

The Bologna process and student expectations



Manja Klemenčič

Abstract

This article argues that seven years after the signature of the Bologna Declaration, the key ideas behind the establishment of the European Higher Education Area are still as compelling as in 1999. Despite progress on many fronts, the main objectives of the Bologna process – better quality, more mobility, greater attractiveness of European higher education and better employability of European students{ XE "students" } – are still in the process of being achieved. From the student perspective, the key ‘problem areas’ still lie in the area of quality assurance, including the modernisation of curricula, the need for learner-focused teaching and of systematic skills development. Another area of concern remains the continued under-financing of higher education, with the related questions of access and student welfare.

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1. Introduction

Bologna remains as compelling today as in 1999

The globalisation and democratisation (or ‘massification’) of higher education have profoundly altered the political, economic and cultural nature of European higher education institutions (HEI). These phenomena have taken place at the same time as a number of other profound social and economic changes in wider society. The role of higher education and its institutions in this new environment has changed and is changing as a consequence. One of the effects of these changes has been the pressing need to enhance the quality of higher education in Europe, in both absolute and relative terms. European governments saw one way to help achieving this through voluntary co-operation, in a structured format, between higher education systems across the continent.

In concrete terms, the idea was to establish a European Higher Education Area (EHEA), based on a Europe-wide system of comparable degrees and transferable course credits, the mutual recognition of qualifications, more mobility, greater co-operation in quality assurance, and linking teaching and research more explicitly to the ideas behind the European Union (the so-called ‘European dimension’). These objectives were agreed upon by all the key members of the European higher education community: the governments, the higher education institutions and students, and were recorded as such in the Bologna Declaration of 1999. However, none of the challenges associated with globalisation and democratisation has yet been fully met. This article argues that the basic ideas behind the Bologna process of enhancing quality, mobility and European co-operation in higher education are as compelling today - if not more so – as they were in 1999.

2. Globalisation and democratisation

Globalisation in HE

Globalisation is most often understood as the lifting of national boundaries in commercial relations, as a result of more effective and affordable information and communication technologies and transportation. As a consequence, the local providers of goods and services are increasingly exposed to a much wider and diversified competition than ever before. The same effect of globalisation can also be seen in the higher education (HE) sector with the emergence of a global market for higher education. For both the seekers and providers of education, opportunities are widely available outside their nation states and home regions. The main effect of globalisation on higher education in Europe has been two-fold. On the one hand, local HEIs in Europe no longer hold a monopoly over education provision, but face competition for students, teachers, and funds. On the other hand, new oppor-

tunities are opening up for the same institutions to offer their services abroad and attract foreign students.

While these effects were already present when the Bologna process was launched in 1999, the trade in cross-border higher education has further intensified since then, in particular with the formal acceptance of China into the World Trade Organisation in 2001. Chinese membership in the WTO boosted its trade and economic growth as well as its domestic demand for higher education. During his visit to the University of Cambridge in September 2005, the Minister of Education from the People's Republic of China, Minister Zhou Ji, highlighted that his government was seeking to increase the national university participation rate from 20% to 40% and to double efforts to provide vocational education for those who cannot enter university.¹ He also stated that the government was eager to send Chinese students to study abroad, as well as to welcome foreign educational establishments and businesses to provide their services in China.

Trade in cross-border higher education

Similarly high demand for higher education can be seen in India, which is, as stated by the Indian Ministry for Human Resource Development, 'one of the largest higher education systems in the world'.² Increased demand for higher education in the world's most populated countries has opened vast opportunities for the export of higher education services by European institutions. These opportunities can, however, only be enjoyed if individual institutions and European higher education as a whole is associated with excellence. One of the key objectives of the Bologna process is exactly this point – raising the attractiveness of European higher education sector through better quality.

Furthermore, the European Union expanded by ten new member states in 2004 and is in the process of further enlargement. For the ten new member states of 2004, participation in EU educational programmes and the Bologna process has facilitated higher educational reform in the spirit of 'capacity building'. In the long term, educational co-operation supports and promotes political and economic co-operation, through the education and training of students with European awareness, experience and contacts. Participation in the Bologna process can bring similar benefits to EU neighbours in the Balkans, Russia, the Caucasus and the Mediterranean. Educational co-operation was an important dimension of the Stability Pact for South East Europe when

Enhancing intra-EU relations and understanding

¹ For more information on the visit, please see <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/news/dp/2005093002>. For information on Chinese higher education, the website of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China can be found at <http://www.moe.edu.cn/english/index.htm>

² For information on higher education in India, please see the website of the Ministry for human resources development of the Government of India at <http://www.education.nic.in/htmlweb/higedu.htm>

it was established in 1999; this was further enhanced when all South East European countries joined the Bologna process in 2003.³

Bologna improves understanding of Europe

Another important although subsidiary role of the Bologna process is to contribute to a better understanding of the European Union among its citizens. The European Union is embarking on a new initiative of ‘communicating Europe’ aimed at enhancing the citizens’ understanding of the EU.⁴ There has not been much improvement since 1999 in terms of eradicating the so-called ‘democratic deficit’ in European decision making. Neither has there been much improvement in raising European citizens’ knowledge of, or sense of belonging to, the main European ideas. With French and Dutch citizens rejecting the proposed Constitutional Treaty in 2005, concerns about the gap between the EU and its citizens have become even more pressing. Higher education can play an important part in this process, through the promotion of European-wide mobility, and through reinforcing the ‘European dimension’ in teaching and research. In concrete terms, programmes and modules in European Studies and research on Europe can all contribute greatly to a better understanding of Europe among the rapidly increasing segment of the population enrolled in higher education.

Massification means a more diverse body of students

The number of students in European higher education has more than doubled over the last 25 years.⁵ It appears that higher education is now sought after by ever-widening section of the population. Apart from young people fresh from secondary schools, there are increasing numbers of adult learners who are either seeking a higher education degree or further training of some sort. As already indicated above, there are also more foreign students coming into European higher education institutions. Each of these groups has distinct expectations and needs. This increase in demand results in pressure on HEIs themselves, with limited facilities, financial and human resources to take in all the would-be students and to offer them what they have signed up for: quality education and training.

HE remains an underfinanced “public good”

The ‘massification’ of higher education has in most European countries not been followed by increased public funding. Instead, higher education institutions are compelled to seek alternative sources of

³ For more information, see the website of the Force Education and Youth/Enhanced Graz Process within the framework of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe at http://www.see-educoop.net/graz_2003/index.htm.

⁴ European Commission (2006), *White Paper on European Communication Policy*.

⁵ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2004), *Education at a Glance 2004*, and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2004), *Internationalisation and Trade in Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges*.

funding. In many European countries, there have been debates whether these funds should come from charging tuition fees, in addition to fundraising through partnerships with industry and the export of higher education services. The trends towards the ‘commodification’ of higher education are increasingly challenging the traditional European value of higher education as ‘a public good’. For students in particular, but also for many HEIs, it is paramount to maintain the principle of higher education as a public good enshrined in European societies, and to maintain equity of access to higher education through public funding. These principles were reaffirmed by the governments in the Prague, Berlin and Bergen Communiqués⁶. However, despite the wide recognition of higher education being a ‘public good’ and a vital aspect of knowledge economy, there is no significant improvement in terms of public financing of higher education.

In conclusion, seven years after the signature of the Bologna Declaration, the ideas behind the Bologna Process are still relevant, whether we look at them from the perspective of governments, higher education institutions, or students. In fact, one could argue that the ‘culture of reform’ of higher education directed through and by the Bologna process is becoming ever more important for Europe’s economic and social development.

HE reform is vital for the future of Europe

3. Motivations for establishing the European Higher Education Area

Governments, HEIs and students have been all supportive of the idea to create a European Higher Education Area. The motivations of these various stakeholders in launching the Bologna process, as well as their respective objectives, however, vary. Governments are first and foremost interested in the impact of higher education co-operation on economic growth. For higher education institutions, the key concern lies in enhancing quality and hence their competitiveness, and preserving governmental commitment to education as a public good. The main concerns of students in the Bologna process have been two-fold: that of equity of access to higher education and student welfare on the one hand, and the employability of graduates through quality education on the other hand. In brief, what all of them have in common is the belief that European-wide co-operation in the area of higher education can serve as a means towards achieving these objectives.

Different motivations for different stakeholders

⁶ All Ministerial Communiqués can be found at <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/>

Bologna for governments

The Bologna process was initiated by European governments on the basis of the realisation that quality higher education was a vital part of competitive knowledge economy in an increasingly globalised world. The challenges related to globalisation and the new knowledge-driven economies were further acknowledged by European governments in 2000 through the Lisbon Agenda. The Lisbon Agenda, which stated the goal of the European Union to become “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable growth with more and better jobs and social cohesion”, further reiterates the importance of (higher) education and training.⁷ Wishing to protect its distinct social welfare model, maintain environmental protection, and advance social cohesion across Europe while enhancing economic growth and employment, the key viable option for Europe lay, and still lies, in boosting its higher education sector and investing in research and development. The success of this strategy has been demonstrated already by the Nordic countries, which have managed to combine high economic performance with high standards of social and environmental protection. Six years since the signature of the Lisbon Convention no better formula has been found: investment in human potential through higher education and research is vital to economic development, while preserving the social model of European societies.

Bologna for HEIs

Higher education institutions are the principal producers and disseminators of knowledge, and hence the key to the “knowledge economy” and the “knowledge society”. While the value of knowledge is rising, and consequently the demand for knowledge rises, there is also an increase in the number of providers of knowledge. European HEIs are by now fully aware of the competition in the global market for higher education. The key to being successful in this competition lies in the quality of education provided and how well this quality can be marketed. One important way to improve quality is through higher education partnerships and mobility programmes, as these lead to comparisons between various aspects of education provision, their evaluation, and improvement through the sharing of best practice⁸. Higher education institutions saw an enhanced opportunity in the Bologna process to build such Europe-wide academic co-operation, which would facilitate the inclusion of students, researchers, teachers and administrators into a European higher education community, giving them access to information and a forum to exchange knowledge. The awareness of the importance of such co-operation is as present today as it was back

⁷ For more on the Lisbon Agenda see Council of Ministers (2000), *Presidency Conclusions from the Lisbon European Council*, at http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/00100-r1.en0.htm.

⁸ For further discussion on the importance of mobility for improving quality, please see Wuttig, Siegbert, article B 3.1-1 of this Handbook.

in 1999. Participating in the Bologna process and getting the Bologna “seal of approval” through Ministerial stocktaking and other reports is increasingly used by higher education institutions (and countries) as a “quality certificate”. Of course the true value of the Bologna process remains in real reforms on the ground in individual institutions, but the impact of the ‘Bologna brand’ should not to be understated, especially in view of attractiveness of European higher education market.

Students have generally accepted the objectives of the Bologna process, as put forward by governments and higher education institutions. The governmental objective of raising employability in the knowledge economy, and the desire expressed by HEIs to improve quality through Europe-wide co-operation were directly relevant to the particular needs and expectations of students.⁹ However, from the very launch of the Bologna process and the Bologna Declaration itself, students have expressed their concerns about trends toward the “commodification” of higher education, which appears to be strengthened through a strong focus on the economic and market value of higher education.¹⁰ In particular, students have been concerned about potential side effects the Bologna process may have on the social dimension{ XE "social dimension" } in higher education: access to higher education, mobility schemes, and general student welfare. ESIB’s policy paper describes well how students see the social dimension in higher education ‘as the struggle for the creation of democratic and inclusive higher education and the struggle for the promotion of student well-being’.¹¹ The policy paper further elaborates that “democratic and inclusive higher education means allowing people to access it on an equitable basis” and that “[t]he promotion of student well-being means creating a social environment that guarantees all the necessary provisions to ensure that the students are able to excel in their studies and to become active citizens”.¹²

Bologna for students

⁹ See EUA (2001), *Salamanca Declaration*, <http://www.eua.be>

¹⁰ See ESIB (1999), *Bologna Joint Students Declaration*, prepared by ESIB on the 19th June 1999 in Bologna on the occasion of the signature of the Bologna Declaration. It can be obtained at <http://www.esib.org/>.

¹¹ ESIB (2001), Brussels Student Declaration from the 3rd European Student Convention, see <http://www.esib.org/>.

¹² *Ibid.*

Sharing knowledge and best practice

Furthermore, ESIB - representing students in the Bologna process - warned in its “Bologna Students Declaration” (1999) that a proper information campaign was needed to prevent “unnecessary opposition and confusion”.¹³ The concern about the proper implementation of the instruments agreed on in the Bologna Declaration and the subsequent Communiqués continues. ESIB’s “The Black Book of the Bologna Process” provides a number of examples where reforms were inadequate or simply wrong.¹⁴

**book tip**

As part of its preparation for the 2005 Ministerial conference in Bergen, ESIB gathered evidence from its national member student unions across Europe of so-called Bologna reforms which were not, in the eyes of the students, in line with the principles of the Bologna process. This evidence was collated and published under the name “The Black Book of the Bologna Process”. This publication gives a number of examples where reforms were inadequate or simply wrong, and as such provides good material for learning from the experience of others in implementing elements of the reform process.

ESIB (2005), *The Black Book of the Bologna Process*, <http://www.esib.org/>

Implementation of ECTS and the reform of curricula in view of the new degree systems are some of the prominent examples of areas where problems in implementation have occurred. Of even greater concern is the rather slow substantive reform of the curricula to better meet the current trends and needs of the knowledge economy in terms of knowledge and skills. A systematic focus on skill development and the definition of skills in expected learning outcomes are particularly underdeveloped. Another area for further improvement is that of doctoral studies, in particular in terms of offering doctoral students supportive research facilities and of making mobility an inherent part of their research experience. An overall challenge still lies in the consolidation of quality assurance mechanisms at national level. These problems are not necessarily due

to a lack of willingness on the part of institutions and governments to undertake the necessary reforms, but rather to a lack of knowledge and experience regarding *how* to undertake them.

Students are also responsible

Finally, student involvement in higher education policy and decision-making most often ends up making demands: on higher education institutions regarding what they should deliver; on governments to fund their education; on industry to come up with jobs and recognise their qualifications. However legitimate these demands may be, with them also come responsibilities. One student responsibility is to take an active part in the learning process. This includes being proactive in seeking knowledge and seeking out opportunities to gain further skills through study, extracurricular activities and employment. It is each student’s responsibility to plan consciously their career paths, including the knowledge and skills they might need in addition to what their study programme offers. It is also the students’ responsibility to man-

¹³ See ESIB (1999), *Bologna Joint Students Declaration*.

¹⁴ See ESIB (2005), *The Black Book of the Bologna Process*, see <http://www.esib.org/>.

date those among them (the very few) interested in student affairs to represent them in higher education bodies, to maintain at least a minimum interest in the ongoing higher educational reforms, and support their student reps when action is needed.

4. Meeting the expectations of a “Bologna” student

Most of the reforms in higher education will require time and substantial effort by higher education institutions especially, but also by governments. There are, however, a number of small improvements that can be made in a relatively short space of time that may have a considerable impact on one of the key concerns of “Bologna” students - their employability¹⁵. These reforms encompass in particular skills development and career guidance. These two aspects are crucial to student employability as well as job performance. Through a systematic focus on skills development, students will not only be more able to find jobs showing what they can do, they will also perform better at the workplace, be more mobile within the job market, and better prepared for learning throughout their lifetimes.

Enhancing employability{ XE "employability" }

Having well developed career services within HEIs is another important aspect of improving students’ employability, as it is a vital aspect of the overall quality mark of the institution. Ideally, every higher education institution should have a centralised “career office” where information on open vacancies, skills development and recruitment process would be available.¹⁶ Career services should also be able to give advice to individual students on how to identify preferred career paths and the qualifications needed, and how to match these with opportunities available on the labour market.

Career services

Skills that can be developed during higher education can be divided into two main categories. The first are practical skills that are pertinent to a particular profession (e.g. accounting, medicine, acting, etc.), and are likely to be included in the particular professional study programme through mandatory practical training. Most effectively, this practical training is conducted in partnership with the employers who

Systematic focus on skills development{ XE "skills development" }

¹⁵ For full discussions on employability from two further perspectives, please see Yorke, Mantz, article B 1.4-1 and Vukasovic, Martina, article B 1.4-2 in this Handbook.

¹⁶ Useful information about career services at higher education institutions can be obtained from AGCAS (The Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) at <http://www.agcas.org.uk/>.

can give the “trainees” first-hand practical experience. The second category of skills encompasses what we often refer to as ‘transferable skills’ (for examples see below). These are skills that are acquired during different activities in life and can be applied in different work situations. Some of these skills are based on an inherent talent that may turn into skills through training. Others are acquired completely anew. These transferable skills are considered as crucial to the job performance of the individual, regardless of the area of work, and are consequently increasingly sought out by the employers in the recruitment process.

Transferable skills that employers seek and that higher education institutions can/should assist students in developing:¹⁷

- intellectual skills, such as the ability to analyse, evaluate, and synthesize; to reflect critically, to identify and solve to engage in lateral thinking; to gather, organise and deploy information; and ‘numeracy’ (statistical skills, data handling);
- communication skills (written and oral);
- organisational skills, such as working independently, management of time and resources, project management;
- interpersonal skills, such as team-work, working with or motivating others, flexibility/adaptability, leadership skills;
- intercultural skills (understanding other cultures and ability to work in an intercultural environment);
- research skills;
- computer literacy;
- foreign language skills.

Handout A 1.1-3-1 Transferable skills

Learning by doing

All people possess some skills. One can, however, only achieve excellence in a number of them through systematic training and reflective “learning by doing”. Here then is a role for higher education institutions in this area. In a higher education environment, transferable skills can be developed through the study process and through systematic and specific training. Indeed, many of the transferable skills can be simply a by-product of a regular academic activity. Through lec-

¹⁷ This information is adopted from the Education Section at the University of Cambridge. More information on the campaign to promote transferable skills among undergraduate students can be obtained at <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/education/learning/tskills/>.

tures, reading material, essay and thesis writing, students assimilate new knowledge, evaluate it and explore ways to apply it in different settings. Similarly, interpersonal skills such as team-work can be developed through group exercises or team projects. The students will only, however, be fully able to excel in these skills if the skills development is an integral part of the course design and also appropriately monitored, and supported through additional training where needed.

Skills, hence, should not be considered only as welcome by-product of the study process, but should systematically be built in, along with knowledge acquisition, to programme planning and the definition of learning outcomes. Hence, it is not enough to say that writing skills are developed through essay assignments within a programme, if the feedback on the essays does not include ways to improve the writing. Another important example of skills development through course work can be offering courses in foreign languages, in addition to the separate foreign language courses. This can be among the most effective ways for improving foreign language skills for students without going abroad. Student mobility, on the other hand, facilitates development of a whole range of skills from foreign language to intercultural and interpersonal development.

Most HEIs offer courses in foreign languages and in information technology, which are valuable. However, higher education institutions should also consider offering courses in other useful transferable skills. Learning how to make effective presentations, how to develop academic writing skills, how to manage interpersonal relationships, how to negotiate, or to manage time are equally important for personal development and employability. Another important set of research skills should also be systematically taught specifically for research students. These encompass a whole array of different abilities: from developing a research plan, being able to use library and internet resources, and writing academic papers, to the more specific disciplinary understanding of how to use particular methods of data acquisition and analysis.

Skills development should be an integral part of institutional quality assurance policy. As the UK QAA Code of Practice suggests, each institution “should make clear to prospective and present students how their skills and knowledge acquired through the study are intended to be of use in their career development”.¹⁸ Unlike some other Bologna related reforms, such as curricula modernisation or setting up mobility schemes, these improvements take relatively less time, effort and re-

Skills development and learning outcomes**Investing in personal development and employability****Knowledge and skills in each programme**

¹⁸ Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education can be found at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/default.asp>. For more information see the website of the UK Quality Assurance Agency at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/>.

sources. For example, offering skills development courses should not necessarily mean hiring outside consultants if financial resources are limited (which they usually are). Basic training does not need much specialist knowledge and can, with some preparation, easily be conducted by a suitable local teacher from another subject area. Alternatively, as many institutions do, such trainings can be conducted in partnership with and through support of potential employers, especially management consultancy and advertising firms. Many student societies, for example debating societies, AIESEC¹⁹ or the European Law Students Association (ELSA)²⁰, include skills development training. These activities should be recognised, promoted and supported by individual HEIs as offering important and complementary skills development opportunities to their students. Finally, there is of course always an option to allow external trainers to offer the courses within the institution. In this case, subsidising students to enable access must be considered.

Responsibilities and facilitation

It is the responsibility of higher education institutions to make students aware of the importance of skills for their personal and professional development. They should be informed about the various opportunities available within the institution, as well as encouraged to take part in mobility schemes and extracurricular activities to complement their studies. However, students are ultimately solely responsible for whether they make the effort to develop these skills or not. The institutional policy on skills development requires co-operation across the institution, notably between academics delivering programmes and the career service trying to facilitate student employability. An interesting example of a campaign to promote transferable skills among undergraduate students, conducted in co-operation between the university's education section and the career service, can be found at Cambridge University, which developed a promotional leaflet on this topic.²¹

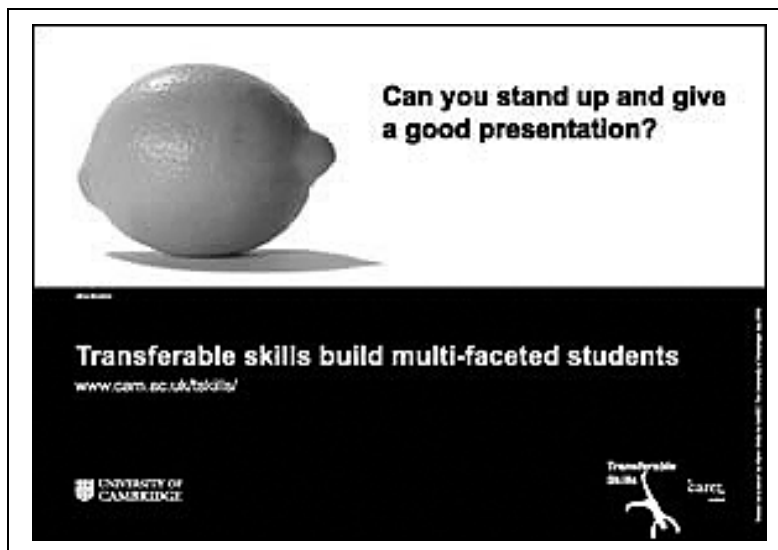
Finally, skills development is not only important for students, but is equally important for the personal and professional development of

¹⁹ See <http://www.aiesec.org/>

²⁰ See <http://www.elsa.org/>

²¹ The campaign for transferable skills was commissioned by the Education Section at the University of Cambridge. More information can be found at <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/education/learning/tskills/>. An interactive guide on transferable skills, designed by CARET (Centre for Applied Research in Educational Technologies) at the University, can be found at <http://www.caret.cam.ac.uk/transkills/>. A complementary guide was prepared by the University of Cambridge Career Service under the name 'What has Cambridge done for me?' to assist student in describing to the employers what they have learned at Cambridge in terms of skills. The guide can be found at <http://www.careers.cam.ac.uk/students/work/cambskills.asp>.

academic and administrative staff at the higher education institution, and therefore also to the overall quality assurance efforts of that institution. It should thus be also made available to these staff members.²² Particular emphasis should be given to developing the “educational skills” of the academic staff, such as didactic methods, mentoring, supervision and assessment techniques. Management skills, such as research project management, financial management, negotiating skills are also important for academics involved in cooperative projects either with industry or other higher education institutions.



²² For examples see the Personnel Division at the University of Cambridge at <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/personnel/staffdev/list.shtml>.

5. Conclusion

Bologna is still important

This article argues that seven years after the signature of the Bologna Declaration, the key ideas behind establishing the European Higher Education Area are as compelling as back in 1999. The idea of turning Europe into the most competitive knowledge economy in the world is still alive, although far from being reached. As part of the ongoing globalisation process, competition not only from the US but increasingly also from rising Asian economic powers continues to press European governments to implement policy measures to boost sluggish European economies. Higher education, research and development are high on the list of instruments that can give Europe a much needed economic boost. Not many of these governments' stated beliefs in the importance of education and research have as yet been translated into significant financial injections. Higher education institutions are still struggling with limited financial, material and human resources to meet rising demand and competition from abroad. Employers are still complaining that graduates entering the labour market do not possess the necessary skills, and Bologna students themselves are wondering whether they are able to match their counterparts in other regions in the world.

Progress achieved, but ...

Nevertheless, some progress in improving the quality of European higher education and in enhancing mobility has certainly been made. The credit for this undoubtedly goes, at least in part, to the increasing co-operation across the European academic community as part of the Bologna process. This process has been by now widely recognised at all levels within HEIs, and is associated with a joint European effort to reform European higher education, notably in establishing comparable degree systems, a credit transfer system and improved instruments for the recognition of qualifications. All of these support inter-institutional mobility and partnership, leading to the sharing of best practice in educational reforms and to quality improvement at individual and collective levels.

...more work to do

However, work still remains to be done. From the student perspective, the key problem areas still lie in the area of quality, be that the modernisation of curricula, the lack of learner-focused teaching, or of no systematic skills development. All of these seriously jeopardise student employability and their performance in the workplace. Another point of concern remains the financing of higher education and related questions of access and student welfare.

In brief, the two top concerns of Bologna students and prospective students remain employability and access to education. Students – current and prospective – and those already in employment are asking themselves: how employable am I in the increasingly global labour market of the 21st century? How prepared am I to work in a world where knowledge becomes outdated faster than ever, and where the

problem with information is not scarcity but overload and questionable accuracy? Am I up to speed? Will I be able to afford higher education?

Reforms take time and effort, and can only be successful if undertaken jointly by all key parties in the higher education community. The Bologna process provides a framework for co-operation between governments, higher education institutions and students across Europe, each bringing specific perspectives to the process and each playing a vital role in the implementation of common objectives. Higher education is of strategic importance for the future of Europe as a “knowledge economy” and a “knowledge society”; it therefore also a public responsibility to provide it with adequate support.

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Biography:

Manja Klemenčič is Ph.D. candidate at the Centre of International Studies, University of Cambridge. She holds a M.Phil. in European Studies from the University of Cambridge and B.A. in Business and Economics from the University of Maribor, Slovenia. She has been a Fulbright Researcher and Fellow at the Center for Business and Government, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University (2003-04), and visiting researcher at the Centre for European Policy Studies in Brussels (2004). Manja's interest and involvement in the Bologna process stems from her work as Secretary General of ESIB-The National Unions of Students in Europe (1999-2001).