

**Doctoral programmes  
for the European Knowledge Society**Salzburg, 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2005

opening speech

Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished guests,

I would like to welcome you all on behalf of the Austrian Minister of Education, Science and Culture, Mrs. Elisabeth Gehrler to this Bologna Follow up Seminar on **DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES FOR THE EUROPEAN KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY**. Minister Gehrler regrets that it is impossible for her to be personally present today; she was called to attend another important obligation at short notice.

At the last meeting of Ministers in Berlin in September 2003 it was due to Mrs. Gehrers initiative that this Seminar is taking place in Salzburg now. Austria is proud to be co-hosting a meeting on this important topic, and I would like to thank our partners, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the European University Association for co-organizing this seminar with us.

I am glad that the conference is taking place in Austria, as we have supported the Bologna Process from the very beginning and have introduced the Universities Act 2002, which provides the legal framework for the implementation of practically all Bologna Objectives, including the new PhD programmes. In preparation for this seminar we have also involved all relevant Austrian stakeholders to jointly think about the future of doctoral programmes on the national level.

We all know that doctoral training has a particularly important role to play because it lies at the interface between Education and Research. This is why it was agreed in the Berlin Communiqué of Ministers in September 2003 to integrate doctoral programmes into the Communiqué.

Doctoral training is the starting point for research oriented careers within and outside the university. It promotes the spirit of creativity for scientific innovation from which the entire society benefits. In order to achieve a competitive and knowledge based society Europe needs to focus on research. As the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area move closer together it is important to address the central role of the doctorate in detail.

To attract the most talented young scientists from all over the world Europe should offer

- degrees and programmes compatible with international structures
- high quality science oriented training
- excellent research conditions
- increased options for mobility and cooperation between institutions
- an attractive alternative for international students and
- increased scope for student exchanges between the continents.

This can only be achieved in a common effort between national governments and higher education institutions as centers of research and innovation and the creation of knowledge.

I am happy to welcome all of you here, representatives of the Bologna Follow up group, national governments, rector's conferences, higher education institutions, student organizations and international organizations. Above all I welcome those whom this seminar is about: young European scientists and researchers.

In the next three days, you as the experts will discuss the future of the Doctorate in Europe. I am confident that your recommendations will be concrete and will contribute to the Communiqué which the ministers will agree upon in Bergen in May this year.

I wish you a fruitful seminar and a very pleasant stay in Austria

Thank you.