

**Update from the European Commission on activities and policy developments  
in higher education related to the Bologna Process**

1) European leaders at the European Summit in March 2008 invited the Commission "to present a comprehensive assessment of future skills requirements in Europe up to 2020, taking account of technological change and ageing populations, and to propose steps to anticipate future needs". A new Communication to be published before the end of the year will outline the Commission's ideas for this assessment.

2) A University-Business Forum was launched by the Commission in March 2008 in order to reinforce the dialogue and cooperation between the worlds of higher education and of work on issues like curriculum development, entrepreneurship, continuing education, governance or mobility. The most innovative ideas may receive support through the new Erasmus university-business cooperation action line.

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/business/forumspeeches\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/business/forumspeeches_en.html)

3) The Recommendation for the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong Learning (EQF) has been adopted in April 2008, following the earlier adoption of the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area in 2005. The work on implementing both frameworks at national level has started. All countries aim to integrate both sets of references and to provide single frameworks for their national systems of education and training (in some countries regional frameworks will co-exist). The Commission supports the networking of national bodies responsible for the implementation and is doing so in cooperation with the Council of Europe, which has a similar mandate for the higher education framework.

4) A High Level Expert Forum has advised the Commission on how to substantially increase mobility, not only for students but also for young artists, entrepreneurs and adult learners. The Report has been presented in June 2008 and the mobility measures will be discussed under the French Presidency of the EU, notably at the conference in Nancy, 4/5 October 2008.

5) The European Parliament has adopted in September 2008 a Report on the Bologna Process and student mobility which expresses a number of concerns about the impact of the Bologna reforms on mobility and calls for more flexibility and more incentives for mobility.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A6-2008-0302+0+DOC+WORD+V0//EN>

6) The Commission will publish by the end of October 2008 a report on the implementation of the Council Resolution of 23 November 2007 on Modernising Universities for Europe's competitiveness in a global knowledge economy.

7) The Commission is reflecting with the EU Member States on the Lisbon Strategy post 2010. The reflection will culminate in a Communication by the end of 2008 on a comprehensive education and training strategy. The overall aim would be to raise skills levels through lifelong learning, by making lifelong learning and mobility a reality, improving the

quality and efficiency of provision and outcomes; promoting equity and citizenship; and enhancing innovation and creativity at all levels of education and training.

8) A series of projects have been selected for grant support under the Erasmus centralised actions and the accompanying measures of the Lifelong learning programme. They concern areas such as curriculum development, quality assurance, transparency, funding, governance and university management. A full list is accessible via the Executive Agency web page. [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/funding/2008/call/index\\_en.htm#results](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/funding/2008/call/index_en.htm#results)

A few projects are described in brief below and a brochure on the overall EU contribution to the Bologna process will be published by the beginning of 2009.

9) Contracts have been renewed for the support of National Teams of Bologna Promoters (31 Erasmus countries) and similar contracts have been concluded for National Teams of Higher Education Reform Experts in the 27 Tempus countries, now covering nearly all 46 Bologna countries plus neighbouring countries in North Africa and Central Asia. The team members inform their peers on reforms in higher education. They can communicate via a virtual community and take part in European training activities, organised with the help of the UNICA consortia. Teams are supported through their Erasmus National Agency or Tempus NTO. They are guided by the national higher education authorities of their country, in most cases the national BFUG delegate. Funds have been reserved to ensure a prolongation of contracts in 2009/2010.

10) Erasmus grant support will be made available to help cover the costs of the 2009 Bologna Stocktaking and Ministerial Conference. Eurydice will provide an update of the Focus survey on reform measures (except degree structures) in order to inform and complement the Bologna stocktaking exercise.

11) Erasmus grant support will be extended to help cover the costs of the second year of existence of the register of quality assurance agencies (EQAR). A reservation has been made for the third year as well.

12) Following the update of the ECTS Key Features in 2007, the ECTS Users' Guide has been updated in 2008. The Commission was assisted in this task by an expert drafting group and the consulting firm GHK. The drafting group consisted of seven experienced ECTS Counsellors (chosen among Bologna Promoters) and three experts designated by EUA, EURASHE and ESU. On 18 September 2008, a draft version was put for consultation to representatives of the EU Member States, EUA, EURASHE, ESU as well as the Bologna Secretariat. The resulting draft version, for which the Commission takes full responsibility, is now presented for consultation to the Bologna Follow-Up Group. Comments (via the Bologna Secretariat) are welcome until the end of October 2008. The Guide will be made available on the web by the end of 2008 and distributed in hard copy, starting with the English version in early 2009.

13) The Commission has decided, after consulting the Lifelong Learning Programme Committee, to re-launch the ECTS Label and the DS label for outstanding performance in recognition and transparency practice. There will be a national pre-selection via the Erasmus National Agencies (deadline is 15 January 2009). Opening up the labels for third country applicants could be considered for future years.