

FROM BERLIN TO BERGEN

General Report from the Bologna Follow-up Group to the Ministerial Conference in Bergen 19-20 May 2005

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1. HALFWAY TOWARDS 2010 (*preliminary text*)

Halfway in the Bologna Process towards 2010, we start to see the contours of the European Higher Education Area. It is not a single, unified higher education system, but a group of more than forty national systems developing according to jointly agreed principles. As additional countries want to join when Ministers meet in Bergen in May 2005, the Bologna Process can be seen as a truly pan-European Process.

For many countries, “Bologna” is an inspiration and a recipe for highly needed reforms in their higher education systems. At the same time we are building a common framework to realise the idea that students and staff shall be able to move freely within our common Area, having full recognition of their qualifications. There are limitations to the free movement set by legal and financial restrictions outside the competence of Ministers of Education, but building a Europe of Knowledge, we must strive to overcome these problems.

At the previous Ministerial Conference in Berlin in September 2003, priority was given to the further development of three central elements in the Bologna Process,

- a three-cycle degree system in each Member State with degrees at Bachelor, Master and Doctor level,
- national quality assurance systems co-operating in a Europe-wide network,
- mutual recognition between Member States of degrees and study periods.

Each of these elements has a national dimension and a European Dimension. So has the concept of qualifications frameworks; national frameworks fitting into *an overarching framework for the European Higher Education Area*. The Follow-up Group will report on the development of an overarching framework for higher education that may be a first element in a European educational framework spanning also vocational education and training.

Ministers have also asked for the development of an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance to be used in the national quality assurance systems. The Follow-up Group can report that agreement on key points has been reached, thus introducing a European dimension in quality assurance.

There exists already an international legal instrument for mutual recognition of degrees and study periods: the Lisbon Recognition Convention. By January 2005 the Lisbon Recognition Convention has been ratified by 31 of the 40 Member States of the Bologna Process and by the five prospective Member States. Formal problems related to the ratification procedure should not keep Member States from practicing the principles of the Lisbon Convention, thus recognising degrees and study periods from other Member States as equivalent to degrees and study periods in their own educational system. Correspondingly, higher education institutions in all Member States should recognise courses from partner institutions in other Member States as equivalent to their own courses.

The year 2010 may be the end of the Bologna Process, but it will at the same time be the beginning of the European Higher Education Area, an area which must continue to develop *after* 2010. Before 2010, Ministers must decide how this should be organised. The Bergen Ministerial Conference may advise on the way to go.

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2. THE BFUG WORK PROGRAMME 2003-2005

In the Berlin Communiqué, Ministers asked the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) to co-ordinate activities in the Bologna Process as indicated in the themes and actions covered by the communiqué and to report on them in time for the next Ministerial Conference in 2005.

The recommendations of the Berlin Communiqué were directed at national authorities, institutions and organisations. Countries and organisations have launched relevant follow-up activities in accordance with the Communiqué. This active participation of all partners is of great importance the long-term success of the Bologna Process.

To co-ordinate activities, the BFUG developed a Work Programme for 2003-2005, decided in its final form in March 2004. Members and consultative members of the Bologna Process have initiated most of the actions included in the Work Programme, and as such, it is basically a bottom-up process. However, the Follow-up Group has ensured that the Work Programme related in the best possible way to the Berlin Communiqué as a whole and that it had a reasonable balance between the various action lines of the Bologna Process.

Seminars were the main vehicle for the follow-up of the Prague Communiqué, and have also been important in the follow-up after Berlin. The EU Commission has supported a number of Bologna Follow-up Seminars in priority areas under the Socrates and Tempus programmes. A number of Bologna Follow-up Seminars were included in the BFUG Work Programme. Responsibility for organising these seminars was widely spread among participating countries and organisations. Condensed reports from the seminars have been included in this report.

The Berlin Communiqué defined three intermediate priorities for the next two years: quality assurance, the two-cycle degree system developing into a three-cycle system, and recognition of degrees and periods of studies. The priorities mentioned have been central in the Work Programme.

It was clear from the Berlin Communiqué that the Ministers envisaged that the BFUG should take responsibility for actions in the following areas:

- monitoring the ENQA project on quality assurance;
- developing an overarching framework of qualifications;
- realising the stocktaking exercise.

As may be seen from separate sections in this general report, these projects have received special attention from the BFUG.

The Follow-up Group has met six times between Berlin and Bergen, being assisted by a Board and a Secretariat as prescribed by the Berlin Communiqué.

All documents and reports referred to in this general report are available at <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/>.

3. THE BOLOGNA ACTION LINES

Six action lines were introduced in the Bologna Declaration:

1. Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees;
2. Adoption of a system essentially based on two cycles;
3. Establishment of a system of credits;
4. Promotion of mobility;
5. Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance;
6. Promotion of the European dimension in higher education.

Three more were introduced in the Prague Communiqué:

7. Lifelong learning;
8. Higher education institutions and students;
9. Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area.

A tenth action line was introduced in the Berlin Communiqué:

10. Doctoral studies and the synergy between the EHEA and the ERA.

In the follow-up after Prague and Berlin, *the social dimension of higher education* has been seen as an overarching or transversal action line.

When the Follow-up Group made a selection of seminars for the inclusion in the BFUG Work Programme 2003-2005, a reasonable coverage of the various action lines was sought. This supplemented the selection according to the explicit priorities of the Berlin Communiqué.

As the process has been developing, action lines have tended to overlap or merge and new concepts have been introduced. As an example, action lines 1,2,3 and an important part of 10 may now be described within *a framework of qualifications for higher education*, the ambition is that also action line 7 may be included in a *framework of qualifications* that may span both higher education and vocational education and training and also possibly other parts of the educational system. The development of an *overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area* will be essential also for action line 6, the European dimension..

A concept implicit in action lines 1 and 4 that has turned out to be central for the Bologna Process; *recognition of degrees and study periods*. The legal instrument has been with us from the start, in the form of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, saying that all States party to the Convention shall recognise degrees and study periods from other States party to the convention as equivalent to degrees and study periods in their own system, provided there are no substantial differences. Hence the appeal from Ministers in Berlin that all Bologna Member states should ratify the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Action line 5 *Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance* has been central in the follow-up after Berlin. With the development of an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance, a common basis for recognition is introduced. The co-operation and trust developing in the quality assurance sector may also be seen as yet another element of the European dimension of higher education (action line 6).

Action line 8 keep reminding us of the importance of higher education institutions and student organisations as partners in the process. The active participation of institutions and their staff and of students in *the implementation* of the European Higher Education Area will be vital for the success of the Bologna Process. This implies that basic principles for this partnership between national authorities and the higher education sector must be clearly visible also in the description of the EHEA, first of all the principle of autonomous institutions and the principle of student participation in the governance of higher education institutions.

Action line 8 also initiated after Prague the discussion of higher education as a public good and a public responsibility. The public responsibility for higher education encompasses the structural elements of the Bologna Process such as a national framework, degree structure, quality assurance and recognition. The public responsibility for the structure of higher education is in all countries defined by the national legislation. A special seminar was organised by the Council of Europe in September 2004 to look closer into the public responsibility for higher education and research, and another seminar organised by UNESCO/CEPES in November 2004 studied the legislation for higher education in a large group of Bologna Member States (see chapter 4 on seminars).

Funding of higher education may – at least partly - be considered a public responsibility. However, in any system, individuals have to carry some of the cost. Student support is a key economic issue where no readymade answer exists, but which is intimately linked to the public responsibility for making higher education more accessible. Student support is also an important factor for mobility.

Student and staff mobility is at the heart of the Bologna Process and *Mobility* has been seen as a separate Bologna action line (action line 4). However, several seminars and also discussions in the Follow-up Group has shown that Mobility is indeed a transversal subject. Being aware that many challenges must be met to further increase mobility between different groups of Member States, further studies will be necessary on various elements, including the recognition issue, the social and linguistic issues, the financial issues, immigration and social security issues and the legislative framework.

A tentative conclusion regarding action lines may be that they have been imperative for the dynamics of the Bologna Process. However, this does not necessarily imply that they should also be parameters for the description of the European Higher Education Area which will be the *outcome* of the Bologna Process: The action lines have shown the way to go, but they do not explicitly define the final goal.

4. BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP SEMINARS (*incomplete*)

Seminars were the main vehicle for the follow-up of the Prague Communiqué, and they have also been an important element in the follow-up after Berlin. *Bologna Follow-up Seminars* have been organised by individual Member States and by consultative member organisations in accordance with their own priorities and objectives, taking account of criteria approved by the Follow-up Group. Fourteen Bologna Follow-up Seminars were included in the BFUG Work Programme 2003-2005, reflecting the priorities set by the Ministers in Berlin and having the potential of contributing most to the realisation of the European Higher Education Area.

Seminars were open to participants from all signatory countries and from those who applied to join, to the representatives of European Commission, Council of Europe, UNESCO-CEPES, EUA, EURASHE and ESIB as well as to other interested parties. All seminars consisted of plenary sessions and workshops, giving opportunity for an active participation and for elaboration of various aspects of the seminar themes. Surveys and background documents were prepared by organisers. This material is available at the Bologna-Bergen web site <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/> together with complete reports and recommendations from each seminar.

The seminars have been important to increase the awareness of the Bologna Process in Member States and also in potential Member States. The Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES have both been very active in their support of the new Member States and the building of bridges to potential new Members. EUA and ESIB have been co-organisers of a number of seminars, also reaching out to National Rectors' Conferences and National Student Unions in Member States and stimulating the dialogue at national level between Bologna Partners.

Recommendations from Bologna Follow-up Seminars have fed into the stocktaking project, into the development of the overarching framework for qualifications and into the joint efforts in quality assurance. Recommendations from seminars have also directly influenced the drafting of the Bergen Communiqué.

4.1 "Joint Degrees – Further Development", Stockholm 6-7 May 2004

50 participants from 18 countries and a number of organisations attended this seminar organised by the Swedish Ministry for Education and Research. The seminar built on previous activity in the field. Two seminars had been held in the preceding period related to joint degrees: in May 2002, also in Stockholm, and in Mantova in April 2003, focussing on integrated curricula. In addition, a survey in 2002 and a project on joint master's degree programmes, both conducted by the EUA, had pointed to a number of problems. In the Berlin Communiqué, Ministers undertook to remove legal obstacles to the establishment and recognition of joint degrees and actively support the development and adequate quality assurance of integrated curricula leading to such degrees.

The seminar considered the situation against this background. In most Bologna countries, degrees are regulated in national legislation. Many higher education institutions co-operate in developing and delivering joint study programmes and joint degrees, but few joint diplomas are awarded. Most countries do not make explicit legal provision for the awarding of joint degrees and joint diplomas. The seminar reiterated the importance of joint degrees for

achieving the Bologna objectives, underlining that the process of developing and offering joint study programmes is the core activity, and discussed aspects such as the use of the Diploma Supplement and ECTS and quality assurance. In a lifelong learning perspective it was pointed out that the possibilities for all types of students to participate should be taken into account when developing joint study programmes and joint degrees.

It was recommended that the Bologna Follow-up Group should map the experience of higher education institutions and students with joint study programmes and joint degrees, and if possible report conclusions and recommendations to the Bergen ministerial meeting. Further, each country should report on the progress made in removing legal obstacles to joint degrees as agreed in the Berlin Communiqué. As a result of the latter recommendation a question about this was included in the template for the national reports.

General rapporteur for the seminar was Professor Pavel Zgaga. The seminar made the following recommendations to the Bergen Ministerial Meeting:

- The possibility of awarding joint degrees with national and foreign higher education institutions should be clearly referred to in national legislation. Every country should report on the progress of their work in time for the ministerial meeting in 2007.
- The format of the Diploma Supplement should be adapted to facilitate the description of joint degrees. The Diploma Supplement should include a cross-reference when double degrees are issued.
- Ministers should encourage the development of incentives for higher education institutions to participate in joint study programmes leading to joint degrees. Higher education institutions should give proper recognition to students and staff who participate in joint degree programmes.

4.2 “Bologna and the challenges of e-learning and distance education”, Ghent, 4-5 June 2004

The main focus of the seminar organised by the Ministry of the Flemish Community (Belgium) and the University of Ghent in cooperation several academic partners, was on the integration of the lifelong learning perspective in higher education. In particular the seminar explored the issue of widening access to higher education, e.g. for a more mature student public that combines studies with other responsibilities.

The seminar was attended by **a total of 99** policy makers, representatives of the academic world and specialists both in international relations and in e-learning from a large variety of countries and organisations participating in the Bologna process.

The seminar discussed how non-classical teaching and learning forms can be of use in an emerging European Higher Education Area of which quality assurance and recognition, as well as mobility and social issues are the corner stones. The challenges higher distance education poses in this perspective were explored accordingly.

General rapporteur was Professor Jef Van den Branden. The following recommendations were made for the further development of the Bologna process:

- To open up the EHEA to an *Open* Higher Education Area by fully integrating the dimension of flexible learning paths supported by e-learning and other non-classical learning and teaching forms.
- To extend quality assurance, accreditation and qualification frameworks to e-learning and other non classical modes of delivery in an integrated approach encompassing the full range of higher education.
- In the context of widening access, to develop leadership in higher education institutions in order to integrate a lifelong learning-for-all strategy in joint responsibility with staff, students and the local and international community.
- To explore how the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention could be used to establish common understanding and shared standards on the validation of prior learning experiences in both formal and non-formal settings as a concrete step to the integration of the lifelong learning perspective in higher education.
- To acknowledge the contribution of so-called “virtual mobility” to international academic exchange and joint curriculum development to take on board in the design of international mobility schemes.
- To promote a broad approach to all “Bologna tools” (as for instance ECTS and Diploma Supplement) to include e-learning and non classical teaching and learning.

4.3 “Using Learning Outcomes”, Edinburgh 1-2 July 2004

The seminar, organised by the Scottish Ministry for Education together with national partners, brought together some 160 participants from 28 countries and from partner organisations. A background report had been commissioned from Professor Stephen Adam, examining the concept of learning outcomes both from a theoretical point of view and in relation to current practice.

Considerable activity was found to be taking place across Europe, but relatively few countries or higher education institutions had implemented learning outcomes in a systematic way. One conclusion in the report was that learning outcomes may enhance all the Bologna action lines. They were seen as part of a shift in emphasis from the teacher to the learner, and in this connection students pointed out that for learning to be genuinely student-centred, the students must also be included in the process of formulating the learning outcomes.

There was general agreement on the usefulness of moving towards an outcomes-based approach in the description of modules/units, study programmes and qualifications. Such an approach lies at the centre of the development of an overarching framework of qualifications for the EHEA, and the seminar provided important input to this work. Descriptions in terms of learning outcomes also facilitate comparison of knowledge, understanding and skills acquired in informal or non-formal learning with formal qualifications, and hence contribute to flexible learning paths in a lifelong learning perspective. In the same way they may facilitate mobility between vocational education and training and higher education.

The seminar discussed the role of learning outcomes in relation to issues such as transparency, mobility, recognition and quality assurance, underlining that they are not the solution to all problems, but a useful tool at both the conceptual and practical levels. Unresolved issues i.a. in relation to credits were pointed out. Also, the concept is used in different ways in different contexts, sometimes in a very technical way, and a common understanding therefore needs to be developed, taking into account the importance of diversity and flexibility.

The seminar recommended that the BFUG should take a leading role in ensuring coherence across the different strands of development of the Bologna Process affected by learning outcomes, and more broadly between the Bologna and Copenhagen processes.

The seminar further recommended that the following themes should be considered for inclusion in the Bergen Communiqué:

- The importance of learning outcomes for the future development of Diploma Supplements, ECTS and qualifications frameworks, as a tool to promote transparency and mobility, while supporting flexibility and diversity across the European Higher Education Area.
- The need to accept that the pace and nature of change will not be uniform across all countries or all disciplines. Such flexibility will protect the diversity inherent in the European Higher Education Area and lead to greater ownership of the final outcome.
- The need for continuing dialogue to achieve a common language and a shared understanding of that language.

4.4 “Assessment and accreditation in the European framework”, Santander 28-30 July 2004

The seminar organized by the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports and the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation was attended by approximately 125 policy makers, representatives of the academic world and specialists both in international relations and in assessment and accreditation.

The main objective was to move forward in the development of common methodological tools for quality evaluation and accreditation of higher education within the European framework of the Bologna Declaration, with a view to identifying tools that are generally accepted as suitable and effective. Additional objectives were to compare processes and to analyse the networking of evaluation agencies and bodies with a view to the mutual recognition of their decisions. General rapporteur was Director Leonardo M. González.

It was confirmed that the networks of agencies will have an important role to play in the establishment of common accreditation criteria and methodologies that may lead to the mutual recognition of their decisions, in particular by means of their efforts to push for more and better knowledge of good practices and exchange of information and experience.

At the same time it was made clear that in defining these common criteria and methodologies it is necessary to take into account the diversity of the various systems and traditions that will go into the construction of a comparable framework.

There is a clear need to establish a glossary of terms that will make it possible to interpret the main features of each institution in the light of common but flexible principles and points of reference agreed at European level.

For the implantation of an effective culture of quality, it is essential that governments, higher education institutions, quality agencies, teachers and students all participate, in view of the expectation that this process will benefit not only the involved agents but also society at large.

It will only be possible to establish common criteria and methodologies if mutual trust among institutions and agencies is achieved on a basis of greater transparency in accreditation processes. To that end it is essential to promote a peer review process among agencies.

Accreditation is viewed as an essential tool for the promotion of quality assurance in higher education systems. The accreditation process should be linked to the implementation of specific recommendations for the improvement of the evaluated qualifications and institutions. It was recommended that a concrete accreditation scheme be set up within the Bologna process.

4.5 “Public Responsibility for Higher Education and Research”, Strasbourg 21-22 September 2004

Approximately 80 participants from 36 countries and a number of organisations participated in this seminar organised by the Council of Europe. General rapporteur was Secretary General Eva Egron Polak. Recommendations were addressed to public authorities in States Party to the European Cultural Convention and some directly to Ministers in Bergen:

Public responsibility for higher education and research should be understood as a multidimensional concept that includes the establishment and maintenance of the required legal infrastructure, elaboration of policy, provision of funds and the further development of the social dimension, to meet current and future needs of the Knowledge Society.

Public responsibilities should be exercised throughout the European Higher Education Area with due regard for the need of higher education and research institutions and systems to act freely and efficiently in the pursuit of their mission.

For universities to meet society’s requirements for research and respond to public interests, public authorities must provide adequate funds and, together with the research community, design policies to regulate conditions under which private resources can best be used.

To respond to increased pressure for cost-sharing in higher education, public authorities should stimulate further research and debate on the impact of different instruments such as tuition fees, student grants, bursaries and loans etc, on aspects such as equality of opportunity, system efficiency, social cohesion, impact on public funding etc, as a basis for future action.

Public authorities should ensure that appropriate bridges exist between higher education and the world of work. Such bridging include a coherent qualifications framework at national and European levels, transparent mechanisms for recognition of qualifications and quality assurance, two way information flows between the labour market and higher education.

Public authorities should establish cost-effective quality assessment mechanisms that are built on trust, give due regard to internal quality development processes, have the right to independent decision-making and abide by agreed-upon principles.

Recommendations to the Bergen Ministerial Conference:

- Ministers were asked to affirm their commitment to making equal opportunity in higher education a fundamental building block of the European Higher Education Area. They were asked to undertake actions that will allow the development of systemic and institutional responses to enable all individuals to realize their full potential.
- Ministers were also asked to acknowledge that funding, motivating and stimulating the development of higher education and research is as important a part of public responsibility. Ministers were asked to stimulate a comprehensive analysis of various approaches that would lead to increased funds for higher education and research, meeting equity, effectiveness and efficiency objectives as well as those of quality and autonomy.

Building the Knowledge Society that is democratic, inclusive, equitable and competitive is a shared responsibility in which an examination of the responsibilities of public authorities must be completed by an analysis of the public responsibility of all other stakeholders. Participants urged that such corresponding analysis be undertaken as well.

4.6 “Designing policies for mobile students”, Noordwijk, 10-12 October 2004

Approximately 130 participants from 30 countries and a number of organisations participated. In this seminar organised by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. General rapporteur was Professor Pavel Zgaga.

The participants in the seminar concluded that structural cross-border cooperation between institutions and high-quality mobility of students and staff make an indispensable contribution to creating a well-educated and internationally oriented work-force and strengthen the intellectual, cultural, social, scientific and technological dimensions of the European knowledge-based society. When designing policies to facilitate and further mobility, this is to be taken into account. A sustained and continued attention for the implementation of already agreed policies and principles in the field of student mobility is required.

Regarding the external quality assurance and requirements by national governments the seminar appeals to national authorities to standardize criteria or mutually recognize each others accreditation decisions and organise trust.

To increase the transparency of Europe's more than 3000 institutions of higher education, a pilot for a *European typology of institutions* has been started and a draft typology is tried out. The seminar asked that the pilot should take into consideration related work carried out by UNESCO-CEPES by the UNESCO-OECD activity on Guidelines on Quality Provisions in Cross Border Higher Education. The results of this pilot study could be reported to the Bologna process.

The *portability of students loans and grants* is an important instrument in the promotion of mobility. The various systems of student support are basically designed for the students that study in their country of origin. Portability of student grants ought to be studied more closely within a EU-context. This should be done in relation to, amongst others, fees and maintenance costs.

The participants in the seminar concluded that a European fund for student support could reduce some obstacles for mobility, and that a network of student support experts from the member states should be founded.

Participants affirmed that issues relating to the portability of student support is a complex area, where education policy as well as income politics and social welfare are intertwined, and with national and supra-national interests at stake. In light of the wishes to increase mobility, student support is an important subject to be taken up in the context of the European Union, because of the tension between national policies and EU-jurisprudence. These legal issues are to be linked with political, social and administrative issues. The participants called on all parties involved to take the necessary steps to reach a satisfactory solution for the problems identified.

4.7 “The employability and its links to the objectives of the Bologna Process”, Bled 22-23 October 2004

Approximately 115 participants from 24 countries and a number of organisations participated. General rapporteur was Martina Vukasović.

This was the first Bologna Seminar handling employability. One major step forward in this issue was that the participants agreed on a definition on the term “employability”:

A set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.

The participants concluded that there are major problems in getting acceptance for the first degree in the labour market. This implies that there are challenges in fulfilling the Bologna action line *Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate*. It is a goal in the Bologna Process that a degree awarded after the first cycle shall be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification.

Achieving the goal in strengthening employability, several measures must be taken. Employers, trade unions’ organisations and professional associations must be involved in the development and creation of new types of qualifications and new curricula. The BFUG must strengthen the participation of these stakeholders.

The seminar participants also recommended that the notion of employability are included as reference points in further Bologna seminars and other activities, in particular those dealing with learning outcomes and an Overarching Framework of Qualification for EHEA.

4.8 “New Generations of Policy Documents and Laws for Higher Education: Their Thrust in the Context of the Bologna Process”, Warsaw 4-6 November 2004

The conference was attended by 40 international participants from 22 different countries and from partner organisations, 20 participants from Poland, and two observers from USA. The main objective was to analyse how laws on higher education are reflecting the realization of the objectives of the Bologna Process. Professor Hans de Wit served as General rapporteur.

Presentations were made on the theme of the conference from 11 different national perspectives, followed by a session featuring comparative perspectives on policy and legislative initiatives for higher education. A comparative analysis was also presented. The presentations and analysis provided relevant information on legal reforms in Europe in the context of the Bologna Process.

Notwithstanding the fact that different countries are at different stages of implementation, there was agreement that most countries have adopted, or are in the process of adopting, legislation enabling achievement of the Bologna goals in the agreed timeframe. At the same time it was recognised that national agendas play a key role in the implementation of the Bologna objectives and in the elaboration of new higher education legislation. Current reforms in national higher education legislation cannot be attributed solely to the Bologna Process. Some were already initiated prior to 1999; in other cases the Bologna Declaration is used as a ‘lever’ for national policy and to solve national problems.

Following the presentations and discussions, one could observe on the one hand a *growing convergence* in line with the Bologna goals (regarding degree systems, credits and accreditation), and on the other hand a *continuation of diversity* that will remain. The latter might even be reinforced, in that higher education is still a national responsibility and is defined foremost by national contexts, constraints and priorities.

Participants agreed that the approach to higher education legislation reform by general framework laws, is most appropriate. Regulating in detail not only results in inflexibility, it is also in contradiction with the trend to deregulate and provide more autonomy. While legislation is an important aspect of implementation, it cannot take the place of commitment, interaction and trust among the different stakeholders.

It was recommended to the member countries in the Bologna Process that they implement general framework legislation for higher education instead of detailed regulatory legislation. It was also recommended that they translate their national policy documents and higher education legislation into English or another major language of the EHEA.

It was recommended to the Bologna Follow-Up Group that it supplements the present stock-taking exercise with one on higher education legislation. This will help to better understand the legal implications of the Bologna Process in different countries, to get a better picture of convergence and diversity in European higher education, to exchange experiences and expertise, and to assist those countries still in the preparatory stage of legislative reforms.

4.9 “Bachelor’s Degree: What Is It?” St. Petersburg, 25-26 November 2004

The seminar was jointly organised by the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, the Committee for Education and Science of the State Duma, St. Petersburg State University and the Council of Europe. It was attended by around 150 participants from Russia and 30 participants from 13 other countries. The working languages were English and Russian. General rapporteur was Sverre Rustad from the BFUG Secretariat.

The seminar had a double focus, in that part of the discussion was concerned with general characteristics of the bachelor’s degree and the benefits and possible disadvantages of a two- (three-) cycle structure, whereas another part was concerned more particularly with the situation in Russia. In the general part, employability and the relation to the labour market was a special theme. There was consensus that bachelor programmes should have a balance between generic and specialist skills, with an emphasis on learning to learn, and that relations between higher education institutions and employers need to be strengthened. Not least is this the case in Russia, where the bachelor’s degree is not well known or accepted and where employers tend to favour traditional integrated programmes. In general more emphasis should be placed on stimulating the creative development of the student, and all bachelor programmes should therefore be research-based.

With regard to the situation in Russia, focus was on the extent and pace of change. It was argued that moving too quickly would risk throwing over board valuable elements of the existing system and thus reducing standards. At present the two-cycle degree structure is voluntary for the institutions, and there were different views on whether it should be made obligatory. On the other hand there seemed to be a general consensus that the bachelor’s degree in Russia should have a duration of 4 years due to the low entry level (11 years of school) compared with many other countries.

The following conclusions and recommendations were submitted to the BFUG for consideration:

- Taking into account the significant role played by humanities and social sciences in curricula in terms of ensuring generic competences, and at the same time widely divergent views and practices concerning the number of credits allocated to the humanities in different study programmes, the seminar recommends to set up a special working group for the study of the role to be played by humanities in higher education.
- Proceeding from the general agreement that bachelor-level programmes are meant to ensure sufficiently broad competences, programme designers are recommended to pay special attention to interdisciplinary and field-specific modules. Based on existing descriptors the structure of competences would then be as follows: generic competences, interdisciplinary competences, field-specific competences and subject-specific competences.
- In designing bachelor-level study programmes for higher education, the designers should pay more attention to labour-market requirements and challenges.
- It is recommended to amend the position taken by the Bologna Declaration to make it clear that access to doctoral studies shall require a completed master’s degree.

4.10 “Improving the recognition system of degrees and study credit points in the European Higher Education Area”, Riga, 3-4 December 2004

This seminar, organised by Latvian authorities in co-operation with the Council of Europe, was attended by approximately 160 participants from 30 different countries and from partner organisations. Professor Stephen Adams served as General rapporteur.

Many Bologna action lines have direct links to recognition. Without effective processes for recognition, important Bologna objectives will not be achieved. However, the Riga seminar indicated what can be achieved and generated a strong agreement about the way forward.

Ministers in Bergen were urged to:

- Amend national legislation to incorporate the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and adopt effective measures to ensure their practical implementation at all appropriate levels;
- Recognise that reaching the goals of the Bologna Process requires defining ‘recognition’ as positioning a holder of a foreign qualification in the host country’s education or employment system, and therefore to:
 - o emphasize the benefits of national qualifications frameworks and endorse the creation of the overarching framework of qualifications for the EHEA on the grounds of their contribution to recognition, mobility and transparency;
 - o promote an intensive national and international dialogue, informed by ENICs and NARICS, to exchange good practice.
- As a matter of urgency, launch a campaign to convey accurate and pertinent information on the Bologna Process to other parts of the world.

At the level of ENIC and NARIC networks it was recommended that:

- The existing cooperation between recognition and quality assurance networks should be further strengthened. It needs to be acknowledged that recognition and quality assurance are intimately related;
- It is explored how the emerging qualifications frameworks and usage of learning outcomes can be applied for improving recognition practices, including the recognition of lifelong learning and other non-traditional qualifications, and how they relate to the legal framework of the Lisbon Recognition Convention;
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- Steps are taken to monitor the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, with a view to encouraging fair and equal treatment of applicants within countries.

In *higher education institutions* steps should be taken to develop institutional recognition policies and practices and to disseminate information on the legal framework for recognition and best practice at the level of faculties and study programmes.

4.11 “The Framework of Qualifications of the EHEA”, Copenhagen, 13-14 January 2005

Approximately 120 representatives from 28 countries and from partner organisations participated in this seminar, organised by the Danish authorities. The purpose of the seminar was to discuss the report from a Working Group on the overarching qualification framework, appointed by the BFUG as a central element in the follow-up of the Berlin Ministerial Conference, see Ch. 6 of this report. The participants recommended:

That *Ministers, meeting in Bergen in May 2005*

- adopt the overarching framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area as proposed by the BFUG Working Group;
- mandate the BFUG to elaborate criteria and procedures for a self-certification system for national framework of qualifications where quality assurance is included and to submit it for final adoption to the Ministerial meeting in 2007;
- delegate responsibility for the maintenance and development of the overarching framework to the BFUG and any successor executive structure;
- commit to elaborating national framework of qualifications compatible with the overarching framework for qualifications of the EHEA by 2010;
- commit to taking adequate account of the overarching framework for qualifications of the EHEA, as well as to consulting all parties to the Bologna Process, in any future development of frameworks for other parts of the education system.

That *public authorities responsible for national education systems*

- in elaborating and maintaining their national qualifications be guided by and ensure compatibility with the overarching framework for qualifications of the EHEA;
- involve all relevant stakeholders both within and outside of higher education;
- identify a nationally agreed set of purposes for their national qualification framework;
- ensure that their national framework link academic standards, quality assurance systems and public understanding of recognized qualifications;
- ensure that the description of each qualification within their national framework of qualifications explicitly state:
 - o to which further qualification(s) that particular qualification gives access;
 - o the relationship of the qualification in question to the three generic cycles of the overarching framework;
- ensure that their national framework associate the relevant transparency instruments, such as the Diploma Supplement, ECTS and Europass.
- ensure that their national framework facilitate learning paths that integrate non-formal and informal learning as well as various entry and exit points.

That *higher education institutions as well as students and their organizations* continue to contribute, as active stakeholders, to the development and maintenance of national framework of qualifications as well as the overarching framework for qualifications of the EHEA;

That *ENIC and NARIC Networks and individual recognition centers* provide clear and adequate information on the overarching framework for qualifications of the EHEA as well as on national frameworks to recognition networks and centers and higher education institutions in other parts of the world.

That *appropriate international bodies* review current transparency instruments, such as ECTS and the Diploma Supplement, in the light of the development of qualifications frameworks.

6. AN OVERARCHING FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA *(preliminary text)*

In the Berlin Communiqué, Ministers encouraged the member states to elaborate a framework of comparable and compatible qualifications for their higher education systems, which should seek to describe qualifications in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile. They also undertook to elaborate an overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area.

Meeting in March 2004, the BFUG approved the establishment of a Working Group to coordinate the work on the development of an overarching framework of qualifications for the EHEA. The Working Group was joined by a number of experts.

The report from the Working Group was presented in December 2004, to be discussed at the Bologna Follow-up Seminar in Copenhagen on 13-14 January 2005, cf. chapter 4, section 4.11. The Working Group has since revised the report and presented it to the BFUG to advise the Ministerial Conference in Bergen.

The Working Group has drawn heavily upon work done by others, especially that of the Joint Quality Initiative who formulated and further developed the ‘Dublin Descriptors’. It has drawn on experiences in countries that have already established qualifications framework for their national higher education systems, and conducted a comparative study of existing national frameworks. The Working Group has also consulted other organisations that have contributed to the discussions.

The Working Group has taken into account other policy areas, including those within the Copenhagen Process and the wider Lisbon Agenda. The European Commission has contributed both through its interests in the Bologna process and as coordinator of the Copenhagen process and of the Lisbon process .

6.1 Conclusions

The report builds on the assumption that qualifications are primarily a matter of national concern and articulated in national qualifications frameworks and that such national frameworks can be inter-connected through linkage to the overarching framework of EHEA.

The Working Group and its experts provide a series of recommendations and proposals regarding the framework for qualifications of the EHEA, and advice on good practice in developing national (or equivalent) frameworks.

It is recommended that:

- the framework for qualifications in the EHEA should be an overarching framework with a high level of generality, consisting of three main cycles, with additional provision for a short cycle within the first cycle;
- the framework should include cycle descriptors in the form of generic qualification descriptors that can be used as reference points. It is *proposed that*:

- the Dublin Descriptors are adopted as the cycle descriptors for the framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. They offer generic statements of typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with awards that represent the end of each of a Bologna cycle.
- responsibility for the maintenance and development of the framework rests with the Bologna Follow-up Group and any successor executive structures established by the ministers for the furtherance of the EHEA.
- all signatories will complete the self-certification process by 2010.

It is proposed that:

- *guidelines* for the range of ECTS typically associated with the completion of each cycle include:
 - Short cycle (within the first cycle) qualifications may typically include / be represented by approximately 120 ECTS credits;
 - First cycle qualifications may typically include / be represented by 180-240 ECTS credits;
 - Second cycle qualifications may typically include / be represented by 90-120 ECTS credits, with a minimum of 60 credits at the level of 2nd cycle;
 - Third cycle qualifications do not necessarily have credits associated with them.
- *criteria* for the verification that national frameworks are compatible with the EHEA framework include:
 - The national framework for higher education qualifications and the body or bodies responsible for its development are designated by the national ministry with responsibility for higher education
 - The national framework and its qualifications are demonstrably based on learning outcomes and the qualifications are linked to ECTS credits
 - The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national framework are transparent
 - The national framework, and any alignment with the European framework, is referenced in all Diploma Supplements
 - There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications in the national framework and the cycle qualification descriptors of the European framework
 - The responsibilities of the domestic parties to the national framework are clearly determined and published
- each country should certify the compatibility of its own framework with the overarching framework, and that details of this self-certification be published, with the following *procedures* used for self-certification of compatibility:
 - The competent national body/bodies shall self-certify the compatibility of the national framework with the European framework
 - The self-certification and the evidence supporting it shall be published
 - The ENIC/NARIC network shall maintain a public listing of States that have completed the self-certification process

- The completion of the self-certification process shall be noted on Diploma Supplements issued subsequently national frameworks should include awards that integrate recognition of non-formal and informal learning experiences.

Advice on good practice to facilitate the creation of successful new national frameworks of qualifications includes:

- the development and review process for producing good national frameworks are most effective when they involve all relevant stakeholders both within and outside higher education. Higher education frameworks naturally link to vocational education and training and post-secondary education and as such are best viewed and treated as a national initiative. This also makes possible the inclusion of, or links to, other areas of education and training outside higher education.
- a framework for higher education qualifications should identify a clear and nationally-agreed set of purposes. Frameworks for higher education qualifications benefit from the inclusion of cycles and /or levels, and articulation with outcome-focussed indicators and/or descriptors of qualifications. Higher education frameworks of qualifications can also benefit from being directly linked to credit accumulation and transfer systems.
- frameworks for higher education qualifications should explicitly link academic standards, national and institutional quality assurance systems, and public understanding of the place and level of nationally recognised qualifications. Public confidence in academic standards requires public understanding of the achievements represented by different higher education qualifications and titles.

The report stresses the importance of national authority in the development of national frameworks and their associated instruments, and the importance of considering the EHEA framework, the Dublin descriptors, and the guideline ranges on ECTS credits as ‘*reference points*’.

6.2 The framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area

	Outcomes	ECTS Credits
Short cycle (within the first cycle) qualification	<p><i>Qualifications that signify completion of the higher education short cycle (within the first cycle) are awarded to students who:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon general secondary education and is typically at a level supported by advanced textbooks; such knowledge provides an underpinning for a field of work or vocation, personal development, and further studies to complete the first cycle;</i> • <i>can apply their knowledge and understanding in occupational contexts;</i> • <i>have the ability to identify and use data to formulate responses to well-defined concrete and abstract problems;</i> • <i>can communicate about their understanding, skills and activities, with peers, supervisors and clients; have the learning skills to undertake further studies with some autonomy.</i> 	approximately 120 ECTS credits

<p>First cycle qualification</p>	<p>Qualifications that signify completion of the first cycle are awarded to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education, and is typically at a level that, whilst supported by advanced textbooks, includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront of their field of study;</i> • <i>can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and have competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study;</i> • <i>have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgements that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues;</i> • <i>can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences;</i> • <i>have developed those learning skills that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy.</i> 	<p>typically include 180-240 ECTS credits</p>
<p>Second cycle qualification</p>	<p>Qualifications that signify completion of the second cycle are awarded to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with the first cycle, and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context;</i> • <i>can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study;</i> • <i>have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgements with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements;</i> • <i>can communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously;</i> • <i>have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.</i> 	<p>typically include 90-120 ECTS credits, with a minimum of 60 credits at the level of 2nd cycle</p>

Third cycle qualification	<p>Qualifications that signify completion of the third cycle are awarded to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field;</i> • <i>have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity;</i> • <i>have made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, some of which merits national or international refereed publication;</i> • <i>are capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas;</i> • <i>can communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise;</i> • <i>can be expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement in a knowledge based society.</i> 	Not specified
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10. NEW MEMBERS *(first part only)*

The criteria for admission of new members to the Bologna Process at the Ministerial Conference in Bergen was set by the Berlin Communiqué:

Countries party to the European Cultural Convention shall be eligible for membership of the European Higher Education Area provided that they at the same time declare their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the Bologna Process in their own systems of higher education. Their applications should contain information on how they will implement the principles and objectives of the declaration.

As applicant countries sought guidance on the procedures and requirements for membership of the Bologna Process, a document explaining the requirements and procedures was developed by the BFUG Secretariat and decided by the BFUG Board in June 2004. The document was made available to interested parties at the Bologna-Bergen web site.

The purpose of this document was to meet the objective in a fair and transparent manner. It also consolidated both principles and action lines of the Bologna Process into a single document. The document made it clear that although the ten action lines are the main focus of Member States, it is equally important to note the underlying principles of the Bologna Process. The realisation of the European Higher Education Area can only be achieved by incorporating these principles within the higher education system of each country:

- International mobility of students and staff;
- Autonomous universities;
- Student participation in the governance of higher education;
- Public responsibility for higher education;
- Higher education having a social dimension.

Applicant States were requested to confirm their respect for these principles in their applications. Regarding the ten action lines, interested parties were referred to the BFUG Work Programme 2003-2005. The deadline for applications was set to 31 December 2004.

As all members of the Bologna Process were asked to produce a national report before the Bergen Ministerial Conference, potential members were asked to produce a report in a similar format, with a special focus on the three intermediate priorities. A template identifying the key questions which should be addressed in the context of the report was made available at the web site.

Regarding procedures for application, it was made known that the decision to accept new members to the Bologna Process would be taken by the next Ministerial Conference. The role of the BFUG would be to make a recommendation, having satisfied itself of the credentials and commitment of the applicants.

Potential members were asked send an application for membership to the Minister responsible for Higher Education in the Host Country for the next Ministerial Conference, with a copy to the BFUG Chair. The application, which should be signed by the (national) Minister responsible for higher education, should declare their commitment to pursue and implement the principles and objectives of the Bologna Process in their own systems of higher education.

13. SOME IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

The fundamental principles of Magna Charta Universitatum

“The university is an autonomous institution at the heart of societies differently organized because of geography and historical heritage; it produces, examines, appraises and hands down culture by research and teaching. To meet the needs of the world around it, its research and teaching must be morally and intellectually independent of all political authority and intellectually independent of all political authority and economic power.

Teaching and research in universities must be inseparable if their tuition is not to lag behind changing needs, the demands of society, and advances in scientific knowledge.

Freedom in research and training is the fundamental principle of university life, and governments and universities, each as far as in them lies, must ensure respect for this fundamental requirement.”

University

An autonomous higher education institution which offers research-based education at degree level. Courses may be taken at bachelor, master or doctor level (first, second, third cycle).

Institutional autonomy

Autonomous higher education institution usually have the right to decide their organisational and administrative structure, decide their priorities, manage their budget, hire their personnel and admit their students, decide the content and forms of their education and research. The degree of autonomy is usually defined in national legislation.

Academic freedom

Academic freedom *for the institution* is a central element in institutional autonomy “to decide the content and forms of its education and research” or with the Magna Charta: “its research and teaching must be morally and intellectually independent of all political authority and intellectually independent of all political authority and economic power”.

Academic freedom *for the academic staff* implies traditionally freedom to chose the subjects, directions and methors of their research and freedom to chose the contents and methods of their teaching as long as this freedom contradicts legislation or infringe on other persons’ rights or the rights of the institution, or with the Magna Charta: “Freedom in research and training is the fundamental principle of university life, and governments and universities, each as far as in them lies, must ensure respect for this fundamental requirement.”

Higher education

All types of courses of study, or sets of courses of study, training or training for research at the post secondary level which are recognised by the competent authority of a (Bologna Member) State as belonging to its higher education system.

Higher education institution

An establishment providing higher education and recognised by the competent authority of a (Bologna Member) State as belonging to its higher education system.

Access to higher education

The right of qualified candidates to apply and to be considered for admission to higher education.

Admission to higher education institutions and programmes

The act of allowing qualified applicants to pursue studies in higher education at a given institution and/or a given programme.

Higher education programme

A course of study recognised by the competent authority of a (BolognaMember) State as belonging to its higher education system, and the completion of which provides the student with a higher education qualification.

Higher education qualification

Any degree, diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority attesting the successful completion of a higher education programme.

Transnational higher education

All types of higher education study programmes, or sets of courses of study, or educational services(including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programmes may belong to the education system of a State different from the State in which it operates, or may operate independently of any national education system.

Recognition (academic recognition)

A formal acknowledgement by a competent authority of the value of a foreign educational qualification with a view to access to educational and/or employment activities.

Mutual recognition

Agreement between two or more (Bologna Member) States or institutions to validate each others degrees, programmes and study periods.

Professional recognition

The professional status accorded to the holder of a qualification

Recognition of prior learning

The formal acknowledgement of skills, knowledge and competencies gained through work experience, informal training and life experience.

Joint study programme

A study programme developed and/or provided jointly by two or more higher education institutions, possibly also in cooperation with other institutions.

Joint degrees

A joint degree should be understood as referring to a higher education qualification issued jointly by two or more higher education institutions on the basis of a joint study programme.

A joint degree may be issued as

- a joint diploma in addition to one or more national diplomas,
- a joint diploma issued by the institutions offering the study programme in question without being accompanied by any national diploma,
- one or more national diplomas issued officially as the only attestation of the joint qualification in question.

Learning outcomes

Statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to do at the end of a period of learning.

Workload

A quantitative measure of the learning activities that may feasibly be required for the achievement of the learning outcomes (e.g. lectures, seminars, practical work, private study, information retrieval, research, examinations).

Credits

Generally agreed value used to measure student workload in terms of learning time required to complete course units, resulting in learning outcomes.

Qualification descriptors

Generic statements of the outcomes of study.

Levels

A series of sequential steps (a developmental continuum), expressed in terms of a range of generic outcomes, against which typical qualifications can be positioned.

Cycles

The three sequential levels identified by the Bologna Process (first cycle, second cycle and third cycle) within which all “Bologna” qualifications are located.

National framework of qualifications (higher education)

The single description, at national level or level of an education system, which is internationally understood and through which all qualifications and other learning achievements in higher education may be described and related to each other in a coherent way and which defines the relationship between higher education qualifications.

Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area

An overarching framework that makes transparent the relationship between “Bologna” national higher education frameworks of qualifications and the qualifications they contain. It is an articulation mechanism between national frameworks.

Assessment

The process of systematic gathering, quantifying and using information to judge the effectiveness and adequacy of a higher education institution or a programme. It implies evaluation of core activities. It is a necessary basis for a formal accreditation decision (see below)

Peer review 4.10 “Improving the recognition system of degrees and study credit points in the European Higher Education Area”, Riga, 3-4 December 2004

This seminar, organised by Latvian authorities in co-operation with the Council of Europe, was attended by approximately 160 participants from 30 different countries and from partner organisations. Professor Stephen Adams served as General rapporteur.

Many Bologna action lines have direct links to recognition. Without effective processes for recognition, important Bologna objectives will not be achieved. However, the Riga seminar indicated what can be achieved and generated a strong agreement about the way forward.

Ministers in Bergen were urged to:

- Amend national legislation to incorporate the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and adopt effective measures to ensure their practical implementation at all appropriate levels;
- Recognise that reaching the goals of the Bologna Process requires defining 'recognition' as positioning a holder of a foreign qualification in the host country's education or employment system, and therefore to:
 - o emphasize the benefits of national qualifications frameworks and endorse the creation of the overarching framework of qualifications for the EHEA on the grounds of their contribution to recognition, mobility and transparency;
 - o promote an intensive national and international dialogue, informed by ENICs and NARICS, to exchange good practice.
- As a matter of urgency, launch a campaign to convey accurate and pertinent information on the Bologna Process to other parts of the world.

At the level of ENIC and NARIC networks it was recommended that:

- The existing cooperation between recognition and quality assurance networks should be further strengthened. It needs to be acknowledged that recognition and quality assurance are intimately related;
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That *ENIC and NARIC Networks and individual recognition centers* provide clear and adequate information on the overarching framework for qualifications of the EHEA as well as on national frameworks to recognition networks and centers and higher education institutions in other parts of the world.

That *appropriate international bodies* review current transparency instruments, such as ECTS and the Diploma Supplement, in the light of the development of qualifications frameworks.

Assessment procedure carried out by external experts.

Evaluation

A systematic and critical analysis leading to judgements and/or recommendations regarding the quality of a higher education institution or a programme.

Quality assurance

An ongoing process of assessing, guaranteeing, maintaining and improving the quality of a higher education institution or a programme.

Quality control

Internal measurement of quality of an institution or a programme referring to a set of operational activities and techniques.

Quality culture

A set of shared, accepted and integrated patterns of quality to be found in the management systems of institutions.

Accreditation

The process by which an accreditation body evaluates the quality of a higher education institution as a whole (institutional accreditation) or a specific higher education programme (programme accreditation) in order to formally recognise it as having met a certain predetermined minimal criteria or standards.

Accreditation body

An independent body that develops educational standards, criteria and procedures and conducts expert visits and peer reviews to assess whether or not those criteria are met.

Benchmarking

A standardised method for collecting and reporting critical operational data in a way that enables relevant comparisons of performances of different organisations or programmes, often with a view to establish good practice.

Stocktaking

Appraising a present situation / degree of process in terms of accomplishments and goals.

Sources:

Magna Charta Universitatum, Bologna (1988)

The Lisbon Recognition Convention (1997) and subsidiary documents

UNESCO-CEPES, Quality Assurance and Accreditation: Glossary of Basic Terms and Definitions (2004)

Report from the BFUG Working Group on the Overarching Qualifications Framework for the EHEA (2004)