

**THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA (EHEA) IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT:  
Report on overall developments at the European, national and institutional levels**

**Final draft submitted to BFUG for its meeting in Prague, 12-13 February 2009**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report, prepared by the working group “European Higher Education in a Global Setting” and approved by the Bologna Follow-up Group at its meeting in Prague on 12-13 February 2009 gives an overview of the developments in the five core policy areas identified by the Ministers in charge of Higher Education at their meeting in London in May 2007. On the basis of the discussions in the working group and the BFUG meetings, the input received from different European organisations and the results of the stocktaking exercise it identifies fields where further efforts are needed. While much has already been achieved in the five core policy areas of information, promotion, recognition as well as policy dialogue and cooperation based on partnership, the report also points out that further action is needed to sustain the many existing initiatives to respond to the growing interest in the Bologna Process and to manage the high but very different expectations from across the world.

Although *information on the EHEA* has been improved especially by updating the Bologna website and producing a new brochure in addition to a wide range of other publications, more effort to enhance the collection, updating and distribution of information in a common format to non-EHEA countries is needed. The report also recommends the provision of structured information on scholarships with a view to creating an EHEA-wide online information system on scholarships and to mandate the Bologna Secretariat to provide information to interested non-EHEA countries.

The *promotion* and marketing of higher education has only recently started with many national and European level activities. These include the setting up of promotion agencies, often combined with the development of a national higher education brand, information offices, websites, campaigns, fairs and many other promotional activities and events. As these activities are unevenly developed across the EHEA, the report recommends the establishment of a network of national contact points for promotion activities in order to foster the exchange of good practice and peer learning, a round table of European actors, and a mapping exercise. A major challenge for promotion activities at European level will be to ensure that they are sustainable and cover the entire European Higher Education Area. Successful promotion and marketing of course rely on a high quality of higher education.

The EHEA is faced with growing interest from other parts of the world. *Policy dialogue* and *cooperation based on partnership* between the EHEA and non-EHEA countries are perceived as an efficient means to ensure that the European Higher Education Area remains relevant for the world, open, flexible and ready to learn from international experiences and to anticipate the need for further reform and adjustment in good time. In order to foster mutual understanding and learning, and to lay the ground for sustainable cooperation, policy dialogue and cooperation based on partnership have to be developed at all levels: at European, national, regional and institutional level. A number of activities are proposed in this respect.

The establishment of an intensive dialogue with other regions in the world is also fundamental to further *recognition of qualifications*. The ENIC and NARIC Networks have set up many initiatives, among them a working party on recognition in a global context. The report recommends making use of the Council of Europe/UNESCO Recognition Convention and its subsidiary texts as a guide to good practice in the assessment of qualifications from countries that are not legally bound by the Convention and as a basis for dialogue on recognition policy.

As the expectations of EHEA countries and stakeholders as well as non-EHEA countries and stakeholders are very high, further action is needed not only to sustain existing initiatives, but also to enhance the scope of activities and fully implement the Strategy “The European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting”. Recommendations referring to the five core policy areas are listed on pages 21-23.

## ACRONYMS

ACA	Academic Cooperation Association
ALECSO	Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
BFUG	Bologna Follow-up Group
CDESR	Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research
CHE	German Centre for Higher Education Development
CHEPS	Dutch Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies
CIEP	Centre international d'études pédagogiques
CIMO	Centre for International Mobility, Finland
CIRIUS	Authority supporting the internationalisation of education and training in Denmark
CRUS	Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities
CUIB	Ibero-American University Council
DAAD	German Academic Exchange Service
EAHEP	EU-Asia Higher Education Platform
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EEA	European Economic Area
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EHEFs	European Higher Education Fairs
EI	Education International
ENIC	European Network of National Information Centres on academic mobility and recognition
ENQA	the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQAR	European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education
ESU	European Students' Union
EU	European Union
EUA	European University Association
EU-LAC	European Union - Latin America and the Caribbean
EURASHE	European Association of Institutions in Higher Education
EURES	The European Job Mobility Portal
GPP	Global Promotion Project
KRASP	Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland
MedNet	The Mediterranean Network of Student Representatives
MERIC	Network of Mediterranean Recognition Information Centres
NARIC	Network of National Academic Recognition Information Centres
NUFFIC	The Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PLOTEUS	Portal on Learning Opportunities throughout the European Space
QA	Quality Assurance
TNE	Transnational education
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCO-CEPES	UNESCO's European Centre for Higher Education
UNU	United Nations University
WCHE	World Conference on Higher Education

## INTRODUCTION

At their meeting in London in May 2007, the Ministers in charge of Higher Education in the countries participating in the Bologna Process adopted the Strategy "The European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting", identifying five core policy areas where action should be taken:

- improving information on the EHEA;
- promoting European Higher Education to enhance its world-wide attractiveness and competitiveness;
- strengthening cooperation based on partnership;
- intensifying policy dialogue; and
- furthering recognition of qualifications.

For their meeting in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium) on 28-29 April 2009, the Ministers requested a report on the overall developments in these five areas at the European, national and institutional levels.

In the framework of the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) work programme 2007 – 2009, a working group on "European Higher Education in a Global Setting" was set up to take forward work in the five core policy areas and to prepare a draft report.<sup>1</sup> This draft report was approved by the BFUG at its meeting in Prague on 12-13 February 2009.

As requested, the report provides an overview of the overall developments and it does so by illustrating actual practice with concrete examples, without claiming to be comprehensive. Concerning developments at European level, input came from the European organisations represented in the working group (ACA, Council of Europe, EI, ENQA, ESU, EUA, EURASHE, European Commission, and UNESCO-CEPES). Developments at national level were covered by the stocktaking exercise.

To get an overview of developments at institutional level proved more difficult, not least because of the large number and huge variety of higher education institutions that exist within the EHEA. The next TRENDS report issued by EUA, which will provide information concerning the implementation of Bologna reforms at institutional level, will not be available before 2010 and the global dimension will be only one of many topics covered. In the absence of a survey on developments at institutional level, this report largely relies on the assessment of the situation by EUA and EURASHE.

On the basis of the input received, and taking into account the discussions in both the working group and the BFUG, this report concludes with recommendations for further action to be taken.

### 1 IMPROVING INFORMATION ON THE EHEA

The working group has supported the Bologna Secretariat in preparing an update and extension of the existing [Bologna website](#)<sup>2</sup> to make it more attractive for a global audience. As the user statistics show, the Bologna website indeed attracts visitors from all over the world. In the period from 1 September 2008 until 31 December 2008, the website was visited 40,437 times by 26,200 users from 170 countries. About 18.5% of the visits came from outside the European Higher Education Area.

The relevant information (country pages, including information for international students and researchers, information on the implementation of the Bologna Process, information about Bologna action lines, news items etc.) has been provided by participating countries, consultative members, and the European Commission, as well as by the chairs of working and coordination groups. On this basis, a first official [Bologna information brochure](#) has been produced, which can be downloaded from the Bologna website to be widely distributed at Bologna-related conferences, seminars and policy dialogues (see also Annex 2).

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<sup>1</sup> For the terms of reference of the working group see Annex 1

<sup>2</sup> [www.bologna2009benelux.org](http://www.bologna2009benelux.org)

In the context of the "Beyond 2010" discussion a number of possible permanent addresses for the website have been secured by the chair of the working group ([www.ehea.info](http://www.ehea.info); [www.european-higher-education-area.org](http://www.european-higher-education-area.org); [www.european-higher-education-area.net](http://www.european-higher-education-area.net); [www.bologna-process.info](http://www.bologna-process.info); [www.bologna-process.net](http://www.bologna-process.net)).

The working group also took stock of existing sources of information and their availability for public use:

The EUA Bologna Handbook of the implementation of the Bologna Process and the EUA-ACA Handbook on Internationalisation of European Higher Education provide analysis and case studies.

The Bologna brochure produced by the European University Association (EUA), can be downloaded free of charge from the EUA website<sup>3</sup> and freely used for non-commercial purposes, provided that the source is acknowledged (© European University Association). EUA also offers a variety of publications on Bologna-related topics such as Joint Masters, Doctoral Programmes or Quality Assurance, increasingly discovered by an international readership.

Before each ministerial conference, the European Students' Union (ESU) publishes a report called "Bologna With Student Eyes", providing analysis and updated information regarding the level of implementation and development of the Bologna Process from a students' point of view. "Bologna With Student Eyes" is based on a survey of 49 national unions of students regarding their perceptions on the reforms conducted in the different countries to implement the Bologna Process.

The European Commission granted the BFUG access to the Bologna Experts' (formerly Bologna Promoters') website and free use of the materials posted there, which can also be downloaded from the current Bologna website. The materials include presentations on the Bologna Process targeted at a variety of different audiences.

The European Commission has recently launched a call for tender for the creation of a European database of higher education institutions that will build on existing national statistical data, expanding them and making them comparable.

Since it was launched in December 2004, the Council of Europe Higher Education Series<sup>4</sup> has published 10 volumes on issues of higher education policy. These include public responsibility for higher education and research, higher education governance, higher education and democratic culture, the European university heritage and issues concerning qualifications and recognition. Publications in the Series are also distributed outside of the European Higher Education Area and have been quoted in non-European articles and presentations. The volume on university heritage has been translated into Spanish and published in Mexico.

UNESCO-CEPES regularly publishes on issues related to higher education in general and to the Bologna Process in particular, for example the quarterly review "Higher Education in Europe", one issue of which has been dedicated to the Bologna Process, and entitled: *The Bologna Effect: Perspectives Beyond a Decade of Influence on Higher Education Change* (Vol. 34, No. 1, 2009).

The Bologna Secretariat, chairs of working and coordination groups, individual BFUG members, consultative members and the European Commission have engaged in a variety of information activities, such as presentations at international conferences, participation in discussion fora, visits organised for international delegations, and answering individual requests for information on the Bologna Process in general and on specific Bologna-related topics.

As the national reports show, most of the 46 EHEA countries also (and primarily) provide indepth information on their national higher education systems and ongoing reforms.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.eua.be/index.php?id=128>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/Resources/HEseries\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/Resources/HEseries_en.asp)

So while a lot has already been done to improve information on the European Higher Education Area, more work remains to be done, especially since the demand for such information about developments at institutional, national and European level is still growing. This information needs to be made available in widely spoken languages and also needs to be continuously updated.

Recommendations for further action are:

- The Bologna Secretariat should be mandated to provide information on the EHEA specifically targeted at non-EHEA countries, which should include providing appropriate information on the EHEA website, facilitating coordinated information visits to and from non-EHEA countries, and supporting embassies of EHEA countries, promotion offices, EU delegations to provide adequate information on the European Higher Education Area.
- Each Bologna country should provide information for international students and staff in a common format (ideally through a website, which would be linked to the Bologna website).
- Countries not yet providing structured information on scholarships should set up national databases with a view to creating an EHEA-wide online information system on scholarships.

## **2 PROMOTING EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION TO ENHANCE ITS WORLD-WIDE ATTRACTIVENESS AND COMPETITIVENESS**

One of the main goals of the Bologna Declaration was “to ensure that the European higher education system acquires a world-wide degree of attraction”. In most parts of Europe, the international promotion and marketing of higher education is, however, a fairly recent phenomenon. For a long time, promotion was (erroneously) viewed as a commercial practice, and as such incompatible with academic values, rather than as a natural element of national and European public policy. A number of factors have changed this picture: these include the emergence of stronger competition internationally among higher education providers, together with a strong drive towards internationalisation in many countries of the EHEA and a greater importance given to a sufficient share of “international students”. Another influence, at least in the European Union context, has been the Lisbon Strategy with the aim to make the European Union the most favoured destination for foreign students and scholars and, more generally, to make the EU educative and training systems a world quality reference by 2010.

The key actors in the international promotion of higher education are the higher education institutions themselves, and nothing can substitute their own efforts to convince potential students (and faculty) around the world of the attractiveness of their programme offerings (and research prowess, where applicable). However, there are other important actors who can complement institutional positioning efforts. Among them are:

- higher education networks, at national as well as European or sub-European cross-border level;
- (sub-national) regional entities, such as Germany's *Länder* or Spain's autonomous regions, to name only two examples;
- national bodies, such as governments, but more frequently specialised “agencies” working on behalf of or in close cooperation with the competent authorities; and
- at the European level, for example the European Union and the Council of Europe, at sub-European level, international organisations such as the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Other actors can play an important role in international promotion and marketing, such as students and alumni, employers, trade unions, and other civil-society players.

This report, however, focuses mainly on the promotional activities of national and European-level actors - not because they are necessarily considered the most important ones, but because relatively systematic information is available on their activities. For promotion activities of higher education institutions in the EHEA this is unfortunately not the case.

Europe's higher education institutions are operating in an increasingly competitive global environment and therefore increasingly engage in a variety of marketing activities not only at national but more and more at international level, too.

In this context, the creation of the European Higher Education Area is perceived as a catalyst for enhancing the global visibility and competitiveness of European higher education and higher education institutions. It can therefore be expected that in their promotional work, European higher education institutions will in growing numbers not only refer to institutional and national facilities and characteristics but also to the common framework of the European Higher Education Area and the wide range of benefits and opportunities that studying, researching and teaching in Europe offers.

This also seems to be the case for programmes, types of institutions or study destinations that previously were not considered as "marketable" to students in other parts of the world - especially countries with less widely spoken languages or whose higher education systems are not well known internationally, but also professionally oriented (and mostly mono-disciplinary) higher education institutions with a regional focus.

So while there are signs that European higher education institutions react to the growing international competition by increased marketing activities, and increasingly do so with reference to the EHEA, no systematic overview of these activities exists. There appears to be a certain reluctance on part of the higher education institutions to share this information, be it for fear of losing a competitive advantage or simply for a lack of interest so far at European level.

The remaining part of this chapter will therefore focus on promotion activities at national and European level.

### **National promotion activities**

While governments, and specialised internationalisation agencies working on their behalf, have for a long time engaged in providing information on study opportunities in their countries, national-level promotion and marketing in the sense of a proactive, coordinated and larger-scale effort aimed at attracting international students only began in Europe in the second half of the 1990s. It was at this time that the UK started its "Prime Minister's Initiative"; Germany launched its "Hi! Potentials" campaign (now: "Study in Germany"); France created its international promotion agency EduFrance (now: CampusFrance); and NUFFIC began to market the Netherlands as study destination - to name only a few such initiatives.

Most national marketing efforts in Europe have been government-induced or, at least, government-supported. In most cases, governments felt that it had become necessary to encourage their higher education institutions to proactively seek to enrol a larger number of international students, and to therefore support their institutions' efforts with a national umbrella campaign to enhance the international visibility and attractiveness of the country's higher education as a whole.

In the overwhelming majority of cases, national governments out-sourced this task to specialised organisations. In countries where there was already an established "internationalisation agency" for the administration of scholarship programmes and similar measures, this organisation was usually entrusted with the development and implementation of the promotional campaign. Examples include Germany's DAAD, the UK's British Council, the Netherlands' NUFFIC, or Finland's CIMO, Sweden's Swedish Institute and Denmark's CIRIUS. In countries without such structures, new entities were set up. This was the case, for example, in France, where three government departments created EduFrance (today: CampusFrance) in the late 1990s. There have also been (rare) cases where organisations were set up without any government initiative, for example in Poland, where the non-profit Perspektywy Foundation was created with the support of the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (KRASP).

In almost all cases, the particular country's higher education sector was centrally involved from the start - and has remained so until today. Some of the above entities are membership

organisations of the country's higher education institutions. Where this is not the case, at least the international promotion sub-section entails a membership element or a similar form of affiliation or subscription of the country's higher education institutions. Likewise, higher education institutions complement the funding made available by governments.

National promotion activity across the EHEA differs enormously in scale. While a few countries apply the whole spectrum of promotional possibilities, others use only selected means or are not yet active. The following is an overview of the various instruments and means employed.

The core element of any developed promotion campaign is a national higher education brand.<sup>5</sup> This brand creates a unique "identity" or "image" of the country's higher education. It consists of a set of key messages and a logo. It is important that all other elements of the promotion campaign (see below) make systematic use of the brand.

The second-most important element of the majority of campaigns is a central website. The website ("Study-in.....") is the core instrument for guiding potential international students to the information they seek in order to make their destination decision and later enrol. Typically it contains a section about the country itself (and its distinctive cultural attractions) and an introduction to the higher education system, as well as practical information about immigration, visas, work, accommodation etc. One of the functions of these websites is to serve as a portal to the websites of individual institutions and their programmes. A well-developed website also contains an overview of scholarship programmes available for study in the country, and special incentives for international students, such as programmes taught in English (mostly in the form of a searchable database). Advanced websites exist in a range of languages that are widely spoken worldwide. The website can be (and normally is) complemented by other electronic (CD-ROMs, DVDs, etc.) and printed promotion and information materials for distribution to potential students at fairs and in other fora allowing personal encounters.

The third element of a developed campaign consists of events of various kinds. The core-type event is a higher education fair. Such fairs create a forum for a direct encounter with potential students and their parents. Some fairs are organised by (the promotion agency of) one single country. Others are organised by country-neutral and often commercial organisations. In the minimalist case, only the promotion agency of a country is present and represents its higher education institutions. More frequently, the promotion agency organises, next to its own presence, that of individual institutions with their own booths. Other types of events comprise smaller seminar-type get-togethers, often of a subject-specific sort, or meetings between representatives of higher education institutions from the host and the promoting country.

A fourth element is communication (media) campaigns. Typically, these target one particular country and transmit their messages via advertisements on television and in widely-read newspapers and magazines, among others. It is common to combine a media campaign with a physical presence (through fairs or other events) in the country.

Fifth, some organisations have set up their own permanent presence in key countries, in the form of information offices. These offices serve as service points for potential students, whom they inform and counsel, and as support structures for events, media campaigns and the like. Only larger organisations (for example, British Council, CampusFrance, DAAD, and NUFFIC to an extent) make the considerable investment in such a permanent physical presence. In other cases, this task is delegated to the embassy or a cultural institute of the country in question. Some countries additionally operate programmes of teachers of their language and culture abroad (e.g. Austria's and Germany's "Lektoren"), who have recently also been entrusted with in-loco promotion work. In many cases, such positions are established under bilateral cultural agreements.

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<sup>5</sup> There have also been attempts by some sub-national regions in Europe, such as Baden-Württemberg and Catalonia, to create their own brand. Likewise, there have been attempts at joint marketing by groups of European countries (the Nordic countries, for example), and also of transnational European university networks, but few of these latter measures have developed a clear brand.

Sixth, there are further promotion-related activities worth mentioning. Only countries with a very advanced promotion campaign are active in these areas. One activity is to work with (selected) private agents, who are a common feature in many source countries (especially in Asia) and who help place students in foreign institutions. Other measures are training and competence building opportunities of all kinds intended to equip the institutions of a given country to better position themselves internationally. Finally, a few countries also invest in background research, such as marketing studies, to explore the potential of their country's higher education institutions in a given country or region, in order to define the geographical focus of their promotion efforts.

More generally, it must be stressed that most national promotion efforts target international students in the first place, and international scholars in the second. Among students, the key target group is almost invariably the graduate segment at Masters, and, in a few cases, at doctoral level.

As has already become clear, very few countries in the EHEA make use of all of the above instruments. In fact, national higher education promotion is very unevenly developed across the EHEA. Since to date there is no transparency concerning the exact involvement of all EHEA countries in national-level marketing, the following classification must be seen as preliminary and subject to revision. Roughly speaking, in terms of national promotion, the EHEA can be divided into three categories of countries.

The first category of countries – mainly from northwest Europe – is characterised by a high degree of involvement, in terms of resources available and activities engaged in. This group is led by the UK, which most likely outperforms any other country by a considerable margin, followed by Germany, France and the Netherlands, each of which have also invested considerably. Seen in relation to their (much smaller) size, Finland and Sweden also belong to this group. Denmark, which recently decided to make a considerable investment in international promotion, is likely to join the group soon.

A second category consists of countries, which are active in only a few of the above activity categories or where an infrastructure (organisation) for international promotion has only very recently been created. In some countries, these are fledgling organisations whose sustainability still needs to be demonstrated. In others, established “internationalisation agencies” have been entrusted with the task, but at a modest level of engagement. This category is led by countries such as Austria (Austrian Exchange Service), Switzerland (CRUS), Poland (Perspektywy Foundation), Ireland (International Education Board Ireland) and Spain (Universidad.es). Hungary (Campus Hungary), Belgium/Flemish Community, and Estonia have started to become active in the field, too.

In a third category of EHEA countries, hardly any form of national higher education promotion could be identified. It must be noted that this group forms the majority of countries in the EHEA. Of course, the National Agencies or National Structures of almost all the countries eligible to participate in the Lifelong Learning Programme and/or the Erasmus Mundus Programme of the European Union engage, in one form or another, in promotion-related measures. However, this activity is usually small-scale and most of it consists of the provision of information rather than active marketing as such.

It must be stressed that the above categorisation is a very rough one and that the field of national-level actors is in flux. There are, for example, indications that some of the countries now in category three might soon have to be classified differently. Romania, for instance, is about to create a new internationalisation agency, which will probably also have promotional tasks - to give just one example.

### **European-level activities**

European-level promotional efforts have been initiated only very recently. The chief actor is the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture, which in early 2007 launched the Global Promotion Project (GPP), described in greater detail below. The EuropeAid Cooperation Office has become active, too, with the award of a contract for European Higher

Education Fairs and the launch of the EU-Asia Higher Education Platform (see also below). Some of the European Union's Delegations conduct local activities.

These implementation projects were preceded by exploratory research work. In 2005, the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) conducted a large-scale study on the way in which European higher education is viewed in other parts of the world. This study, "Perceptions of European Higher Education in Third Countries"<sup>6</sup> surveyed over 20,000 pupils, students, teachers, university staff and higher education policy-makers around the globe and yielded a detailed picture of the perceived strengths and weaknesses of European higher education as seen from outside. Its results and recommendations have informed the European Commission in the design of the Global Promotion Project. EURODATA<sup>7</sup>, also carried out by ACA, drew a detailed picture of the flows of international students into and out of Europe, and thus provided an atlas of the relative attractiveness of Europe as a study destination.

### Global Promotion Project

The Erasmus Mundus programme has among its objectives to promote the European quality offer in higher education, to encourage incoming mobility of third-country graduate students and scholars and to improve the profile, visibility and accessibility of European higher education throughout the world. In keeping with these objectives, the Erasmus Mundus Global Promotion Project (GPP) aims to build upon perceived strengths and overcome negative perceptions by helping to create a clear European "identity" in higher education, by improving the availability and accessibility of information on studying in Europe and by enhancing the professional capacity of European higher education to promote itself as a place of study.

The GPP began in January 2007 and runs until December 2009. It comprises five inter-related "Lots" or groups of services:

- Lot 1: Development of a European "brand" and design of a "Study in Europe" portal;
- Lot 2: Studies on innovative services for international study;
- Lot 3: Measures to improve higher education marketing techniques in Europe;
- Lot 4: Events to promote European higher education; and
- Lot 5: Design of a media campaign and preparation of information materials.

Target audiences include students from around the world, student bodies, higher education institutions, parents and employers.

The main outputs of the GPP so far have been:

- The development of a "Study in Europe" brand, based on the inherent strengths of European higher education (Quality, Diversity and Opportunity). These key messages are integral to the current promotional campaign.
- A "Study in Europe" website<sup>8</sup>, which presents easily comparable information on study opportunities in 32 European countries and is available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. The website comprises the following sections: Why study in Europe? Courses and Programmes; European Higher Education; Application Guide; Living in Europe (including Jobs); Scholarships and Testimonials; Glossary and Events.
- "Study in Europe" promotional materials (brochure, flyer, posters, DVD) in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.
- The funding of "Study in Europe" areas within two Higher Education Fairs, in Russia (Moscow on 13-15 November 2008) and Brazil (Sao Paulo on 27-29 March 2009).

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<sup>6</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/acareport.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Kelo, Maria; Teichler, Ulrich; Wächter, Bernd (2006): EURODATA. Student Mobility in European Higher Education, Bonn. Lemmens.

<sup>8</sup> [www.study-in-europe.org](http://www.study-in-europe.org)

- A “Study in Europe” Communication Tool-Kit for European higher education institutions<sup>9</sup>, containing advice on the following themes: Effective Marketing; Key Messages about European Higher Education; Effective Planning for Cultural Diversity; Working with Education Agents; Supporting Alumni Relations; Media Relations; Press Releases; Higher Education Fairs; Use of the Internet; Use of the Study in Europe Promotional Tools.
- A study on current trends in Trans-National Education (offshore courses and campuses, online learning, etc.) providing a detailed analysis of current TNE provision, comparing the experiences of European countries with those of established and emerging competitors from elsewhere in the world. The study considers different partnership scenarios and funding models, the main motivations and “drivers” of TNE, issues relating to quality assurance, the experience of students participating in European TNE programmes and the possible future direction of TNE in Europe.<sup>10</sup>
- A pilot network of European Higher Education promoters in Mexico (March 2008-March 2009).

### European Higher Education Fairs (EHEFs)

Some European Higher Education Fairs are funded from the Asia-Link Programme of the European Commission’s EuropeAid Cooperation Office. These fairs are organised, on behalf of EuropeAid, by a consortium of CampusFrance, British Council, NUFFIC and DAAD. Being financed from the budget of the Asia-Link Programme, they target exclusively Asian countries eligible to participate in this scheme.<sup>11</sup>

The EHEFs are open to higher education institutions as well as national organisations and other education providers in all European countries which are eligible to participate in Asia-Link<sup>12</sup>. The vast majority of participants (upward of 80 percent) are individual higher education institutions.

After a pilot fair held in Bangkok in late 2004, the series of EHEFs proper started in late 2006 and ran until the autumn of 2008. A total of eight fairs were organised in seven countries (Thailand, India, Malaysia, China, Vietnam (2), the Philippines and Indonesia). The fairs targeted (potential) students as well as their parents to convince them to choose Europe as their study destination. Stakeholder initiatives complement these efforts.

### EU-Asia Higher Education Platform

The EU-Asia Higher Education Platform (EAHEP) was launched under the Asia-Link Programme with the aim of enhancing information exchange, dialogue and cooperation in higher education and research between the EU and Asia. It is being implemented by a consortium made up of EUA, NUFFIC and DAAD in 2008 and 2009. Next to organising four workshops and two round tables in Asia and the EU, it has organised two European higher education fairs, roughly modeled on the EHEFs, one in New Delhi on 14-16 November 2008 and one in Thailand in November 2009.

So there seems to be a clear trend towards an increase in promotion activities at all levels (institutional, national and European) but those activities are unevenly developed across the EHEA and, especially concerning institutional promotion activities, a systematic overview is missing. The national reports confirm the trend towards introducing promotion activities/campaigns, establishing and/or mandating agencies in this area, and to use the implementation of the Bologna Process to enhance attractiveness and competitiveness of the national systems. However, the focus of these activities lies on the individual systems as part of the EHEA and not on the EHEA as such. A major challenge for promotion activities at

<sup>9</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/doc/toolkit\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/doc/toolkit_en.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/news\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/news_en.html) (see entry of July 2008)

<sup>11</sup> Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar/Burma, Nepal, North Korea, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam.

<sup>12</sup> EU-27 plus candidate countries Croatia, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, and Turkey, as well as EEA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

European level will be to ensure that they are sustainable and cover the entire European Higher Education Area.

Recommendations for further action are:

- Each EHEA country should designate a contact point for information and promotion activities. The contact points will form a network fostering the exchange of best practice and know-how transfer as well as peer learning in the field of national-level promotion of higher education.
- A European mapping of promotion activities based on a sample of higher education institutions in each country should be carried out, also assessing the impact the Bologna Process has on institutional higher education promotion strategies and measures.
- A round table should be convened by the Bologna Secretariat with the participation of the European Commission and other main actors in higher education promotion in Europe to devise a “road map” and to identify opportunities and actions for enhancing European-level promotion.

Last, but not least, it must be underlined that international promotion and marketing rely for their success on a number of important preconditions. Chief among them is a high quality of higher education. It is therefore crucial that the countries of the EHEA do not waiver in their quest to improve quality.

### **3 STRENGTHENING COOPERATION BASED ON PARTNERSHIP AND INTENSIFYING POLICY DIALOGUE**

Since 1999, the Bologna Process and its *acquis* have created considerable interest in many parts of the world. In several countries, concrete initiatives have been taken to implement the Bologna Process or some of its features (e.g. in Israel, Kazakhstan, Maghreb countries or lusophone countries in Asia and Africa). Some countries have expressed interest in the exchange of good practice and cooperation on particular issues, such as quality assurance, recognition, exchange of students, or lifelong learning (e.g. Australia or New Zealand).

The Bologna Process responds to this growing interest from other parts of the world by seeking to intensify policy dialogue and strengthening cooperation based on partnership.

Higher education policy dialogue and cooperation based on partnership can be considered complementary to another policy area addressed by the Strategy and covered in chapter 2 of this report, namely promotion. Similarly, policy dialogue and cooperation based on partnership rely heavily on adequate and reliable information and in many cases will deal with recognition issues. In other words, the five elements of the Strategy for European Higher Education in a Global Setting are closely interlinked. The focus of this chapter is, however, on policy dialogue and cooperation based on partnership, listing a variety of existing initiatives aimed to further both.

Policy dialogue and cooperation based on partnership between Europe and other parts of the world are perceived as an efficient means to ensure that the European Higher Education Area does not develop into a “fortress Europe” but rather remains relevant for the world: open, flexible and ready to learn from international experiences and to anticipate the need for further reform and adjustment in good time.

The Strategy “The European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting” emphasised that policy dialogue and cooperation based on partnership should be of mutual benefit. Recognition of qualifications and student exchange are two prominent examples. A global exchange of talent and knowledge could contribute to capacity building. Intercultural knowledge resulting, for instance, from student and staff exchanges could boost innovation and creativity in higher education and research but also in the economy more generally. There also are a number of global challenges that simply require international cooperation, such as climate change.

Countries participating in the Bologna Process, as well as individual higher education institutions also compete in a global market, but there is no inherent contradiction between competition and cooperation – they can be seen as two sides of the same valuable coin. A balance between competition, cooperation and solidarity becomes increasingly important in a globalised environment in order to respond to global societal needs.

**Policy dialogue** is a two-way process: While the rest of the world learns about Europe, Europe learns about the rest of the world. Policy dialogue is an indispensable means to communicate the Bologna Process, its *acquis*, and its underlying principles to international partners. It contributes in a very sustainable and efficient way to information on, and promotion of, European higher education. At the same time, as European higher education institutions become increasingly involved at the global level, knowledge and understanding of higher education systems and developments in other parts of the world, in the respective political, economic and societal environments, is of strategic importance for Europe. In this regard, the European Higher Education Area can expect to gain at least as much from international policy dialogue as it contributes.

Individual EHEA countries, the European Commission and consultative members have recognised the importance of policy dialogue in higher education and research at an early stage. Initiatives have been launched involving higher education institutions and stakeholder organisations. There is also significant activity at the level of individual national stakeholder organisations with respect to dialogue and cooperation with similar organisations around the world. The national reports show a high level of commitment of many EHEA countries to policy dialogue on higher education reforms and specific topics with partners from across the world, bilaterally and in multilateral networks.

The European Union has developed several inter-regional dialogue and partnership initiatives, such as the EU-LAC process, the ASEM process, the EU-ASEAN, the Euro Mediterranean partnership, and in the context of its Neighbourhood policy. While higher education and research have been identified as important elements and driving forces by some of these initiatives and there has been frequent reference to, for instance, the EU-LAC and the Mediterranean higher education spaces, there still seems to be a lot of scope for further development. There is a strong interest in the Bologna Process from those EU partner regions. The challenge for the EHEA is that in EU policy dialogue settings Europe consists of 27 EU member states while the European Higher Education Area encompasses 46 participating countries and this does not make it easier for international partners.

With a number of countries (Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, India, Israel, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, New Zealand and the US) the European Union has set up a sectoral policy dialogue on education and culture or will do so in the near future. The sectoral policy dialogues will be organised through annual thematic seminars on jointly selected topics of common interest. These seminars will be held at administrative level (Commission services and Ministries) with the participation of experts and stakeholders from both sides.

In the Council of Europe's work dialogue between Europe and other regions is an essential part of all policies, underpinned by the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue entitled "Living Together as Equals in Dignity"<sup>13</sup> adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7 May 2008.

The Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research (CDESR) is a prominent platform for policy dialogue between policy-makers in public authorities and higher education institutions and addresses issues relating to the Bologna Process at its plenary sessions. The CDESR includes Canada, Israel, Japan, Mexico and the United States as well as the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) as observers.

Education International (EI), the global union federation representing teachers and education workers, including academic staff, with 394 member organisations worldwide, has 100 member organisations representing three million university and research personnel working in

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<sup>13</sup> See [www.coe.int/dialogue](http://www.coe.int/dialogue)

the higher education and research sector. Via this broad membership and global scope, much of EI routine or daily work concerns global issues.

Every second year, EI holds an international conference on higher education and research, gathering higher education and research workers from all over the world. This conference is an opportunity for EI members to formulate policies in the area of higher education and research, and to inform each other about developments in their region or country. The conference functions well as an opportunity for exchanging information and discussing policy. The latest conference of this kind was held in Malaga (Spain) in November 2007, with a large part of the programme devoted to discussions about the Bologna Process and Europe's interaction with the rest of the world on issues regarding higher education and research.

ENQA is an umbrella organisation for European quality assurance agencies, with 48 members from 25 Bologna countries. Through its associate/affiliate scheme, ENQA has formalised its cooperation with another 23 quality assurance bodies and networks from Bologna countries as well as from Israel, Kazakhstan and the US. In May 2008, ENQA signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and participates, together with several other regional networks from all over the world, in the INQAAHE committee for regional representatives.

UNESCO-CEPES facilitates policy dialogue with representatives of other regions of the world, through the UNESCO global dimension, for example at the UNU/UNESCO International Conference on "Pathways Towards a Shared Future: Changing Roles of Higher Education in a Globalized World", 29-30 August 2007, Tokyo, Japan.

The UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education "The New Dynamics of Higher Education", which will be held from 6 to 8 July 2009 at UNESCO's Headquarters in Paris to take stock of developments since the 1998 WCHE and to re-visit the framework for Priority Action, offers an important forum for discussions on policy issues for higher education worldwide.

The forthcoming 2009 WCHE is preceded by a series of regional conferences organised to bring specific regional concerns, expectations and proposals to the World Conference. In the Europe Region, the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education in the Europe Region: Access, Values, Quality and Competitiveness<sup>14</sup> is being organised by UNESCO-CEPES and the Government of Romania, represented by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, in collaboration with Council of Europe, European Commission, OECD, EUA, ESU, and EI. The Forum will be held in Bucharest (Romania) from 21 to 24 May 2009 and will adopt the "Bucharest Message to the 2009 World Conference on Higher Education – Recommendations and Appeals", an important element of which will be the role of the Bologna Process in the global context.

A report commissioned in conjunction with the Forum, entitled "Ten Years Back and Ten Years Forward: Developments and Trends in Higher Education in Europe and North America" will reflect on major developments in higher education in the region, paying particular attention to the Bologna Process and the Ministerial Conference in Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve.

Through international participation at EUA conferences, EUA participation at international partners' events, dialogue meetings, and mutual visits, the European University Association has provided opportunities for immediate exchange and update on national and regional developments, and the impacts that global trends have in different parts of the world. One example of EUA's role in policy dialogue has been its support of the follow-up of the ASEM education ministers' meeting and the subsequent ASEM university platform, launched in 2008 with the first meeting of European and Asian rectors.

EUA's international activities have also been useful in developing a more concise and detailed understanding of topical European higher education issues, on which EUA currently focuses. Examples include: institutional reflections on national research and research funding strategies; the strategic importance of doctoral studies for the institutions, and the strong

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<sup>14</sup> [www.cepes.ro/forum](http://www.cepes.ro/forum)

interest of international partners in further exchange and cooperation in this area; and strategic thinking about internationalisation processes.

International activities carried out thus far also confirm thematic congruence and cohesion of the “European” and the “International” agenda of EUA. It has been found that EUA and its partner organisations around the world have quite a few issues in common. There is a general trend whereby boundaries between domestic and international issues appear to be increasingly blurred. Thus the EUA international strategy, officially launched in 2006, informs all areas of EUA activity, from Bologna reforms to research.

EURASHE, an association of European Higher Education Institutions – Polytechnics, Colleges, University Colleges, etc. - devoted to Professional Higher Education and related research within the Bachelor-Master structure, has through affiliated national and sectoral associations and institutional members in the EHEA, and via associate members in other regions of the world, links with over 800 higher education institutions which are either in a process of implementation of the Bologna reform, or have adopted certain aspects of the Bologna Process for use in their own regional contexts.

The European Students’ Union (ESU) keeps regular contacts with student organisations outside Europe, to contribute to a globalisation of the student movement, to share experiences and in particular to support student representatives that are restrained from operating and expressing themselves freely. With support from UNESCO and EI, ESU is setting up a worldwide operating platform for student organisations based on regional platforms, which will also participate in the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education in 2009, and has issued a global student statement to the UNESCO WCHE+10 “Education for all”.

Some of ESU’s unions created MedNet, a network involving ESU members and organisations from the southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Furthermore, ESU is involved in the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean University in Slovenia, aimed at fostering greater cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean.

A great part of ESU’s work in policy dialogue happens at international events organised by other actors for a wide range of audiences, which students are invited to. These fora constitute an important means for the exchange of good practice and policy debate with actors from different world regions.

While dialogue is a communication mode of speaking and listening, **cooperation based on partnership** implicates mutual understanding and joint action. Cooperation based on partnership is characterised by trust, gained through mutual knowledge, and describes enduring relations open for all issues which are of mutual interest. As for policy dialogue, cooperation based on partnership can take place at different levels, at international, national or regional levels, at the level of higher education institutions and organisations, as well as at the level of their departments and individual members.

Cooperation based on partnership has already been practiced in higher education and research for many decades. Individual scholars as well as higher education institutions have built their relations on partnership, based on trust, mutual understanding and solidarity. Higher education institution partnerships have been furthered by national initiatives that provided grants for establishing academic and capacity building relations between two higher education institutions. They generally comprised provisions for mobility and often also for curriculum development, capacity building and in some cases also for research. Many of them have created long-lasting relations between individual scholars, and had a strong impact on linking students’ and young researchers’ careers to Europe’s higher education and research.

The national reports clearly indicate that cooperation based on partnership is the core of international cooperation. A wealth of bilateral agreements have been concluded at governmental level, covering a wide range of activities, including recognition, joint degrees, student exchange and research. Besides, financial incentives have been created to foster

exchange of students and scholars and direct bilateral cooperation between higher education institutions.

For more than ten years, the European Commission has provided funding for thematic partnership consortia under several funding programmes. These programmes not only had a strong impact on building links with international partners but they also strengthened the relations between European partners. While the actual projects are of limited duration, it has been observed that the relations between institutions and individual scholars often endure, and lay the ground for other initiatives.

In 2008, the European Commission launched the fourth phase of the Tempus programme<sup>15</sup>, which supports the modernisation of higher education in 28 countries of the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, North Africa and the Middle East (some of which are EHEA countries) with an annual budget of around €60m.

The Tempus programme also provides the opportunity to discuss higher education reforms and the implementation of reforms in partner countries, latest developments in the Bologna Process, and good practices in areas of common interest. Coordinated by the National Tempus Offices, a policy initiative was launched at the beginning of 2008 to set up teams of reform experts who will become a pool of expertise in key policy areas and support progress toward the Lisbon and Bologna objectives, taking into account local needs and aspirations. Besides, seminars and conferences are organized related to specific topics such as quality enhancement in higher education in the EU and its partner countries.

In the context of a Tempus project, EURASHE for instance, set up a Central Asian Symposium on "QA seen from three perspectives – Governments, Higher Education Institutions and their students, Enterprises", in Almaty (Kazakhstan) in October 2007, and organised a Seminar on "QA on an institutional level", which took place in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) in May 2008.

The Erasmus Mundus programme (2004-2008) on the other hand has supported the establishment of 103 joint Masters courses set up by consortia of EU higher education institutions. The Erasmus Mundus Masters courses are eligible to receive student fellowships and are a powerful tool to attract non-European students to Europe. So far, 6,000 student fellowships have been awarded to third country nationals<sup>16</sup> and 2000 academics have been able to benefit from the programme. The Erasmus Mundus programme II (2009-2013) will continue its present actions but will extend its scope to the doctoral level and will also support of European students in order to ensure a fair treatment vis-à-vis third-country students.<sup>17</sup>

Erasmus Mundus joint Masters and doctoral programmes will have to be of outstanding academic quality and involve education institutions from different European countries and, in the case of doctorates, other relevant partners, such as research centres and enterprises, to ensure innovation and employability. These programmes may involve higher education institutions or other relevant partners from third countries and will include periods of study and research in at least two different countries.

Moreover the new phase of the programme integrates the "Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window" under the "Erasmus Mundus" umbrella. Partnerships funded under this action will continue to allow for the transfer of know-how and exchanges of students and professors at all levels of higher education according to the "Erasmus model", while respecting the needs and priorities of the countries concerned. The overall funding for Erasmus Mundus II will be around €923m.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/tempus>

<sup>16</sup> Nationals coming from all countries other than the 27 EU Member States, the EEA-EFTA states (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) and the candidate countries for accession to the EU (presently Croatia, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Turkey), who are not residents of any of the above countries, and who have not carried out their main activities (studies, work, etc.) for more than a total of 12 months over the last five years in any of the above countries are considered "third country nationals".

<sup>17</sup> For more information on the Erasmus Mundus programme consult the website of the European Commission: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/external-relation-programmes/doc72\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/external-relation-programmes/doc72_en.htm)

Furthermore, the European Commission has commissioned a study to map the Member States' external policies and tools in education and training and will compare them in terms of approaches, resources mobilised, and outcomes achieved. The aim is to collect evidence to help the European Commission better target its policies and identify the added value of current instruments, and to ensure better coherence between EU and Member State external policies in the field of education and training. This study provides a first broad picture of the relevant instruments of the international cooperation programmes and external education policies including higher education. A phase II of this mapping study is currently under consideration.

Since 1995, the European Commission has concluded agreements with the United States and with Canada to support joint cooperation programmes in higher education and vocational training. The EU-Atlantis programme and the EU-Canada Transatlantic Exchange Partnerships Programme support partnerships between higher education and training institutions from the two sides of the Atlantic for the purpose of setting up joint study programmes, joint/double degrees and balanced exchanges of students and faculty. This form of balanced cooperation based on partnership has been recently extended to Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea. As a result in 2008 35 new projects were launched involving over 2,000 two-way exchanges of students from Europe and the partner countries. Since the inception of the programmes in 1995, 267 projects have been funded involving some 800 European universities and vocational training institutions, 680 institutions in North America and 60 institutions in Asia Pacific. To date, the projects have supported over 10.000 students' exchanges.

From the perspective of higher education institutions, the Bologna Process is seen as a catalyst for improving cooperation with other world regions. The EUA Convention, which took place in Lisbon in March 2007, underlined the enormous interest of EUA members in developing both strategies and structures for international cooperation, exchange and research collaboration. The discussions with rectors, vice rectors and deans from European universities confirmed once more that scope and nature of international higher education cooperation is moving from an ancillary service within the university to the centre of institutional governance, strategy and mission planning. This suggests a perception of international issues from a rather holistic point of view.

Since EUA developed its Internationalisation Strategy in 2006, the association has sought not only to enhance the international visibility of European universities, but to develop dialogue, facilitate networking and further cooperation with major international partners, in particular university associations and networks in other parts of the world. EUA identified as one of its tasks communicating the developments and achievements of European higher education and research to a wide range of partners across the world.

The Let's Go campaign<sup>18</sup> organised by Education International and ESU promotes awareness of, and seeks to remove the remaining obstacles to, mobility of students and staff, not only within Europe but also with other parts of the world. By doing so, the Campaign aims to contribute to increasing the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area and thus to pave the way for further cooperation.

Individual EHEA countries, the European Commission and consultative members have repeatedly stressed the importance of cooperation based on partnership with developing countries, also in the context of the United Nations' Millennium Goals, and engaged in a variety of activities. Education International, for instance, works to a large extent on activities aimed at improving the educational systems in developing countries and countries in transition. This work includes measures to achieve the Millennium goals and the Education for All goals, it also includes assisting educational workers worldwide to create and sustain democratic, representative bodies. Although these activities might seem rather distant from or even unrelated to the Bologna Process, they are strategies to increase discussion on policy dialogue and cooperation based on partnership. To establish partnerships with countries from all over the world Europe needs knowledge about their systems. More importantly, there need to be

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<sup>18</sup> [www.lets gocampaign.net](http://www.lets gocampaign.net)

higher education systems in place – which must be built on inclusive and high quality early childhood education, primary and secondary.

The Bologna Process is a good example of cooperation based on partnership within Europe. All stakeholders (national administrations, universities and professional higher education institutions, students, quality assurance agencies, etc.) are involved in the decision-making process and committed to the success of its implementation. This unique strength of the process is reflected in cooperation as well as policy dialogue with other parts of the world. In this context, Education International's action to support education workers in creating unions and other representative organisations is crucial for stakeholder participation to become possible in the respective countries.

Policy dialogue and cooperation based on partnership are crucial to the further development of the Bologna Process and its global standing. The present criteria for membership of the Bologna Process are effective and are not in need of amendment or revision and should be kept. At the same time, opportunities have to be developed at the level of national and regional government agencies, higher education institutions, higher education institution representative bodies and higher education organisations, in order to foster mutual understanding and learning, and to lay the ground for sustainable cooperation.

#### Recommendations for further action are:

- Balanced bilateral and multilateral cooperation based on partnership, e.g. in the framework of relevant EU programmes and projects, should be enhanced and intensified with partners across the world.
- A *Bologna policy forum*
  - ❖ with participants at ministerial, stakeholder or civil servant level, from EHEA countries and countries that are not party to the European Cultural Convention;
  - ❖ involving *policy dialogue on specific topics* (such as mobility, quality assurance, recognition, student involvement, governance etc.) or on higher education reforms in general; and
  - ❖ making full use of existing EU and UNESCO initiatives.For the countries concerned this does not, however, imply any specific status in the Bologna Process.
- Inviting stakeholders from countries that are not party to the European Cultural Convention to Bologna-related conferences, seminars and other events and to contribute to projects and initiatives as part of the BFUG work programme, where appropriate.
- Contribution by the BFUG to relevant projects and activities in other regions.

It is crucial that at European and at national level, funding instruments are available that allow the establishment of solid, multilayered and sustainable cooperation initiatives, complemented through interregional higher education policy dialogue driven by stakeholders, such as higher education and student associations.

## **4 FURTHERING RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS**

The ENIC<sup>19</sup> and NARIC<sup>20</sup> Networks<sup>21</sup> constitute the main European platform for the development of recognition policy and practice, as the national reports confirm. The two Networks are distinct but hold annual joint meetings, and a high proportion of their activities are carried out jointly. The ENIC Bureau and the NARIC Advisory Board meet together, normally twice a year in addition to a meeting on the eve of the annual ENIC/NARIC meeting. The Networks may also organise working parties or otherwise to address pertinent recognition issues.

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<sup>19</sup> European Network of National Information Centres on academic recognition and mobility, served jointly by the Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES.

<sup>20</sup> Network of National Academic Information Centres, served by the European Commission.

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.enic-naric.net/>

Membership of the two networks overlap to an extent. The NARIC Network is made up of the national information centres of countries of the European Union, the European Economic Area and of countries that participate in the relevant EU programmes. These centres are also members of the ENIC Network, which in addition includes the national information centres of all other countries party to the European Cultural Convention, the UNESCO Europe Region and/or the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention).

The ENIC Network therefore comprises several countries that are not members of the Bologna Process: Australia, Canada, Israel, New Zealand and the United States, which all participate actively in and contribute substantially to the activities of the Networks. Its composition therefore makes the ENIC Network itself a platform for policy dialogue with some countries that are not members of the Bologna Process. The Canadian centre has played a key role in developing the ENIC-NARIC website and maintained the site until July 2007, when UNESCO-CEPES assumed this task.

The global context has been highly relevant to two of the main activities of the ENIC and NARIC Networks since the London Conference, one being the analysis of the National Action Plans for recognition submitted prior to the conference, in which a non-European perspective has been included.

The second is the ongoing work on “substantial differences”, one of the key provisions of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, according to which competent authorities should recognize foreign qualifications unless they can demonstrate a substantial difference between the qualification for which recognition is sought and the corresponding qualification in their own degree system (increasingly: qualifications framework). No legal text can provide a comprehensive definition of the term “substantial difference” and the Networks have therefore sought to develop a better common understanding of this concept. The discussions in the ENIC and NARIC Networks are the basis for a publication to be issued in the Council of Europe Higher Education Series.

The seemingly technical issue of “substantial differences” is important in the global context because it ultimately addresses developing a proper understanding of the concept of qualifications and of the purposes of recognition. It links directly to key areas of the Bologna Process – in particular qualifications frameworks and quality assurance – and is important in seeking to further attitudes that emphasize learning outcomes more than formal aspects of education programmes. The work that the Networks have carried out on the concept of “substantial differences” will be important in developing a policy dialogue on recognition with other regions of the world described in more detail below.

At their 2008 meeting in Malta, the ENIC and NARIC Networks decided to make recognition in a global context a focus of their future activities and agreed to set up a specific working group on “Recognition within a Global Setting”, thus opening discussions and cooperation with other UNESCO regions on the issue of recognition of foreign qualifications. Some work has already been undertaken in this area.

However, the networks would like to go a step further and to develop a more concrete policy dialogue on key recognition issues with representatives of other regions. One difficulty is that other regions do not have networks similar to the ENIC Network and in most regions only a few national information centres function in a similar fashion. A part of the challenge will therefore be to identify the appropriate partners for dialogue in the various regions. The policy dialogue should, on the one hand, aim to improve information on recognition matters. This would include providing adequate information on structural reforms (in particular the role of qualifications frameworks), on transparency instruments such as the Diploma Supplement and ECTS as well as other credit systems from other regions, and the status of institutions. On the other hand, there should be dialogue aiming to arrive at a better understanding of recognition issues. In this context, the ENIC/NARIC work on substantial differences is crucial, as is the role of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and its subsidiary texts, in particular the Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications.

Many of the current and recent initiatives of the ENIC and NARIC Networks are thus relevant to the EHEA in a global setting, and the Networks are setting up a working party on recognition in a global context.

In the Mediterranean region, a network was established as a result of an EU-funded project led by UNESCO and the French CIEP (Centre international d'études pédagogiques) with the participation of the Council of Europe. The project aimed in particular to develop national information centres in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. The MERIC Network (Network of Mediterranean Recognition Information Centres) was launched at a meeting in Rabat in December 2006 with a President from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Vice Presidents from Algeria and Morocco.

UNESCO's Third Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications held in Tanzania in September 2007, provided for an international dialogue and the sharing of best-practices on issues of international quality assurance, accreditation and the recognition of qualifications. The Global Forum also examined the progress made since the last Forum in 2002 and proposed areas of cooperation and policy debate for the future.<sup>22</sup>

The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)<sup>23</sup>, launched in March 2008, seeks to increase transparency of quality assurance, enhancing trust and confidence in European higher education, which in turn is expected to further promote the international recognition of qualifications. The Register is open to quality assurance agencies worldwide that are active in Europe and work in compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance.

The Bologna seminar "Quality Assurance in Transnational Higher Education: From Words to Action" that took place in London on 1-2 December 2008, examined aspects of quality assurance in respect of cross border higher education activities. It took as a central reference point the UNESCO-OECD Guidelines on Quality provision in cross-border higher education, and focused on responsibilities, principles, and practicalities.

The seminar identified a clear need for better information on the extent of transnational education (TNE) in Europe (and indeed outside) to find out how many European countries are actually involved in exporting and importing TNE and to enable a broader understanding of the TNE phenomenon at the societal level.

The seminar also called for close co-operation and networking between agencies responsible for quality assurance in both sending and receiving countries to ensure the quality of TNE.

Participants agreed that the same factors which apply to the quality assurance of national higher education should also be applied to the quality assurance of transnational education, even though it is being offered in another country (while taking into account the need for relevance to and respect for, the cultural context in which the TNE is being delivered). As in all higher education, the final responsibility for the quality and standards of TNE lies with the higher education institutions.

#### Recommendations for further action are:

Beyond identifying the appropriate partners for dialogue in other regions, which is in itself no minor challenge, it is recommended that the ENIC and NARIC networks seek to:

- establish dialogues on recognition policy with other regions;
- explore the implications on recognition of the overarching frameworks of qualifications of the EHEA, the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, and compatible national frameworks as well as the development of qualifications frameworks in a number of countries outside of Europe;

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<sup>22</sup> [http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=53309&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=53309&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

<sup>23</sup> [www.eqar.eu](http://www.eqar.eu)

- improve the publicly available information on recognition in cooperation with other regions;
- make use of the Council of Europe/UNESCO Recognition Convention and its subsidiary texts as a guide to good practice also in the assessment of qualifications from countries that are not legally bound by the Convention and as a basis for dialogue on recognition policy; and
- report back to the BFUG on their work in this area and in particular the outcome of the specific working party on “recognition within a global setting”.

In the field of transnational education (TNE) it is recommended to:

- launch a mapping study of TNE provision to better understand the different kinds of provision involved, how quality is assured, how TNE relates to national education systems, etc. The study could be undertaken by the E4 group (ENQA, EUA, EURASHE, ESU) in collaboration with other stakeholders; and
- include a sentence into the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué which states that TNE should be considered as ‘education’ and, as such, should be subject to the same guidelines as are applied to any other educational programmes. Hence, TNE is subject to the same principles of public good and public responsibility that constitute the basis for all higher education.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Bologna Process has made it easier for countries, organisations and higher education institutions outside Europe to cooperate with their counterparts in Europe, and vice versa. Transparency of degree structures, mobility within Europe, visibility of the quality of European higher education institutions and their students, the possibility of setting up joint degrees, the added value of European higher education institutions to educate intercultural citizens that are aware of societal needs, all contribute to the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area and of its higher education institutions.

The expectations of EHEA countries and stakeholders as well as non-EHEA countries and stakeholders are high. While a lot has already been done in the fields of information, promotion, recognition as well as policy dialogue and cooperation based on partnership, further action is needed to sustain existing initiatives, to respond to the growing interest in the Bologna Process and to manage the high but very different expectations from across the world.

As with all Bologna reforms, the Strategy “The European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting” can only be successful if underpinned by policy and funding measures at European and national level that encourage its institutional implementation based on institutional commitment.

### Improving Information on the EHEA

- The Bologna Secretariat should be mandated to provide information on the EHEA specifically targeted at non-EHEA countries, which should include providing appropriate information on the EHEA website, facilitating coordinated information visits to and from non-EHEA countries, and supporting embassies of EHEA countries, promotion offices, EU delegations to provide adequate information on the European Higher Education Area.
- Each Bologna country should provide information for international students and researchers in a common format (ideally through a website, which would be linked to the Bologna website).
- Countries not yet providing structured information on scholarships should set up national databases with a view to creating an EHEA-wide online information system on scholarships.

### Promotion

- Each EHEA country should designate a contact point for information and promotion activities. The contact points will form a network fostering the exchange of best practice and know-how transfer as well as peer learning in the field of national-level promotion of higher education.

- A European mapping of promotion activities based on a sample of higher education institutions in each country should be carried out, also assessing the impact the Bologna Process has on institutional higher education promotion strategies and measures.
- A round table should be convened by the Bologna Secretariat with the participation of the European Commission and other main actors in higher education promotion in Europe to devise a “road map” and to identify opportunities and actions for enhancing European-level promotion.

#### Policy dialogue and cooperation based on partnership

Policy dialogue and cooperation based on partnership are crucial to the further development of the Bologna Process and its global standing. The present criteria for membership of the Bologna Process are effective and are not in need of amendment or revision and should be kept. At the same time, opportunities have to be developed at the level of national and regional government agencies, higher education institutions, higher education institution representative bodies and higher education organisations, in order to foster mutual understanding and learning, and to lay the ground for sustainable cooperation.

To further dialogue and cooperation with countries in other parts of the world, the following forms of cooperation will be developed:

- Balanced bilateral and multilateral cooperation based on partnership, e.g. in the framework of relevant EU programmes and projects, should be enhanced and intensified with partners across the world.
- A *Bologna policy forum*
  - ❖ with participants at ministerial, stakeholder or civil servant level, from EHEA countries and countries that are not party to the European Cultural Convention;
  - ❖ involving *policy dialogue on specific topics* (such as mobility, quality assurance, recognition, student involvement, governance etc.) or on higher education reforms in general; and
  - ❖ making full use of existing EU and UNESCO initiatives.

For the countries concerned this does not, however, imply any specific status in the Bologna Process.

- Inviting stakeholders from countries that are not party to the European Cultural Convention to Bologna-related conferences, seminars and other events and to contribute to projects and initiatives as part of the BFUG work programme, where appropriate.
- Contribution by the BFUG to relevant projects and activities in other regions.

It is crucial that at European and at national level, funding instruments are available that allow to establish solid, multilayered and sustainable cooperation initiatives, complemented through interregional higher education policy dialogue driven by stakeholders, such as higher education and student associations.

#### Recognition

Beyond identifying the appropriate partners for dialogue in other regions, which is in itself no minor challenge, it is recommended that the ENIC and NARIC networks seek to:

- establish dialogues on recognition policy with other regions;
- explore the implications on recognition of the overarching frameworks of qualifications of the EHEA, the EQF-LLL, and compatible national frameworks as well as the development of qualifications frameworks in a number of countries outside of Europe;
- improve the publicly available information on recognition in cooperation with other regions;
- make use of the Council of Europe/UNESCO Recognition Convention and its subsidiary texts as a guide to good practice also in the assessment of qualifications from countries that are not legally bound by the Convention and as a basis for dialogue on recognition policy; and
- report back to the BFUG on their work in this area and in particular the outcome of the specific working party on “recognition within a global setting”.

In the field of transnational education (TNE) it is recommended to:

- launch a mapping study of TNE provision to better understand the different kinds of provision involved, how quality is assured, how TNE relates to national education systems, etc. The study could be undertaken by the E4 group (ENQA, EUA, EURASHE, ESU) in collaboration with other stakeholders; and
- include a sentence into the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué which states that TNE should be considered as 'education' and, as such, should be subject to the same guidelines as are applied to any other educational programmes. Hence, TNE is subject to the same principles of public good and public responsibility that constitute the basis for all higher education.

Recommendations for further follow-up

- **Fully implement the Strategy "The European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting", also taking into account the recommendations described in this report.**
- **Include the implementation of the Strategy in any future stocktaking exercises.**

## ANNEXES

### Annex 1: Terms of Reference

<b>Name of the working group</b> <b>"European Higher Education in a Global Setting"</b>
<b>Contact person (Chair)</b> <b>Barbara WEITGRUBER</b> <b>barbara.weitgruber@bmwf.gv.at</b>
<b>Composition</b> (Please ensure the necessary balance with regard to geography, size, old vs. new, countries vs. organisations etc.)  Countries: Armenia, Austria, Belgium/French Community, France, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Spain, UK  Organisations: European Commission, Council of Europe, EI, ENQA, ESU, EUA, EURASHE, UNESCO/CEPES, ACA, ENIC and NARIC networks
<b>Purpose and/or outcome</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To take forward work in the five core policy areas of the strategy "The European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting" with a special focus on the priorities "improving information on, and promoting the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA" and "improving recognition",</li><li>• To prepare a draft report on the overall development at the European, national and institutional levels for BFUG by the end of 2008.</li></ul>
<b>Reference to the London Communiqué</b>  <b>2.19, 2.20, 3.6</b>
<b>Specific tasks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To cooperate with the Secretariat regarding the development of the Bologna Secretariat Website for a global audience and with EUA regarding the Bologna Handbook where appropriate,</li><li>• To cooperate with the Council of Europe, the European Commission and UNESCO as well as the ENIC and NARIC networks to enhance fair assessment of qualifications of other parts of the world on the basis of the LRC and, as appropriate, UNESCO Conventions for other regions,</li><li>• To Liaise with the European Commission on EU initiatives and programmes on global promotion and cooperation,</li><li>• To look for ways of integrating the "OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Education" into the activities of the working group, especially by closely cooperating with ENQA in the seminar on "Transnational education (TNE) and the OECD/UNESCO-Guidelines for quality provision in cross-border higher education"</li></ul>

**Reporting**

Minutes of working group meetings will be made available to BFUG (by the Bologna Secretariat).

BFUG should also receive regular reports and updates.

To allow for good communication with BFUG as a whole and for the necessary consultations, progress reports should be submitted at least two weeks before each BFUG meeting. In between BFUG meetings, updates can be circulated by the Bologna Secretariat via e-mail.

Deadline for final report (draft version): 15 January 2009

Deadline for final version: 1 March 2009

**Meeting schedule**

22 November 2007

11 January 2008

28 May 2008

02 September 2008

29 January 2009

**Liaison with other action lines**

Please specify how the cooperation will be organised

Cooperation with the stocktaking working group will be organized with the chair of the stocktaking working group so that it meets the needs of both groups.

Cooperation with other elements of the work programme (working groups, seminars) will be sought where appropriate once the work programme has been approved.

**Additional remarks**

Organisation of work:

In the first meeting of the working group, a detailed work programme and timetable will be agreed upon and work will be divided among the participating countries and institutions so that for each portion of the work programme a country or organization will take the lead and the work load is equally shared.

**Annex 2: Bologna brochure** [separate document]

- 2a: to print it as booklet
- 2b: web version, also suitable for normal printing

## **Annex 3: Conclusions of the Bologna Seminar “Quality Assurance in Transnational Higher Education: From Words to Action”, London, 1-2 December 2008**

### **MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP**

#### **THE CONFERENCE**

The ENQA conference on Quality Assurance in Transnational Higher Education: From Words to Action, organised by QAA in London on 1-2 December 2008, examined aspects of quality assurance in respect of cross border higher education activities. It took as a central reference point the UNESCO-OECD Guidelines on Quality provision in cross-border higher education, and focused on responsibilities, principles, and practicalities.

#### **MAIN FINDINGS**

Three main findings were identified during the discussions at the seminar:

##### **1. Responsibility for QA in TNE**

The conference concluded that it was important that QA systems for TNE should be developed collaboratively. The relevant authorities in the country in which the education is actually offered, and those in the country in which the provider is based, had a joint responsibility to assure the quality of the education offered. In respect of education provided within the EHEA, the E4 (ENQA, EUA, EURASHE, ESU) should survey current arrangements for QA of TNE and promote good practice in their implementation.

Most countries now have relatively comprehensive regulatory and policy frameworks for assuring the quality of higher education offered by their own HEIs within their national jurisdiction – but sometimes TNE activities are excluded from these frameworks. There is no obvious reason why this should be so and all higher education provided by a country's HEIs should be subject to its national regulatory framework, irrespective of where the students actually undertake their study. HEIs should also recognise that the same rigour should be applied to the QA arrangements used for all their programmes, no matter how they are delivered (i.e. including TNE). The same factors which apply to the QA of national higher education should also be applied to the QA of TNE, even though it is being offered in another country (while taking into account the need for relevance to and respect for, the cultural context in which the TNE is being delivered) . As in all higher education, the final responsibility for the quality and standards of TNE lies with the HEIs.

It would be helpful to consider carefully the implications of the phrases “education system” and “institution belonging to a national education system”. For institutions that belong to a national system, there are fairly clear arrangements for QA, at least if the system in question is that of a country which has adequate QA provision. TNE can either belong to a national system while operating in a country different from the one to which it belongs (e.g. branch campuses of a UK university operating in Malaysia, unless the branch campus is (also) formally a part of the Malaysian HE system), or is detached from a national system and does not belong to one. In some cases, it may be difficult to determine whether provision belongs to a national HE system or not, and if it does, whether it belongs to the national system of the provider or the receiver country.

The Conference expressed the view that resources for assessing quality should be built into the planning and delivery of all programmes from the very beginning. There is a clear need for close co-operation and networking between agencies responsible for QA in both countries, given the large number of programmes which can be involved. Enhanced communication, involving both the sending and receiving QA bodies, is particularly important for ensuring the quality of TNE. In addition, there needs to be open and constructive debate about the extent to which governments should be expected to intervene in matters related to the QA of TNE and the recognition of study programmes.

It is not enough to state a requirement that TNE should be subject to QA processes; steps must be taken to ensure that that the requirement is fulfilled. At the same time, an institution should not be required to undergo QA when this is not practicably possible. It would be most undesirable to make such a requirement if the agencies were unable to cope with the total demand for QA within a reasonable time frame. QA agencies, whatever their formal status, operate under a public mandate, and it is a public responsibility to make sure that they have sufficient capacity and resources to allow them to meet the responsibilities placed upon them.

## **2. Relationship between the ESG, INQAAHE GGP and UNESCO-OECD Guidelines**

The Conference agreed that the UNESCO-OECD guidelines provide a comprehensive frame for building institutional and national QA cultures for TNE. They are compatible and can function well with the ESG and the INQAAHE GGP. There was broad agreement that because the UNESCO-OECD guidelines were created using a process that included extensive consultations with stakeholders, there was a sufficient degree of ownership by the key participants to ensure that their implementation was beneficial. But there remained a need for a greater awareness of (and engagement with) the issues surrounding TNE, which the guidelines highlighted. No additional guidelines were needed, but more emphasis should be put on the implementation of those already existing. The guidelines could be used to spur governments and HEIs to consider the significance of TNE and its effects and impacts on their HE systems. Once EQAR was fully operational, it could assist in making QA for TNE within the EHEA easier, since the agencies in EQAR might undertake QA outside their own countries and have their QA assessment recognised by other countries of the EHEA. It would be important that public authorities in the EHEA accepted the validity of such statements in their own system.

## **3. Significance and use of information about TNE**

The extent of TNE in Europe (and indeed outside) remains unclear - there is no information on how many European countries are involved in exporting and importing TNE. There are problems with capturing data about such activities, as there is no common register of those offering TNE, not all are licensed with the host country government (or are required to be), and many are privately financed, etc. There is clearly a need for better information, to enable a broader understanding of the TNE phenomenon at the societal level. UNESCO and OECD could with benefit include on their respective websites relevant information on TNE providers, existing QA mechanisms, and good practice, thereby making this information more widely and easily available. UNESCO could use its existing portal on recognised higher education institutions for this purpose. This portal could feature guidelines for prospective applicants into TNE programmes. The Conference also concluded that these portals could be further developed, with the involvement of the stakeholders.

The further mapping of TNE in the EHEA could be linked to the ESG, developed by ENQA in collaboration with its E4 partners (EUA, ESU, EURASHE). The E4, that has been asked to take general oversight of quality matters in the EHEA, could be asked to undertake such a mapping exercise liaising with other organisations as appropriate. This would provide an opportunity for agencies, students and HEIs to work together to identify TNE questions in the EHEA and to develop solutions in a way that was consistent with European processes.

### **MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BFUG:**

- 1. A general mapping study of TNE provision being offered within the EHEA should be considered. This kind of a mapping exercise could increase understanding of the different kinds of provision involved, how quality is assured, how TNE relates to national education systems, etc. The study could be undertaken by the E4 group in collaboration with other stakeholders.**

There is an assumption that Europe is 'clean' of fraudulent TNE activity but in reality some problem pockets do exist within the region. There is also a lack of knowledge about the scale and types of TNE provision within Europe. A mapping study would address these and help to understand how arising questions are dealt with (i.e. questions such as whether some governments turn a blind eye, the lack of awareness, lack of power, too much/too little regulation etc). Asking governments, HE ministries and other stakeholders how they track the TNE which takes place within their jurisdiction, and how they monitor it for quality would also give a valuable insight into the different structures that currently exist, and how these might be able to work together better.

**2. A sentence should be inserted into the Leuven communiqué of the Bologna Process which states that TNE should be considered as 'education' and, as such, should be subject to the same guidelines as are applied to any other educational programmes.**

**Hence, TNE is subject to the same principles of public good and public responsibility that constitute the basis for all higher education.**

It should be made clear in the Leuven communiqué that while inclusion of TNE was implicit in previous ministerial statements, it is now explicit – all the guidance, aims, etc (such as the ESG) apply to TNE, as it is included within the definition of 'education'.