

# **BOLOGNA WORKING GROUP ON EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS**

## ***NOTES OF MEETING OF 12 JUNE 2006 AUSTRIAN FEDERAL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND CULTURE, VIENNA***

### **Present**

Toril Johansson (Chair)	Norway
Alf Rasmussen	Norway
Rolf Larsen	Norway
Barbara Weitgruber	Austria
Mogens Berg	Denmark
Eric Froment	France
Birgit Galler	Germany
Joseph Mifsud	Malta
Pedro Lourtie	Portugal
Felix Haering Pérez	Spain
Bernd Wächter	Academic Cooperation Association (ACA)
Sjur Bergan	Council of Europe (CoE)
Monique Fouilhoux	Education International (EI)
Dáithí Mac Síthigh	Students in Europe (ESIB)
Peter van der Hijden	European Commission (EC)
Michael Gaebel	European University Association (EUA)
Stefan Delplace	EURASHE
Jan Sadlak	UNESCO-CEPES
Jan Levy	Norway
Yvonne Clarke	Bologna Secretariat
Pavel Zgaga	Rapporteur
Cornelia Racké	Observer

### **1. Opening of the meeting**

Toril Johansson opened the meeting by giving thanks to Barbara Weitgruber for once again hosting a Working Group meeting in Vienna. Apologies had been received from Padre Friedrich Bechina, the Holy See, Annika Persson Pontén, Sweden and Athanasios Kyriazis, Greece.

### **2. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was agreed and adopted.

### **3. Minutes of the last meeting**

Comments received from Barbara Weitgruber of Austria had been included. It was advised that UNESCO-CEPES should be used in full, not just UNESCO. It was agreed that 'Process' in the context of Bologna Process would have an initial capital.

#### 4. Reflections on the work so far

Toril Johansson was pleased to say that the work in this group is characterized by an open dialogue, good discussions and representatives eager to make substantial contributions for the purpose lying ahead: To make a strategy document on the external dimension of the Bologna Process. The WG has been able to produce important documents between meetings, and in spite of a minor delay, has been able to keep the timetable as well.

The WG has a good rapporteur in Pavel Zgaga, who is helping the WG by asking the right questions and also give the help needed to put all the ideas together for the strategy paper. Ms Johansson was confident that the WG will have a good result of its work in time to propose a strategy document.

On the last meeting, the WG agreed upon three subgroups to help concentrate on three main issues in the strive to focus the discussion. The WG has received two documents from the sub group on **Identity**, chaired by Friedrich Bechina, and one document each from the subgroup on **Information**, chaired by Barbara Weitgruber and the subgroup on **Attractiveness – collaboration – competitiveness**, chaired by Pedro Lourtie. Johansson gave thanks to them all for preparing these documents.

By making the above mentioned documents, the WG has taken an important step further – but have more work to do. Therefore – it is of great importance that the WG has a continuing good communication between the members and the rapporteur during the remaining period of the mandate.

#### 5. A strategy for the external dimension of the Bologna Process

Presentation of the documents from the subgroups:

*a) Identity, presented by Sjur Bergan and Jan Sadlak*

The Identity Group suggested a text for the London Communiqué based on a set of commitments and fundamental values for higher education in Europe, see the distributed paper.

In discussion the following points were made:

- With reference to the strategy structure discussed at the last meeting (5.0 of the note) the Bologna Process needed to be more explicit in underlining values and that the EHEA would be based on the constant Higher Education (HE) values and not underlying political changes in countries (which should be recognised by Ministers in London 17 May 2007).
- The final version of the text remained outstanding, agreement was needed on whether the values would be for European HE or for global

HE and what would be the added value of the European aspect?

- The identity/values should also be based on the characteristic that European Higher Education is linked to research. Other suggested headings were linkage to society to include the functions of institutions and autonomy in HE to cover the functions of institutions. Whether the identities and values given in an European context should be globally accepted, is for non-European areas to decide.
- The EHEA identity/values content of the report should be implicit throughout the drafting of the Communiqué. The concept of modernisation was clear without having to address it and use of the words identity/values might be misplaced in a post-modernisation era.
- Reference should be made to the Magna Carta Declaration.

*b) Information, presented by Bernd Wächter and Barbara Weitgruber*

This subgroup commented that they had gone much further in their paper than asked for by the WG. The paper had the following structure:

1. History: the “external dimension” in the Bologna Process to date
2. Work done and work awaiting us
3. Possible elements of an external strategy of the Bologna Process

The core elements proposed for an external strategy are the following.

- (3.1) Information on the EHEA
- (3.2) Promotion of the European higher education (attractiveness/competitiveness)
- (3.3) Partnerships
- (3.4) Policy dialogue
- (3.5) Recognition issues
- (3.6) Development cooperation
- (3.7) Values (democracy, open societies, tolerance vis-à-vis other religions and creeds, openness, openness to the world)

*c) Attractiveness – collaboration – competitiveness, presented by Pedro Lourtie*

Lourtie reflected on some issues considering the design of the strategy:

- Competition is a fact: competition to attract the best brains and competition in cross-border provision.
- Attractiveness improves competitiveness and induces competition with the major providers of higher education, the export business of education and the brain drain.
- Cooperation with the developing countries is an instrument of solidarity and of sustainable world-wide development.
- Success in promoting the Bologna approach, through cooperation,

requires attractiveness.

- Interest of the Bologna Process is spreading.
- Interest of the Bologna Process, information and cooperation with other regions may lead to make it a reference to other regions of the world.
- There are a number of political and academic fora of European cooperation with other regions of the world that should not be duplicated.
- Approach to the cooperation is region dependent.

In discussion of the papers on b) information and c) attractiveness - collaboration - competitiveness, the following points were made:

- The Information paper noted examples where explicit in current declarations. The continued involvement of groups/organisations other than Governments was advised.
- Inclusion of the Barcelona Process was advised. If wider circulation was proposed, other organisations involved in the Bologna policy dialogue should be included. Advice was welcomed on how to make optimum use of networks and regions, like ENIC-NARIC and UNESCO, to exchange information on the EHEA and the benefits of its reaction with other parts of the world. An issue is how to build up co-operation worldwide, but be aware of that it is not a necessary linkage between the development of a country and the development of its HE system. Comments were given on the implementation of policies, the financial support and how different policies from countries might be combined.
- Ensure the Bologna 'brand' would not be diluted; the Process is more than the sum of its parts. The strategy need to be clear about how the Bologna concept would be communicated. Referring back to the Brussels meeting and consideration of the consequence of promotion of the Process as means of HE reform. How the Bologna Process, not as an organisation with structure and funds, could add value to the promotion of European HE and attractiveness in the context of other contributors eg Erasmus Mundus and other HE exchange programmes.
- There need to be agreement on the External Dimension elements, also consideration of the core elements that Governments had agreed to in signing various declarations. It has to be clarified whether the External Dimension Strategy is open to all parts of the world or an internal European process only to make Europe an attractive destination for researchers and students. Monitoring of achievements in the Bologna Process need to be addressed as well as security.
- A worthwhile exercise might be to identify and map forums and programmes in the European neighbourhood to see where Bologna fits. The European research area extended beyond EU countries and the frequent flyer idea could stimulate awareness of the extent of

income from mobility.

d) Summing up by Pavel Zgaga

- The strategy has priority and following discussion it would be changed and refined. A summary for the Communiqué drafting group was recommended. Agreement is needed on the size of the document. An overarching strategy was mandated by Bergen, the basic values discussed would be added as a pre-amble. Two to three pages for the strategy paper were suggested with most of the background analysis in the report.
- The third point of the Information group paper provided a good format for the strategy with focus on Europe/European issues but not in an imperialistic way. Agreement is needed to define the Bologna Process and common understanding of the geographical scope of the EHEA and the dimension outside the Process.
- An additional part on sustainability, how to implement and improve was proposed for the strategy and would be included in the paper for circulation in August. The strategy and implementation proposals would be discussed at the Oslo seminar. The timetable make us work with the report and the strategy in parallel.

In discussion the following points were made:

- It is more important to agree on content than size of the strategy document and to identify the target group, also to consider the impact/interaction on other policy areas (social inclusion). A clear direction for the strategy with an action list of how to take the external dimension forward must be developed.
- It is recommended that a draft strategy document with clear conclusions and recommendations should be ready to present to BFUG in October 2006. These recommendations should ensure common understanding of what could be done, and allow the 45 countries to discuss and agree on the concept.
- It was suggested that a point on funding be included. This was generally opposed as it was outside the Bologna Process mandate, but it could be acceptable to mention it in the context of referring to other organisations. It is important to distinguish between the terms funding and costing.
- It was agreed that Pavel Zgaga should work on the strategy based on the Information paper and incorporating the paper prepared by Pedro Lourtie on attractiveness. The identity/values text could be circulated to BFUG/Board and the Working Group could use the text to influence the London Communiqué. When agreed the findings of the group and the official seminars could be submitted to the Communiqué Drafting Group. The extensive discussion on values would be better placed in

the report as the material was appropriate to the conclusions of the group.

## **6. Globalisation and Higher Education: linking Bologna to the global discussions**

If Europe are striving for a fruitful dialogue with the rest of the world, we are of course dependent on organisations to coordinate and cooperate. Such an initiative was for example the process on quality assurance, chaired by Jan Levy. This work was very important. Therefore, Toril Johansson, had taken the opportunity to ask Jan Levy to reflect on the possibility to develop such cooperation and coordination in other important areas of the Bologna work. She made it, however, clear that the ideas at the moment not necessarily represented an official Norwegian view.

Jan Levy, Counsellor, the permanent delegation of Norway to the OECD, gave a presentation that gave preliminary ideas on linking Bologna to the global discussions. It presented a number of ideas to the Working Group from outside the Process and gave a view of global developments in HE. Levys overhead presentation will be distributed to all members of the Working Group.

Possible arenas for following up on these ideas are:

- The Bologna seminars
- The London Ministerial meeting, 17 May 2007
- UNESCO General Conference, October 2007
- OECD Tertiary Education Reviews

## **7. Discussion**

The WG had a discussion on the definition of a region and how it might not be suitable to a geographical area. In dealing with another region the nature of it needed to be clear to promote effective dialogue and co-operation. This would be worth noting for the External Dimension strategy. In the Bologna region HEIs, students and Governments work together, but this was not always evident in other regions.

## **8. Further work procedure and next meeting(s)**

The next meeting will take place at the Mission of Norway to the EU in Brussels on 4 September 2006 from 10.00 -17.00. The Nordic Seminar will take place in Oslo on 28-29 September 2006. Members of the Working Group will meet in the afternoon of 29 September 2006.

**Other forthcoming events and announcements** (Members were to send information to the Secretariat)

10 May 2006	EU Commission modernisation agenda to make EHEA more attractive to the rest of the world
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18 -20 May 2006	2 <sup>nd</sup> meeting of the international Ranking Expert Group
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(IREG) organised by UNESCO-CEPES,  
Institute for Higher Education Policy in Washington D.C.  
and CHE-Centre for Higher Education  
Development, held in Berlin, Germany.

4-6 June 2006      Joint meeting of the ENIC and NARIC Networks (Council  
of Europe/UNESCO/CEPES/  
European Commission), held in Tallinn, Estonia

29 June 2006      Catalonia Declaration

**Yvonne Clarke**  
**Bologna Secretariat**