

# **Teacher Support - Creating a Supportive Working Environment in Higher Education**

Presented by

Andreas Keller

(Education International)

Bologna Working Group “New Goals”

Paris, 13 June 2016



# Contents

1. The higher education staff in the Bologna Process
2. New challenges for higher education teachers
3. Essentials of a supportive environment for higher education teachers



- 1. The higher education staff in the Bologna Process**
2. New challenges for higher education teachers, researchers and administrative staff
3. Essentials of a supportive environment for higher education teachers



# Education International – EI ([www.ei-ie.org](http://www.ei-ie.org))



- Worldwide umbrella organisation for education trade unions
  - Representing about 30 million education workers from 400 affiliated unions worldwide, including 11 million from 130 affiliates in Euro
  - Among them are 700,000 staff member of higher education institutions in the Bologna Area
- European Region of EI: ETUCE
  - European Trade Union Committee for Education
  - Involved in the Bologna Process since 2005
  - Consultative member of the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG)
  - Participation in Ministerial Conferences, BFUG working groups and Bologna seminars
  - Member of the EQAR Register Committee



# Higher education staff in communiqués from the Bologna ministerial summits

<p><b>Continuously since Bologna 1999</b></p> <p><b>Especially London 2007</b></p>	<p>Mobility of teachers, researchers and administrative staff in the European Higher Education Area</p>
<p><b>Continuously since Berlin 2003</b></p> <p><b>Especially Bergen 2005</b></p>	<p>Doctoral level as third study cycle, later also “early-stage researchers”</p>
<p><b>Bergen 2005</b></p>	<p>Recognition of higher education staff (represented by Education International – EI) as partners in the Bologna Process (alongside institutions and students)</p>
<p><b>Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve 2009</b></p>	<p>Staff participation</p> <p>Social insurance/ Retirement pensions (Portability)</p>



# Higher education staff in communiqués from the Bologna ministerial summits

## Budapest/Vienna 2010

„Recent protests in some countries, partly directed against developments and measures not related to the Bologna Process, have reminded us that some of the Bologna aims and reforms have not been properly implemented and explained. We acknowledge and will listen to the **critical voices raised among staff and students**. We note that **adjustments and further work, involving staff and students**, are necessary at European, national, and especially institutional levels to achieve the European Higher Education Area as we envisage it.“



# Higher education staff in communiqués from the Bologna ministerial summits

## Budapest/Vienna 2010

„We acknowledge the key role of the academic community – institutional leaders, **teachers, researchers, administrative staff** and students (...).

We recognise that a more **supportive environment for the staff** to fulfil their tasks, is needed.

We fully support staff and student **participation in decision-making structures** at European, national and institutional levels.“



# Higher education staff in communiqués from the Bologna ministerial summits

## Bucharest 2012

“We reiterate our commitment to promote student-centred learning in higher education, characterised by innovative methods of teaching that involve students as active participants in their own learning. Together with institutions, students and **staff**, we will facilitate a **supportive and inspiring working and learning environment.**”





# Higher education staff in communiqués from the Bologna ministerial summits

Yerevan 2015

“We will support and protect students and **staff** in exercising their right to **academic freedom** and ensure their representation as **full partners** in the governance of autonomous higher education institutions.”

“We will encourage and support higher education institutions and staff in promoting **pedagogical innovation in student-centred learning environments** and in fully exploiting the potential benefits of **digital technologies** for learning and teaching.”



# Higher education staff in communiqués from the Bologna ministerial summits

Yerevan 2015

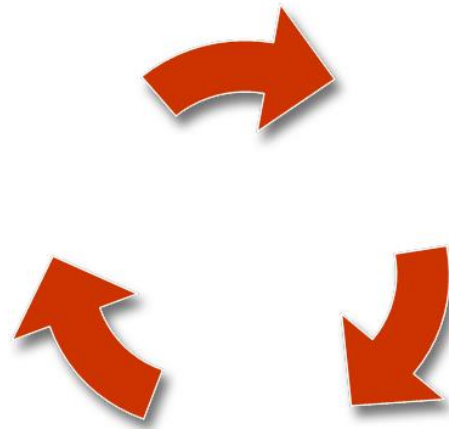
“We will promote a **stronger link between teaching, learning and research** at all study levels, and provide **incentives** for institutions, **teachers** and students to intensify activities that develop creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. (...)

It is essential to recognize and support **quality teaching**, and to provide **opportunities for enhancing academics’ teaching competences.**”



# ***The focus turns to those who must carry out the reforms in practice***

Governments, institutional leaders



Students

Higher education staff



## Working Group “New Goals”: Topics according to the terms of Reference by the BFUG

- New priorities for the future of EHEA, including: learning and teaching innovations, use of digital technologies
- Links between higher education and research
- Building more inclusive systems
- Lifelong learning, employability and the role of higher education in economy
- Professional recognition
- Active citizenship and response
- ➔ Crucial role of higher education teachers – need of support



1. The higher education staff in the Bologna Process
- 2. New challenges for higher education teachers**
3. Essentials of a supportive environment for higher education teachers



## Higher education teachers: increasing demands in the wake of Bologna reforms

- Greater need to supervise and advise students
- Curricular reform
- New formats for teaching, learning and examining (e. g. student-centred learning, digital learning)
- Diverse student population (“new learners”)
- Quality assurance, evaluation
- Accreditation
- Administration and management (bureaucracy)



## EI Study on “Enhancing Quality – Academics’ Perceptions of the Bologna Process” (2010)

- Academic staff workload has dramatically increased concomitantly with the large increase in bureaucratic work to be undertaken by academics.
- Respondents from half of the countries represented in the study clearly state that the necessity to work overtime has increased with the implementation of Bologna reforms.



## EI Study on “Creating a Supportive Working Environment in European Higher Education” (2015)

- Commissioned by EI Research Institute
- Report by Mary Clarke, Senior Lecturer in the School of Education, University College Dublin
- <http://www.issuu.com/educationinternational/docs/highereducation>
- [http://www.issuu.com/educationinternational/docs/leaflet\\_bologna\\_process](http://www.issuu.com/educationinternational/docs/leaflet_bologna_process)





# EI Study on “Creating a Supportive Working Environment in European Higher Education” (2015)

- The aim of the study was to gain insights from academics who were members of trade unions about their working conditions at their higher education institution, their changing roles and expectations with reference to research, teaching, administration and their perceptions of the changing academic landscape
- Nine member unions of ETUCE from nine European countries participated in the project (Denmark: DM, Germany: GEW, United Kingdom: UCU, Ireland: IFUT and TUI; Italia: FLCGIL, Latvia: LIZDA, Portugal: FCT-UNL, Romania: Alma mater, Serbia: TUS)



# EI Study on “Creating a Supportive Working Environment in European Higher Education” (2015)

- Mixed methods approach (questionnaire and interviews)
- In the countries surveyed, individual academics were targeted who were members of academic trade unions and employed full-time or spent at a substantial part of their work time on teaching and/or research. The survey addressed all grades of academic staff. As a rule, responses were included, if respondents provided answers to more than half of the questions posed.
- The survey instrument was distributed between December 2013 and February 2014 in the nine countries where each of the unions was represented.



# EI Study on “Creating a Supportive Working Environment in European Higher Education” (2015)

## Casualization of employment:

- 48% did not have permanent contracts.
- 17% had worked in three institutions before their current job, and 10% had worked in six or more institutions since they qualified.
- A higher proportion of males were in permanent positions compared to their female colleagues.
- While not having permanent positions a majority of respondents were employed full time.



# EI Study on “Creating a Supportive Working Environment in European Higher Education” (2015)

## Perceptions of working conditions

- The contractual status and prior work experience of academics played an important role in shaping perceptions of their working conditions.
- For many there is perceived deterioration in their working conditions since starting work and is attributed to increased administrative responsibilities, staffing embargos, wage cuts and few opportunities for professional development.
- Difficult to achieve a work life balance in their current institutional contexts.



# EI Study on “Creating a Supportive Working Environment in European Higher Education” (2015)

## Perceptions of teaching environment:

- A majority of academics across the countries surveyed were of the view that teaching was underfunded, there was a lack of teaching support staff and that more administrative support for teaching related activities was required.
- Only 39% perceived management in their institutions as being supportive of teaching.
- Training provided for teaching is not assessed as being adequate.
- The evaluation of teaching was regarded as a bureaucratic process that did not focus on developing teacher quality.



# EI Study on “Creating a Supportive Working Environment in European Higher Education” (2015)

## Involvement in decision making

- Most feel not involved in decision making with reference to the determination of budgets; the selection of key administrators; choosing new faculty and promotion and tenure decisions.
- Participants did not feel that they were influential at faculty or in a wider institutional context. Many (44%) were of the view that decision-making processes were not collegial.
- For half of participants (51%) the non-involvement of staff in decision making processes was perceived as a real problem.



1. The higher education staff in the Bologna Process
2. New challenges for higher education teachers
- 3. Essentials of a supportive environment for higher education teachers**



## Emerging conclusions

- The success of higher education institutions in a period of austerity is inextricably linked to the creation of supportive academic work environments.
- Permanent employment is a pre-condition for creating supportive work environment.
- Academic staff needs to be involved in meaningful decision making through collegial governance structures and their representative unions.
- Teaching an increasing and diverse student population as well requires continuous professional development for academic staff – as well as digital education or student-centred learning





## Emerging conclusions

- Institutions should support research led teaching and recognise teaching as a legitimate career progression route
- Autonomy in research remains the key factor maintaining job satisfaction in otherwise difficult conditions therefore it should be safeguarded and supported.
- Academics are not against accountability but the evaluation of teaching should be focused on improving teaching quality.
- Unnecessary administrative burden must be reduced and more administrative support is needed.
- Goals and processes of Bologna process need to be better communicated to academic community.



# Crosslinks

- European Research Area
  - European Charter for Researchers & Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (2005)
  - Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)
- UNESCO Recommendations concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel (1997)
  - Autonomy, Self-governance, collegiality ...
- European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education
  - ETUCE and EFEE (European Federation of Education Employers)
  - Joint Declaration on “Supporting Early Career Researchers in Higher Education in Europe” (2015)



**Thanks a lot for your attention!**

*Andreas Keller*

*andreas.keller@gew.de*

