

## **Input to the panel *Actions taken and lessons learned on the Second Bologna Policy Forum on March 12, 2010***

by Ann Fritzell, Education International Pan European Structure

I represent Education International (EI), which is a worldwide organization for 30 million teachers and education workers in 172 countries. I am one of the two Swedish members of EI's standing committee for Higher Education and Research in Europe (HERSC). I have also represented EI in the Bologna work group for mobility and social dimension preceding the ministerial meeting in London in 2007 and I am also a member of the national Bologna Follow Up Group in Sweden, representing the Swedish university teachers.

### ***So, what actions has EI taken?***

Mobility for academics and students is at the core of the Bologna Process, and has been addressed in every ministerial communiqué and has been discussed in several work groups during the process. EI has been very active in these work groups and we arranged an official Bologna Seminar on Mobility in cooperation with ESIB (now ESU) in London in 2007, we had a joint campaign *Let's go* with a closing conference in Lille, France in 2008 etc. But still, so much remains to be done and the things most needed – such as visa provisions, portable loans and grants for students and pensions and other social security benefits for staff – are often not within the mandate of the ministers of education. And to promote the mobility of teachers one might try to use the established international networks of researchers also for teaching experiences.

### ***And what lessons has EI learned during this process?***

***The first lesson learned*** is that the fact that the university teachers were *not* recognized as one of the key players in the reform work and were not represented from the *beginning* of the process has not been positive for a successful implementation of the many important action lines of the Bologna Process. With all due respect to rectors/vice presidents of universities; they cannot and shall not represent the teachers. The students have – as often is the case – been more alert and more successful in claiming their say on an earlier stage of the process.

***The second lesson learned*** is that although EI has been almost fully accepted at European level - in BFUG, in working groups etc – ever since the ministerial meeting in Bergen, Norway in 2005, this is not necessarily so in all countries and certainly not so at all HEI:s. In too many countries my sister organizations are not represented in the national BFUG:s and practically none of the national delegations to this ministerial meeting holds a representative of the associations of university teachers. This certainly does not help to speed up the implementation of the action lines decided upon by the ministers in the respective countries. We should not only be seen as social partners but also as professional associations representing the very persons on whom the practical implementation of the Bologna Process relies on a daily basis.

**The third lesson learned** is that in one of the key areas of higher education: *Quality Assurance* there is a lack of academics at *all* levels – institutional, national and European. In order to ensure fitness-for-purpose for all types of quality assurance systems, academic staff must be fully engaged in the design of quality assurance procedures within their institutions, within national quality assurance agencies and be accepted fully in European processes, alongside the representatives of HEI:s and students.

**The EI conclusion:**

*The support of strongly committed staff is essential for the ownership and success of the reforms of the Bologna Process. Academic staff, represented by professional associations, has to be included as key players at all levels of the process.*

*But this also implies that HEI:s and national governments have to offer attractive working conditions – decent salary, improved tenure, compatible social security benefits and portable pension schemes, but also ensure academic freedom for individual academics – to be able to attract and retain qualified university teachers, because high quality education and research calls for high quality university teachers!*