Dr. Birger Hendriks 8 November 2012

Germany - States

**Structural reforms**

Some of the main political goals of the Bologna Process of yesterday, today and tomorrow in the context of the German HE political situation are the following:

1. **Challenges**

Looking at the mobility figures of students and staff in the different countries of the Bologna Process it seems still to be necessary to speed up the development and to improve its quality. Although relative as well as absolute mobility figures are different in the Bologna states they should still increase. To improve this situation it will require an intensified process of implementation at the national level as well a changing mindsets both in politics and in the institutions. The lack of enough mobility in both groups (students and staff) is an Achilles heel for the whole process.

Furthermore while promoting the goals of the Bologna Process we are suspicious of being technocrats who destroy the European tradition of an “entire education” (“learning for earning or learning for living?”)

1. **Goals and tools**

When starting the Bologna Process we had the chance to build up the catalogue of different goals at the international level. At the national level some countries started working very early, others did not care about it. The phase of implementation followed and is still going on. In many cases the quality of this implementation asked and still asks for improvement. This means:

1. In many cases we can see a lack of sufficient quality in the implementation process. What we still need is to motivate the HEI’s including all relevant stakeholders in this direction. They should be convinced why doing so in the sense of “cui bono?”. The Rectors Conferences as well as EUA and EURASHE can play a useful role in this context.
2. It should be discussed how to implement the Bologna tools into the context of the “entire education” (in German: “Bildung”). In particular some universities and parts of the Rectors Conference in Germany try to differentiate between universities and “Fachhochschulen” / polytechnics as follows: “We (the universities) are responsible for the entire education process at the level of HE, the “Fachhochschulen” should care for employable graduates.” To me it does not seem to be so easy as to neglect this approach (…learning for living), but it may endanger in some parts the whole Bologna Process: If employability is no longer a relevant goal for universities they can forget all about the other goals. I do not have a proposal for a solution at the moment but would be glad to discuss this matter.
3. The context of the different tools like employability, learning outcomes and qualification frameworks is still not clear enough, at least at the national level. It would be helpful to get an impact on the improvements necessary from the international Bologna Process.
4. The rankings play an important role in the elite HEI’s as well as in many countries outside Europe. On the other hand many countries do not like some rankings at all. It is necessary to find a more intensive approach to the advantage of classifications for everybody. In India for example the authorities are requiring universities to collaborate only with those foreign universities that are ranked among the top 500, as far as joint degrees and programs are concerned.
5. Last not least to the core: the quality assurance (QA). The results of QA processes are still not obvious enough, and the system has in many cases no teeth in terms of funding or incentives. Also the publication of QA reports is not always guarantied. Necessary improvements are important for mobile students.

There are other points to be discussed like internationalization that are to be dealt with in other working groups.