



# TOWARDS THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

Conference of European Ministers Responsible  
for Higher Education

Bergen, 19-20 May 2005



## FACTS ABOUT NORWAY



Photo: Fritjof Fure

### THE KINGDOM OF NORWAY

Norway is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary democratic system of governance. It consists of the western and northern parts of the Scandinavian peninsula as well as northern territories off the mainland. Norway is Europe's sixth largest country in terms of land mass, but is sparsely populated and ranks only 28th in population with approximately 4.6 million people. To the east it borders on Sweden, Finland and Russia, and to the north, west and south it is surrounded by ocean areas. These include the Barents Sea, the Norwegian Sea, the North Sea and the Skagerrak.

The country is richly endowed with natural resources, including petroleum, natural gas, minerals, fish, timber and hydroelectric power. These resources, particularly in the offshore sector, have helped Norway to develop into one of the world's richest countries per capita. Other contributing factors have been the country's proximity to the important markets of Western Europe and its easy access to energy, widespread industrialisation, political stability and a high level of education among the population.

### LANGUAGE

Norway's official language is Norwegian, with two written variants. Some 20,000 inhabitants have the Sámi language as their mother tongue. North Sámi is an official language on a par with Norwegian, used mainly in the Sámi districts in the North. English is the most widespread foreign language, followed by German and French.

### CLIMATE

Given Norway's extreme northerly position, its mainland climate is surprisingly mild. The high mountain ranges provide protection from precipitation to large inland areas in the south-east, giving this part of the country a more continental climate than would be expected in light of its proximity to the coast. Some of these areas east of the mountains have an annual

rainfall of less than 300 mm. Most of the precipitation from the sea falls along the west coast, with some areas in the Bergen region recording an annual rainfall of up to 3000 mm. However, May is usually a month with comparatively little rainfall in Bergen.

### ECONOMY

The Norwegian economy is generally characterised as a mixed economy - a capitalist market economy with a clear component of state influence. The economic policy is designed to stabilise and counteract unemployment and inflation, to stimulate growth and to influence the structure of industry and the distribution of income.

### HIGHER EDUCATION

Norway has six universities, six specialised university institutions, 25 university colleges, two national academies of the arts and 29 private higher education institutions with accredited programmes. The country has 200,000 registered students, with approximately 175,000 in state institutions and 25,000 in private institutions. 15,000 Norwegian students study abroad, and Norway welcomes more than 10,000 foreign students per year. The institutions have extensive academic and administrative autonomy.

A major reform adopted by the national parliament in 2001 and implemented in 2002-03 brought Norwegian higher education largely in line with the Bologna objectives. The reform introduced a Bachelor-Master-Ph.D. degree structure and a credit system based on ECTS, established an independent national quality assurance agency, gave higher education institutions increased autonomy, made the Diploma Supplement mandatory and put in place a number of other measures to increase internationalisation. It covers both state-owned and private higher education institutions. Norway ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention in 1999.

### DEAR CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT,



It is a great pleasure to invite you to the fourth Ministerial Conference of the Bologna Process, and I am proud to invite you to Norway and Bergen. Bergen is said to be the gateway to the fjords of Norway. It is also a World Heritage City with long cultural traditions, and not least, a city of higher education with a number of institutions, including the University of Bergen, which is also host to the Holberg Prize. The academic and student life is a vital and important part of the city.

My expectations for the Ministerial Conference are high. I hope that it will turn the focus of the Bologna Process even more strongly towards implementation, and will come to be seen as an important milestone towards reaching the objectives of the Process. The stocktaking and conclusions from the many seminars over the past two years will give a good basis for deciding on priorities and further specifying objectives on the road towards the achievement of a European Higher Education Area. The Process so far has shown that the European Higher Education Area is an achievable goal.

Even though the Bologna Process is a genuinely European process, it should not be perceived as inward-looking. The globalisation of higher education rapidly increases, and this must necessarily influence our discussions in Bergen.

The number of Bologna Member States is now 40, and I am pleased that the Bologna family may be extended still further in Bergen. Another five European countries have applied for admission, declaring their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the Bologna Process in their own higher education systems.

I hope your stay in Bergen will become a positive experience that will stay with you long after your departure. In addition to the organised social programme I would recommend all participants to go for a stroll in the city centre and the harbour on your own. The harbour-front "Bryggen", with its easily recognisable and prominent appearance, is rich in historic tradition, and has given its profile to the Bergen 2005 Conference logo.

I look forward to welcoming you in Bergen.

KRISTIN CLEMET

Norwegian Minister of Education and Research



## PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

### CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

#### THURSDAY 19 MAY

- 0900-1000: Registration
- 1000-1300: **Plenary Session**
- 1000-1115: Opening addresses:
- Minister Kristin Clemet
  - Minister François Biltgen
  - EU Commissioner Ján Figel
- Decision on the accession of new Member States
- 1115-1145: Coffee Break
- 1145-1300:
- Presentation of the general report of the Bologna Follow-up Group and the report from the stocktaking
  - The Bologna Process as seen by the higher education institutions and students (the EUA *Trends IV* report and the report from the ESIB student survey)
  - Messages from Consultative Members
- 1300-1430: Lunch
- 1430-1730: **Ministers' Meeting**
- Discussion of the reports and messages, the results of the stocktaking, the further development of the Bologna Process and the draft communiqué
- 1430-1730: **Discussion Groups parallel to the Ministers' Meeting**
1. Doctoral Studies and the Synergy between Higher Education and Research (with simultaneous interpretation)
  2. Lifelong Learning
  3. Quality Assurance and Recognition in a Global Perspective
  4. Institutional Autonomy and Governance
- 1930: **Conference Dinner in Haakon's Hall**

#### FRIDAY 20 MAY

- 0900-1200: **Plenary Session**
- Reports from the Discussion Groups
  - Finalisation and adoption of the Bergen Communiqué
  - Closing statements
  - Declaration by the next host country
- 1200-1230: Photo call for the Ministers and heads of delegation
- 1230-1330: Press conference
- 1200-1430: Lunch
- Departure

The working languages of the conference will be English and French, with simultaneous interpretation in the plenary sessions and in Discussion Group number 1 on 19 May.

### SOCIAL PROGRAMME

#### WEDNESDAY 18 MAY

- 1830-2045 Excursion on the historic three-masted barque "Statsraad Lehmkuhl"
- 2100-2300 Reception hosted by the University of Bergen at the Bergen Maritime Museum

#### FRIDAY 20 MAY, AFTERNOON

Optional sightseeing tour to Bryggen and Fløien – approximately 3 hours (1500-1800). The walking tour of Bryggen gives an impression of the history of the city as one of the four major overseas trading centres of the Hanseatic League. The buildings are now on UNESCO's World Heritage List. The Fløibanen funicular then takes the participants to Mount Fløien, which offers an excellent view of Bergen, the fjords and the mountains.

#### SATURDAY 21 MAY

"Norway in a Nutshell" – day trip.

This is a round trip through the beautiful fjord region, taking participants via the Flåm railway, Aurlandsfjord, the narrow Nærøfjord and the steep Stalheimskleivene road back to Bergen. This event is at participants' own cost (NOK 760,-).

#### 17 MAY - NORWAY'S NATIONAL DAY

17 May is Norway's national day, commemorating the signing of the Norwegian constitution and liberation from Denmark in 1814. It is the country's greatest ceremonial day, with colourful festivities including music and processions of schoolchildren and, in Bergen, the city's characteristic boys' brigades ("buekorps"). The celebrations last all day, with the first procession already at 7 a.m. and the main parade normally at 11. For a photographic impression, see <http://www.norphoto.com/r/eng1.php>. Delegates who have the opportunity to arrive in Bergen in time for the national day celebrations are strongly encouraged to do so.



Harbour-front "Bryggen"

Photo: Bergen Reiselivslag/Per Eide



## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### VENUE

The conference venue is:

Hotel Norge  
Nedre Ole Bulls Plass 4  
Postboks 662  
Bergen N-5807  
Norway  
Telephone: +47 55 57 30 00  
Fax: +47 55 57 30 01

The hotel is located in the city centre. For more information see <http://bergen.radissonsas.com/>.

The conference dinner will be held in the 13th-century Haakon's Hall.

### ACCOMMODATION

Delegates will be accommodated at Hotel Norge and at Rica Travel Hotel  
Christiesgt. 5-7  
5808 Bergen  
Telephone: +47 55 36 29 00  
Fax: +47 55 36 29 01

Rica Travel Hotel is located close to Hotel Norge. *Accommodation must be booked via the electronic registration form, cf. below.*

### FLIGHTS

There are direct international flights to Bergen from Amsterdam, Copenhagen, London (Gatwick and Stansted) and Stockholm. Delegates from other countries may travel via one of these cities or via Oslo. There are frequent flights between Oslo and Bergen all day.

Please note that due to the national day celebrations in Norway some flights may be cancelled on 17 May.

### TRANSPORTATION

There will be organised transportation for all participants from Bergen Airport to the hotels, to and from social events, and back to the airport after the conference, with a special limousine service for Ministers on arrival.

### REGISTRATION

For practical and security reasons, the electronic registration form must be filled in for all delegates. The registration form is found at <http://konferanse.revio.no/bologna05>. Please take care to note any special preferences with regard to accommodation or meals.

*The deadline for registration is 1 April 2005.*

More detailed information about the conference will be sent to all participants after registration. In case of questions, please contact:

Travel and accommodation:  
Via Travel Bergen  
Telephone: +47 55 54 36 30,  
please refer to « Bologna »  
e-mail: [edith.beyer@via.no](mailto:edith.beyer@via.no)

Local conference organisation:  
Norwegian Centre for International  
Cooperation in Higher Education  
Telephone: +47 55 30 88 05  
e-mail: [bologna@siu.no](mailto:bologna@siu.no)

Questions related to the invitation or the content of the conference programme may be directed to the Secretariat of the Bologna Follow-up Group at [bologna@ufd.dep.no](mailto:bologna@ufd.dep.no).

## BERGEN, A WORLD HERITAGE CITY AND A GATEWAY TO THE FJORDS OF NORWAY



Photo: Bergen Reiselivslag/Oddleiv Apneseth

### – A CITY WITH ITS FEET IN THE SEA, ITS HEAD IN THE SKIES AND ITS HEART IN THE RIGHT PLACE

Bergen is an international city with a small-town charm and atmosphere. The inhabitants love to show off its beauty and its many sides. They are proud of Bergen's shipping, trading and cultural traditions. The city with its 235,000 inhabitants is like an amphitheatre climbing up the mountainsides, overlooking the sea. Bergen is said to be the gateway to the wildest and loveliest fjords of Norway.

### HISTORY

Bergen was founded in 1070. It is favourably situated in relation to sea trade and was for a long time Norway's most important commercial, shipping and industrial town. Bergen became a commercial and shipping centre of European significance, and for a while, during the Middle Ages, it was the largest town in all the Nordic countries. Its harbour-front, "Bryggen", was a scene of thriving activity for the Hanseatic League up to the 18th century, and its easily recognisable and prominent appearance has given its profile to the Bergen 2005 Conference logo.

Bergen's commerce still thrives, though nowadays much of its economic life is centred on the North Sea oil industry.

### HIGHER EDUCATION IN BERGEN

Bergen has four state-owned higher education institutions:

*The University of Bergen.* A young, modern university with most of its premises concentrated in the heart of the city. The university has some 17,000 students and

2,500 academic and other staff. It has seven faculties covering most of the traditional university disciplines. The University of Bergen is a centre of marine sciences and research, and is also host to the Holberg International Memorial Prize for outstanding scholarly work in the field of arts and humanities.

*Bergen University College*, with approximately 5,000 students and faculties of education, engineering and health and social sciences.

*The Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration*, with about 2,770 students.

*Bergen National Academy of the Arts*, which is one of the two independent institutions of higher learning in the visual arts and design in Norway, with 300 students.

Private higher education institutions in Bergen include a school of architecture and institutions offering programmes in education as well as health and social sciences, business administration etc.

The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU) is an agency that promotes international cooperation in education and research. SIU is a public administrative body under the Ministry of Education and Research, located in Bergen.

More information about Bergen is found at [www.visitbergen.com](http://www.visitbergen.com).





[WWW.BOLOGNA-BERGEN2005.NO](http://WWW.BOLOGNA-BERGEN2005.NO)

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UNIVERSITETET I BERGEN

