



Opening remarks of Jan Sadlak, Director of UNESCO-CEPES

Opening Session

International Conference on *New Generations of Policy Documents and Laws for Higher Education: Their Thrust in the Context of the Bologna Process*, 4 – 7 November 2004,
Warsaw, Poland,

Your Excellencies,
Distinguished guests and participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear colleagues,

I am indeed privileged to introduce this conference and to chair its first session. First and foremost I would like to warmly thank the Polish authorities, in particular Mr. Aleksander Kwaśniewski, President of the Republic of Poland, for his high patronage of our event. I say this on behalf of both UNESCO-CEPES and our partner organization, the Institute of Knowledge Society.

Allow me to also point out that this meeting is organized in collaboration with the Polish Ministry of National Education and Sport, the European University Association (EUA), the Council of Europe, and the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (*KRASP*). This meeting is also one of the Bologna Follow-up Group Seminars within its Work Programme for 2003-2005. I must also add, gratefully, that the organization of this event would not have been possible without the support of numerous academic and corporate sponsors, in particular Orbis, SA.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Colleagues,

I think that it is legitimate, five years after the signature of the Bologna Declaration and with six more years to go before 2010 - the target year for achievement of the main objectives -, to place in proper perspective both the policy documents and laws on higher education which have been elaborated and/or adopted since the beginning of the Bologna Process. This we must do in order to see how they are reflecting a general thrust, and in particular, how they are contributing to the realization of the ten main pillars of the Bologna Process.

This analytical exercise is particularly relevant in that the Bologna Process is also **a political project**, implying the participation and support of democratic institutions with legislative and executive powers. Evidently, support from the academic community is equally important. The progress already accomplished is quite remarkable, and demonstrates both genuine interest and goodwill on behalf of the major stakeholders. In fact the impressive commitment demonstrated by all parties has advanced implementation considerably. But we also know that this is not

enough, in that in order to implement the goals of the Bologna Process we need solid legal frameworks at the national level.

As you can see from the programme of our meeting we will have an opportunity to learn about policies and legal regulations from the following countries: **Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, and the United Kingdom.** These presentations will be combined with a broader comparative analysis, to be presented in the final part of our meeting.

As I already mentioned, our Conference is one of the official events of the Bologna Process in the period 2004-2005. In this respect the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG), which is in charge of the process of implementation between the ministerial conferences, is expecting to receive a report from this meeting in Warsaw. Such a report will serve as one of the Follow-Up Group's inputs to its overall report to the Conference of the Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, to be held in May 2005 in Bergen. This is one reason why this meeting is of particular significance.

Before moving on to the next speaker, let me once again thank you all for your participation in this event, so important for higher education in each of your countries and for Europe as a whole.

Thank you for your kind attention.