



Education International

**Update to BFUG
24-25 August 2010**

1. “Time for a New Paradigm in Education: Student Centred Learning (T4SCL)”

EI is together with the European Students’ Union working on the promotion of student centered learning through participation in a project “Time for Student Centered Learning – T4SCL”. Under the project, the research team of EI and ESU has published a survey on students’ and staff unions’ perceptions and experience on student centered learning in Europe, as well as a theory and practice report which were presented in May in Bucharest, Romania at the launch conference of the project. In July, in Malta a training session was held for EI and ESU representatives with the main aim of empowering the participants, down the road from theory to practice, for further dissemination of their acquired knowledge on SCL to their colleagues especially through a planned training for more EI and ESU members which will take place in Slovakia in September 2010. The project research team is currently preparing a Toolkit on SCL which will be disseminated at the Stakeholders’ Forum in October 2010 in Leuven. The project is expected to further illuminate the definition of SCL and its implementation in the institutions while providing the basis for further policy development within the EHEA.

For more information about EI-ESU’s project, please visit the project website:
www.t4scl.eu

EI is also actively participating in following projects: EQUINET – working for equitable access to Higher Education in Europe; FLLLEX – The Impact of Lifelong Learning Strategies on Professional Higher Education in Europe; SIRUS – Shaping Inclusive and Responsive University Strategies; Access to Success – Fostering Trust and Exchange between Europe and Africa; and USBM – University Strategies and Business Models.

2. EI’s report “Enhancing Quality - Academics’ Perceptions on the Bologna Process”

EI has published a report which was specially aimed for dissemination at the Bologna Anniversary Conference that took place in Budapest and Vienna in March 2010.

The report presents the findings of a study undertaken with 34 unions representing higher education staff across 26 European countries. It is a study of the academics’ perceptions of the implementation of the impact of the Bologna Process in their respective countries over the reference period 2005-2009, with an examination of how the Process has affected them in particular, together with an appreciation of other ongoing reforms which are taking place in parallel to the Bologna Process, and which also impact on the daily lives and working conditions of academics.

Among the many findings of the study, we can note that academics are clear in their views that more is left to be done for the proper and full implementation of the Bologna Process in the majority of countries represented in this study, while for a large number of



union respondents the impact of the Bologna Process has been largely positive in their respective countries, though a number of them also consider the impact to be more or less neutral.

On the other hand, a clear rise in bureaucratic work for academics as a direct impact of the Bologna Process has been noted. The Process has also been accompanied by deterioration in remuneration for academic staff, as well as a trend of declining teaching and research conditions in Central and Eastern European countries and a trend of deteriorating teaching conditions in Western Europe. Improved working, teaching and research conditions for academic staff are seen as a prerequisite for a successful outcome to the Bologna Process.

The academic staff participation and involvement in Bologna Process' implementation at the national and institutional levels has been found to be consistently weak and concomitantly detrimental to the implementation of the Process on the whole. The study has further researched additional factors which have manifested themselves as trends impacting on the lack of involvement of academics over the reference period 2005-2009 and the involvement of academics at the European level, with particular reference to the two action lines of quality assurance and mobility as bad and good practice examples respectively.

The academics' perceptions of the future of the Bologna Process are then outlined in the final substantive part of this study. Academics are reported to have a positive outlook on the future of the Process, perceiving it to be a sign of quality as well as an opportunity for the creation of an academic labor market. While they see room for better organization of the Process in general, they also largely consider it possible for the Process to open up to continents outside Europe for better comparability across continents and the creation of further opportunities for students and academic staff.

EI perceives the report as a clear indication of the need for future improvements within the Bologna Process especially within the field of the working environment for the academic staff and moreover needed stronger involvement of the staff on all levels, as has been emphasized in the adopted Ministerial Declaration 2010 in Budapest and Vienna.

3. ESU-EI Agreement

ESU and EI have reiterated their will to continue the cooperation within the Bologna Process arena, bringing attention to the topics of mobility, access to higher education, social dimension, student centred learning and academic freedom.

The renewed signed agreement has brought consensus on the need to meet and discuss issues of mutual concern, advocate for common policy positions and cooperate on different projects. They are concerned about the increase of trade and GATS negotiations influence on education and decrease of public funding of higher education.



The agreement further recognizes the need for stronger involvement of students and staff in the promotion of employment rights of young researchers and quality assurance mechanisms in transnational education. Additionally, EI has repeated its commitment to support ESU's efforts in international student cooperation.

3. HERSC Sub-Groups on Quality Assurance, Doctoral Studies and Supportive Environment

EI Pan European Structure Higher Education and Research Standing Committee has three working Sub-Groups: on QA, Doctoral Studies and Supportive Environment. Besides our continuous work on improving staff participation in the quality assurance processes, through exchange of experience and active participation in EQAR as well as further development of the inclusion of staff on the national and institutional levels and the improvement of the working conditions of doctoral students/early researchers and attractiveness of the positions in the academia for young and interested students, as in Bologna Anniversary Budapest Vienna Ministerial Declaration that was adopted in March 2010 ministers have recognized the need for a more supportive environment for the staff to fulfil their tasks, HERSC has formed another Sub-Group on the topic. The Sub-Group is currently preparing an input paper for BFUG which would propose the definition of the term, elements which are prerequisites for the supportive environment, and the needed subsequent policies and active measures.

More information about EI activities in the field of higher education outside of Europe and related issues can be found on www.ei-ie.org.