



SEMINAR FOR BOLOGNA AND HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM EXPERTS:

Putting Bucharest's Conclusions on Track – The Experts' Role

READER

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CHAPTER 1: MESSAGES FROM THE ORGANISERS

1.1. Welcome to Vilnius

Dear Colleagues,

It is a great pleasure and honour to welcome you to the “Seminar for Bologna and Higher Education reform experts: Putting Bucharest’s Conclusions on Track – The Experts’ Role” on June 4-6, 2012, under the Higher Education Reform project funded by the European Commission. The seminar is co-organized by the European Commission, UNICA network, Brussels Education Services and Vilnius University hosting the event.

It is a great pleasure to welcome you in Lithuania, a new and active member of the European Union (since May 1, 2004). Lithuania is the only Baltic country boasting nearly eight hundred years of statehood tradition, while its name was first mentioned almost one thousand years ago, in 1009 and which is notorious for being the last pagan country in Europe (first christening taking place in 1387).

Vilnius is the largest city and the capital of Lithuania. The city was first mentioned in written sources in 1323, in letters written by Grand Duke Gediminas. Over time, Vilnius has been rapidly transformed and the town has emerged as a modern European city. "Very pleasant and very beautiful, that's what comes to one's mind when talking about Vilnius". Vilnius is a cosmopolitan city with a diverse architecture. The Old Town, the historical centre of Vilnius, is one of the largest in Europe. The Old Town of Vilnius was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1994 just because the town "has preserved an impressive complex of Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque and classical buildings as well as its medieval layout and natural setting".

Vilnius University, which welcomes you on this occasion, is an integral part of the Old Town of the city. Kings and Queens, Presidents and Prime Ministers, ministers and high officials of all countries coming to Vilnius also visit Vilnius University. Vilnius University is not only the oldest in the Baltic States and the biggest in Lithuania, it also enjoys the greatest popularity among the Lithuanian school leavers. The University has always enjoyed free academic spirit, informal and friendly communication and eagerly went for new ideas that would advance learning and research. Therefore the Bologna and Higher Education expert seminar is a great occasion for an old University to contribute to the future of European Higher Education Area and broaden cooperation perspectives.

The organizing team welcomes you at Vilnius University and wishes nice stay, good experience, and fruitful work.

Local organizing team



1.2. Speakers' short biographies

Jacob Fuchs is Head of Division, The Division of Internationalisation at the Agency of Universities and Internationalisation of the Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education. He holds a M.Ec. from University of Copenhagen and has previously worked with several Danish ministries, including the Ministry of Finance. He has served as Danish Co-Chair of the Bologna Follow-Up Group during the first half of 2012.

Andrejs Rauhvargers is born in Riga, Latvia and has a Ph.D. from the University of Latvia. He is Secretary General of the Latvian Rectors' Conference and Professor at the Faculty of Education at the University of Latvia and also senior advisor of the European University Association (EUA).

Internationally Andrejs Rauhvargers is member of the Bologna Follow-Up Group since 2000 and since 2005 he chairs the working group which studies the implementation of the Bologna process. He was the main author of the Bologna Stocktaking reports of 2007 and 2009 and in 2010-2012 co-chaired the Bologna process Implementation Group which prepared the report published for the Ministerial Conference in Bucharest , 26-27 Apr, 2012.

Andrejs Rauhvargers is also author of a number other major reports and publications on various aspects of international higher education such as recognition, joint degrees, higher education quality assurance, qualifications frameworks and others and has also been co-editor of several volumes of the Council of Europe Higher Education series.

In 2011 he carried out a study and EUA published his report "Global University Rankings and their impact".

Andrejs Rauhvargers has also served as president of the European Network of Academic Recognition Centres (ENIC) from 1997 to 2001 and as president of the Intergovernmental

Committee of the Lisbon Recognition Convention from 2001 to 2008. He has chaired international working groups that worked out the subsidiary texts to the Lisbon Recognition Convention which introduce new principles in recognition of qualifications in Europe.

Andrejs has delivered presentations and invited talks in around 30 countries at all continents, among them EU Members states but also USA, Canada, Colombia, Ghana, Montenegro, Russia, Turkey and others.

In 2006 Andrejs Rauhvargers was awarded the EAIE Constance Meldrum Award for innovation and leadership in international higher education.

Allan Bruun Pedersen is Senior Adviser in the Danish Agency for Universities and Internationalisation. He has 10 years experience in recognition issues. He is also President of the ENIC-Network (The Council of Europe's and Unesco's recognition network with 51 member countries). He has also carried out task of expert adviser in recognition projects in Germany, Georgia and ex-Yugoslavian countries. He is member of the Bologna Follow Up Working Group on Recognition and National Contact Point for the EQF.

Brian Power is head of Student Support and Equity of Access to Higher Education at the Irish Department of Education and Skills and is currently Co-Chair of the Bologna Working Group on the Social Dimension of Higher Education. He has held a number of senior posts in the Department of Education and Skills, including in international and EU affairs and has served as Education Attaché in the Permanent Representation of Ireland to the EU. He previously held positions in the Departments of Finance, Social Protection, Justice and Foreign Affairs.

He is also an active member of the Bologna Network of Experts on Student Support in Europe (NESSIE) and, until recently, was Co-Chair of the network. He has previously served as a member of the EU Education Committee and the Education Committee of the OECD. He holds an MSc in Public Service Innovation Management from the University of Ulster and the Letterkenny Institute of Technology and represents Ireland as a member of the High Council of the European University Institute.

Kathleen Ordnung works for the Federal Ministry of Education and Research of Germany in the field of International Exchanges in Higher Education and Internationalization. After completing her degree in law she held different posts at the Federal Environment Agency and the Federal Ministry of Health. Currently she is responsible for the implementation of the Bologna process in Germany at working level. She also acts as member of the Bologna Follow-up Group.

Ligia Deca is the Head of the Bologna Follow-Up Group Secretariat (2010-2012). She coordinates a team of professionals that supports the activities part of the 2009-2012 Bologna Process' workplan and was highly involved in the preparation in the 2012 Bucharest Ministerial Conference and Third Bologna Policy Forum, under the coordination of the BFUG Chairs and Vice-Chair.

Previously, she was the Chairperson (2008-2010) of the European Students' Union (ESU). As a Chairperson, she was the main policy and organisational coordinator of ESU, while being the official ESU representative in the Bologna Follow-Up Group, the European Union Lisbon higher education setting and UNESCO. Her professional experience also includes working in the Quality Assurance field by being active as a consultant in the development of quality management systems in various institutions (higher education institutions, public institutions and private companies) and coordinating the Coalition for Clean Universities - a campaign aimed at fostering academic integrity and fighting corruption in the Romanian educational sector.

Ligia Deca has graduated a Master degree in Maritime and Port Management, after finishing a Bachelor degree in Maritime Engineering.

María Luisa García Mínguez has a linguistic background acquired in the universities of Zaragoza (Spain) and in Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium). Since 1991 she has worked in the European Parliament and the European Commission, mainly in activities related with the education research. In this respect, she was the coordinator and author of several Eurydice comparative studies on education systems and policies throughout Europe.

María Luisa García Mínguez is since 2008 the coordinator of the Erasmus programme in the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (European Commission). In this context, she has the responsibility of coordinating the selection, management and dissemination of results of European projects that intend, inter alia, to strength the social dimension of higher education, to improve the quality and relevance of higher education, to increase the cooperation between higher education and the labour market and to strength quality through mobility and cross-border cooperation. She is also responsible for coordinating the activities related to the European Credit Transfer System/Diploma Supplement labels and the National Teams of Bologna experts.

CHAPTER 2: THE BUCHAREST COMMUNIQUE & THE ROLE OF THE EXPERTS

2.1. Making the Most of Our Potential: Consolidating the European Higher Education Area – Bucharest Communiqué, 27 April 2012

'We, the Ministers responsible for higher education in the 47 countries of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) have met in Bucharest, on 26 and 27 April 2012, to take stock of the achievements of the Bologna Process and agree on the future priorities of the EHEA.

Investing in higher education for the future

Europe is undergoing an economic and financial crisis with damaging societal effects. Within the field of higher education, the crisis is affecting the availability of adequate funding and making graduates' job prospects more uncertain.

Higher education is an important part of the solution to our current difficulties. Strong and accountable higher education systems provide the foundations for thriving knowledge societies. Higher education should be at the heart of our efforts to overcome the crisis – now more than ever.

With this in mind, we commit to securing the highest possible level of public funding for higher education and drawing on other appropriate sources, as an investment in our future. We will support our institutions in the education of creative, innovative, critically thinking and responsible graduates needed for economic growth and the sustainable development of our democracies. We are dedicated to working together in this way to reduce youth unemployment.

The EHEA yesterday, today and tomorrow

The Bologna reforms have changed the face of higher education across Europe, thanks to the involvement and dedication of higher education institutions, staff and students.

Higher education structures in Europe are now more compatible and comparable. Quality assurance systems contribute to building trust, higher education qualifications are more recognisable across borders and participation in higher education has widened. Students today benefit from a wider variety of educational opportunities and are increasingly mobile. The vision of an integrated EHEA is within reach.

However, as the report on the implementation of the Bologna Process shows, we must make further efforts to consolidate and build on progress. We will strive for more coherence between our policies, especially in completing the transition to the three cycle system, the use of ECTS credits, the issuing of Diploma Supplements, the enhancement of quality assurance and the implementation of qualifications frameworks, including the definition and evaluation of learning outcomes.

We will pursue the following goals: to provide quality higher education for all, to enhance graduates' employability and to strengthen mobility as a means for better learning.

Our actions towards these goals will be underpinned by constant efforts to align national practices with the objectives and policies of the EHEA, while addressing those policy areas where further work is needed. For 2012-2015, we will especially concentrate on fully supporting our

higher education institutions and stakeholders in their efforts to deliver meaningful changes and to further the comprehensive implementation of all Bologna action lines.

Providing quality higher education for all

Widening access to higher education is a precondition for societal progress and economic development. We agree to adopt national measures for widening overall access to quality higher education. We will work to raise completion rates and ensure timely progression in higher education in all EHEA countries.

The student body entering and graduating from higher education institutions should reflect the diversity of Europe's populations. We will step up our efforts towards underrepresented groups to develop the **social dimension** of higher education, reduce inequalities and provide adequate student support services, counselling and guidance, flexible learning paths and alternative access routes, including recognition of prior learning. We encourage the use of peer learning on the social dimension and aim to monitor progress in this area.

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 should be an open process in which students develop intellectual independence and personal self-assuredness alongside disciplinary knowledge and skills. Through the pursuit of academic learning and research, students should acquire the ability confidently to assess situations and ground their actions in critical thought.

Quality assurance is essential for building trust and to reinforce the attractiveness of the EHEA's offerings, including in the provision of cross-border education. We commit to both maintaining the public responsibility for quality assurance and to actively involve a wide range of stakeholders in this development. We acknowledge the ENQA, ESU, EUA and EURASHE (the E4 group) report on the implementation and application of the "European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance" (ESG)¹. We will revise the ESG to improve their clarity, applicability and usefulness, including their scope. The revision will be based upon an initial proposal to be prepared by the E4 in cooperation with Education International, BUSINESSEUROPE and the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), which will be submitted to the Bologna Follow-Up Group.

We welcome the external evaluation of EQAR and we encourage quality assurance agencies to apply for registration. We will allow EQAR-registered agencies to perform their activities across the EHEA, while complying with national requirements. In particular, we will aim to recognise quality assurance decisions of EQAR-registered agencies on joint and double degree programmes.

We confirm our commitment to maintaining public responsibility for higher education and acknowledge the need to open a dialogue on **funding and governance** of higher education. We recognise the importance of further developing appropriate funding instruments to pursue our common goals. Furthermore, we stress the importance of developing more efficient governance and managerial structures at higher education institutions. We commit to supporting the engagement of students and staff in governance structures at all levels and reiterate our commitment to autonomous and accountable higher education institutions that embrace academic freedom.

¹ European Association for Quality Assurance (2011) 'Mapping the Implementation and application of the ESG'

Enhancing employability to serve Europe's needs

Today's graduates need to combine transversal, multidisciplinary and innovation skills and competences with up-to-date subject-specific knowledge so as to be able to contribute to the wider needs of society and the labour market. We aim to enhance the **employability** and personal and professional development of graduates throughout their careers. We will achieve this by improving cooperation between employers, students and higher education institutions, especially in the development of study programmes that help increase the innovation, entrepreneurial and research potential of graduates. Lifelong learning is one of the important factors in meeting the needs of a changing labour market, and higher education institutions play a central role in transferring knowledge and strengthening regional development, including by the continuous development of competences and reinforcement of knowledge alliances.

Our societies need higher education institutions to contribute innovatively to sustainable development and therefore, higher education must ensure a stronger link between research, teaching and learning at all levels. Study programmes must reflect changing research priorities and emerging disciplines, and research should underpin teaching and learning. In this respect, we will sustain a diversity of doctoral programmes. Taking into account the "Salzburg II recommendations"² and the Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training,³ we will explore how to promote quality, transparency, employability and mobility in the third cycle, as the education and training of doctoral candidates has a particular role in bridging the EHEA and the European Research Area (ERA). Next to doctoral training, high quality second cycle programmes are a necessary precondition for the success of linking teaching, learning and research. Keeping wide diversity and simultaneously increasing readability, we might also explore further possible common principles for master programmes in the EHEA, taking account of previous work.

To consolidate the EHEA, meaningful implementation of **learning outcomes** is needed. The development, understanding and practical use of learning outcomes is crucial to the success of ECTS, the Diploma Supplement, recognition, qualifications frameworks and quality assurance – all of which are interdependent. We call on institutions to further link study credits with both learning outcomes and student workload, and to include the attainment of learning outcomes in assessment procedures. We will work to ensure that the ECTS Users' Guide⁴ fully reflects the state of on-going work on learning outcomes and recognition of prior learning.

We welcome the progress in developing **qualifications frameworks**; they improve transparency and will enable higher education systems to be more open and flexible. We acknowledge that realising the full benefits of qualifications frameworks can in practice be more challenging than developing the structures. The development of qualifications frameworks must continue so that they become an everyday reality for students, staff and employers. Meanwhile, some countries face challenges in finalising national frameworks and in self-certifying compatibility with the framework of qualifications of the EHEA (QF-EHEA) by the end of 2012. These countries need to redouble their efforts and to take advantage of the support and experience of others in order to achieve this goal.

A common understanding of the levels of our qualifications frameworks is essential to recognition for both academic and professional purposes. School leaving qualifications giving access to higher education will be considered as being of European Qualifications Framework (EQF) level 4, or equivalent levels for countries not bound by the EQF, where they are included in National

² European University Association (2010) 'Salzburg II Recommendations'

³ European Commission (2011)'Report of Mapping Exercise on Doctoral Training in Europe – Towards a common approach'

⁴ European Commission (2009) ECTS Users' Guide

Qualifications Frameworks. We further commit to referencing first, second and third cycle qualifications against EQF levels 6, 7 and 8 respectively, or against equivalent levels for countries not bound by the EQF. We will explore how the QF-EHEA could take account of short cycle qualifications (EQF level 5) and encourage countries to use the QF-EHEA for referencing these qualifications in national contexts where they exist. We ask the Council of Europe and the European Commission to continue to coordinate efforts to make the respective qualifications frameworks work well in practice.

We welcome the clear reference to ECTS, to the European Qualifications Framework and to learning outcomes in the European Commission's proposal for a revision of the EU Directive on the recognition of **professional qualifications**. We underline the importance of taking appropriate account of these elements in recognition decisions.

Strengthening mobility for better learning

Learning mobility is essential to ensure the quality of higher education, enhance students' employability and expand cross-border collaboration within the EHEA and beyond. We adopt the strategy "Mobility for Better Learning"⁵ as an addendum, including its mobility target, as an integral part of our efforts to promote an element of internationalisation in all of higher education.

Sufficient financial support to students is essential in ensuring equal access and mobility opportunities. We reiterate our commitment to full **portability** of national grants and loans across the EHEA and call on the European Union to underpin this endeavour through its policies.

Fair academic and professional **recognition**, including recognition of non-formal and informal learning, is at the core of the EHEA. It is a direct benefit for students' academic mobility, it improves graduates' chances of professional mobility and it represents an accurate measure of the degree of convergence and trust attained. We are determined to remove outstanding obstacles hindering effective and proper recognition and are willing to work together towards the automatic recognition of comparable academic degrees, building on the tools of the Bologna framework, as a long-term goal of the EHEA. We therefore commit to reviewing our national legislation to comply with the Lisbon Recognition Convention⁶. We welcome the European Area of Recognition (EAR) Manual⁷ and recommend its use as a set of guidelines for recognition of foreign qualifications and a compendium of good practices, as well as encourage higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies to assess institutional recognition procedures in internal and external quality assurance.

We strive for open higher education systems and better **balanced mobility** in the EHEA. If mobility imbalances between EHEA countries are deemed unsustainable by at least one party, we encourage the countries involved to jointly seek a solution, in line with the EHEA Mobility Strategy.

We encourage higher education institutions to further develop **joint programmes and degrees** as part of a wider EHEA approach. We will examine national rules and practices relating to joint programmes and degrees as a way to dismantle obstacles to cooperation and mobility embedded in national contexts.

⁵ Bucharest Ministerial Conference (2012) Mobility for Better Learning. Mobility strategy 2020 for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)

⁶ Council of Europe/UNESCO (1997) Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region

⁷ NUFFIC, Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education (2012) European Area of Recognition Manual.

Cooperation with other regions of the world and **international openness** are key factors to the development of the EHEA. We commit to further exploring the global understanding of the EHEA goals and principles in line with the strategic priorities set by the 2007 strategy for “the EHEA in a Global Setting”⁸. We will evaluate the strategy’s implementation by 2015 with the aim to provide guidelines for further internationalisation developments. The Bologna Policy Forum will continue as an opportunity for dialogue and its format will be further developed with our global partners.

Improvement of data collection and transparency to underpin political goals

We welcome the improved quality of data and information on higher education. We ask for more targeted data collection and referencing against common indicators, particularly on employability, the social dimension, lifelong learning, internationalisation, portability of grants/loans, and student and staff mobility. We ask Eurostat, Eurydice and Eurostudent to monitor the implementation of the reforms and to report back in 2015.

We will encourage the development of a system of voluntary peer learning and reviewing in countries that request it. This will help to assess the level of implementation of Bologna reforms and promote good practices as a dynamic way of addressing the challenges facing European higher education.

We will strive to make higher education systems easier to understand for the public, and especially for students and employers. We will support the improvement of current and developing transparency tools in order to make them more user-driven and to ground them on empirical evidence. We aim to reach an agreement on common guidelines for transparency by 2015.

Setting out priorities for 2012-2015

Having outlined the main EHEA goals in the coming years, we set out the following priorities for action by 2015.

At the national level, together with the relevant stakeholders, and especially with higher education institutions, we will:

- Reflect thoroughly on the findings of the 2012 Bologna Implementation Report and take into account its conclusions and recommendations;
- Strengthen policies of widening overall access and raising completion rates, including measures targeting the increased participation of underrepresented groups;
- Establish conditions that foster student-centred learning, innovative teaching methods and a supportive and inspiring working and learning environment, while continuing to involve students and staff in governance structures at all levels;
- Allow EQAR-registered quality assurance agencies to perform their activities across the EHEA, while complying with national requirements;
- Work to enhance employability, lifelong learning, problem-solving and entrepreneurial skills through improved cooperation with employers, especially in the development of educational programmes;

⁸ London Ministerial Conference 2007: European Higher Education in a Global Setting. A Strategy for the External Dimension of the Bologna Process.

- Ensure that qualifications frameworks, ECTS and Diploma Supplement implementation is based on learning outcomes;
- Invite countries that cannot finalise the implementation of national qualifications frameworks compatible with QF-EHEA by the end of 2012 to redouble their efforts and submit a revised roadmap for this task;
- Implement the recommendations of the strategy “Mobility for better learning” and work towards full portability of national grants and loans across the EHEA;
- Review national legislation to fully comply with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and promote the use of the EAR-manual to advance recognition practices;
- Encourage knowledge-based alliances in the EHEA, focusing on research and technology.

At the European level, in preparation of the Ministerial Conference in 2015 and together with relevant stakeholders, we will:

- Ask Eurostat, Eurydice and Eurostudent to monitor progress in the implementation of the Bologna Process reforms and the strategy “Mobility for better learning”;
- Develop a system of voluntary peer learning and reviewing by 2013 in countries which request it and initiate a pilot project to promote peer learning on the social dimension of higher education;
- Develop a proposal for a revised version of the ESG for adoption;
- Promote quality, transparency, employability and mobility in the third cycle, while also building additional bridges between the EHEA and the ERA;
- Work to ensure that the ECTS Users’ Guide fully reflects the state of on-going work on learning outcomes and recognition of prior learning;
- Coordinate the work of ensuring that qualifications frameworks work in practice, emphasising their link to learning outcomes and explore how the QF-EHEA could take account of short cycle qualifications in national contexts;
- Support the work of a pathfinder group of countries exploring ways to achieve the automatic academic recognition of comparable degrees;
- Examine national legislation and practices relating to joint programmes and degrees as a way to dismantle obstacles to cooperation and mobility embedded in national contexts;
- Evaluate the implementation of the “EHEA in a Global Setting” Strategy;
- Develop EHEA guidelines for transparency policies and continue to monitor current and developing transparency tools.

The next EHEA Ministerial Conference will take place in Yerevan, Armenia in 2015, where the progress on the priorities set above will be reviewed’.

2.2. Let's talk about... **(reflections on promoting Bologna process)**

Raimonda Markeviciene
Bologna expert, Lithuania

...What?

Since the very moment the Bologna declaration has been signed in 1999 it became apparent that there are several levels regarding its implementation: European, national, institutional, and departmental (one may wonder if it is appropriate to talk about the personal one - of each and every teacher that has to work on the scene of European higher education). If asked, most probably everybody would answer that the ownership of Bologna process lies with the European Union (©?!) and national ministers of education, i.e. those who provide political will and put signatures under political documents. The implementation, however, is in the hands of institutions of higher education whose sense of ownerships goes as far as national laws allow. Keeping in mind that those actors on each level of Bologna implementation work in their own environment that causes their particular points of view and limitations of the vision to the broader picture, no matter horizontally or vertically, the way to seemingly common goals become wrought with already existing and newly (un)consciously created obstacles.

The aim of this paper is to look at the Bologna implementation and counseling from the institutional perspective and the Bologna expert point of view. Of course, it is not possible to cover all controversial issues faced by Bologna experts in a short paper all the more to offer one-size-fits-all solutions. However there are some questions that have to be asked frequently enough in order to gain greater attention as only the unanswered questions make the world go round.

.... Bologna counseling scheme

Started in 2004, National Teams of Bologna Promoters projects, which later were renamed into National Teams of Bologna Experts projects and supported by the European Commission, seemed to be an answer to the problem of promoting Bologna process at the grassroots level. It would be unfair even to try rationalizing the need and efficiency of the existing scheme which, after all, is aimed to help institutions to cope with the challenges under Bologna implementation, however some inadequacies of the scheme in the view of the goals to be attained have to be acknowledged.

The call for Bologna experts' projects gives a clear description of the Bologna experts' profile, i.e. it lists certain positions in the university hierarchy that would suit the role designed for the experts. According to the adopted method of open coordination the selection of the experts is entrusted to the national authorities. So far this sounds reasonable and easy to understand. Where the understanding fails is why every call for the Bologna expert projects includes a new call for expert selection. The notion of expert becomes quite hazy. You are an expert if your national authorities decide so, even though this is the first time you hear about Bologna. However, if after a couple of years of the training during the project's implementation, the national authorities decide to pick up another person – you are not an expert any more. The question is where does your expertise disappear? Where do these discarded experts disappear? How to ensure that they would remain on the scene after the training they have received?

The roles of the experts on the national levels are quite different depending on the country. The Bologna projects are required to describe what interaction points would be found between Bologna experts and other stakeholders – among them - the same national authorities who were responsible for the expert selection. The work of the experts' team is reported only in the framework of the above said project. The national authorities are not asked and do not have to account on how they have “made use” of experts' services. Lucky are the teams in those countries where Bologna experts are included into national working groups designed to solve one or another problem. On the one hand, these experts are able to contribute with the European approaches to certain problems being solved thus providing the solutions with European dimension and better compatibility within European higher education area. On the other hand, the experts of such teams are able to provide the institutions with the long term view on what is happening or most likely will happen on the European as well as national levels.

In order to give quality counseling to the institutions the knowledge of and training on the national initiatives is as crucial as the training and information on European affairs. However this has to be ensured by those who select their own experts, i.e. national authorities that have to ensure a proper dialogue between experts and national decision makers if Bologna counseling scheme is to be a success.

... Experts' situation

It becomes apparent that the experts function in a sort of limbo situation: selected by the national authorities, approved at the European level and trying to piece together and rationalize different levels of Bologna implementation challenges – European, national, and institutional – in order to make some sense in their work. They have no power of authority on any of the levels mentioned above; their only power is the power of persuasion which may be easily lost on the grounds of the shaky and short-lived status of an appointed expert.

Experts, as all human beings, are guided by some approaches in their counseling work. One may disagree but the following aspects are very important: assumptions of rationality of people one encounters (that might remain just that- assumptions); reaching the goal or, in other words, response to or usefulness of the work carried out; ability to embrace and communicate short and long term effects as well as assess possible impact; and finally, consideration of variety of stakeholders that differ in their hierarchy, profile and needs.

Let us imagine the expert who is guided by the above mentioned approaches and send him/her on imaginary counseling mission. Let us consider just several topics and the challenges (s)he faces while discussing them.

... National laws

Our imaginary expert going on counseling visits to institutions of higher education encounters the same problem: (s)he goes to “preach” Bologna ideas, values and tools and ends up discussing national laws and institutional requirements that in quite a number cases are counter effective for Bologna implementation. One might argue that Bologna process has introduced seemingly all possible measures to ensure each country's performance in implementing it. Here, among others such initiatives as Bologna Follow-up-Group with each country's representatives, ministerial meetings, stock-taking reports as well as broad consultation campaigns on different issued could be mentioned. However, one very important issue has been forgotten.

Bologna process attaches great importance to quality issues, these being a separate action line targeting quality assurance as well as permeating other Bologna priority areas such as mobility.

What the Bologna process does not question is the quality of the national law/legislation. This is especially vital in the educational cultures where academic autonomy is quite weak and the state authorities believe that all controversial and problematic issues may be solved not by educating academic world in order to see different sides of the same coin but by dictating to it. In most cases, instead of providing a broad framework for the institutions to work in and find solutions that would fit into the framework, this approach leads to micromanagement of higher education and might even stop further development and initiatives on institutional level. To give but a few examples:

The country adopts legislation on recognition of foreign degrees in order to have a full control of the implementation of Lisbon Convention of Recognition. However the legal acts remove the possibility for higher education institutions to participate in the recognition procedures, i.e. all the foreign degree/qualification recognition issues are dealt with on the national level. Correct application of Lisbon recognition convention is ensured. The legislation earns the country a thick tick and the greenest possible colour in the Bologna stock-taking report, but... causes institutions of higher education to lose all the gained expertise on issues of recognition, reduces the need to follow the developments in this action line on European level, increases the period of decision-making on recognition, stops institutions from applying their own judgment whether to accept a student if his/her graduation documents are produced later than enrolment deadline, limits the choice of languages in which student's documents have to be submitted, etc... In other words the legislation that is well treated and attractive on the political level might be a death sentence on certain areas of internationalization policy of an institution. The institutions start losing potential students. Any international student is trying to choose the system that offers quick solutions, is not bureaucratically burdensome, and creates the least obstacles for his/her mobility.

The best example of the national micro-management is the implementation of the Diploma Supplement (DS). Created by European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES the document itself offers a clear layout and explanatory notes on how to fill it in. The DS Label initiative, first introduced by the European Commission in 2003, offers a tool to check the quality of the document as it is produced by the institution. The initiative of various countries' authorities to speed up DS implementation by supporting it with various legal acts must be applauded, however applause dies quickly enough when the acts become so prescriptive that after following them the institutions of one or another country realize they have no chance to get the DS label.

One might argue that it is not for the Bologna experts to decide whether and how the quality of the national laws has to be taken into account in the whole process of Bologna implementation; however it is up to them to point out when a national law that looks politically correct on the stage of Bologna implementation at one level distorts a broader canvas of Bologna philosophy and directly affects those actors who are the only ones that can ensure that Bologna goals are reached, i.e. higher education institutions.

...Joint degrees

Joint programmes and Joint/double/multiple degrees are a hot issue around Europe thanks to the institutional initiatives and such educational programmes supported by the European Commission as Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus and others. The issue of joint degrees perfectly illustrates the dichotomy between Bologna philosophy and national legislation as it is officially declared.

The overview of National reports for the Stock-taking exercise of 2009 gives interesting information: out of 30 countries checked only 3 officially declared that legislation on the Joint Degrees is to be adopted. 27 countries claim the Joint Degrees may be legally issued. The institutional practitioners would laugh at this claim and they would be right because in many countries joint degrees are possible *de jure* but difficult or impossible *de facto*, as possibility to

issue joint degree, in many cases, is regulated by a stand alone document that has no “organic” connection to other documents guiding higher education.

Let us imagine, what kind of advice our Bologna expert might give at the institution (s)he visits? The presentation of the ideal model of the joint programme and joint degree as so much has been written about the topic on the European level and... the sorry state of the same problem in the national legislation of a particular country. The poor Bologna expert assumes a double role: that of the Bologna promoter and that of a critic of the national legislation. This leads to another conclusion: our claims of having international universities remain just claims. Our universities are national as long as their international initiatives may be stopped or declared illegal by the absence of the particular national law.

... Quality of mobility

There is hardly any other Bologna priority area than mobility that has to offer so many tools and documents on European level. To mention but a few: Student Mobility Charter; tools such as ECTS and Diploma Supplement, huge programmes such as LLP and Erasmus Mundus with concrete requirements that should ensure quality, and yet... in most cases the deep layers of quality of mobility on an institutional level remains an elusive and difficult element to quantify.

Our imaginary Bologna expert, while on counseling missions, would soon find out that (s)he is not confronted by eager questions of EU mobility targets for 2020 but rather by mundane complaints and search for expert’s opinion on how legal or institutional decisions, such as institutional database restrictions, could be overcome to improve mobility. Sharp and helpful tools to ensure quality of mobility, as they may seem to be on European level, acquire quite interesting and unrecognizable shape before they reach the end user – the staff that actually deals with mobility. One might ask why? As always simple questions do not have simple answers.

Mobility has been important before Bologna declaration and has become a priority area after signing it. Numbers and most importantly numbers were the means to assess how well the institutions are doing in it (has anyone ever heard that an institution was asked to reimburse student grants to any of the EU programmes for not recognizing a student’s study period abroad?). This has formed an institutional culture, which may be called quantity mobility culture, with the wrong emphases on mobility issues – the more impressive mobility numbers, the better. Nobody either on European or on national level has asked an institution why it is embarking on mobility and what it wants to achieve by it. The first attempts to tackle this line of thinking were in Erasmus Policy statements for the 2007 application for LLP. Even these documents were mostly produced by the units dealing with mobility issues. In other words, nobody has even tried to introduce the notion of institutional academic mobility culture which in this context could be described as the possibility of students and teachers to move between different institutions for the development of mind, attitudes, behavioral patterns as well as institutional mind-set and structures. Described like that it is clear that the institutional mobility culture should reach every single staff member.

Without a proper institutional mind-set incorporating mobility culture the quality of mobility is hardly possible. One might ask what helps to create this elusive mobility culture. Shared institutional goals? Institutional regulations and decisions? Of course those but these aspects develop only when the institution reaches a critical/decisive number of mobile and internationally exposed teaching staff. Staff mobility which compared to student mobility is neglected, is the only and main factor that might help to reach a breakthrough in establishing institutional mobility culture.

Then we will not be faced by the situation where the information provided by the institutions is not sufficient or confusing and the solutions for study period recognition are strange at best, if not harmful for the mobile students.

How much our imaginary expert might help to shift the attitudes on mobility in an institution? Even with all the mobility tools developed and explained, shifting the institutional emphasis of mobility problems from quantity to quality remains an expert's headache. Certain external pressures on the institutions have to be removed so that they would start to realize that mobility is not only the aim in itself to ensure higher ranking but also a tool to reach certain aims that would satisfy both individual involved in the mobility and the institution that should create conditions for it. For this tool to be effective the right emphases have to be found.

It has to be noted that mobility is one of the hardest topics to counsel about. All institutions are engaged in it therefore it is assumed that they know the problems related to it however changing institutional mind from quantity to quality mobility and emphasizing institutional mobility culture approach should be seen as the main task in promoting mobility under the Bologna flag.

...How?

Though this short paper is concentrated on a few loose issues that have to illustrate the challenges faced by Bologna experts and Bologna process and is far from tapping on all the problems prevailing in all the countries, it hopefully shows that each level of those actors that push, support and implement Bologna have different points of view, different agenda and priorities in problem solving. The Bologna experts are in the midst of that in their counseling tasks trying to match European approaches, national legal challenges, and institutional aspirations. This puts them into the unique position that allows judging how much or how little integration there is between the three different levels of Bologna implementation. This raises some questions to the broad scope of addressees:

- How to reach better interaction of the Bologna teams so that the expertise on solving concrete problems at institutional level could be shared?
- Should Bologna experts' opinion be heard through broader comparative country-to-country initiatives and trainings, instead of the static project reports produced by Bologna project coordinators?
- Can the Bologna experts be used to reach greater integration between the three levels of Bologna implementation contributing to national and European policies?
- Would it be going too far to suggest:
 1. To have a list of all Bologna experts (former and present) on the European Commission webpage as at the moment www.bolognaexperts.net is a perfect tool for the experts but not very useful for the outside users?
 2. To create something like Bologna Experts "Alumni", so that the people who are not supported by the Bologna experts projects any more, could be easily found and possibly used as visiting experts by their own country's or any of the European institutions?
 3. To ask national authorities to report in their National reports for stock-taking how Bologna experts have been involved in national working groups developing legal acts?

Vilnius, December 2009

2.3. The National Teams of Bologna Experts and the Lifelong Learning National Agencies

Extract from the 'Invitation to submit Grant applications for National Teams of Bologna Experts addressed to the National Agencies (National Teams of Bologna Experts 2011 – 2013), Brussels 17.11.2010'.

The **purpose of the National Teams of Bologna Experts** is to provide a pool of expertise to promote and enhance progress toward higher education reform in their countries. The Activity Plan for the National Teams will make sure that all those involved in Higher Education on a national level benefit from a pan-European nature of these reforms.

The overall **framework of the work** carried out by the National Team is defined in two categories:

- Implementing the Bologna Process reforms:
 - Quality Assurance (internal and external);
 - The 3 Cycle System: curricular reform, national and European Qualification Frameworks (NQF/EQF), Tuning;
 - Recognition (ECTS, Europass Diploma Supplement, Lisbon Recognition Convention).
- Promoting European Union initiatives and programmes in the field of higher education, and in relation to the Bologna Process:
 - The Higher Education strand of the Youth on the Move Initiative
 - The Education and Training 2020 Agenda. More specifically:
 - The new Communication on the modernisation of higher education in Autumn 2011;
 - Lifelong Learning, with a focus on the development of flexible study programmes and systems for recognition of prior learning.
 - The Erasmus programme, with a particular stress on the Erasmus Centralised actions, in collaboration with the Executive Agency

The LLP National Agencies will provide administrative and financial support, as well as support with regard to the content, to the National Teams of Bologna Experts, under the guidance of the national authorities. They will:

- assist in the process of selection and appointment of the Bologna Experts by the national authorities;
- prepare the Activity Plan and budget;
- submit the grant application to the Executive Agency;
- implement the Activity Plan;
- prepare the final report, submit it for approval to the national authorities and forward it to the Executive Agency.

The National Teams of Bologna Experts are expected to **perform the following tasks**:

- At national level:
 - Give and receive training;
 - Advise higher education institutions on reforms;
 - Assist on policy-making;
 - Involvement in promotional and awareness-raising activities.

- At international level:
 - o Participate in European training events;
 - o Invite Bologna Experts from other National Teams to provide advice and assistance;
 - o Organisation of events involving Bologna Experts from various countries;
 - o ECTS visits.

The profile of the Bologna Experts: The Bologna Experts scheme is a “peer-to-peer” exercise. Bologna Experts are professionals active in higher education advising their colleagues on how best to introduce higher education reforms. The Experts do not replace the work done by Ministries, Rectors Conferences, Quality Assurance Agencies, ENIC/NARIC centres, LLP National Agencies, National Europass centres, etc. They should be well embedded in the national higher education environment and cooperate closely with National Bologna Committees where these committees exist. They should be good communicators able to convince their peers.

Members of the National Team are to hold one of the following positions (or a combination thereof):

- (Vice-)Rectors
- Deans
- Senior Academics
- Directors of Study
- International Relations Officers
- Higher Education Experts

Furthermore, for the whole duration of the contract period, each Team shall include at least one student. It is suggested that students are trained as recognition counsellors and that they actively participate, among other tasks, in the field of ECTS.

CHAPTER 3: CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE SEMINAR SPEAKERS

3.1. Keynote Speeches

‘Priorities of the 2012 Bucharest Communiqué: How do we proceed?’

Jacob Fuchs,

Danish Co-chair of the Bologna Follow-Up Group

The ministers of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) met in Bucharest in April 2012 to discuss the future of higher education in Europe. They agreed to focus on three main goals in the Bucharest Communiqué, which sets out the priorities for the next three years: to provide quality higher education for all, to enhance graduates’ employability and to strengthen mobility as a means of better learning.

These goals will be put into practice through continuous work on the tools of the Bologna framework. This includes securing widespread use of ECTS, the Diploma Supplement and qualifications frameworks and strengthening European quality assurance and recognition. The Communiqué emphasises that the EHEA countries must concentrate on fully supporting higher education institutions and other stakeholders in the efforts to deliver meaningful changes. The Bologna Experts can here play a pivotal role as facilitators.

Jacob Fuchs, Danish Co-chair of the Bologna Follow-Up Group, will present the key priorities of the Bucharest Communiqué and the political deliberations that lead to its adoption. He will then discuss next steps with a particular emphasis on how the Bologna Experts can contribute to putting the Bucharest conclusions on track.

‘The 2012 Bologna Process Implementation report: progress in the period between 2009 and 2012’

Andrejs Rauhvargers,

BFUG member, Co-Chair of the Bologna Process Working Group on Implementation

The presentation will shortly cover all the aspects included in the report *The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report. Eurydice, Brussels, 2012, 220 pp.* The main focus of the presentation will be on the structural aspects and tools of the Bologna process:

- Achievements and issues of the implementation of the Bologna three-cycle degree system including the short cycle programmes, as well as issues regarding access to the next cycles;
- Joint degrees;
- The block of tasks that depend on proper implementation of the Learning Outcomes: implementation of ECTS, student-centred learning, qualifications frameworks, internal quality assurance within HEIs and implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning and Lifelong Learning within HEIs;
- The status quo in Quality Assurance;

- Achievements and solutions of the pertinent obstacles in recognition of qualifications and study credit points.

A less elaborate sight on social issues and mobility will also be given.

3.2 Discussion Groups

3.2.1. Qualification frameworks, quality assurance, recognition and transparency tools

Allan Bruun Pedersen, BFUG – recognition WG

This discussion group aims to present the major conclusions of the ministerial communiqué from Bucharest in May 2012 on the topics qualification frameworks, quality assurance, recognition and transparency tools. Most important is the aim to initiate discussions on how to develop and implement the ministerial recommendations at the HEI's within EHEA and to exchange views on the Bologna and HERE experts' role in this process.

The presentation and the following discussions will focus on topics such as institutional recognition and credit transfer policies. Is there a need for a more centralised institutional approach to recognition based on the principles and procedures stemming from the Lisbon Recognition Convention? Are the HEI's aware of the principles and procedures outlined in the LRC, the only juridical binding part of the Bologna process? What is the European Area of Recognition manual (EAR-manual), <http://www.eurorecognition.eu/Manual/> , and is it a useful tool for admission officers?

How can Bologna and HERE Experts promote qualification frameworks and make them part of everyday life for students, staff and employees of the HEI's? Are qualification frameworks simply a technical academic instrument or could it be "the new black" in promoting employability of academic qualifications? Are short cycle qualifications included in the national qualification framework and if not, which implications do this have for holders of short cycle qualifications?

Only 28 QA agencies in 13 countries are registered in EQAR. How can Bologna and HERE experts promote the knowledge of EQAR and which role can they play in paving the way for national commitment to EQAR? Does the ministerial goal of allowing EQAR registered quality assurance agencies to perform QA activities across the EHEA comply with national legislation?

These are some of the relevant discussions which are feasible for a debate within this group, as well as topics and discussions raised by the expert participants.

Bucharest Ministerial meeting background documents relevant to this session:

- [Qualifications Frameworks Working Group report](#)
- [Recognition Working Group report](#)
- [Transparency Tools Working Group report](#)
- [European Network on Recognition of Prior Learning report](#)

Please note that they can all be found on the Vilnius Seminar's website

3.2.2. Mobility

Kathleen Ordnung, BFUG – Mobility WG

Kathleen Ordnung will highlight the main conclusions of the Bucharest Communiqué in terms of 'Mobility'. She will also refer to the Mobility working group report and the Mobility Strategy 2020 for the EHEA. The talk will be based on her experience as an active member of the Bologna Follow-Up Group. Her introductory presentation will be the starting point of an interactive discussion with the meeting participants. The focus of the discussion will lie on the role the Bologna and Tempus Higher Education Reform experts can play in the implementation/interpretation of the Communiqué.

[Bucharest Ministerial meeting background documents relevant to this session:](#)

- [Mobility Working Group report](#)
- [The Mobility Strategy 2020 for the EHEA: Mobility for Better Learning](#)

[Please note that they can all be found on the Vilnius Seminar's website](#)

3.2.3. Social Dimension

Brian Power, Chair BFUG – Social Dimension WG

The presentation will examine the evolution of the social dimension of higher education in the Bologna Process, including the way in which the social dimension has been defined since it was first referred to in the Prague Communiqué in 2001, through to the current objective which aims to ensure the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of states' populations.

It will explore recent developments in relation to the social dimension at European level, including the Social Dimension Working Group proposal for a pilot project to promote peer learning on the social dimension of higher education in Europe. It will also look at some concrete examples of good practice in individual countries.

These issues will be examined within the context of specific reference to the social dimension of higher education in the Bucharest Communiqué, including the specific priority action for the period 2012-2015 of strengthening policies to widen overall access and raise completion rates, including measures targeting the increased participation of underrepresented groups.

[Bucharest Ministerial meeting background documents relevant to this session:](#)

- [Social Dimension Working Group report](#)
- [Annex: Proposal for a pilot project to Promote Peer Learning on the Social Dimension of HE in Europe](#)

[Please note that they can all be found on the Vilnius Seminar's website](#)

3.2.4. International Openness

Ligia Deca, Head BFUG Secretariat

Internationalisation has become one of the key words in higher education institutions' strategies, but also in national policy making. In the frame of the Bologna Process, the Bologna Follow-Up

Group (BFUG) has set up a working group on International Openness and a Network on Information and Promotion to assist with the implementation of the 2007 “The European Higher Education in a Global Setting⁹ Strategy and to coordinate the organization of the Bologna Policy Forum, an essential event in fostering dialogue on higher education at a global level.

With the Bologna Process entering a new decade of in-depth and proper implementation and with the adoption of the 2012 EHEA ‘Mobility for better learning’ Strategy¹⁰, it is now clear that more emphasis should be put into mainstreaming internationalization into all aspects of higher education. There are many projects underway to help in the build-up of a repository of good practices, as well as several ideas on how to go further on this topic, which are all included in the 2012 Report of the International Openness Working Group¹¹.

The introduction to the discussion group will look at these developments, while trying to emphasise the role of the Bologna and Higher Education Reform Experts in designing and implementing internationalization strategies, in line with the ministerial commitments made both in the Bucharest EHEA Ministerial Conference Communique, as well as in the 2012 Bologna Policy Forum Statement.

[Bucharest Ministerial meeting background documents relevant to this session:](#)

- [International Openness Working Group report](#)

[Please note that they can all be found on the Vilnius Seminar’s website](#)

3.2.5. ECTS/DS Label counselling – case studies

María Luisa García Mínguez, Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency (European Commission)

The EACEA will provide to the participants a brief overview and explanation of the application and assessment criteria for the current label selection 2012. As the session is a training event, the participants will have the opportunity to discuss in small groups some real case studies from different countries that could serve as a reference point to illustrate some of the key dimensions of a successful Label application.

The objective is to enable Bologna Experts and National Agencies representatives to have a second opportunity (the first one was during the Training Seminar in Brussels, March 2012) to discuss on those main aspects of ECTS and DS labels that will be crucial for providing the best targeted advice to the potential Label applicants.

⁹ <http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/Global%20context/Strategy-for-EHEA-in-global-setting.pdf>

¹⁰ [http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/\(1\)/2012%20EHEA%20Mobility%20Strategy.pdf](http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/(1)/2012%20EHEA%20Mobility%20Strategy.pdf)

¹¹ <http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/%281%29/IO%20WG%20Final%20Report.pdf>

CHAPTER 5: BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Please note that the following documents can all be found on the Vilnius Seminar website:
<http://vilnius2012.bolognaexperts.net/>

A. European Higher Education Area Ministerial Conference Documents:

A.1. The Ministerial Communiqué represents one of the main political documents of the European Higher Education Area. The Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué takes account of the achievements since the last Ministerial conference in Leuven in 2009 and sets objectives that would be operationalised in the plan of work for the upcoming sequence of the Bologna Process. It is prepared by the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG).

A.2. Bologna Process Working Groups and Networks reports:

- * A.2.1. Social Dimension Working Group report and Annex (Proposal for a pilot project to Promote Peer Learning on the Social Dimension of HE in Europe)
- * A.2.2. Qualifications Frameworks Working Group
- * A.2.3. International Openness Working Group
- * A.2.4. Mobility Working Group
- * A.2.5. Recognition Working Group
- * A.2.6. Transparency Tools Working Group
- * A.2.7. European Network on Recognition of Prior Learning
- * A.2.8. NESSIE - Network of Expert on Student Support in Europe

Disclaimer: the reports listed above reflect the discussions of the WGs and Networks' members, according to the Terms of Reference adopted by the BFUG and the BFUG 2009-2012 Work Plan.

A.3. The Mobility Strategy 2020 for the EHEA: Mobility for Better Learning

A.4. The Report on the Implementation of the Bologna Process

B. Statements from EHEA consultative members and other organisations:

- B.1. ENQA
- B.2. Education International
- B.3. EUA
- B.4. EURASHE
- B.5. EQAR
- B.6. ESU: Bologna with Student Eyes 2012

C. Bologna Policy Forum Documents:

- C.1. Bologna Policy Forum Statement
- C.2. Bologna Policy Forum thematic sessions' background paper