diploma supplement	3
19. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	5
20. Stage of implementation of ECTS	3
TOTAL	4.47
	(4.75+5+3.67)/3=4.47 ~ 4

Chapter 3

In this chapter, the scores on each of the ten criteria in the scorecard are presented in more detail.

Table 3.1 gives a summary of the number of countries that scored in each colour category for the three action lines, *quality assurance*, *two-cycle system* and *recognition of degrees and periods of study*. This is followed by a brief commentary on the scores for the ten individual scorecard criteria.

It is planned to add a brief comment on each of the criteria in the stocktaking report. and some of the points to be included are listed as bullet points. Following discussion at the meeting of the BFUG on 11-12 April, these points will be further elaborated in the final draft.

NOTE: Key to expressions of quantity used in this draft

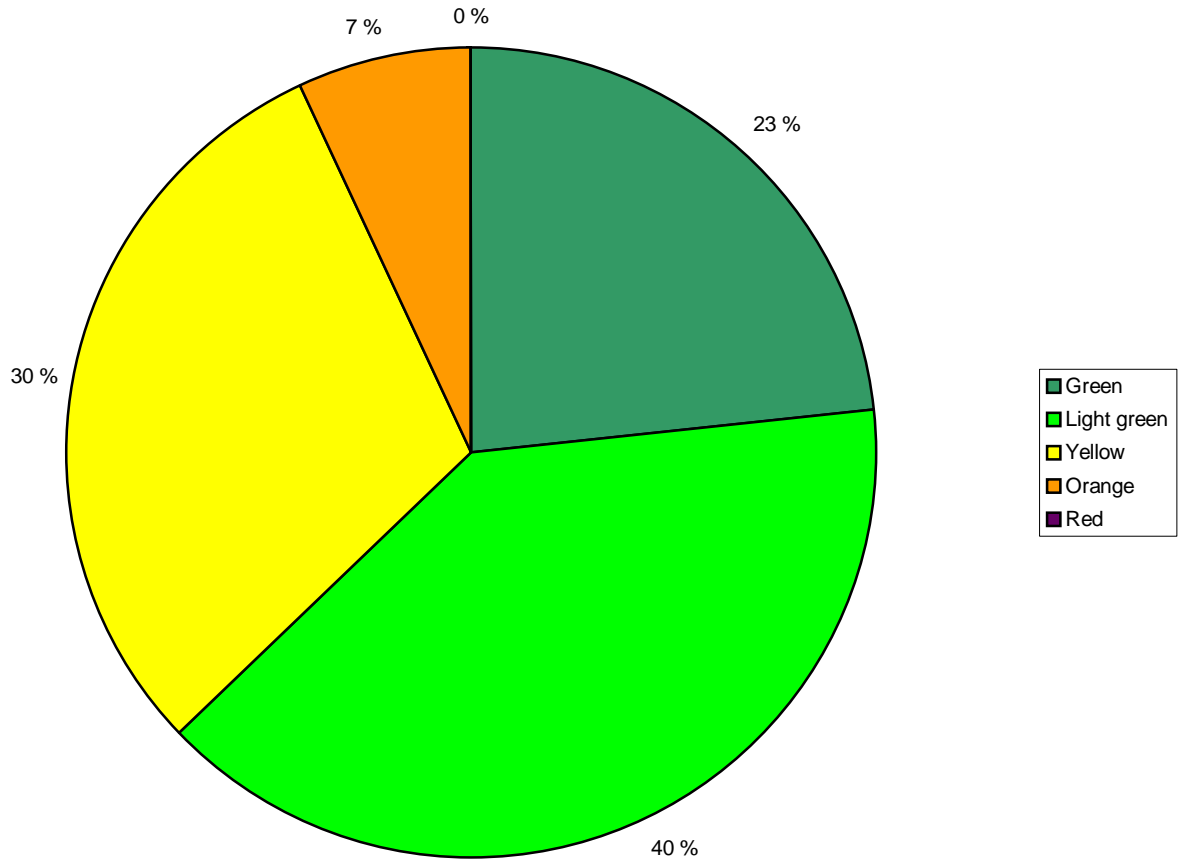
	Number of countries*	Percentage of total (approximate)
All	43	100
<i>Almost all</i>	39-42	90+
<i>Great majority</i>	28-38	66+
<i>Most</i>	22-27	51+
<i>Many</i>	15-21	33+
<i>Some</i>	11-14	25+
<i>A small number</i>	5-10	11+
<i>Very few</i>	<5	10 or less

**While there are 40 countries, there are two separate scores for three of the countries: Belgium, Serbia-Montenegro and UK.*

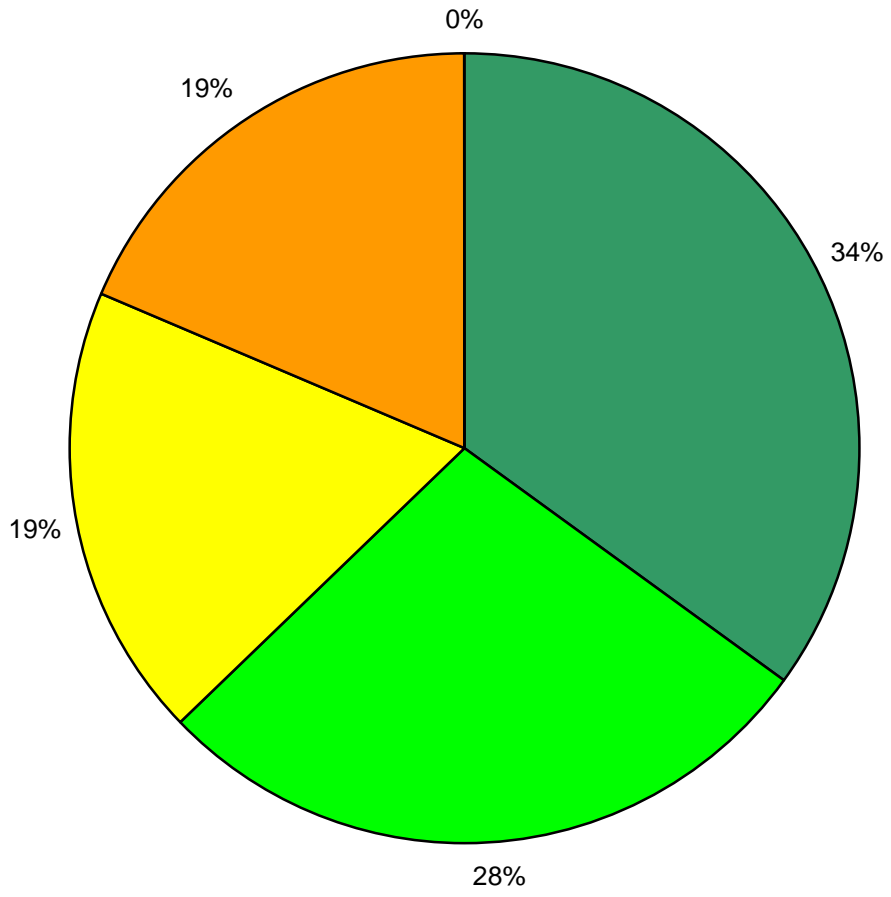
Table 3.1 Summary of scores for three action lines

Action lines	Number of countries in each colour category				
	Green	Light green	Yellow	Orange	Red
Quality assurance	15	12	8	8	0
The two-cycle degree system	16	14	4	7	2
Recognition of degrees and periods of study	14	20	9	0	0
Score for all three action lines	10	17	13	3	0

Bologna Scorecard



Quality assurance (Av)



Action line 1

Quality assurance

Number of countries in each colour category

Scorecard criteria	Green	Light green	Yellow	Orange	Red
Quality assurance Average	15	12	8	8	0
Stage of development of quality assurance system	22	6	12	3	0
Key elements of evaluation systems	18	7	9	8	1
Level of participation of students	6	9	13	6	9
Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	12	15	6	10	0

Most countries have made excellent or very good progress on developing and implementing their quality assurance systems.

1. Stage of development of quality assurance system

Almost all countries have a quality assurance system in place for higher education.

In 22 countries, a Quality Assurance (QA) system is in operation at national level and applies to all Higher Education, with the responsibilities of bodies and institutions clearly defined. In these countries, there is either a fully functioning dedicated QA agency in place, or existing agencies have QA as part of their responsibility.

In a further 6 countries, a QA system is in operation, but it is not applied to all higher education programmes.

In 12 countries, the process of is at an advanced stage, with either legislation or regulations awaiting implementation, or the existing system being reviewed or developed in accordance with Bologna action lines

In 3 countries, planning for putting in place a QA system is at a preliminary stage, or initial debate and consultation has begun.

COMMENTS ON EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE TO BE ADDED, FOR EXAMPLE

- Range of organisational models in QA agencies
- Involvement of main stakeholders in the process
- Typical composition of Board/Council
- Definition of responsibilities
- Implementation issues: often these are implicit in national reports, for example stakeholder support.

2. Key elements of evaluation systems

Most countries have quality assurance systems that match the criteria set out in the Berlin Communiqué.

The following **five** elements of evaluation systems are listed in the Berlin Communiqué:

- *internal assessment*
- *external review*
- *participation of students*
- *publication of results*
- *international participation*

In 18 countries, all five elements are fully implemented in all Higher Education. In a further 7 countries, *either* all of the elements are in place but they are not yet in operation in all Higher Education, *or* four of the five elements are in operation.

In 9 countries, implementation of an evaluation system including **two or three** of these elements has begun, and in 8 countries, implementation of an evaluation system including **one** of these elements has begun, or preliminary planning is in progress for implementing an evaluation system including these elements.

In just one country, there is no evaluation system in place.

COMMENTS ON EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE TO BE ADDED

Which elements are most often missing? (Student participation, followed by publication)

3. Level of participation of students

Many countries have made some progress in involving students in quality assurance. However, a small number of countries have not yet begun to involve students in any way in QA.

It is possible for students to participate at **four** levels of the evaluation process:

- In the governance of national bodies for QA
- Within teams for external review
- Consultation or involvement during external reviews
- Involvement in internal evaluations.

In 6 countries, students participate at **all** four levels, and in another 9 countries, students participate at **three** of the four levels. Thirteen countries involve students at **two** of the four levels, and in 6 countries they participate at only **one** of the four levels.

In 9 countries, there is either no student involvement yet, or there is no clarity about structures and arrangements for student participation.

COMMENTS ON EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE TO BE ADDED

When students are involved, it is most likely to be in internal reviews. Only a small number of countries have students as members of the governing bodies for QA agencies.

4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking

The level of international participation, co-operation and networking is excellent or very good in most countries. All countries have at least begun to introduce an international dimension to their QA systems.

Formal international participation in QA is possible at **three** levels:

- In the governance of national bodies for QA
- In teams for external review
- Membership of ENQA or other international networks.

Twelve (12) countries have international participation at all **three** levels, and 15 countries have international participation at **two** of the three levels. In 6 countries, there is international participation at **one** of the three levels.

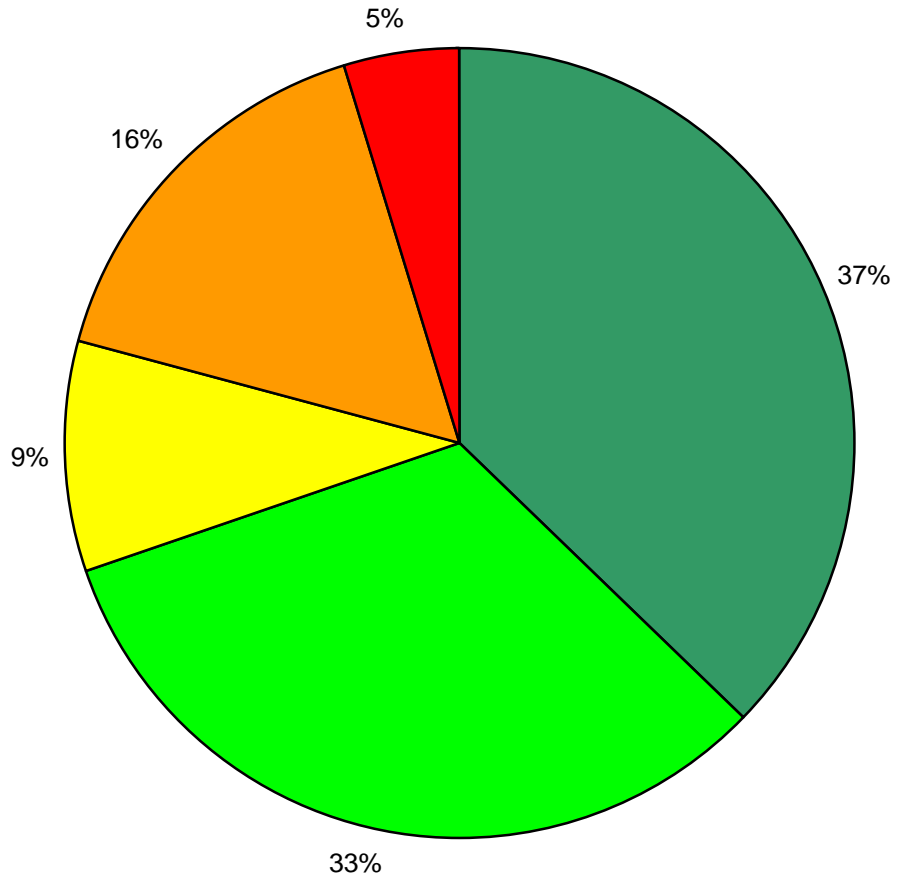
Ten (10) countries are involved in other forms of transnational co-operation in executing QA, for example pilot projects or informal international networks.

COMMENT ON EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE TO BE ADDED

The main level of international participation, co-operation and networking that is missing is involvement in the governance of national bodies for QA. This is in place in only a small number of countries. In some cases, there are legal or statutory reasons why it cannot happen.

Some countries were not eligible to become members of ENQA before 2004.

The two-cycle degree system (Average)



Action line 2

The two-cycle degree system

Number of countries in each colour category

Scorecard criteria	Green	Light green	Yellow	Orange	Red
The two-cycle degree system (Average)	16	14	4	7	2
Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	23	8	6	5	1
Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	16	6	7	9	5
Access from first cycle to second cycle	18	12	3	7	3

The great majority of countries have made excellent or very good progress in implementing the two-cycle system by 2005.

5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system

The two-cycle degree system is being implemented in the great majority of countries in 2005.

In 23 countries, the two-cycle degree system is being implemented in 2005 on a wide scale, while in 8 countries it is being implemented on a limited scale.

In 6 countries, *either* legislation or regulations have been prepared, and are awaiting implementation, *or* existing degree structures are undergoing review or development in accordance with the Bologna action lines.

Five (5) countries are engaged in a preliminary planning or pilot phase that will lead to the implementation of the two-cycle degree system, while only one country has not yet started to work on putting the two-cycle system in place.

COMMENTS TO BE ADDED

The level of change that was necessary in some countries was considerable, while in others it was minimal.

Some fields of study remain outside the two-cycle system in many countries (examples of the fields of study to be mentioned from Eurydice report).

6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system

In most countries, more than half of the students are enrolled in the two-cycle system in 2005.

In 16 countries, **81-100 per cent** of students are enrolled in the two-cycle system in 2005, and 6 countries have between **51-80 per cent** of students enrolled.

Seven (7) countries have **25-50 per cent** of students enrolled in the two-cycle system in 2005, and 9 countries have **1-24 per cent** of students enrolled.

In 5 countries, **no students** are enrolled in the two-cycle system in 2005

COMMENTS TO BE ADDED

These figures are broad estimates based on the limited information that was available in national reports and Eurydice summaries.

7. Access from first cycle to second cycle

In principle, the great majority of countries have arrangements to allow access for all students to at least one second-cycle programme. In some countries, however, students report that the transition from the first to the second cycle is difficult because of structural or procedural obstacles.

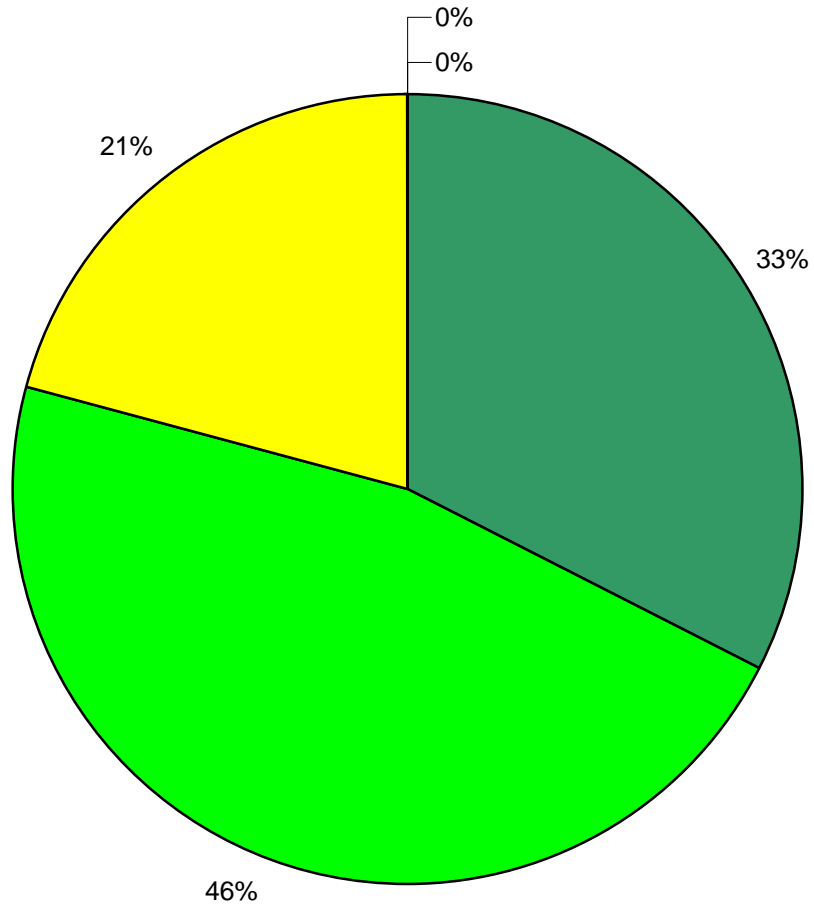
In 18 countries, there is access for all students to at least one second-cycle programme without major transitional problems, where access means having the right to apply for admission. In 12 countries, there is relatively smooth access for a majority of students with minor structural or procedural problems. Three (3) countries offer a number of first cycle programmes that do not provide access to the second cycle.

Access to second cycle programmes is limited for the majority of students in 7 countries because of structural or procedural obstacles. In 3 countries, there are currently no arrangements for access from the first cycle to the second cycle.

COMMENT TO BE ADDED

The scores on this criterion are based national reports and on information provided by ESIB.

Recognition of degrees and periods of study (Av)



Action line 3

Recognition of degrees and periods of study

Number of countries in each colour category

Scorecard criteria	Green	Light green	Yellow	Orange	Red
Recognition of degrees and periods of study	14	20	9	0	0
Stage of implementation of diploma supplement	17	10	12	2	2
Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	29	5	5	1	3
Stage of implementation of ECTS	20	12	9	2	0

All countries have made good progress on recognising degrees and periods of study. The great majority have made excellent or very good progress.

8. Stage of implementation of diploma supplement

Almost all countries have introduced the diploma supplement in at least some programmes in 2005.

In 17 countries, every student graduating in 2005 will receive the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge, issued in a widely spoken European language, and in a further 10 countries, it can be issued to every student **on request**.

In 12 countries the diploma supplement will be issued to **some students** or in **some programmes** in 2005. Two (2) countries either plan to begin implementing the diploma supplement in 2006, or have begun preliminary planning, pilot testing, or initial debate and consultation about its introduction.

Only 2 countries currently have no arrangements in place for implementing the diploma supplement.

COMMENTS TO BE ADDED

Many countries are still in the early stages of implementation.

The stocktaking process does not take account of general developments about recognition. No data were gathered about the actual level of recognition that is happening.

9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention

The great majority of countries have signed and ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention and also have a national information centre in operation.

Twenty-nine (29) countries have signed and ratified the Convention and have a national information centre (ENIC/NARIC) in operation. In 5 countries, the Convention has been signed and ratified but a national information centre is not yet in operation.

The Convention has been signed and the process of ratification has begun in 5 countries, and in one country the Convention has been signed but the process of ratification has not begun.

Three (3) countries have not yet signed the Convention.

COMMENTS TO BE ADDED

Link between Lisbon Convention and Bologna process: catalysts for change

10. Stage of implementation of ECTS

The great majority of countries are implementing the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) at least in some programmes.

In 20 countries, ECTS credits are allocated in the majority of Higher Education programmes, enabling credit transfer and accumulation, and in 12 countries ECTS credits are allocated in a limited number of programmes.

In 9 countries, *either* there is a national system for credit transfer and accumulation, which is compatible with ECTS, *or* the national credit transfer and accumulation system is being gradually integrated with ECTS. Two (2) countries either have a national system for credit transfer and accumulation, which is *not* compatible with ECTS, or they plan to implement ECTS in the future.

COMMENT TO BE ADDED

The pattern here is similar to the diploma supplement, with many countries in transition from a national credit system to ECTS. It would be useful to comment on the practice in countries where they have already successfully adapted their national system to integrate it with ECTS.

Chapter 4 – Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

At their meeting in Berlin in 2003, Ministers identified three priority action lines with the objective of setting tangible targets for participating countries – targets which not only lent themselves to measurement in the manner undertaken by this Working Group, but more importantly, the achievement of these targets would represent real commitment on the part of all participating countries to make the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) a reality. They not only give due recognition to the mobility, but they emphasise the higher education reform must be underpinned by quality and transparency of degree structures.

The analysis in the previous chapter indicates that overall, participating countries have made good progress in the three priority action lines, and as such, real progress is being made in the realisation of the European Higher Education area.

Good progress on Quality Assurance

In Berlin, Ministers acknowledged the importance of quality assurance in the establishment of the EHEA. More than half of the participating countries have quality assurance structures in place. Critically, almost half have systems built on the criterion of the Berlin Communiqué. It is also pleasing to note that international participation and networking feature in many of the systems. This evidence, combined with the consensus which underlined the work of the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA), augers well for the continued progress in this area.

However, this progress should not mask a deficit on quality assurance, and in particular the absence of student participation in quality assurance procedures. Four levels of participation were identified – governance structures, external review teams, consultation/ involvement during external reviews and involvement in internal evaluations – and less than 14% of participating countries have involvement at all four levels. This is also borne out by the EURYDICE analysis. In material provided by ESIB to the WGS, ESIB noted that the majority of good practices on student participation are based on the individual and voluntary effort of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and conversely, conscious decisions are made by other institutions not to promote student involvement. Whilst the WGS would not go as far as ESIB – after all, all quality assurance systems have at least one level of student participation – there is a need to move as quickly as possible to accommodate student representation along the principles articulated by ENQA.

Finally, while good progress has been made on quality assurance systems, it is just that. Systems or processes will drift in the absence of committed ownership. *Trends IV* identified as a challenge for the future the risk that excessive emphasis on the process could actually displace the end objectives of quality assurance, being the enhancement of quality. It is important, therefore, to view progress in this area as evidence of establishment of a system – it is not evidence that the culture of quality assurance has filtered through all strands of the higher education life. The ultimate success of this objective relies on the willingness of institutions, their staff and their students to embrace systematic quality assurance as central to their respective roles in the delivery of higher education.

Good progress on Two-Cycle Degree System

The adoption of the two-cycle degree system, with its origins in the Sorbonne Declaration, is seen as critical to the future of the EHEA, and its implementation throughout the area is well underway. Already by 2005, at least 54% have the system in place on a wide scale, with a further 19% having it in place in a more limited capacity. More importantly, the percentage of students covered by the two-cycle degree system is also increasing. It is safe to predict that this action line will be realised by 2010. The stocktaking analysis also indicates that access between cycles is available for all students in 42% of participating countries, while some minor ‘structural’ or procedural problems exist in a further 28%.

It is on the issue of access perhaps that some controversy exists. Along with the terminology used in the Berlin Communiqué, access was defined in terms of the ‘right to apply for admission’ – the so-called Lisbon Recognition Convention meaning. However, ESIB in their submission to the WGS, looked at access in the meaning of “admission”. Transitional difficulties, and consequently, options for students looking to escalate between cycles were subject to factors, such as the need to undertake ‘bridging courses’ when moving between university and ‘non-university’ sector, restrictions being placed on opportunities to progress to next cycle, including limits on numbers, enrolment exams and selection procedures. ESIB also cite restriction on movement between different fields of study in different cycles and finally, tuition fees. Clearly, such analysis extends the definition of access into areas which could potentially create difficulty for stakeholders in many participating countries. It also extends the impacts of the Bologna Process into other public policy domains, many of which lie outside the remit of Ministers with responsibility for higher education. Equally, it is clear that any extension of the definition of access must be done with a clear vision of the issue to be addressed. Moreover, it should be done in a manner which can be agreed within the Bologna Follow-Up Group.

Trends IV highlighted a key objective of the emerging two-cycle degree system. On completion of the first cycle, it is acknowledged that this should have different orientations, in order to accommodate a diversity of needs including academic, individual or labour market. It is a matter of concern that qualifications issued by authorities who have undertaken a programme of qualification reform in accordance with the Bologna principles have failed to secure support and suffers from a ‘*lack of credibility among students and employers*’. Such perceptions clearly damage the reform process, and perhaps, more importantly, validate wrong impressions for those outside the EHEA. It is vital that these are tackled as a matter of urgency, and while Institutions and Governments may pursue the line proposed within *Trends IV*, this goes deeper and must be tackled at an appropriate level. A process of engagement must be opened with social partners, and specifically employer representative organisations, to explain the developments within the EHEA and to become receptive to the employability of bachelor graduates. This may also serve to illustrate the need for representatives other than academia to participate within the governance structures and decision-making structures of the higher education system.

Good progress on Recognition of Degrees and Periods of Study

This action line records the most successful progress of all, with the ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention by some 28 of the participating countries signalling genuine attempts by all to recognise foreign qualifications unless there is a substantial difference. Many of the graduates of 2005 will have the Diploma Supplement issued automatically and free of charge,

and to the extent that this assists mobility, this is a welcome development. The continued development of ECTS as the ‘common currency’ will also facilitate mobility. This progress will undoubtedly assist the implementation of other complementary policy initiatives such as EUROPASS.

However, the analysis of the WGS did not review certain issues such as the quality of the Diploma Supplement. Again, in its contribution, ESIB noted that not all countries followed the format as recommended by the UNESCO/ Council of Europe guidelines, and thus, this detracted from the usefulness of the document issued by the HEIs. Similarly, *Trends IV* illustrates a number of difficulties associated with the Diploma Supplement, including demands on students’ records systems, costs of translation and the substantial effort to put the technology in place.

While many of the above may be classified as ‘implementation difficulties’, *Trends IV* highlights some difficulties associated with recognition, which are the purposes of tools such as the Diploma Supplement and ECTS. For example, it highlighted difficulties associated with foreign degrees, including the existence of a variety of validation procedures. It was also interesting to note that despite the existence of inter-institutional learning agreements, individual professors continued to question the acceptability of qualifications. While the level of awareness is increasing, ENIC/ NARICs remain underutilised in terms of co-operations with HEIs. All of these issues serve to illustrate that notwithstanding progress on the structural dimension of recognition, a substantial body of work remains to be undertaken to convince all stakeholders to take the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention into the HEIs – it would seem that a disconnection exists between the aspirations of Ministries to promote mobility and associated recognition and the exercise of academic autonomy by individual staff members.

Some of the issues identified by the WGS, along with ESIB and EUA emphasise the need for progress on the emerging framework for European Qualifications. The report of Working Group of the European Qualification Framework highlights the contribution that it will play in assisting and facilitating recognition.

Good progress overall, but....

Halfway towards 2010, the colour of progress for participating countries is ‘light green’. This means that given the benchmarks developed, Ministers at Bergen can take satisfaction on three particular action lines. It is also important to note that it was not possible for this analysis to measure the scale or rate of progress, which has been dramatic, particularly in the case of late entrants to the Bologna Process. But the strength of the Bologna Process has been its voluntary and collaborative nature. Since the original declaration, an additional 11 countries have joined the process, and it is likely that this will increase further. However, while increased membership brings a richness in diversity to the process, it emphasises the need to ensure consistency of progress – a chain is as strong as its weakest link. It would do a disservice to the vision of the Bologna Process to develop on the basis of a two- or three-tier speed model, and therefore, members should be prepared to take responsibility to assist each other as we all move towards 2010. Some examples already exist, and the Council of Europe have played a strong role in applicant countries such as Ukraine, Georgia etc. However, once in the process, members must be prepared to continue with this support through study visits, receipt of delegations etc. It is also important that a repository of information is built which would promote sharing of experiences and networking. Membership of the Bologna Process

must mean more than the opportunity to visit other countries or institutions – it must serve as a catalyst of change, not only for the HEI or the student, but for society in its widest context.

Good progress but will it be sustained?

This is first time that the BFUG has ever objectively measured progress – prior to this, it relied on national reports as the means of determining progress. In Ireland, there is a story of a lost visitor looking to find his way to his final destination, only to be told by the local villager that if “*I were you, I would not start here!*” The journey of the WGS is similar, and while it proceeded to identify key benchmarks, this work present in this report should serve as a basis to increase the level of sophistication of future exercises. In the first instance, it is the firm recommendation of the WGS that this exercise should be repeated, with the data collated serving as the base to measure future progress. But this should not become an exercise to climb the scale or change the colour. If this becomes the case, the exercise loses validity and is reduced to the level of language and nuance rather than action.

But it is also important that effort is assigned to develop benchmarks for the other action lines in the Bologna Process – after all, the three priority action lines only represent a third of all of the action lines. The next exercise needs to probe further the implications of the issues identified in this report, along with an analysis of other action lines.

Good progress but what can we do to increase impact?

In the mandate given to BFUG, Ministers requested the identification of possible corrective action where deficiencies were identified. The picture is a positive one, and while the WGS identifies a series of recommendations, there is nothing new in them. For many participating countries, they formalise the acknowledged concerns, which exist with any major reform process. The WGS recommends that action be taken on a number of issues, and that the outcome should be reported at the next meeting of Ministers in 2007. These issues are:

- (a) A process of formal engagement should be initiated with employer organisations, both at national and European level. The objective of such engagement should be to communicate the process of reform, combined with ensuring the employability of the bachelor graduate.
- (b) A Working Group, composed of EUA, EURASHE, ESIB, EU Commission and a number of participating countries, should be established to prepare a report on the issues associated with access, and its conclusion should, if possible, recommend a series of benchmarks to measure action in this area;
- (c) Each participating countries should prepare an action plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications. This plan should form part of the country’s National Report for the next Ministerial meeting in 2007;
- (d) The Board of the BFUG should consider the possibilities for putting in place a support structure to assist countries in the implementation of the various action lines of the Bologna Process. The Board should continue to support the Council of Europe as it engages with countries outside the Bologna Process.
- (e) The stocktaking process should continue to report on progress for each Ministerial Conference. The process should be resourced appropriately so as it can serve to illustrate the many issues that lie ahead on the road to 2010.

The Bologna Declaration stated that

“a Europe of Knowledge is now widely recognised as an irreplaceable factor for social and human growth, and as an indispensable component to consolidate and enrich the Europe citizenship, capable of giving its citizens the necessary competences to face the challenges of the new millennium, together with an awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural space.”

The millennium is now with us, and these aspirations remain as real as they did when they were first expressed in June 1999. This exercise is a contribution to this vision, and with the above recommendations, it should assist in realising the goal.