

UNESCO

UNESCO-CEPES
EUROPEAN CENTRE
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

**Higher
Education
in Europe**

In this issue:

The Bologna Process: Retrospect and Prospects

Vol. XXX, No. 1, 2005

Higher Education in Europe

Volume XXX Number 1 2005

CONTENTS

From the Editors	1
The Bologna Process: Retrospect and Prospects	
Pan-European Grading System Scales: Lessons form National Systems and the ECTS <i>Terence Karan</i>	5
The Bologna Process and Integration Theory: Convergence and Autonomy <i>Kasper Barkholt</i>	23
The Entrepreneurial University in the Knowledge Society <i>Sorin E. Zaharia and Ernest Gilbert</i>	31
Implementation of the Bologna Process Goals: On Greek State Funding <i>Aristotelis Stamoulas</i>	41
Creating a Quality Assurance System for Croatian Higher Education <i>David M. Currie, Denisa Krbec, James Higgins</i>	53
Prospects for European Integration: Turkish Higher Education <i>Fatma Mizikaci</i>	67
The Bologna Process and Lifelong Education: Problem-Based Learning <i>Eulàlia Hernández-Encuentra and Javier Sánchez-Carbonell</i>	81
Book Reviews and Studies	89
Notes on Contributors	95

From the Editors

This issue of Higher Education in Europe attempts to provide a critical, if necessarily brief, overview of the implementation of the goals of the Bologna Declaration. As an evolutionary and collective experience, the implementation of the Bologna Process unfolds gradually and organically throughout and among the countries involved, and across a daunting thematic range. Furthermore, as an undertaking of truly continental proportions, the Process also concerns a multitude of stakeholders; it calls for substantial institutional reorientation; and it introduces theoretical frameworks on the development of higher education, which suit stakeholders, or national systems and cultures of higher education, to a variable extent in each case.

Although, on the one hand, the Bologna Process may therefore be perceived by some as a 'one size fits all' approach to higher education reform, on the other hand, its structure and implementation are open and adaptive by design: the garment is not only an attractive one, but allows for individual and repeated fittings. The Bologna Process and its attractions and subtleties are an equally strong suit for UNESCO-CEPES, as the Centre has been since September 2003 a consultative member of the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG).

UNESCO-CEPES also enjoys relatively privileged insight into the workings of European integration in the higher education field, drawing as it does on well-nigh ten years' experience in this particular area. However, although emerging trends of European integration have been distinguishable for that time, the turn of the Twenty- First Century has brought about a marked acceleration and intensification of activity.

With the impetus of the Bologna Declaration in 1999 and a series of ensuing developmental milestones (the Lisbon Convention, the Berlin Communiqué', periodic conferences of ministers of education, etc.), common European higher education and research spaces are well and truly a work in progress. And progress is precisely our subject: its nature, its measurement, its underlying assumptions, and the agreement, or lack thereof, on its intended consequences. All of these are subjects of consideration in this issue from a concentrated variety of thematic and geographical perspectives. The context for such discourse is, of course, one of great social upheaval, in both the global order and the traditional role of the university in European society. The pressures of globalisation are unrelenting, the welfare state is in steady decline, and the knowledge society and economy of Western liberal capitalism have been crowned and enthroned. As Marek Kwiek recently observed, the processes affecting today's university consist of "... the gradual individualisation (and recommodification) of our societies, the denationalisation (and desocialisation) of our economies, as well as the universalisation of higher education and the commodification of research" (Kwiek, 2004: 223).

Few would dispute the backdrop of change against which the Bologna Process continues to unfold. Nevertheless, inevitably, interpretations regarding the potential and meaning of such global flux also colour our perception of European integration and its mechanisms. Thus, such factors have only augmented the range of perspectives from which we should assess current developments in European higher education and research: Is the Bologna Process about education, or economics? What of its 'social dimension'? Is higher education a public good, a marketized service, or a mix of the two? Must the university be forced onstage and, blinded by the spotlight, anointed 'engine of the

knowledge economy'? What of its defining academic values? Can universities, national governments, and supranational institutions reach practical consensus despite, sometimes, discordant views and interests? Many of these questions can be associated with the effects of globalisation and therefore apply to other regions as well, but the Bologna Process has clearly enabled an accelerated European pace. Like a great drama, the Bologna Process has succeeded in involving its public: we may choose heroes and villains, see subplots and conspiracies, and hear sceptics and cat-callers. Unfolding in real time and again like a gripping play, it appeals not in spite of, but precisely for its contradictions and squeaky wheels: in perspective, it has demonstrated its most meaningful role as a joint – if Herculean – effort. At present and over five years since its inception, the Process is a unified regional construct, based on the pride of place given in Europe and by Europe to its people, its societies, and its future. Its development is thus assured, and it can well tolerate some humble beginnings and constructive criticism. *Finis origine pendet*: the end lies in the beginning, and the ideals and goals of the Bologna Process constitute on balance a most welcome start.

As suggested above this issue of Higher Education in Europe is a watermark of progress, assessed from a range of thematic and geographical vantage points. Our Topic opens with Terence Karran's article, 'Pan-European Grading Scales: Lessons from National Systems and the ECTS', in which he assesses the impact of the Bologna Process on the grading schemes of member countries of the European Union. Karran's work follows on from a piece published previously in *Higher Education in Europe* (Karran, 2004) in which he identified some problems regarding the implementation of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The current paper moves on to explore the possibility of further reforms, and offers some elements of a unified grading system for European higher education. The author's argument is that while the ECTS functions as an exchange framework (akin to the now defunct Exchange Rate Mechanism), a unified grading system would actually serve as a currency – not unlike the Euro. He proposes that although more radical, such an approach would prove not only more useful but also more equitable, in that a more just and fair system would constitute the best safeguard of academic freedom. Kasper Barkholt follows with another look at integration, this time from a political science perspective. In 'The Bologna Process and Integration Theory: Convergence and Autonomy', the author applies two theoretical frameworks of integration to the field of higher education, and explores their implications for current European trends such as the marketization of education and the involvement of supranational institutions. Like Karran, he refers briefly to concerns of academic freedom, although this time in the context of another European trend, namely, the growing importance of quality assessment. Barkholt's conclusion on the current trends of integration in European higher education is that in the context of "loosely coordinated integration" on the part of the European Union, national governments want to have it all: they integrate and marketize to achieve certain benefits, and remain champions of the 'public good' to secure others

The nature of the relationship between the academy, the business, and the knowledge economy is the subject of Sorin Zaharia and Ernest Gibert's article, 'The Entrepreneurial University in the Knowledge Society'. In it, the authors argue that the knowledge society and economy require a radical reconfiguration on the part of both universities (the "entrepreneurial university") and industry (the "knowledge

organisation”), the interests and domains of which now overlap more than ever. In the case of universities, they highlight an increasingly uncertain environment, a surge in demand for higher education, and the internationalisation of education and research as dominant factors of change; these are driving new expectations of the university’s role, and lie at the heart of a hastily arranged marriage with the “non-academic world”.

New relations thus subsume the traditional ties between universities and industry, and Zaharia and Gibert conclude that both parties are now on new trajectories of transformation in the context of the knowledge economy. This transformation is characterised by the “management of creative knowledge” and, in the case of the European university, by the “entrepreneurial reaction”, a litmus test for survival. The authors propose four principal axes of organisational change to ensure the university’s metamorphosis, and share some examples of organisational change from Romania. Our focus then turns to Greece and to the funding of higher education. Although the latter is admittedly not (yet) on the European Union’s agenda relative to the Bologna Process, this issue can nevertheless pose some challenges to the implementation of the Bologna goals as Aristotelis Stamoulas explains. In ‘Implementation of the Bologna Process Goals: On Greek State Funding’, Stamoulas highlights the fact that although higher education may be legislated as a public good in Greece, in practice it nevertheless requires private expenditures that inevitably favour those of higher socioeconomic status. Even in resolutely public higher education systems, a fundamental concern of equity therefore remains, and the author rightly questions the consistency of this fact with current political emphasis on the ‘social dimension’ of the Bologna Process (including in Greece). In the Greek case, he examines the state funding allocations to universities, and concludes that funding allocated to each institution should be made contingent on the quality of education offered and the socio-economic background of its student body. He notes that the Greek higher education system resisted the implementation of measures for quality assurance and evaluation, concludes that attention to the ‘social dimension’ is inadequate, and, with regard to funding matters, calls on the Greek establishment to recognise that “free higher education is simply a utopian goal.”

Reference was made earlier to Kasper Barkholt’s identification of quality assurance as a current trend in European integration. On the same subject, David Currie, Denisa Krbec, and James Higgins provide a thorough and pragmatic action plan focused on the current needs of Croatia in this area. In ‘Creating a Quality Assurance System for Croatian Higher Education’, the authors propose a quality management and/or continuous improvement framework that speaks to Croatia’s higher education system, and incorporates the lessons of both previous experience and current literature from the USA, Turkey, and Australia. The authors encourage higher education professionals and policy-makers to learn from the experience of other countries, and to rely on quality management systems and techniques that have proven effective in other national contexts.

Yet another current trend in the integration of European higher education, also facilitated and supported by the Bologna Process, is the increasing mobility of students, researchers, and academic staff across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and European Research Area (ERA). As with higher education funding and the Bologna Process, Turkey’s status with the European Union likewise awaits a formal pronouncement. Nevertheless, evidence of relevance to our Topic appears clear, and

Fatma Mizikaci confirms it in her article, 'Prospects for European Integration: Turkish Higher Education'. Mizikaci outlines the principal features of Turkey's highly centralised higher education system, and traces its increasing internationalisation in the wake of two historical events: the breakdown of the former Soviet Union and the process of European integration. She considers the implications of both for student and academic mobility, suggesting that while Turkey has become a 'receiving' country in the context of post-Soviet central Asia, it likely to be a 'sending' country with regard to its historical (and ongoing) orientation to Europe and the West. Mizikaci observes that clearly defined national policies regarding internationalisation and mobility in higher education are yet unavailable in Turkey, despite widespread support of the Bologna Process itself. However, she notes that, as facilitated by the introduction of European and international cooperation and research schemes, student and academic mobility from and to Turkey are clearly on the rise.

One final theme relevant to the Bologna Process is present here, and that is lifelong education. Eula' lia Herna' ndez-Encuentra and Javier Sa' nchez-Carbonell cover this topic from the vantage point of a higher education institution in Spain, and present an interesting report in their article, 'The Bologna Process and Lifelong Education: Problem-Based Learning'. Herna' ndez and Sa' nchez draw our attention to the stated need in Bologna Process documents for common curricula to meet the goal of lifelong education, and to the primacy of innovative curricular designs. Such designs, they argue, must rely on "new approaches" that enable students to identify and build on skills and attitudes required for the development of broad professional competence.

This is not just an academic pursuit, but requires a cross-section of aptitudes, experience, and areas of capacity development. The authors therefore searched for and incorporated a suitable learning methodology, problem-based learning (PBL), into the conduct of their Psychology course and the holding of a student congress. The organisation, preparation, and conduct of the congress required participants to develop a wide range of problem-solving abilities, both individual and collective. Based on the feedback received, Hernandez and Sanchez conclude that their project, and the possibilities inherent in problem-based learning methodology, clearly enabled participants' self-directed learning and increased their "lateral" professional competencies.

This issue of Higher Education in Europe comes to a suitably refined close with Reviews Editor, Eric Gilder.

The next issue of the UNESCO-CEPES review will be on the theme of 'Ranking Systems and Methodologies in Higher Education'. It will be based foremost on a selection of papers presented at the first meeting of a working group on 'Higher Education Ranking Systems and Methodologies: How They Work, What They Do' a joint project of the Institute for Higher Education Policy and UNESCO-CEPES; submissions remain welcome.

References

KARRAN, T. "Achieving Bologna Convergence: Is ECTS Failing to Make the Grade?", *Higher Education in Europe* 29 3 (2004): 411-421.

KWIEK, M. "Intellectuals, Power, and Knowledge", *Dia-Logos. Studies in Philosophy and Social Sciences*. Vol. 6. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004.