The Bologna Process – a journey
Status quo, challenges and opportunities

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Themes of the presentation

Introduction of the EHEA
Overview of official Bologna Process implementation progress
Challenges and opportunities
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Bologna Secretariat

BP – main features

- Evolving international policy cooperation process based on voluntary adherence to common goals and inter-governmental cooperation;
- 47 country members, Republic of Moldova joined in 2005;
- The EU represented through the European Commission as a BP member;
- Membership based on being a signatory of the CoE European Cultural Convention and willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the Bologna Process (Berlin, 2003);
- Set of values and fundamental principles (evolving): stakeholder participation, institutional autonomy, academic freedom, but also the CoE foundations: democracy, human rights and the rule of law;
- High level of stakeholder participation;
- Decision making – ministerial meetings, steering and national exchange – Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG), thematic and policy work – BFUG WGs and networks.

Bologna Process

- Bologna (1999)
- Prague (2001)
- Bergen (2005)
- London (2007)
- Leuven/Louvain-la Neuve (2009)
- Bucharest (2012)
### The EHEA unfolded

**Bologna action lines** → **EHEA Objectives/ HE priorities**

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### BFUG Workplan 2009-2012

**Working groups:**
- International openness: The European Higher Education Area in a Global Context
- Mobility
- Qualification frameworks
- Recognition
- Reporting on the implementation of the Bologna Process
- Social dimension
- Transparency tools
BFUG Workplan 2009-2012

Networks:
- EHEA Information and Promotion Network
- Network of NQF (National Qualifications Framework) Correspondents
- NESSIE (Network for Experts of Student Support in Europe)
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) network

The BFUG Secretariat

- **Main role:**
  “...to provide neutral support to further the consolidation of the European Higher Education Area under the exclusive authority of the BFUG and its Chairs and Vice-Chairs.”

- **Functions:**
  - Administrative and operational support for BFUG, its sub-structures (WG and networks) and the Board (minute-taking, background documents drafting, assisting chairs in planning the meeting, communication etc.);
  - Create and maintain the EHEA permanent website (www.ehea.info) and electronic archives;
  - Act as an internal and external contact point for the EHEA, while ensuring dissemination of information on behalf of the Chairs or based on direct requests;
  - Participate in organising the 26-27 April 2012 Ministerial Conference and Bologna Policy Forum.
Themes of the presentation

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Report 2009

EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register);

• E4 – European University Association (EUA), European Students’ Union (ESU), EURASHE and ENQA: Quality Assurance:
  • European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) and
  • EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register);
• Target of 20% mobile graduates in the EHEA by 2020 – launched by ESU at the 20th anniversary of the ERASMUS programme;
• The social dimension in HE – introduced by ESU as a priority in 2011 (Prague);
• EUA – placing doctoral education on the agenda, as well as the link between EHEA and ERA;
• BUSINESS EUROPE – underlining the importance of employability;
• Council of Europe – leading the work on qualifications frameworks and public responsibility on HE;
• ESU and EI – student centered learning.
Bologna Process Independent Assessment 2010

- The European HE landscape has visibly changed, perhaps with the exception of Social Dimension;

- 17 countries have joined the Bologna Process between 2001-2005, mostly from the East and South-East of Europe, “two-speed Bologna”;

- No real high-performers on all Bologna Action Lines, which resulted in a second Bologna decade, aimed at “full and proper implementation of the agreed objectives and the agenda for the next decade set by the Leuven/ Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué” (Budapest and Vienna Ministerial Declaration, 2010).

- Stakeholder participation as a main factor in advancing Bologna Process reforms.

- A balanced mixture of supporting policy mechanisms (funding, regulation, policies in other areas, communication and information exchange) appeared to be crucial to the successful implementation of Bologna reforms.

Bologna Process Independent Assessment 2010

- Main features leading to differentiation of the BP implementation at national level:
  - Different challenges in national HE systems:
    - inefficiencies (e.g. high drop-out rates, low participation rates across a variety of dimensions)
    - limited systemic flexibility, and upgrading quality during rapid expansion;
  - Different management and governance arrangements, meant that the implementation of national reforms deviated from Bologna intentions.

- Divergence has been strengthened by the fact that key actors in different countries interpreted elements of the Bologna reform agenda differently.

• Bologna tools were broadly implemented, but there is a clear need for a systemic approach:
  ➢ Linking quality assurance with recognition.
  ➢ Learning outcomes as the key to unlocking the potential of ECTS, qualifications frameworks and Diploma Supplement.

• Access, progression and success in higher education become key to economic and social recovery from the crisis. A new focus of the Bologna Process.

• Mobility is still seen as the hallmark of the EHEA, but more concern about imbalances and about the link with Social Dimension.

Themes of the presentation

Introduction of the EHEA

Overview of official Bologna Process implementation progress

Challenges and opportunities
Challenges for countries from SE Europe

- Bologna reforms are sometimes confused with EU recommendations and even with the “acquis communautaire”;
- Lack of tradition in stakeholder involvement;
- Resistance to implementation from HEIs and misunderstandings regarding the aims of the Bologna Process;
- Insufficient data collection;
- Mimetism of HE reforms seen in other national contexts;
- Insufficient funding allotted to Bologna Process implementation and little possibility for accessing EU funds;
- Complicated procedures in obtaining a mandate for the BFUG representatives, which sometimes results in low participation in the BFUG debates;
- Developing regional dialogues on Bologna Process implementation.

Opportunities

- Tapping into the full potential of the talents in the Republic of Moldova: increasing access and success in HE of all those who have the ability to be involved.
- Fulfilling the Bologna Promise by unlocking the potential of the Bologna tools:
  - Understanding learning outcomes;
  - Using ECTS, DS, NQF and QA in a coherent way;
- Increasing regional and European level cooperation and exchange of good practice;
- Make the Bologna Process mirror more of the priorities at the national level by:
  - Setting up a national BFUG;
  - Being active in the European BFUG;
  - Increasing cooperation of academic communities.
- Moving towards student centered learning.
Thank you!
Questions...