

# WORKING GROUP ON EMPLOYABILITY

## REPORT TO MINISTERS

### BOLOGNA CONFERENCE

LEUVEN/LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE 28-29 APRIL 2009

#### Executive Summary

1. This report takes forward the request of the Ministers responsible for higher education in the Bologna Process signatory countries for the Bologna Follow Up Group to consider how to improve employability in higher education. A Working Group was set up to take this work forward. It reviewed several recent reports and carried out its own mini-survey of countries to establish what they considered to be the main challenges with regards to graduate employability. [Paragraphs 1 to 3]
2. The main issues identified by Group were: [Paragraphs 4 to 6]
  - i. employability of graduates at the Bachelors level is a particular problem for some countries, with a perception amongst some graduates and employers that the qualification is not adequate for employment;
  - ii. work experience for graduates;
  - iii. some employers do not think that universities are doing enough to prepare graduates for the world of work. Some universities query whether employability should be a part of their mission and purpose; &
  - iv. Some employers and some higher education institutions have little practical experience of engaging with each other, especially in curriculum design focussing on improving employability.
3. The Group defined employability as: *the ability to gain initial meaningful employment, or to become self-employed, to maintain employment, and to be able to move around within the labour market.* [Paragraph 13]
4. Arising from its work the Group identified four main challenges to improving the employability of graduates. These were: ensuring that the value of first cycle/bachelors programmes are fully understood by all stakeholders (employers, students, parents, academics and higher education institutions); increasing dialogue between higher education and employers to allow them to understand, and be responsive to, each other's needs; encouraging more work related placements which are sensitively integrated into study programmes and workload; and improving the provision of career and employment related information, advice and guidance. [Paragraphs 20 to 28]
5. The Group made the following suggestions for action which flowed from its analysis, [Paras 29 to 33]

#### Raising awareness of the Bologna Process and the value of a first cycle/Bachelor degree

It is for Governments to give a strategic lead in this work and we suggest that they, together with higher education institutions and the representative organisations, should:

- continue to promote the benefits of the Bologna Process reforms as a whole, including the benefits of a first cycle/Bachelor degree, to students, potential students, employers and professions (including promoting the benefits of a high quality European Higher Education Area being a distinctive and attractive destination);
- make further progress in establishing their national qualifications frameworks in line with the Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area; and that
- governments, as appropriate, lead by example ensuring that their own public sector employment practices cater to graduates with first cycle/Bachelor degrees.

#### Promoting greater dialogue between higher education institutions and employers

- Governments should take the lead in ensuring the conditions which will promote and incentivise dialogue; and
- higher education institutions and their representative bodies should develop or strengthen links with employers and employer bodies (such as business and employers' associations, chambers of commerce, trade associations or professional groups) to establish partnerships to share good practice in how to make higher education provision more responsive to labour market demands and advise employers of the range of skills that graduates can bring to their employment.

#### Employability skills

There is increased focus on providing work placements as part of courses; on students considering taking jobs related to their course of study where appropriate and which are compatible with their study work-load; on strengthening entrepreneurial skills in the curriculum; and on developing more programmes of part-time study to cater for those people already in the workplace who wish to update their skills as part of the lifelong learning agenda. Consideration should also be given to the interchange, through short work placements and secondments, between staff in business and staff in higher education institutions to overcome any barriers between them. Governments, the social partners, and higher education institutions should consider ways to increase interchanges.

#### Information, advice and guidance

Responsibility for the provision of advice and guidance should be strengthened within higher education institutions. All higher education institutions, together with Governments/government agencies and employers, should improve the provision, accessibility and quality of their careers and employment-related services to students and alumni.

#### Timetable and monitoring progress

The actions highlighted in this report should be taken forward as appropriate within individual countries as a matter of urgency in the light of the current economic crisis and progress should be monitored through responses to any Bologna Process stocktaking report questions on increasing the employability of graduates with Bachelor qualifications. [Paragraph 34]

## Introduction

1. At their meeting in London in May 2007 the Ministers responsible for higher education in the Bologna signatory countries called on the Bologna Follow Up Group *to consider in more detail how to improve employability in relation to the three cycles in higher education as well as in the context of lifelong learning*<sup>1</sup>. As a result, a working group on employability was established to examine evidence and to make suggestions to Ministers to improve the employability of graduates. (Annex 1 lists the members of the working group.)

2. This report is a result of deliberations of this working group over four meetings from October 2007 to January 2009. This report aims to provide:

- i. a working definition of what we mean by “employability”;
- ii. an analysis of the importance of employability;
- iii. an outline of the main challenges to improving employability;
- iv. practical suggestions for encouraging further dialogue between employers and higher education institutions;
- v. some suggestions for actions to be taken by governments, higher education institutions and students in the area of employability; and
- vi. examples of national practice in the following areas:
  - awareness-raising amongst employers of the value of a Bachelors qualification and associated learning outcomes;
  - involving employers in devising curricula and curriculum innovation based on learning outcomes;
  - provision of careers and guidance services;
  - employment and career structures within the public service that are fully compatible with the new degree system; and
  - self-employability.

3. The suggestions we make in this report are not intended to be formally adopted and applied in every country. They are intended to offer suggestions for what actions countries may take in response to the challenges we have identified. We do not attempt to provide a “blueprint” for dealing with the complex issues related to the question of employability. Our aim is to offer practical ideas from which countries, individual institutions and others can draw as they believe to be appropriate taking into account the readiness of their systems to adapt.

## Background

4. The working group conducted mini surveys of the countries participating in the Bologna Process to inform this report. Respondents were asked to consider what the main challenges were in their country with regards to graduate employability, and the nature of the dialogue in their country between higher education institutions and employers. They were asked to

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<sup>1</sup> London Communiqué, paragraph 3.5: “Following up on the introduction of the three-cycle degree system, we ask BFUG to consider in more detail how to improve employability in relation to each of these cycles as well as in the context of lifelong learning. This will involve the responsibilities of all stakeholder. Governments and HEIs will need to communicate more with employers and other stakeholders on the rationale for their reforms. We will work, as appropriate, within our governments to ensure that employment and career structures within the public service are fully compatible with the new degree system. We urge institutions to further develop partnerships and cooperation with employers in the ongoing process of curriculum innovation based on learning outcomes”

contribute two examples of best practice in their countries in the areas to be covered by this report. It must be stressed that this work was not intended to provide a systematic survey of the 46 signatory countries to the Bologna Process: some of the evidence from these surveys, carried out in late 2007/early 2008, was largely anecdotal.

5. The main issues identified in the survey responses were:

- The growth in the number of graduates in the 1980's and 1990's produced an apparent over-supply in the labour market in some areas of the economy, though access to higher education remains an important issue;
- Employability of graduates at the Bachelors level is a particular problem for some countries, with a perception amongst some graduates and employers that the qualification is not adequate for employment;
- Work experience is highly valued by employers. Young graduates who finish studying with work experience tend to be more competitive in the labour market than those who do not;
- Some employers do not think that universities are doing enough to prepare graduates for the world of work. Some universities query whether employability should be a part of their mission and purpose; and
- Some employers and some higher education institutions have little practical experience of engaging with each other, especially in curriculum design focussing on improving employability which is an area where both sides should work together more closely.

6. These issues have been used by the group to inform its discussion on the problems associated with employability. Annex 2 to this report presents a short selection of national practice drawn from countries' responses to a short questionnaire issued by the working group in late 2007. All survey responses can be viewed in full on the Bologna website.<sup>2</sup>

7. In addition to the survey responses this report draws on the 2008 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) "Education at a Glance", "Bologna with Student Eyes" 2007, Trends V report, as well as international comparative surveys of graduates which provide valuable information about the relationship between higher education and employment. The conclusions of the CEDEFOP report "Future skill needs in Europe: medium term forecast"<sup>3</sup>, were also taken into account by the Group.

8. The OECD Report "Education at a Glance 2008"<sup>4</sup> found that employment rates rise with educational attainment and that unemployment rates are generally lower for higher-educated individuals: it found that the unemployment rate for those aged between 25-64 with tertiary education was 3.5% in 2006 [OECD average, Table A8.5a]. [The Group observed that the statistics related to tertiary education were not differentiated between first cycle/Bachelors and second cycle/Masters and hoped that this position would be remedied soon.]

9. "*Bologna with Student Eyes*" (2007) highlights a link between employability and curricular

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<sup>2</sup> [www.bologna2009benelux.org/actionlines/employability\\_survey.htm](http://www.bologna2009benelux.org/actionlines/employability_survey.htm)

<sup>3</sup> European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 18 February 2008

<sup>4</sup> See also "Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Society Vol 2, OECD, 2008 – Chapter 9 "Strengthening ties with the labour market"

reform, and expresses concern that while degree courses are being fitted into the three cycle structure, no curricular reform is taking place. A traditional long first cycle is in many cases simply divided into two, Bachelor and Masters, with no thought to relevance, recognition and value of Bachelor qualification in the labour market. This renders Bachelor degrees meaningless and has an adverse effect on employability of graduates with such degrees, leaving them with unclear perspectives. Many students would thus choose to carry on for another two years and get their Masters, as in the “old days”, to improve their employment prospects. This has to be seen in the context of very little or no dialogue between the employers and academics.

10. This is echoed in *Trends V* (2007), which suggests that employability is a high priority in the reform of curricula in all cycles but finds that there is still much to be done to translate this priority into institutional practice. Strengthening dialogue between employers and higher education institutions is one of the main challenges for the future if this goal is to be achieved. The report finds that employers lack awareness as to what to expect from a Bachelor graduate, in particular in countries where the three cycle structure has been recently introduced. This means that both governments and higher education institutions need to increase their efforts to communicate to the rest of society the reasons why the higher education reforms are taking place, and it is important that governments lead by example and ensure that their own public sector employment practices cater to graduates with Bachelor degrees. In addition, career guidance needs to be expanded as the “Bologna Bachelors” start to enter the labour market.

11. Employability should also be considered in the context of other, wider, challenges that will be faced within the European Higher Education Area in the short to medium term. These include demographic change which will result in a decrease in the population of working age by 2020 of up to 10% in some countries rising to around 30% in some cases. The changing nature of jobs – with moves away from less skilled occupations to more highly qualified ones, including the specialised jobs of the future such as those involved in combating climate change – points to the need for higher education systems which are more responsive to the changing needs of students and employers.

### The current economic climate

12. Much of the evidence considered by the working group in the course of its work was gathered before the pronounced deterioration in world economic conditions which took place in the latter part of 2008. Indications are that some sectors in labour markets will face significant challenges and may well undergo significant change in the short term. The Group’s view is that the issues raised in this report are all the more important in the context of this global economic and financial crisis: if students leaving higher education are to take advantage of the growth and job creation associated with economic recovery, action on the issues associated with employability identified in this report should become a matter of urgency.

### **What is “employability” and why is it important?**

13. There are many definitions of employability: the Bologna working group on employability defined employability as: *the ability to gain initial meaningful employment, or to become self-employed, to maintain employment, and to be able to move around within the labour market.* The core mission of higher education in this context is to equip students with the knowledge, skills and competences that they need in the workplace and that employers require; and to ensure that people have more opportunities to maintain or renew those skills and attributes throughout their working lives (whether they are employed or self-employed). At the end of a course students should have an in-depth knowledge of their subject as well as generic

employability skills. These should include the ability to engage in different disciplines; to pursue flexible learning paths and to ensure continued personal and professional development.

14. It must also be remembered that, while most people in work have employment status, a vast number of enterprises are one-person businesses whose owners are self-employed. Whether they are in the creative industries or in the hi-tech innovation chain, such entrepreneurs will need to have built a relevant knowledge base and developed appropriate skills while in higher education. There is therefore a strong case for embedding an entrepreneurial/ enterprise strand more securely within HE curricula – not necessarily to generate start-up companies, but to develop the action-oriented and innovative capacity needed in SMEs, micro-businesses, large corporates and social enterprises.

15. As we move towards a more knowledge-based society, employability – and the contribution higher education can make towards making lifelong learning a reality for all - will become increasingly important. It will be an essential ingredient in creating a learning society where citizens can update their skills and knowledge, acquire new qualifications, and improve their economic prosperity.

16. The Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA), adopted in 2005, set out generic qualification descriptors for each cycle based on the learning outcomes and competences that a person holding a particular qualification should be able to demonstrate. (The qualifications at Bachelor, master and doctor levels are described in full in the QF-EHEA and the “Dublin Descriptors”.) The Framework does not describe separate, specific, ‘employability’ skills. The Group took account of the work of various experts<sup>5</sup> when it came to examining the many skills a graduate would need to be able to show to be considered ‘employable’. These included the following:

- transfer of (academic) knowledge to professional work assignments (‘problem solving activities’);
- development of typical working styles (eg working under pressure, working independently without clear assignments);
- development of typical working values (‘loyalty’, ‘achievement orientation’);
- social skills (‘leadership’, ‘team work’, etc.);
- supplementary knowledge (foreign languages, ICT, organisational knowledge, etc.);
- context awareness (‘adaptation’, ‘reflection’, ‘risk taking’, etc.); and
- learning to manage one’s own career.

17. The link between the proportion of the workforce with a degree and productivity is generally acknowledged. A study by Fernando Galindo-Rueda and Jonathan Haskel, “Skills, Workforce Characteristics and Firm-Level Productivity: Evidence from the Matched ABI/Employer Skills Survey in England (2005), found that productivity is 30% higher if all the workforce has a degree than if none do. Furthermore, people gain from the opportunity for self-fulfillment and personal enrichment afforded by higher education.

18. At the time the Working Group began its work graduate unemployment was not a widespread problem. The demand for graduates and postgraduates remained high, and the supply of graduates and postgraduates had been increasing in recent years. For example, a

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<sup>5</sup> For example, from the presentation by Professor Ulrich Teichler, International Centre for Higher Education Research, Kassel, at the University of Leon in January 2007: ‘The Future of Employment and Work of University Graduates and of the Character of Bachelor Programmes’.

report issued by the Centre for Higher Education Research and Information (CHERI)<sup>6</sup> found there was a high employment rate amongst European graduates: 95% declared themselves to be employed five years after graduation. Of graduates who were in paid employment, 5% were self-employed. The figures showed that the highest unemployment rates were between 9% and 7%.

19. However, in some countries graduate unemployment is becoming an issue and is likely to exacerbate as a result of the economic crisis. There is possibly a mismatch between the needs of employers and the content of courses offered by higher education institutions and selected by students. When combined with wider economic conditions this mismatch may have resulted in an oversupply of graduates in subjects where there was no immediate labour market demand. Graduate unemployment could also be due to the fact that their flexibility to be able to work in other related fields is not high enough. Another factor might be that the content of their courses did not focus on employability and labour market relevance.

### **Main challenges**

20. Working from the themes identified in survey responses described at paragraph 5 and from evidence of reports such as those mentioned in paragraphs 6-10, the group identified four main challenges to improving employability that would require action by employers (be they public or private), by higher education institutions, by students and by governments (including Ministers responsible for higher education).

21. Employers rely on the output of universities in the sense that they provide employment opportunities for graduates; they are also, in some cases, significant funders of university teaching and research; and they are potentially the provider of students in the shape of their current workforce who may want to enter, or re-enter, higher education as part of the lifelong learning agenda. The group therefore focussed in particular on ways of encouraging and promoting employer engagement in higher education.

22. In some countries, higher education institutions have begun to define their mission as more employer-facing, not least because, taking into consideration the current demographic trends and future needs of a diverse student body, relationships with employers will increasingly become part of the core of institutions' mission. As we have seen above, and through individual countries' returns to the group's questionnaire, some institutions have started to seek a closer match between curricula and the needs of employers, for instance.

23. Active dialogue with employers presents its own challenges for the higher education sector. Employers vary in size, organisation, management structure and representation. There is a perception that employers – particularly small employers – are reluctant to train their staff. In turn, employers' perception is that universities are not doing enough to prepare graduates for the world of work. Continuous vocational education and training for employees is a shared responsibility between employees and employers. Continuous VET not only fosters the competitiveness of enterprises, it also helps ensure the employability of individual employees. While there are examples of effective dialogue having been established between employers and higher education institutions, some employers complain that graduates have been unable to develop specific practical skills within their narrow field of specialisation. Some universities query whether employability should be a part of their mission and purpose at all. Conversely some employers, and some students, take the view that following a particular course of study is

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<sup>6</sup> Reflex Report to the Higher Education Funding Council for England No1, July 2007.

preparation for a specific job or profession. In a changing economic environment the degree holder will more than ever need to be capable of applying their knowledge and skills to ensure they are flexible and adaptable in changing labour market conditions.

24. Employability of graduates at the first cycle (or Bachelor) level is perceived to be a problem for many countries which traditionally had a long first cycle of studies leading to a Master's degree, with a perception amongst graduates, higher education institutions and employers that the Bachelor qualification is not adequate for employment. Such perceptions, when expressed especially within higher education institutions themselves, leads to considerable uncertainty among students. Countries where the first cycle has only recently been introduced have no experience of first cycle/Bachelor graduates in their labour market. *The first challenge is therefore to ensure that the value of Bachelor programmes is clarified and communicated so that it is understood, particularly by employers, students, parents and academics/professors and higher education institutions themselves.*

25. Across the European Higher Education Area overall, the extent to which employers' views are taken into account in the design of curricula is variable. This is due, in part, to some higher education institutions or academic staff having no tradition of dialogue with employers, and employers having little experience of engaging with the sector. In some countries such engagement is well advanced with innovative practices such as the co-financing of student places or the involvement of employers in the design of course content. It is a shared responsibility of employers and higher education institutions to enter into a positive dialogue and this should be a long term relationship. Such a dialogue needs to be informed by the views of students to ensure that their concerns and needs are captured. *The second challenge is for individual higher education institutions and employers to engage in a meaningful two-way dialogue which allows institutions to be more responsive to employer and business needs and for employers to explain their needs better to institutions.*

26. There is a wide variation across countries of the numbers of students who undertake work experience as part of their courses, and the amount of time spent on such placements. For example, the Centre for Higher Education Research and Information report cited earlier found that about 55% of European graduates took part in work placements or internships as part of their degree course. There was a wide variation within this average from 86% at its highest to 21% at the lower end. The average length of placements in Europe was 8.5 months and again the variation was wide: between 10 months and 3.5 months.

27. Indications are that young graduates who finish studying without any work experience tend to be less competitive in the labour market. Work experience is highly valued by employers when selecting their employees. Higher education institutions have an important role to play in fostering both informal contacts between students and employers as well as in facilitating more structured opportunities for work experience. *The third challenge is to encourage more employers to offer more high quality placements, for higher education institutions to integrate them sensitively within the curricula, and for students to view them as a key part of their course.*

28. Students throughout their period of study who need to make the transition from education to employment, and potential students (either from school or from employment), need information, advice and guidance on careers and employment options to ensure they make informed decisions on the options and courses available to them. Equally, it is the responsibility of students to seek out career related information, advice and guidance. In some countries this is provided as a matter of course directly by institutions themselves or in partnerships with other agencies. In others this provision is underdeveloped. *The fourth challenge is to improve the*



*provision of information, advice and guidance about future careers and employment opportunities for students.*

## **Suggestions for action**

### Raising awareness of the Bologna Process and the value of a first cycle/Bachelor degree

29. Successful implementation of the existing Bologna Process action lines envisages higher education being organized in three cycles and with the possibility of exit from, or progression to the next cycle at each stage. National qualifications frameworks will be compatible with the overarching Qualifications Framework for the EHEA with mobility facilitated and employability enhanced. However, a good deal more progress is needed to make this a reality across the EHEA; and, in some countries, more work is needed to ensure that these reforms and the benefits they bring are fully understood by all key stakeholders. Students, higher education institutions and employers need to be made aware of the value of first cycle/Bachelor degrees. In countries where the first cycle has only recently been introduced, these degrees are sometimes perceived as simply a step towards gaining a Master's degree, rather than as a qualification in its own right.

30. This points to an ongoing need to promote the Bologna Process more widely to ensure that its benefits are fully understood. Emphasis on quality assurance arrangements, credit transfer and recognition systems is essential to developing a wide range of employability (and mobility) options for students (and researchers) which would strengthen the recognition of first cycle/Bachelor degree amongst employers and students. The working group believes that the careers and guidance services within universities could play an invaluable role in raising awareness of the value of the first cycle/Bachelor degrees in their work with employers. **It is for Governments to give a strategic lead in this work and we suggest that they, together with higher education institutions and the representative organisations, should:**

- **continue to promote the benefits of the Bologna Process reforms as a whole, including the benefits of a first cycle/Bachelor degree, to students, potential students, employers and professions (including promoting the benefits of a high quality European Higher Education Area being a distinctive and attractive destination);**
- **make further progress in establishing their national qualifications frameworks in line with the Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area;**

**and that**

- **Governments, as appropriate, lead by example ensuring that their own public sector employment practices cater to graduates with first cycle/Bachelor degrees.**

### Promoting greater dialogue between higher education institutions and employers

31. Employers, both in public and private sector, and universities need to be encouraged to co-operate more to ensure that the skills that they feel graduates need are reflected in higher education provision. There is a need to encourage a more systematic dialogue between higher education institutions and employers at all levels – internationally, nationally, regionally and locally. This dialogue needs to take place across a wide range of different areas, including curriculum design, accreditation and/or quality assurance of programmes, work placements for

students, preparation of professional standards, and transforming knowledge and research into practice. **We suggest:**

- that Governments should take the lead in ensuring the conditions which will promote and incentivise dialogue; and
- that higher education institutions and their representative bodies should develop or strengthen links with employers and employer bodies (such as business and employers' associations, chambers of commerce, trade associations or professional groups) to establish partnerships to share good practice in how to make higher education provision more responsive to labour market demands and advise employers of the range of skills that graduates can bring to their employment.

### Employability skills

32. Higher education institutions and employers need to work together, involving students, to identify ways in which courses and programmes of study can offer students the opportunity to develop and define for themselves the employability skills set out in paragraph 13. **We suggest that there is an increased focus on providing work placements as part of courses; on students considering taking jobs related to their course of study where appropriate and which are compatible with their study work-load; on strengthening entrepreneurial skills in the curriculum; and on developing more programmes of part-time study to cater for those people already in the workplace who wish to update their skills as part of the lifelong learning agenda. Consideration should also be given to the interchange, through short work placements and secondments, between staff in business and staff in higher education institutions to overcome any barriers between them. Governments, the social partners, and higher education institutions should consider ways to increase such interchange.**

### Information, advice and guidance

33. In some countries there are well-developed careers advisory services provided at the level of each institution. These may offer a range of advice and support to current students to help them identify and clarify their individual skill sets and put them in touch with potential employers. In some cases these services are available not only to students currently studying at the university concerned but also to students from that university throughout their subsequent career. In other countries this responsibility falls to the national employment service. **We suggest that responsibility for the provision of advice and guidance should be strengthened within higher education institutions. All higher education institutions, together with governments/government agencies and employers, should improve the provision, accessibility and quality of their careers and employment-related services to students and alumni.**

### Timetable for change

34. The existing Bologna action lines are due to be implemented by 2010 but it is already clear that not all will have been fully and effectively implemented across the European Higher Education Area by that date. **We suggest that the actions highlighted in this report are taken forward as appropriate within individual countries as a matter of urgency in the light of the current economic crisis. Progress should be monitored through the**

## **responses to any Bologna Process stocktaking report questions on increasing the employability of graduates with Bachelor qualifications.**

### Conclusion

35. The labour market will not stand still over the coming years and what it takes to remain employable will change too. Demographic change as well as increased globalisation and competition will require greater flexibility and adaptation by employers, higher education institutions, and individuals. This may well be accelerated by the current global economic and financial crisis – and the response to these challenges may well ensure that we are better prepared to exploit the growth and job creation associated with economic recovery when it arrives. There will need to be a greater focus on student-centred learning based on more flexible learning paths, the facilitation of mobility, a diversity of qualifications reflecting the employment market, and greater efforts to make lifelong learning a reality. And there will need to be a greater focus on outcome-based learning and the recognition of prior learning and non-formal routes of learning. This will require all partners and stakeholders to continue to ensure that the partnerships and dialogue they establish are long-term, responsive, and have employability at their centre.

## Annex 1

### The Bologna Working Group on Employability: Participants

COUNTRY/ORGANISATION	NAME AND ORGANISATION	
Chair (UK)	Rachel Green	Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills
Austria	Elisabeth Ferentschik-Doppler	Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung
Croatia	Teo Matkovic	Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb
Czech Republic	Josef Koubek	Institute of Chemical Technology
Finland	Maija Innola	Ministry of Education
France	Helene Lagier	Ministry of Higher Education and Research
Georgia	Maia Chankseliani	Ministry of Education and Science
Germany	Waltraud Kreutz-Gers	Ministry of Innovation, Science, Research and Technology of North Rhine Westfalia
Hungary	Ferenc Makovényi	Hungarian Higher Education and Research Council
Luxembourg	Germain Dondelinger	Ministère de la Culture, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche
Poland	Tomasz Saryusz-Wolski	Technical University of Lodz
Spain	José-Ginés Mora	Universidad Politecnica de Valencia
United Kingdom	Robert Newbould	Department for Innovation, Universities & Skills
Business Europe	Irene Seling	Confederation of German Employers' Associations
European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)	Ronald Guillen	
European Students' Union (ESU)	Bruno Carapinha / Bergthora Snaebjörnsdottir	
European University Association (EUA)	Howard Davies	
Education International	Brian Everett	
UNESCO-CEPES	Peter Wells	
Bologna Secretariat	Cornelia Racké	

## Annex 2

### A selection of national practice

1. The following paragraphs present a short selection of national practice drawn from countries' responses to a short questionnaire issued by the working group in late 2007. It should be stressed that these examples are not intended to be held up as exemplars of good practice in any given area: they are cited here to offer readers ideas and suggestions of approaches followed by the countries concerned. (Full responses for those countries which participated in the survey are on the general Bologna website.)

#### ***Awareness-raising amongst employers of the value of a First Cycle/Bachelors qualification and associated learning outcomes.***

In 2004 leading German business companies started an initiative called "Bachelor Welcome!" In 2006 and 2008 the initiative was reiterated. With this initiative the companies committed themselves to the Bologna Process and its new cycle and degree system but also pointed out their expectations.

The Austrian Economic Chamber has commissioned a research project entitled "Bachelor Neu und der Arbeitsmarkt" (New Bachelor and the Labour market), which is an analysis of various views of enterprises and higher education institutions and which includes recommendations both for the employer side and the universities. In particular, intensive awareness measures are being recommended by all sides in order to strengthen the basis of the new study structure. In order to present this study, co-operation between the Austrian Rectors' Conference (since 2007 Universities Austria), the Austrian Association of Universities of Applied Sciences and the Economic Chamber aimed at improving the publicity and acceptance of the Bachelor degree by means of the information campaign "Welcome Bachelor". Apart from this initiative universities exchange opinions with representatives of the labour market on the acceptance of their graduates at the labour market. Half of the public universities have already established career centres and/or pursue other kinds of activities in regard of employability.

#### ***Involving employers in devising curricula and curriculum innovation based on learning outcomes.***

In Estonia, employers are involved in development of professional standards, and by law involved in accreditation process. There is a requirement that all academic structures need to have a programme board with an employers' representative on it.

In Norway, at some higher education institutions Research Institutes have been established in partnership with the business sector, and these institutes ensure close co-operation and dialogue between the higher education institutions and the business sector.

Employers play a part in defining the content of some programmes in Sweden, discussing its relevance as well as providing projects and placements. Different kinds of programmes with a certain focus, such as the Swedish teacher education programmes, have integrated placement periods. "Adjunct professors" with appropriate academic qualifications are hired part time by a higher education institution but still keep their regular employment within a company.

In Liechtenstein, the dialogue between institutions and employers takes place on several levels and across several sectors. Industry experts participate in special boards and study programme advisory councils and influence curriculum development. Experts are also included

in exam commissions for Bachelor, Master and Repeat Diploma examinations. The business community has established academic chairs for specific priority topics at Hochschule Liechtenstein. There are joint projects in the field of research and transfer and cooperation in sectoral "professional traineeships" for students.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has allocated £148 million for the next three years to increase capacity and capability of HEIs to deliver workforce development activities for employers. Universities will work with employers to review and address their skill needs, and are encouraged to deliver in innovative ways, for instance at the time and place to suit all parties. Moreover, Foundation degrees (Fds), which are developed in conjunction with employers to meet the specific needs of their industry and employees, have been expanding. In December 2007 there were approx 72,000 people registered on Fds. The aim of 100,000 students registered on Fds by 2010 is fully expected to be achieved. Most recently, to reflect the changing economic times, HEFCE have announced an additional fund of £50 million (£25 million matched funding between HEFCE and the HEIs involved) for Universities to help them meet employers in supporting the development of their staff and longer-term business growth. It is envisaged that the first help will commence from April 2009.

### ***Provision of careers and guidance services.***

In Spain, the Comprehensive Employment Service (SIE, Servicio Integral de Empleo) in the Technical University of Valencia (UPV, Universidad Politécnica de Valencia) is a case of a university office that started as an employment office but became a centre devoted to follow-up their graduates, to research employers' opinions, to organise work-placements for students and to intermediate between employers and graduates. It is structured in four services. *Unit for work placements* (practices during studies) provides work placement in companies through an agreement of collaboration between the company and the university. *Centre of guidance and information for employment* advises graduates in the job search through information and counselling, but also through training candidates in basic skills for accessing different jobs. *Unit for employment* establishes a direct connection between the jobs demanded for graduates of the UPV and the positions offered in the market. *Unit of prospective* analyses the transition of graduates to the labour market and undertakes surveys to designed to track graduates.

Careers and guidance service are offered in many various ways in the Czech Republic. Institutions organize contacts of students with potential employers. Students (for instance in the framework of IAESTE (International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience) or other student organizations) organize job fairs. On the other hand there are projects supported by the Czech Ministry of education showing each year the situation in the employment arena in the Czech Republic for graduates of all kinds. An integral part of these analyses is the comparison of the situation in the Czech republic and foreign countries.

In Lithuania, one of the most successful initiatives of organization of the career management services in higher education establishments is the activity of the Career centre, established at Vilnius university in 2004. This centre provides not only diverse professional information and consultation services, but also cares about students' career management competencies.

In Croatia environment where there is so far no institutionalized dialogue between the higher education institutions and employers about curriculum development, most efforts on facilitating employability are concerned with matching the soon-to-be graduates with potential employers. To that end, there are some projects led at the level of individual faculties, as well as some students' organizations (in particular in fields of business, IT and languages). On some

occasions these projects provide services such as Job Fairs, CV databases, meetings with employers etc. In the mid 2000s, private job-mediation firms have emerged as the main agents in introducing students to the job market, although lately the public employment service has started organizing Job Fairs and increasing activities towards graduates.

In France the 2007 law – ‘*Libertés et responsabilités des universités*’ – gave universities, two further missions of public service (*‘missions de service public’*) and one of them is student guidance and student integration into the labour market. Any registration in a university has to be prepared by a pre-registration: so any learner preparing the ‘*baccalauréat*’ the year before the first year at university is able to make wishes for his/her further studies in higher education.

This scheme, called ‘Orientation active’ (‘active guidance’), means that any learner in the last year in secondary education must be given advice, guidance – on the basis of a file including his/her future plans, his/her motivations for a specific field, and his/her results in the previous years - to give him or her all the clues, all the information needed before making a fully-informed choice. Learners can also ask for an appointment with a professor from university.

The kind of advice he/she is therefore given includes information about what the programme is really about in the expected subject area(s), the kind of works which is supposed to be done when studying this subject area, and also, what kind of jobs would be possible on the labour market, and whether it is reasonable for him/her to go into such a subject area, given his/her profile, results, motivations.

The law also makes it compulsory to create special offices within universities especially devoted to give support to students for their integration into the labour market ; these offices are called ‘bureaux d’aide à l’insertion professionnelle’ (BAIP for the FR acronym).

### ***Employment and career structures within the public service that are fully compatible with the new degree system.***

Apart from the regulated professions where the kind of training required for pursuit of the profession is defined, in Latvia there are few restrictions on access to jobs. It is for the employer to decide which person and with which level of qualification to choose. As regards the civil service, for instance, in Latvia there are no restrictions on employment of Bachelors.

### ***Self-employability.***

Technology Incubator at the Technical University on Bratislava (Slovakia) provides support for start up companies and technology transfer, and provides support for new entrepreneurs with no experience in managing their own companies via a project "Support in Establishing Innovative Firms in the University Technological Incubator".