

***12 March 2010, 11.00 – 12.40, Vienna (3 speakers = EURASHE, ESU, EUA)***

***EHEA Overall implementation – essence and impact***

The Bologna Process has introduced unifying elements that are shared by institutions across 46 countries while respecting the diversity of disciplines, national and institutional contexts.

58% of Trends respondents view the realisation of the EHEA as positive. Only 0.1% views it negatively.

These developments have attracted very positive attention from around the world and have shown that European higher education is dynamic and capable of responding to the complex needs of knowledge-driven societies.

It is important, however, to note that the Bologna Process has been characterised by an evolving agenda and that, too often – even if understandably – the

stress on the technical aspects of the action lines has obscured the underlying objectives.

Looking back over a decade of reform, Trends data show that a great deal of progress has been made but that the rapid implementation of 'Bologna tools' peaked around 2007. The next phase will be to deepen the change process by creating new organisational cultures and using the architecture, quality infrastructure and the Bologna tools in the national and institutional contexts and within institutional and national priorities, resource constraints, and a changing international context.

The most pressing needs include:

- implementing the Bologna reforms as a package (as opposed to 'à la carte')
- investing higher education institutions with the ownership of the reforms if they are to be implemented properly
- communicating better to a wider public the benefits of these significant changes

- understanding that curricular changes take time to be implemented properly
- funding the development of student-centred learning
- and recognising that the Bologna reforms are being implemented in a context of significant and profound changes in institutions

Most importantly, the expressed interest in shifting to a student-centred learning paradigm offers the opportunity to communicate a more humanistic view of education and the full benefits of the Bologna reforms by presenting its various elements in a connected way and focused on the underlying objectives of enhancing the professional and personal developments of all.

## **IN SUMMARY**

- Successful implementation of Bologna is partly conditional on the capacity of institutional leaders to bring institutional coherence to a multi-dimensional change agenda, and to explain, persuade and motivate staff members, and students. Therefore, emphasis should be placed on institutional responsibility in the further implementation of the

Bologna Process and HEIs should have considerable scope in implementing the change agenda, which they must be able to relate to their specific mission and objectives, thereby respecting institutional diversity.

- The success of Bologna has hinged on the involvement of all actors, including students and institutions, in policy discussions. This *modus operandi* at the European level must continue and be strengthened at the national and institutional levels in order to meet the ambitious objectives set for Europe.
- Both the EHEA and the ERA create opportunities and responsibilities for European HEIs. It will be important to strengthen the links between the European higher education and research areas to enhance one of the singular strengths of European higher education – the unique role of universities in ensuring a close interface between education, research and innovation. To meet these objectives EUA will also continue to advocate for closer links

between the EHEA and the ERA and thus for a European Knowledge Area crucial for universities to be able to educate graduates equipped with the high level skills Europe needs for the knowledge societies of the 21th Century.