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| 08/11/2012 Brief summary from Education International on:The main challenges the EHEA is facing taking into account the major political, economical, social and technological developments; **One of the main challenges,** in an overall European perspective, is the lack of investment. The last few years have meant that most governments have invested less in HER. The reduction of investments is likely to undermine the quality of HE. This leads to less teacher led education per week, larger groups and less time for teachers to prepare. Increased resources is needed to ensure higher quality in both undergraduate and graduate education.  When it comes to the implementation of the Bologna process, EI published a report in 2010.[[1]](#footnote-1) The report shows that the support for implementation of reforms is insufficient. Across Europe, there is a lack of support to academic staff for the large amount of administrative work that the implementation requires in practice. It also shows that; there is a deterioration in working conditions of academic staff, that the participation and involvement of academic staff in decision making processes is crucial, and that public funding is of great importance for the quality of HE.  **Another main challenge** for higher education and research in Europe is the lack of permanent positions for university teachers and researchers. I Sweden, for example, 37 per cent of women and 32 per cent of men amongst the teaching and researching staff are employed on fixed term contracts. One third of this category of staff are on fixed-term appointments. In for example Germany the share of short term contracts is aprox. 80 per cent.  This creates a situation of uncertainty for employers, poor working conditions and a risk that the most talented teachers and researchers move on to other areas of the labour market, which of course leads to lower quality in teaching and research.    To guarantee high quality in HE universities and university colleges must offer attractive,  clearly-defined career opportunities for both women and men and both research and teaching must be part of the work of PhD qualified teachers.  **In Sweden, a third main challenge** is the Swedish quality assurance system. ENQA has not reconfirmed HSV full membership and HSV will thus be designated as “ENQA Full member under review” for a period of two years and will need to undergo a new review process. This is problematic not only because Sweden for the moment don´t have a quality assurance system that is in line with the ESG, but also because part of the funding for HE is performance based and allocated according to the quality evaluations. As the quality assurance systems legitimacy has been questions this might make the Swedish HE less attractive to foreign students and thus have a negative effect on the mobility of students.  **The extent to which the  EHEA Structural Reforms are suitable to address those challenges and the way those reforms can be reinforced;**  For quality reasons it is of utmost importance that the European countries have quality assurance systems in line with the common European standards and guidelines. If transparency tools or evaluation results are unreliable both the quality of education and the mobility of students and staff are obstructed.  The involvement of both HEI and academic staff in the Bologna process is of importance for a successful implementation. Many European unions point out the issue of represent­ation on the basis that academics collectively make up one of the largest internal stake­holders within higher education institutions, making them key to ensuring the success of Bologna reforms both at the institutional and national levels.  **The main political goals of the Bologna Process of yesterday, today and tomorrow.**  It is clear that there is currently some unrest across a number of countries with respect to the way in which the Bologna Process has been implemented. Nevertheless, academic staff remain committed to the proper implementation of the Bologna Process as envisaged in the 1999 Bologna Declaration. This is clearly visible from the way in which academics perceive the Bologna Process as developing in the future. As a symbol of quality.  The close link between the quality of higher education and research and the attractive­ness of academic professions must be better recognized, and, as the Ministers stated in the Budapest-Vienna Ministerial Declaration on the European Higher Education Area, “a more supportive environment for the staff to fulfil their tasks, is needed.”[[2]](#footnote-2) If our members cannot experience support from institutions and governments at the BFUG level, it is likely that their positive attitude towards the Bologna Process will be severely reduced. | |

For Education International

Karin Åmossa

Senior researcher

Swedish Association of University Teachers

ka@sulf.se

Cell: +46702921770

1. ”Enhancing quality. Academics´Perceptions of the Bologna Process – a study by the Education International Pan-European Structure” March 2010 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “The Bologna Process: the case for a Supportive Environment for Academic staff, and the key features of a Supportive Environment - An Education International position paper”, march 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)