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MASTER'S DEGREE THESIS

***HIGHER EDUCATION REFORMS AFTER THE BOLOGNA PROCESS:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GREECE, LITHUANIA AND
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA***

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. Introduction.....	6
2. Higher education systems in Greece, Lithuania and Bosnia-Herzegovina.....	10
2.1. Greece.....	10
2.2. Lithuania.....	11
2.3. Bosnia–Herzegovina	12
3. Towards an European Higher Education Area	15
3.1. Understanding the Bologna Process.....	16
4. Milestones of the Bologna Process	19
4.1. Prague Communiqué 2001	19
4.2. Berlin Communiqué 2003	20
4.3. Bergen Communiqué 2005.....	21
4.4. London Communiqué 2007.....	21
5. The practical implementation of the Bologna Process	23
5.1. Degree system	23
5.1.1. Implementation of the first and second cycles.....	23
5.1.2. Access to the next cycle.....	26
5.1.3. Implementation of national qualifications framework.....	27
5.2. Quality assurance	28
5.2.1. National implementation of “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area”	29
5.2.2. Development of external quality assurance system	31
5.2.3. Student participation	32
5.2.4. International participation.....	33
5.3. Recognition of degrees and study periods.....	35
5.3.1. Implementation of diploma supplement	35
5.3.2. National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention	36
5.3.3. Implementation of the European Credit Transfer System	39
5.4. Life-long learning.....	41
5.4.1. Recognition of prior learning.....	41

5.5.	Joint degrees	43
5.5.1.	Establishment and recognition of joint degrees	43
6.	Summary and Conclusions	45
7.	References	47
8.	Appendixes	54

ABBREVIATIONS

CEPES	European Centre for Higher Education
CoE	the Council of Europe
EC	the European Commission
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ENIC/NARIC	European Network of Information Centres/ National Academic Recognition Centres
ENQA	European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
ESU	the European Student's Union
EU	the European Union
EUA	European University Association
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
R&D	Research and Development
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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“The foundation of every state is the education of its youth”

Diogenes Laertius

1. Introduction

This thesis is a discussion of ‘Intra-European’ cooperation in the field of higher education. More specifically, it concerns attempts to coordinate and unify the various systems of higher education as they have developed in the individual nations in accordance with the Bologna Process. Focus on the development of higher education in this treatise is examined against the background of the Bologna Declaration. This is outlined in more detail below, but in principle this Declaration of June 1999 embraced a number of principles whereby, through a process known as the Bologna Process, the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was to be established by 2010. This was “envisaged as an open space that allows students, graduates, and higher education staff to benefit from unhampered mobility and equitable access to high quality higher education.”¹ There is nevertheless much to be learnt from a comparative study of three contrasting nations in respect of their reform paths in accordance with the Bologna Process. Developments in Greece, Lithuania and Bosnia-Herzegovina were chosen as the point of departure for a comparative study.

These three nations represent 1) a founder member of the EU (Greece); 2) a former Soviet Republic and new Member State (Lithuania); and 3) a post-communist Balkan country – a new European State today (Bosnia-Herzegovina). The reason for choosing these contrasting states was the Europeanization process and its impact on higher education. A special contribution to the study is that of Bosnia-Herzegovina which is still at a preparatory stage in its application for EU-membership.

In the following we examine the difficulties encountered by these three countries in adapting to the Bologna Declaration in the light of their contrasting historical, cultural and social backgrounds. This was to result in differing approaches, dissimilar policies and diverse measures in their efforts to comply with the requirements of the Declaration.

What characterised these contrasting approaches, policies and measures? What difficulties were encountered in the light of the disparate higher education systems? Of course, the level of success may not be able to be measured until 2010, but in retrospect it will be interesting to reflect on the situation of three contrasting nations a few years prior to the target year. It is appropriate at this point to consider to whom this paper is directed. Both the analytical and descriptive content suggest that certain aspects will be of interest to policy-makers in the field of higher education; other aspects may be of interest to social scientists.

¹ About the Bologna Process, Bologna Process Official website 2007–2009, available at: <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/about/> [10 June, 2007]

The Bologna Declaration is not the subject of a joint European policy. It is, as the title indicates, a declaration of intent. It leaves the individual governments free to determine the national structure of higher education, course content, and organization of national higher education institutions. However, the Treaty of Nice, Article 2, 149, strongly reflects the relation between the Bologna Declaration and the Treaty where it is stated that Community action “shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organization of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity”.²

Any hypothesis relating to the Bologna Process, at this period in time, would be more presumptive than conclusive. One might nevertheless hypothesize that the voluntary process which followed from the Bologna Declaration assisted the integration of higher education policies in Europe. But this remains to be seen. The “hard” policies characterized by binding Acts of the latter half of the previous century have gradually given way to “soft” policies of voluntary, non-binding recommendations and guidelines. These, of course, are very new legislative procedures in many European countries which are only occasionally met in our three-nation study. The preservation of independence, national and local autonomy in various policy areas became the keyword of many EU declarations. In the field of higher education this was reflected in the Bologna Declaration: “We hereby undertake to attain these objectives [auth.: system of common degrees, cycles, credits mobility, quality assurance and European dimension] – within the framework of our institutional competences and taking full respect of the diversity of cultures, languages, national education systems and of University autonomy – to consolidate the European area of higher education. To that end, we will pursue the ways of intergovernmental cooperation, together with those of non-governmental European organisations with competence on higher education. We expect Universities again to respond promptly and positively and to contribute actively to the success of our endeavour.”³

The research problem of this paper is a study of the success of the Bologna Process as expressed hitherto in communiqués. These have often given the impression that the process has followed a regular pattern in all signatory nations. However, in reality, the Declaration apparently failed to take into consideration the varying and contrasting political, social and cultural circumstances of the various nations. This is manifest in the Bologna Stocktaking Report of 2007 and which supplied much of the comparative information in this paper. The general aim of the Bologna

² http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/en/treaties/dat/12001C/pdf/12001C_EN.pdf [16 August 2007]

³ Appendix 1

Process was to establish the EHEA by 2010. In order to establish and achieve this goal, successive communiqués have measured the success hitherto, and based on this, prescribed new priority action lines for the ensuing period. An indication that this process was not without difficulties was hinted in the last two communiqués of Bergen (2005) and London (2007). This is discussed below.

An appropriate hypothesis could have been that the Bologna Process failed to reach its 2010 target as the aims and methods to achieve the prescribed goals neglected the consideration of diverse national circumstances. This paper exemplifies the situation in three contrasting nations. It would be premature to test a hypothesis which could not be tested until 2010 (at the earliest).

Forty-six countries have signed the Bologna Declaration hitherto. So far, the major objectives appear to have overridden national interests. The particular major objective of a change in focus in higher education was reflected in the London Communiqué of 17th May, 2007: “Our stocktaking report, along with European University Association’s *Trends V Report*, ESIB’s *Bologna with Student Eyes* and *Eurydice’s Focus on the Structure of Higher Education in Europe*, confirms that there has been good overall progress in the last two years. There is an increasing awareness that a significant outcome of the process will be a move towards student-centred higher education and away from teacher driven provision. We will continue to support this important development.”⁴

In our discussion of developments in national higher education policies in the light of the Bologna Process – and with special reference to the three countries selected for comparison – we shall reflect on the individual characteristics of each nation, and how they seek to implement the goals and overall objectives of the Bologna Process.

Data sources

There is a variety of source material including databases such as those of CEPES and ENIC. Journals include European Political Science, European Journal of Education and publications by HE scholars, all of which have been invaluable. The contribution of the EC to the creation of the EHEA is prominent. Documents from Conventions, the EU higher education policy papers, Bologna follow-up group reports and Bologna Process Communiqué declarations provided additional material as was the European University Association *Trends V Report 2007* and Eurydice’s *Focus on the Structure of Higher Education in Europe. National Trends in the Bologna Process 2006–2007*. The European higher education reform is driven by the Bologna Process signatory countries and the Ministers of higher education; therefore we have included key aspects from national legislation, national reports

⁴ <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/londonbologna/uploads/documents/LondonCommuniquefinalwithLondonlogo.pdf> [22 May 2007]

and National Action Plans of the year 2005–2007. Finally, information from various web-sites such as Bologna Secretariat, EurActiv etc. provided interesting background information.

2. Higher education systems in Greece, Lithuania and Bosnia-Herzegovina

There are probably more higher education systems than nations in Europe.⁵ In the following study of the three selected nations, Greece, Lithuania and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the aim is to focus on developments in higher education policy after these nations became signatories to the Bologna Declaration. Each of the three nations faced different challenges, but all with the same goal – that specified for 2010 in the Bologna Declaration. Nevertheless, the historical factors, and the fact that Bosnia-Herzegovina became a signatory at a later date, all contributed to different patterns of development.

2.1. Greece

Throughout its history, Greece has gone through long periods of transformation in its political system. The main issues in the 20th century were to preserve country's security, to consolidate democratic institutions, and to ensure economic and social development. Consequently, participation in international organizations and promotion of cooperation was welcomed internally. Greece joined the EU in 1981, and subsequently signed a large number of bilateral and multilateral agreements, and now is active member in various international organizations and structures. The Greek signature in the Bologna Declaration contributed to further Europeanization of the country's higher education system. However, the main transitory phase in the Hellenic higher education system commenced at the beginning of 2004, signifying a national-level debate on the modernization of the higher education system.

The Bologna Process has been applied through number of legislative reforms in Greece. The following decrees typify these: Law 1404/1983 concerning Technological Educational Institutions, Law 2083/1992 concerning higher education institutions and Open University, Law 2916/2001 concerning Higher Education, Law 3255/2004 concerning new scheme for Joint Master's Degrees, and Law 3374/2005 concerning Quality Assurance in Higher Education, ECTC and Diploma Supplement. Moreover, Article 16 of the Constitution⁶ of the Republic of Greece clearly states the establishment of university level institutions by private persons is prohibited. However, intense debates about amending this provision to allow the establishment of non-state higher education

⁵ Bols, A., Nilsson, T., "A Revolution at Your University", *Pharmacy Education*, Vol.4 (2), June 2004, pp. 103–105

⁶ <http://www.hri.org/docs/syntagma/> [6 September 2007]

institutions are continuing in Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, academic and public society as well as the Greek Parliament.

The Greek higher education system comprises a university sector with 23 universities, and a technological sector with 16 technological education institutions. There are no occupational-oriented non-university higher education institutions (colleges) as is the case in Lithuania and Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, a broader analysis would show the Greek higher education structure to be much more complex, with a wide variety of educational institutions providing formal education jointly or independently. The number of students accepted for studies in 2006–2007 amounted 35.9 thousand at the universities, and 25.6 thousand at the technological education institutions.⁷

Taking into consideration further promotion of the EHEA, Athens hosted at least two important Bologna Process official seminars in 2003 and 2006 dealing with social and external dimension strategies of European higher education. The debates proved to be successful and further encouraged countries to unite towards a collective goal. Moreover, as a leading cultural nation in the South-east European region, Greece is an important example regarding higher education reforms for the other countries in the region including Bosnia-Herzegovina.

2.2. Lithuania

After regaining independence from Soviet Union in 1990 and carrying out many economic, social and cultural reforms, Lithuania sought a speedy integration into the political and economic structures of Europe and the defensive structures of the Western world. Since then, education also has become a priority area.

Just after the signature of the Bologna Declaration (1999), a new Law on Higher Education⁸ was introduced. This was a reform of cardinal importance based on the post-secondary education experience of the West, its purpose being the establishment of a two-tier system in higher education. In other words, the Law entailed making the necessary changes in the system of higher education so as to align it with common European principles and to strengthen the EHEA. Other main laws concerning higher education are the Law on Science and Studies⁹ and the Law on Education.¹⁰

⁷ Greek population is 11 million

⁸ Lietuvos Respublikos Aukštojo mokslo įstatymas [auth.: Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Lithuania], Official Publication „Valstybės Žinios”, 2000, Nr. 27-715; Latest amendment on 18 July, 2006

⁹ Lietuvos Respublikos Mokslo ir švietimo įstatymas [auth.: Law on Science and Education of the Republic of Lithuania], Official Publication „Valstybės Žinios”, 1991, Nr. 7-191; „Valstybės Žinios”, 2002, Nr. 68-2758

¹⁰ Lietuvos Respublikos Švietimo įstatymas [auth.: Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania], Official Publication „Valstybės Žinios”, 1991, No. 23-593; „Valstybės Žinios”, 2003, No. 63-2853

Moreover, according to Article 41 of the Constitution¹¹ of the Republic of Lithuania, higher education is available to everyone according to one's potential; and free higher education is guaranteed to all "successfully studying citizens" in all public higher education institutions. However, today a major discussion is taking place regarding funding of the higher education where primary intention of the Ministry of Science and Education is to introduce a fixed fee for courses.

Currently, there are 50 higher education institutions in the country – 15 public and 7 non-public universities as well as 16 public and 12 non-public colleges. Colleges are the non-university higher education institutions (with an occupational orientation for marked employment), the most rapidly growing higher education sector in the country. This could be explained as a result of the reform whereby vocational colleges were discontinued, but where many of which were designated as the first non-university higher education institutions. The number of students studying in the year 2005–2006 amounted to 141.8 thousand at the universities and 55.9 thousand at colleges.¹²

Returning to the matter of compliance with the Bologna Process and further creation of the EHEA, the Lithuanian Higher Education System Development Plan for 2006–2010¹³ schedules the new stage of reforms going in accordance with the European trend. The objectives of the Development plan are to further improve governance and management of higher education, enhance quality, establish new funding mechanisms and ensure effective use of the resources.

2.3. Bosnia–Herzegovina

The case of Bosnia-Herzegovina¹⁴ is rather similar to Greece and Lithuania – a country of the Western Balkans which has learnt from the hard lessons of history and wars. However, it seems that Bosnia-Herzegovina managed to get on the crucial path towards reconciliation and integration into democratic structures. The Bosnian government understands that if left outside the EU, it would find itself in the grey zone of the Europe; a number of dangers for the safety and stability of the entire

¹¹ Lietuvos Respublikos Konstitucija [auth.: The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania], Official Publication „Valstybės Žinios“, 1992, Nr. 33-1014

¹² Lithuanian population is 3.4 million

¹³ The Lithuanian Higher Education System Development Plan for 2006–2010, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, Official Publication „Valstybės Žinios“, 2006, Nr. 39-1394

¹⁴ Since 1995 Dayton Peace Accords the State of Bosnia-Herzegovina has been divided into two political entities – the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina consisting of ten separate cantons plus the Brčko district which belongs to both entities. The authority over higher education is given to the two entities. In addition, no legislation or procedural mechanisms ensure the homogeneity of academic standards or allow the comparative assessment of the performance of academic institutions. Such situation results higher education in Bosnia-Herzegovina to face unresolved issues of governance at the levels both of coordination and the management of institutions. However, recent adoption of the state level Higher Education Law should improve the situation but more time for fluent implementation and visible results is needed. In this paper, the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina is considered as an entity and therefore no discussion is made of the separate federation and cantonal dimensions.

region could arise. Hence Bosnia-Herzegovina submitted the necessary documents and was accepted to join the Bologna Process at the Berlin Ministerial Conference in September 2003 together with six other countries.¹⁵ In addition, the fact that Bosnia-Herzegovina was a late signatory has resulted in recent legislation implementation of many Bologna Process action lines compared to other countries. Soon after signing, the drafting of the state-level Framework Law on Higher Education¹⁶ was initiated under the auspices of the Ministry of Civil Affairs. However, even when submitted to the Lower House of Bosnia-Herzegovina Parliament, it was not endorsed until 13 June, 2007.¹⁷ The adoption of the Law on Higher Education on the 30 July, 2007, witnesses one of the key reform bills outlined in the European Partnership commitments that are encouraged by all: the Office of the High Representative, the CoE, the EC, the World Bank, the OSCE and the UN. Despite the achievements following the adoption of the state-level higher education Law, the implementation of the law is most important and needs to start as soon as possible. However, the higher education Law remains a subject of hot debate concerning funding. This is in the hands of the entities – the government of the Republika Srpska and the cantons of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina – instead of the state, and hence criticised as not being consistent and uniform across Bosnia-Herzegovina. Only Article II of The Constitution¹⁸ of the State of Bosnia-Herzegovina stresses the education being a fundamental right and freedom for all persons within Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Today there are 8 public universities (6 in the Federation and 2 in the Republika Srpska), and 6 private universities (1 in the Federation and 5 in the Republika Srpska) (with 96 faculties and academies enjoying a very strong degree of autonomy within the universities), and 11 private faculties and higher schools¹⁹ (3 in the Federation and 8 in the Republika Srpska). The number of students enrolled at the universities in Federation reached 60.8 thousand, 58.5 thousand of them belonging to the independent faculties in the academic year 2005–2006, and 14.7 thousand in the Republika Srpska during the year 2002–2003²⁰. Some 95 per cent students study at public universities in Bosnia-Herzegovina.²¹

¹⁵ Albania, Andorra, the Holy See, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

¹⁶ http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/draft-framework-law-high-educ-Bosnia-Herzegovina-enl-t04.pdf [22 May 2007]

¹⁷ Such rather rough experience could be explained by the indigenous nature of the state order. The Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska were not jointly responsible for basic educational matters in Entity level. Therefore each canton was operating according to its own legislation (Law on University of Bosnia-Herzegovina (1998, latest amendment May 2006), Higher Education Law of Tuzla Canton (1999, latest amendment May 2005), Higher Education Law of Sarajevo Canton (1999, latest amendment May 2006), Higher Education Law of RS (July 2006) etc.

¹⁸ http://www.ccbh.ba/public/down/USTAV_BOSNE_I_HERCEGOVINE_engl.pdf [6 September 2007]

¹⁹ Non-university type higher education institutions with an occupational orientation for market employment

²⁰ Students enrolled at the universities in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the year 2002–2003 amounted 51.7 thousand

²¹ The population of Bosnia-Herzegovina is 3.8 million

Regarding further higher education reforms within Bosnia-Herzegovina, various projects concerning quality assurance, legal improvements, modern institutional arrangements and accreditations as well as universities autonomy, student mobility assurance, EHEA and European Research Area promotion etc. are funded and encouraged by the EC, the CoE and accompanying programmes.²² However, despite present funding and strong support of the international community, the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina will have to develop as a self-reliant political entity in order to carry out higher education reform in accordance with the Bologna Declaration. As a condition for all this, the prevention of all kinds of discrimination in higher education is vital as well as more effective means for the development of a multicultural, multi-linguistic and open democratic society. In this respect, Bosnia-Herzegovina still has some way to go.

²² To date the EU has been the main Vocational Education and Training (VET) donor, through the OBNOVA, Phare and CARDS VET programmes (total €11 million)

3. Towards an European Higher Education Area

The pre-history of the Bologna Process commenced in 1988 when 388 Rectors of universities worldwide came to Bologna, Italy for the 900th anniversary of the Bologna University. There, the Magna Charta Universitatum²³ was signed outlining the following fundamental principles what later became to be known as the Bologna Process:

- The University is an autonomous institution that meets the needs of the world around, morally and intellectually independent of all political and economical power
- Teaching and research in universities must be inseparable
- Freedom is vital in research and training at the universities
- A university is the trustee of the European humanist tradition.

The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region²⁴ followed after. It was developed by the CoE and UNESCO and adopted by national representatives meeting in Lisbon in April, 1997. This CoE/UNESCO Convention (usually referred to as the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC)) has since been ratified by most European countries as well as by Lithuania and Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1998 and 2004 respectively. Greece has neither signed nor ratified the LRC although some of its principles have been applied already.

Among the main points of the LRC are the following:

- Holders of qualifications issued in one country shall have adequate access to an assessment of these qualifications in another country
- Non-discrimination
- Recognition of the qualifications
- Cooperation and assistance on related information among the signature countries
- Appointments of the national information centres
- Encourage higher education institutions to issue diploma supplement, etc.

In Paris, in May 1998, four education ministers from France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom signed and adopted the Sorbonne Declaration²⁵ on the harmonization of the architecture of the European higher education system. This declaration appeared to be the final push required

²³ http://www.magna-charta.org/pdf/mc_pdf/mc_english.pdf [10 June 2007]

²⁴ http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13522&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html [10 June 2007]

²⁵ http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/980525SORBONNE_DECLARATION.PDF [10 June 2007]

towards the Bologna Declaration in the meantime, led by the Western European players. It focused on such issues as:

- Convergence of higher education systems in Europe
- Common two-cycle degree system: undergraduate (Bachelor) and graduate (Master)
- Improvement of students and teachers mobility, cooperation and employability by removing cross-border obstacles
- Promoting mutual recognition of degrees and academic qualifications.

Taking all this into consideration, such shaping of the matters of higher education in Europe led to the joint recognition that notwithstanding important differences, European higher education systems are facing common internal and external challenges related to the growth and diversification of higher education, the employability of graduates, the shortage of skills in key areas, and the expansion of private and transnational education etc. The way towards overall convergence and common action at European level started with the signature of the Bologna Declaration.

3.1. Understanding the Bologna Process

Ministers from twenty-nine European countries²⁶ met in Bologna and signed the Bologna Declaration²⁷ in June, 1999. The Declaration became the primary document used by the signatories to establish the general framework for the modernization and reform of European higher education. The process of reform came to be called the Bologna Process.

The Bologna Declaration aims to reform the structures of states' higher education systems and establishing what was necessary to create the EHEA by the year 2010 as well as to promote the European system of higher education world-wide. The Declaration states the following objectives:²⁸

- Adoption of a system of easily-readable and comparable degrees, also through the implementation of the diploma supplement.
- Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate: Access to the second cycle shall require successful completion of first cycle studies, lasting a minimum of three years. The degree awarded after the first cycle shall also be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification. The second cycle should lead to the master and/or doctorate degree.

²⁶ From 1999: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Swiss Confederation, United Kingdom

²⁷ Appendix 1

²⁸ *ibid*

- Establishment of a system of credits – such as the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) – as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility. Credits could also be acquired in non-higher-education contexts, including life-long learning, provided these are recognised by the receiving universities concerned.
- Promotion of mobility by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement. Students should get easier access to study and training opportunities outside their home country. Teachers, researchers and administrative staff should get recognition and valorisation of periods spent in a European context researching, teaching and training, without prejudicing their statutory rights.
- Promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies.
- Promotion of the necessary European dimensions in higher education, particularly with regards to curricular development, inter-institutional cooperation, mobility schemes and integrated programmes of study, training and research.

These six objectives are known as the essence of the Bologna Process but they have been developed further since.

Beside the voluntary and intergovernmental features of the Bologna Process, we should note that it was not foreseen in the Bologna Declaration that all European countries should have the same higher education system by 2010. In fact, the very substantial feature of the Process is the balance between diversity and unity. Moreover, the aim of creating convergence should also not be unappreciated: it is not a path towards standardization and uniformity of European higher education. The fundamental principles of autonomy and diversity are indeed respected. That is precisely why the intention of the Bologna Process is to look for ways to build the bridges and to facilitate the principle of translation that make it easier for individuals to move from one educational system or country to the other. Subsequently, the specific nature of the countries' higher education systems is set to be preserved. If not, there would be little point studying abroad if all study courses were virtually identical throughout.

Taking into account the long-term goal of the overall Process, according to the Bologna Declaration, by 2010 the systems of higher education in European countries should be organized in such a way that:

- it is easy to move from one country to the other (within the EHEA) for the purpose of further study or employment;

- the attractiveness of European higher education is increased so many people from non-European countries also come to study and/or work in Europe;
- the EHEA provides Europe with a broad, high quality and advanced knowledge base, and ensures the further development of Europe as a stable, peaceful and tolerant community.

As a result, it can be noted that the goal is rather ambitious and not connected solely to the Bologna Process. On one hand, the Lisbon Agenda of the EU encompasses the EC contribution to the intergovernmental Bologna Process. During the meeting of the European Council in Lisbon in March, 2000, the heads of state or government launched the Lisbon Strategy²⁹ aimed at making the EU the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world, and achieving full employment by 2010. The Lisbon Agenda rests on three pillars, two of them embracing economic and environmental matters, and one more coping with social matters and being designed to modernize the European social model by investing in human resources and combating social exclusion. The Member States are expected to invest in education and training with the framework of life-long learning, and to conduct an active policy for employment, making it easier to move to a competitive knowledge economy.

On the other hand, from the EU perspective, the Bologna Process is obviously linked to the Copenhagen Process³⁰ launched in December 2002, where the emphasis was on enhanced European cooperation in vocational and educational training. This initiative is aimed at establishing synergies between the Process and important fields such as transparency and qualifications, credit transfer, quality assurance, and a European qualifications framework. As will be seen, the Bologna Process encompasses all the above-mentioned and more.

In summary, the Bologna Process is in compliance with Lisbon Strategy and Copenhagen Process. This contributes to globally ambitious goals: a competitive knowledge-based economy, sound society, citizens' mobility and employability, as well as the overall development of Europe. Moreover, a European social model that promotes investment in human resources, changing needs of society as well as improvement of qualitative education and transparency is challenged. Therefore, it would be quite correct to declare that such objectives are widely accepted and welcomed by every human being in today's society. This reflects the voluntary nature of the declaration, facilitated by the fact that its goals are supported by the grass roots of society.

²⁹ http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/lisbon_strategy_en.htm [22 May 2007]

³⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/education/copenhagen/copenhagen_declaration_en.pdf [22 May 2007]

4. Milestones of the Bologna Process

Although the European Union still does not have a common educational policy, in the last decade of 20th century it was recognized if the EU and Europe wanted to stay competitive in science and research and respond adequately to increasing global challenges in these areas, the only way ahead was comprehensive and harmonized structural and systemic reform of the higher education sector.

During the signing of the Bologna Declaration in 1999, special tools have been agreed on how to drive this overwhelming higher education reform, and consequently a specific follow-up structure has been organized. Further ministerial meetings were agreed to be held in Prague (2001). Subsequent meetings were held in Berlin (2003), Bergen (2005) and London (2007). These are summarised briefly in this chapter in order to gain a better understanding of recent developments and achievements declared in the Ministerial Reports on the Bologna Process.

4.1. Prague Communiqué 2001

In May 2001, the meeting in Prague was called to assess the progress accomplished hitherto, and to identify the main priorities that were to guide the Bologna Process in the immediate future. The ministers adopted the so-called Prague Communiqué³¹ which set out guidelines for the next two years. The popularity of the Process rose further and four more countries³² became signatories to the Declaration.

Furthermore, a permanent Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) was to be established in order to take responsibility for the continuing development of the Process. The BFUG consists of the representatives from all signatory countries and the EC and is chaired by the rotating EU presidency. There are several observers to the work of the BFUG: The CoE, the European University Association (EUA), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) and the European Students Union (ESU).

In Prague three key elements of the Bologna Process were emphasized:

- Promotion of life-long learning
- Involvement of higher education institutions and students
- Enhancement of the attractiveness of the EHEA.

³¹ http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/Prague_communiqueTheta.pdf [22 May 2007]

³² From 2001: Croatia, Cyprus, Liechtenstein, Turkey

The latter elements reaffirmed previous commitments of the Bologna Process. But now the opinions of academics and students were also taken into consideration through their official involvement.

4.2. Berlin Communiqué 2003

In the Berlin Ministerial Conference in September 2003, seven new countries³³ were accepted into the Process. Moreover, this time the ministers charged the BFUG with preparing the detailed reports on the progress and implementation of the intermediate priorities. The stocktaking process was undertaken before the next Ministerial conference in 2005. The Stocktaking Report referred to progress made in three priority action areas: quality assurance, two-cycle degree system and recognition of degrees and periods of study. In addition to this, the UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education (UNESCO-CEPES) joined the work of the BFUG as a consultative member.

Apart from taking note of the developments from 2001 to 2003, the Berlin Communiqué³⁴ also set guidelines for further work and concluded that:

- development of quality assurance at institutional, national and European levels is vital;
- the implementation of two-cycles system needs to be started;
- recognition of degrees and periods of studies, including the provision of the diploma supplement automatically and free of charge for all graduates as of 2005 needs to be implemented;
- there is big need of elaboration of an overarching framework of qualifications for the EHEA;
- the Doctoral level as the third cycle should be included in the Process;
- promotion of closer links between the EHEA and the European Research Area needs to be assured.

Taking all this into consideration, the development and reinforcement of the quality assurance was challenged for the first time since the beginning of the Process. Further, the economic framework could be found in the Berlin Communiqué. The contribution to study cycles, framework of qualifications and re-enforcement of the European Research Area leads to the promotion of cooperation and further strengthening of the European Economic Community.

³³ From 2003: Albania, Andorra, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Holy See, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

³⁴ <http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/Communiquel.pdf> [22 May 2007]

4.3. Bergen Communiqué 2005

In May 2005, the Bologna Process welcomed five new countries³⁵ and the ministers responsible for higher education met in Bergen to discuss the mid-term period achievements of the overall Process. The Stocktaking Report³⁶ was submitted for the first time by the BFUG and the adoption of the Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance in EHEA was marked. Moreover, all participating countries were instructed to prepare National Reports prior to the presentation of the Stocktaking Report.

As far as the BFUG is concerned, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)³⁷, the Education International Pan-European Structure³⁸ and the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe joined the BFUG as consultative members.

Taking into consideration the priorities for 2007, the mid-term Bergen meeting confirmed the necessity to focus on existing plans for the future rather than creating new goals. The priorities of Bergen Communiqué³⁹ included:

- Reinforcing the social dimension and removing obstacles to mobility
- Implementing the standards and guidelines for quality assurance as proposed in the ENQA report
- Implementing national frameworks of qualifications
- Awarding and recognizing joint degrees
- Creating opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education, including procedures for recognition of prior learning.

4.4. London Communiqué 2007

The latest follow-up meeting was held in London, May 2007. This time, the Republic of Montenegro was welcomed as a new member of the Bologna Process. Moreover, the second Stocktaking Report⁴⁰ has been successfully introduced drawing the overall picture of the aims achieved since Bergen.

³⁵ From 2005: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine

³⁶ Bologna Process Stocktaking Report 2005, Bergen, 2005, available at:

<http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/BPStocktaking9May2005.pdf> [1 August 2007]

³⁷ ENQA's General Assembly confirmed on 4 November 2004 the change of the former European Network into the European Association

³⁸ In Europe this incorporated the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE)

³⁹ http://www.dfes.gov.uk/londonbologna/uploads/documents/050520_Bergen_Communique.pdf [22 May 2007]

⁴⁰ Bologna Process Stocktaking Report 2007, London, 2007, available at:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/londonbologna/uploads/documents/6909-BolognaProcessST.pdf> [22 May 2007]

While looking towards and beyond 2010, the London Communiqué⁴¹ reconsidered the year 2010 as an opportunity to reformulate the vision that was a motive of the Bologna Process in 1999.

As far as the latest priorities for the 2009 Ministerial meeting in Leuven are concerned, concentration will be on completing already agreed action lines, such as the ongoing priorities of the three-cycle degrees system, quality assurance and recognition of degrees and study periods. Some new action areas were added relating to life-long-learning and joint degrees. However, the focus for further action was put on:

- Establishment of a Register of European Higher Education Quality Assurance Agencies (REHEQA), to enhance confidence in European higher education and to facilitate the mutual recognition of quality assurance. The register should be public, and consist of agencies reviewing quality of education in higher education institutions, and
- Adoption of a strategy for the external dimension of the Bologna Process (EHEA in a global setting) for improving the information and promoting the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA.

On the one hand such initiative for the register was welcomed and regarded as a contribution to the further improvement and implementation of quality assurance. Nevertheless, the question could be raised as to whether this would not result in a certain amount of duplication. ENQA had already been established for a decade and was responsible for coordinating information, experiences and good practices. This information was disseminated to European quality assurance agencies, public authorities and higher education institutions. Clearly, this is an important agency. However, the EC had offered to make a substantial contribution to the start-up costs for establishment of the Register.⁴² It could be suggested that this apparent conflict of interests was initiated by the desire of the EC to gain legal control of the entire Bologna Process.

⁴¹ <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna/uploads/documents/LC18May07.pdf> [22 May 2007]

⁴² Report to the London Conference of Ministers on a European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies, ENQA, Helsinki, 2007, available at: <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/about/Register-report.pdf> [1 August 2007]

5. The practical implementation of the Bologna Process

The overall progress in the Bologna Process was confirmed in the London Ministerial Communiqué. This was important to the political actors in their work in establishing the EHEA. At the academic level the climate is rather different. The principles and the spirit of the Bologna Process that characterised its mid-term peak were generally welcomed, but policy practices were divergent (and remain so today), endangering the overall process of reform. Therefore, further sustained development of the EHEA should not become a pick-and-choose strategy whereby each nation gave priority to different paths for reform. All priority action lines (as illustrated in Appendix 3) are interconnected but where some priority action lines provide the basis for others. Therefore there is an urgency to give priority to certain initial elements. Only in this way will decision-implementation be effective.

Against this background we proceed to a study of the implementation of priority action lines in Greece, Lithuania and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and while observing the situation in higher education reform in these countries, contribute further to discover the remaining challenges and shortcomings.

5.1. Degree system

Across Europe as well as in Greece, Lithuania and Bosnia-Herzegovina, there is no more doubt whether the three-cycle degree system of Bachelor, Master and Doctoral studies will be established. In its 2007 report, the EUA noted a dramatic improvement since 2005 in the implementation of structural degree reform in compliance with the Bologna Process.⁴³ Moreover, the access from one cycle to the next has improved as well as provision of structured Doctoral programmes. The implementation of a national qualifications framework has started with the aim of making it compatible with the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA.

5.1.1. Implementation of the first and second cycles

Since 1982, the Greek higher education system has been organized as a two-tier system and the implementation of the Bologna degree structure is not problematic at all. The first cycle programmes are structured in four years in both the universities and technological education institutions. In Lithuania, the completion of both the binary higher education system and three-cycle

⁴³ Crosier, D., Purser, L. and Smidt, H., *Trends V: Universities Shaping the European Higher Education Area*, EUA publications, Brussels, 2007, pp. 16–19

studies form, the transformation of which has been taking place since 1993, were legally implemented and have complied with the goals of the Bologna Declaration since the year 2000. Consequently, Bachelor programmes last for four years. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, because of the complex geographic and political structure, the implementation of the degree structure is viewed differently in various universities and faculties. However, all universities have begun the consensual implementation of the first cycle that ranges from three to four years.

As far as second cycle is concerned, the Greek programmes last one to two years and lead to a Master's degree that can be awarded by all universities and by those technological education institutions that have been accredited by the Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency. Technological education institutions with no accreditation are not authorised to run post-graduate programmes. As a result, all technological education institution graduates can continue their second cycle studies at a university. By contrast, in Lithuania, an academic first as well as second cycle degree (obtained after minimum of one-and-a-half or two years of study) can be awarded only by the universities. Colleges issue diplomas of non-university higher education and award a professional qualification after three or four years of study which has a practical orientation. Colleges do not have authority to arrange second-cycle programmes. However, students may continue their Master degree studies at university after taking certain bridging courses in order to achieve equivalent level of competence and credits. In addition, since the beginning of the year 2007, the Professional Bachelor degree has been approved to be issued by the colleges and thus granting the academic right to enter the university. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, not all the universities are organizing post-graduate courses at the present time as the innovative graduate courses are being newly formed and number of students in the second cycle is expected to increase in the future. Second cycle studies vary from one to two years.

Taking into consideration the regulated professions such as medicine, engineering, agriculture, arts, law etc., the duration of the studies lasts five to six years in all three countries and these long-term programmes are not considered as post-graduate degrees, neither in Greece nor in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In Lithuania, however, they retain integral type which leads directly to the second cycle or professional qualification. However, both Greece and Lithuania are discussing possibilities of adjusting the long-term programmes to two-cycle system, but the progress is rather slow.

Further contributions and challenges

Taking into consideration the legislation, we mention here the extreme flexibility in some laws that allow students to take examinations repeatedly with no limit and so to keep the status of the student for a long period. Greece could be an example in this case as not all universities have studies

cycle duration limits (e.g. in Lithuania it is possible to prolong the studies for one academic year and only under certain circumstances such as those resulting from illness, pregnancy, etc.). In that sense the university becomes a host institution for those who could not graduate successfully and thus keeps the students occupied. But this has no positive impact on the general level of employment or on quality whatsoever.

According to the Bologna Declaration, the Bachelor's degrees should be relevant to the European labour market and qualify graduates for employment. Consequently, the trend is towards shorter Bachelor degrees of three instead of four years study. However, there are some doubts here about the value of a short period of undergraduate degrees, not only in the minds of the students but also by academics and employers, and it does not seem that Greece and Lithuania are an exception. Frequently, there appears to be no awareness by the labour market about the new degree structure as well as no acceptance of the graduates with new degrees in the labour market. The practice witnesses simple re-labelling and no substantial reconstruction of the old study programmes. Certainly, in following this trend and inviting students to select modern shorter programmes in Croatia, professors give a priority to shortening their programmes as a matter of prestige. Thus now seems also to be the case in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Another aspect discussed here is Professional Bachelor degrees in Lithuania. Despite the adopted legislation, many gaps still remain in practical implementation of the degree, There is neither no clear definition which colleges have the right to issue such degrees or under which circumstances. Neither is there any coordinated legislation outlining further academic rights of the degree holder. It is even not clear whether only the new programmes and also the old programmes can lead to the new professional degree. This clearly shows a non-qualitative decision-making process that is based on political objectives and which does not improve the general prestige of the colleges in Lithuania.⁴⁴ Moreover, the proclaimed new degree does not have any qualitative aspect as the study programmes are not being changed in accordance to the requirements of the Bachelor degrees.

Taking all this into account, despite reported good overall performance in implementation of first and second cycles, many challenges and unanswered questions remain and demand more consistent effort. These include employability after graduation, general attitude towards the degree holders, quality in newly-structured programmes and in overall higher education.

⁴⁴ In Lithuanian society colleges usually are regarded as second-class higher education institutions

5.1.2. Access to the next cycle

More than four-fifths of the signatory countries to the Bologna Declaration reported that there is access⁴⁵ to the next cycle without barriers. In comparison to the three countries studied, we should note that in both Greece and Bosnia-Herzegovina all Bachelor qualifications give access to the Master studies, while in Lithuania students having graduated from colleges must follow additional bridging courses. Such courses can be found in Greece and Bosnia-Herzegovina, but these are mainly designed for transfer to other disciplines or depend on specific prerequisites of the particular university.

Access to Doctoral studies is generally restricted to the applicants who have successfully completed a university second cycle Master's programme. In Greece, however, access is possible with a Bachelor's qualification; those faculties that do not offer post-graduate programmes (due to practical reasons) accept students without a Master's qualification for Doctoral studies. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, there are several tens of undergraduate technical studies programmes lasting for five years at the University of Banja Luka that have direct access to the third cycle studies. In addition, Bachelor and Master studies structure programmes at non-university type higher education institutions are not normally organized. However, Bosnia-Herzegovina is one of the five countries⁴⁶ which organises the latter-mentioned structure although students concerned are not eligible to apply for direct admission to third cycle programmes.

Further contributions and challenges

Even if most qualifications give further access to the next study cycle, several obstacles remain. These mainly arise from particularities of different higher education systems and national degree terminologies. Bearing in mind the fact that all the Bologna Process priority action lines are interconnected and furthermore – they aim at common understanding, recognition and compatibility – the observed recognition criteria (discussed below) is important here. From a practical point of view, it is quite certain that the Lithuanian college undergraduate diploma would not be recognized so as to allow access to Greek post-graduate studies. The same could be stated regarding the Bosnian Master's qualification obtained in non-university type higher education institution and its credibility for further academic access to third cycle university level studies in Greece or Lithuania.

As a result, the aims of the EHEA are indeed promoting a concerted higher education system and its simplification in order to increase competitiveness and attractiveness of European higher education sector. Despite the declared progress in furthering academic rights of the students,

⁴⁵ Access: the right of qualified candidate to apply and be considered for admission to higher education

⁴⁶ Together with Albania, Croatia, Italy and Montenegro

qualitative decisions should have more scope concerning access to the next cycle throughout Europe. Without a uniform system within Europe we hardly can hope for increased compatibility world-wide.

5.1.3. Implementation of national qualifications framework

At the Bergen Conference, the European ministers responsible for higher education adopted an overarching framework of qualifications for the EHEA. This refers to the three-cycle studies structure as well as to a generic description (in terms of qualifications' level, workload, quality, profile, learning outcomes and granted rights after the qualification is obtained) of each cycle in order to compare the relationship between the qualifications. It is also intended that the framework should be an intelligible, meaningful source at the international level.

Greece and Lithuania report all their study programmes as being fully compatible with the European qualifications framework although the national qualifications framework (NQF) is still in a process of creation. The NQF model preparation working groups in Greece are proposing the full or partial model to be adopted in 2007, while in Lithuania a model of this kind intended to be completed in 2008. However, one should bear in mind that adoption is not necessarily the same as implementation. Bosnian, in turn, will begin designing its own NQF in 2007 and expects to set up a national centre to link the Bosnian qualifications framework to its European counterpart in 2009. "Maybe we are being too ambitious," says Bosnia-Herzegovina national coordinator Suad Muhibic. "But we can only try", reports the European Training Foundation.⁴⁷ This aim is rather realistic as Lithuania launched its NQF pilot project in 2005. However, most of the leading countries⁴⁸ where NQF has been established in line with the European qualifications framework started the process before 2005. Some have taken ten to fifteen years to complete the development process and implement their framework fully.

Further contributions and challenges

The NQF is considered as a mechanism to simplify the system describing formal qualifications and other learning outcomes at all levels of education. The NQF will also help institutions and students to better understand the nature of qualifications. However, they should not ignore higher education institutions, and individuals making their own contribution to the creation and acquirement of knowledge for the NQF. Despite the high aims of the European system of qualification, the example of Lithuania illuminates a rather rough experience. The Lithuanian project

⁴⁷ *South East Europe sets NQF and quality assurance as top priorities*, European Training Foundation News, available at: http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/opennews/500C62E467687066C125724B0030860B_EN?OpenDocument&VER= [10 June 2007]

⁴⁸ Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Portugal, United Kingdom

“Creation of the National Qualifications System”⁴⁹ and the manager of the project, the Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority, does not explore every possible avenue to cooperate with stakeholders concerned. The major Lithuanian universities and institutes are welcomed to assist the project. However, the national qualification assessment body – the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education – and its Division for Qualifications Assessment is ignored. This situation indicates a lack of cooperation, common understanding and most importantly – lack of quality – in the NQF.

5.2. Quality assurance

Mutual recognition in the field of quality assurance (QA)⁵⁰ in higher education calls for the development of clearly defined and commonly accepted evaluation and accreditation criteria and methodologies. In order to achieve this goal, a national QA system should not only include the bodies responsible for the task but also specify their composition and fundamental objectives as well as ensuring transparent cooperation and networking.

Taking into consideration the national bodies for QA, the body in Greece is the Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency (HQAA) and in Lithuania the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (CQAHE). The HQAA was established in 2005 by law.⁵¹ The autonomy and independence of HQAA is secured by law in order to ensure the effectiveness, validity and fairness of the process, transparency and acceptance of the results. The CQAHE was established in 1995 by the Ministry of Science and Education of Lithuania. Consequently it is an autonomous public administration institution with the majority of its employees being civil servants. Considering the membership in ENQA, both Greece and Lithuania are intending to apply for full membership. This should not take too long since HQAA and CQAHE comply with fundamental objectives of QA and meet the set criteria such as independence and autonomous responsibility for the operations and methods in QA. Moreover, HQAA already has the status of observer in ENQA. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, no body for QA exists due to the long period without any law on higher education being implemented. However, the Draft Law on Higher Education envisages the establishment of the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance (ADHEQA) on a state level.

⁴⁹ <http://www.lnks.lt/english/> [25 August, 2007]

⁵⁰ Quality Assurance (Synonym – Quality Control) is an all-embracing term referring to an ongoing, continuous process of evaluating (assessing, monitoring, guaranteeing, maintaining, and improving) the quality of a higher education system, institution or programme

⁵¹ Law 3374/ 2005 issued on 2 August, 2005 (*OJ* 61, A') concerning Quality Assurance in Higher Education, ECTS and Diploma Supplement in Greece

Since this Law has already been adopted, a national QA agency is expected to be established in the near future.

5.2.1. National implementation of “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area”

It is generally agreed that main responsibility for quality provision and evaluation lies within higher education institutions themselves. However, given the fact that public funded institutions are accountable to society, the quality of higher education needs to be safeguarded. The aim of “Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA”⁵² (usually referred to as European standards and guidelines) is therefore to assist institutions in maintaining their quality.

In Greece and Lithuania, the process of implementing a national QA system in line with the European standards and guidelines has already started. Greece has established a new QA system for the entire higher education system in 2005 and which is regulated by law.⁵³ It encompasses internal assessment, external review, publications of the results and participation of the students in QA of higher education. The Lithuanian QA system has started to operate basically in accordance with the European standards and guidelines in 1995. However, further improvements and challenges of the European standards and guidelines will continue to be carried out. One chapter of the programme – The Lithuanian Higher Education System Development Plan for 2006–2010⁵⁴ – is concerned with the analysis of updates of the curriculum and QA in higher education.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina the national QA system and procedures for internal and external QA are still under review, though in line with the European standards and guidelines. This is being covered by the Joint CoE/EC Project “Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia-Herzegovina”⁵⁵, the overall objective of which is to support the economic regeneration of Bosnia-Herzegovina by improving the quality of higher education in compliance with the Bergen Communiqué. The second important project of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina is “Strengthening QA in Bosnia-Herzegovina”.⁵⁶ Here, the main goals embrace training of experts and administrative staff for QA, establishment and networking of the QA agency including peer reviews, and dissemination of information concerning QA. However, the establishment of a legal and fully operational national QA

⁵² <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/about/Register-report.pdf> [1 August 2007]

⁵³ The Law 3374/2005 opt. cit

⁵⁴ The Lithuanian Higher Education System Development Plan for 2006–2010, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, Official Publication „*Valstybės Žinios*“, 2006, Nr. 39-1394

⁵⁵ <http://www.jp.coe.int/CEAD/JP/Default.asp?ProgrammeID=86> [17 August 2007]

⁵⁶ <http://www.sus.ba/qa/activities.htm> [17 August 2007]

system in Bosnia-Herzegovina is possible only when the Law on Higher Education is not only adopted but also implemented.

The three countries in the study undertook dissemination of information of European standards and guidelines to higher education institutions and the general public. In Lithuania, the European standards and guidelines have been translated into the national language and introduced to the higher education institutions. In Greece, the HQAA has organized seminars for countries' higher education institutions where the President of ENQA has addressed the European standards and guidelines in a speech. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the information on QA in higher education has been disseminated to the public through various means such as printed media, brochures, the Internet etc. All this contributes to a better understanding of the quality at the social level and makes the public aware of the importance of QA.

Further contributions and challenges

A significant development in the QA arena was made by a major EUA project "Quality Culture in European Universities"⁵⁷ that involved no less than 134 higher education institutions grouped in eighteen networks, and which ran from 2002 to 2006, and was funded by the EC. It was also recognised as an important response to the Prague Communiqué call for collaboration and dissemination of best practice between higher education institutions. The Bologna Process Stocktaking Report 2007 reported there are no countries which would not make a minimum contribution towards implementation of the European standards and guidelines.⁵⁸ However, as the study of Greece, Lithuania and Bosnia-Herzegovina showed, these countries still admit that in addition to the standards and guidelines for QA, a common understanding of genuine quality *per se* and quality culture in European higher education institutions is needed. Therefore, it could be argued that precisely this matter should be afforded priority before developing the European standards and guidelines, as the first forms the background for the latter. Furthermore, another question rises concerning the European standards and guidelines: What is the meaning of this consolidated term? Is there a common European framework of the higher education standards and guidelines? On the one hand, the EHEA refers to consolidated higher education; on the other, the term is new and it does not have any deep traditions.

⁵⁷ http://www.eua.be/fileadmin/user_upload/files/EUA1_documents/Quality_Culture_2002_2003.1150459570109.pdf [17 August 2007]

⁵⁸ Bologna Process Stocktaking Report 2007, op. cit., p. 19

5.2.2. Development of external quality assurance system

The internal evaluation is the corner stone of QA in higher education. Therefore, the external evaluation⁵⁹ is the condition of the credibility of the results of the internal evaluation. Proper external evaluation is achieved with the assistance of the national QA bodies following the European standards and guidelines. Consequently, external QA is compulsory in most signatory countries including Greece and Lithuania. Bosnia-Herzegovina does not provide any central regulations, but this does not mean the individual institutions do not establish their own regulations and comply entirely with those of the ENQA. In fact, since the Law on Higher Education in Bosnia-Herzegovina was adopted on 30 July, 2007, the establishment and implementation of national QA system has priority.

In Lithuania, a fully functioning QA system for all higher education is in operation at the national level. The evaluation of programmes or institutions includes internal assessment, external review and publication of results. The CQAHE performs external evaluation of higher education study programmes, public and non-public established and establishment-seeking higher education institutions as well as QA of R&D. External review is performed on the basis of a self-assessment report of the higher education institution and a site visit of the external evaluation team from the CQAHE. Moreover, the evaluation of some universities by such organizations as EUA has also been experienced. Similar procedures for external evaluation are conducted and operate in Greek HQAA, where activities include evaluation of study programmes, institutions and organizational audit. Both countries determine clearly periodical external QA as recommended by the ENQA. In Greece the external evaluation process is takes place every four years while Lithuanian quality evaluation is conducted once every eight years and every four years for newly-established higher education institutions. ENQA is recommending that the procedure is repeated at least once every five years and that results are available publicly. The QA bodies in Lithuanian and Greece already make the reports publicly available.

Further contributions and challenges

External QA or accreditation of higher education institutions and study programmes makes a vital background for the country's higher education system as precondition for sound and qualitative higher education. The European standards and guidelines give the right input for QA agencies external evaluation but it has no legal regulations. Concerning the legal rights and functions of the

⁵⁹ External evaluation (Synonym – External review): the process whereby a specialized external body collects data, information and evidence about an institution or a programme, in order to make a statement about its quality. External evaluation is normally carried out by a team of external experts, peers or inspectors

QA agencies the practice in Lithuania is regulated by several Ministerial decrees.⁶⁰ In Greece and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the legislative justification for the QA procedures requires more improvements. Proper legislation would secure effective administration of the QA procedures thus regulating the methods of external QA and not leaving higher education institutions partially free to devise their own QA measures.

The Bologna Process Stocktaking Report 2007⁶¹ indicates a general trend in cooperation and support for external QA system in participating countries. Consequently, it would be useful for Greece, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Lithuania to establish contracts with other countries concerning furthering and sharing experiences in external QA. The Report indicates ENQA as the right body to help countries to collaborate further. However, it may be discussed whether it is possible to achieve good results at an international level while it remains unclear what may be achieved domestically.

5.2.3. Student participation

In the Bergen Ministerial meeting in 2005 the Ministers recognized the explicit need to involve students in the process of QA. Consequently, nearly all the Bologna Process countries that are the members of the EU included student representatives in the governance of the national bodies of QA. Greece and Lithuania followed this trend. In Greece, student participation in the HQAA is established and ensured legally⁶² giving two of the fifteen places to students' representatives from universities and technological education institutions. In the Lithuanian CQAHE, the participation of students is excluded as there is no governing board *per se*. This notwithstanding, student participation is legally regulated and is compulsory in counselling boards of the CQAHE: the Experts' Council for Quality in Higher Education and the Experts' Council for Assessment of Research and Higher Education Institutions.

General students' participation in QA is ensured during internal evaluation procedures in both Greece and Lithuania. Students participate in higher education institutions self-evaluation group preparatory procedures, and are invited to respond to the questionnaires or other internal QA functions. Regarding the external evaluation, the CQAHE in Lithuania started to involve students as peer teams for external evaluation of higher education institutions and/or study programmes in 2006.

⁶⁰ Minister's Decree on the Rules of the Assessment of Research and Higher Education Institutions, Official Publication „Valstybės Žinios“, 2001, Nr.57-2066; Minister's Decree on Quality Assessment with Non-university Higher Education Institutions, Official Publication „Valstybės Žinios“, 2004, Nr.168-6190; Minister's Decree on the Regulations on Higher Education Study Programmes' Accreditation, Official Publication „Valstybės Žinios“, 2004, Nr. 175-6515, Official Publication „Valstybės Žinios“, 2005, Nr. 123-4403

⁶¹ Bologna Process Stocktaking Report 2007, op. cit., p. 22

⁶² Law 3443/2006 enacting Local Youth's Councils and their participation in the Local Governance in Greece

Bosnia-Herzegovina students' participation is mainly recorded in internal QA processes that are formed by several universities of the Republic. This is mainly influenced by long absence of state-level legislation. However, the newly adopted Bosnia-Herzegovina Law on Higher Education declares the right⁶³ for students to participate in rating on the quality of higher education.

Further contributions and challenges

Despite the improved rights of students to participate in QA procedures, students see a need to further increase their role in the future. The national student unions, including those of Lithuania and Bosnia-Herzegovina reported the following list⁶⁴ of elements that need most changes and improvements as they have most obstacles for genuine QA system: Lack of a QA system; more financial and human resources for the national QA bodies and for external reviews; more transparency concerning procedures; more attention to study conditions, student workload and teaching in the QA processes; clearer consequences connected to evaluations; public justification of follow-up of both internal as external QA what is really happening and to justify why something is not happening etc. The countries welcome such initiatives and intend to help developing the social dimension of the EHEA. However, the involvement of students in QA procedures requires many more attempts than one might initially realise. This refers to increased bottom-up strategy and therefore much more effective decision-implementation where the academic level might affect the political level. Without such strategy the achieved goals would be rather theoretical and superficial.

Finally, who else, if not students, could raise awareness of the importance of the quality element in higher education? Students are one of the most important outputs of the higher education institutions and, being a conscious and well-educated part of the society must be the main respondents to the questions arising concerning the QA in higher education.

5.2.4. International participation

The involvement of experts' panels with foreign experts' representatives in the assessment of Lithuanian higher education study programmes has been exercised since 2002. Study programmes such as law, medicine, odontology, sociology, educology, management and business administration, public administration and public health have been evaluated since 2002. In 2006, further programmes of social work, and computer science were included in the evaluation process. Future plans for

⁶³ http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/draft-framework-law-high-educ-Bosnia-Herzegovina-enl-t04.pdf [22 May 2007]

⁶⁴ ESIB's Bologna Process Committee, eds., *The Black Book of the Bologna Process*, the National Unions of Students in Europe, Bergen, 2005, available at: http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/02-ESIB/0505_ESIB_blackbook.pdf [1 May 2007]

composing peer review teams are being prepared. Greece in turn, exercises involvement of foreign experts such as top-rank professors or distinguished researchers at corresponding foreign higher education institutions or research institutes into the HQAA External Evaluation Committee. The desire to have at least one foreign expert in the evaluation process is legally regulated.

Many national bodies of QA of the EU countries are the members of international QA networks. The ENQA has already been mentioned. In addition, there are several other regional and international QA agencies.⁶⁵ Lithuania holds a position in the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) as well as in the Network of Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEEN). The activities exercised by the networks involve collecting and circulating the information on current and developing theory and practice in assessment, improvement and maintenance of quality in higher education. As regards Bosnia-Herzegovina and Greece, neither of these countries is a member of any other international or regional QA network.

Further contributions and challenges

Due to interconnection between Bologna Process priority action lines and the still early stage of the development of the QA agencies external review, international participation cannot show high results yet. However, Greece and Lithuania further improve the ways of international participation in QA. International participation is a condition for guaranteeing international acceptance, openness and transparency of QA processes in all countries. Therefore, international cooperation and the international dimension of external review should be further promoted by such consolidated bodies as ENQA, EUA and the EC.

Like the EU strongly encourages regional cooperation in Balkan region through activities promoting democratization, non-discrimination and reconciliation, regional and international QA, networks are another big contribution to the improvement of QA processes and sharing of best practices in higher education. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania are members of the CEEN, and therefore Bosnia-Herzegovina as well as Greece could join the initiative and contribute further to QA in higher education and international participation.

Another matter, however, is the lack of coordination and harmonisation in reports of the Bologna Process (e.g. Stocktaking Report 2007, Eurydice's Focus on the Structure of Higher Education in Europe 2006/2007, National Reports). As an example we should mention one of the

⁶⁵ The Nordic Quality Assurance Network in Higher Education (NOQA); The Network of German-speaking-countries, Germany, Austria and Switzerland, (D-A-CH); The Joint Quality Indicative (JQI); The European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA)

elements of the Bologna Process priority action lines – the peer review.⁶⁶ Namely, the Eurydice reported that Greece is referred to be the subject to peer review while Lithuania still plans to start it in the beginning of 2008. On the contrary, the National Reports referred to Greece and Lithuania as having established the peer review already. As a result, such misleading practice harms the overall success of the higher education reforms and does not lead to transparency and reliability.

5.3. Recognition of degrees and study periods

The main European tools that have been developed to help in the process of curriculum reform and recognition of prior learning are the diploma supplement, the ECTS, the three-cycle structure and, recently, the NQF. One of the key aspects in the Bologna Process is the unquestioned inter-relation of the different priority action lines. Both the diploma supplement and the ECTS are inseparable and lead to improvement of student-centred systems, student mobility, transparency, understanding of acquired knowledge, development of international programmes. Furthermore, the national implementation of the principles of the LRC complements the above-mentioned tools and further improves recognition of degrees and study periods.

5.3.1. Implementation of diploma supplement

Despite the description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed, the diploma supplement⁶⁷ provides additional information concerning the national higher education system so that the qualification is understood in relation to its national context of education.

Good progress in implementation of the diploma supplement in Europe could be reported. Greece, Lithuania and thirty other countries could be described as leading countries in this field. The diploma supplement in Lithuania was legally introduced in 2004, and since 2006 is delivered automatically free-of-charge in English and Lithuanian languages to all higher education institution graduates. In Greece, the law⁶⁸ regulating QA in higher education, the establishment of ECTS and diploma supplement states that students graduating in the academic year 2006/2007 will receive the diploma supplement issued in both Greek and English languages, free-of-charge.

The diploma supplement corresponds fully the EU/CoE/UNESCO diploma supplement format in all three countries. However, in Bosnia-Herzegovina there has not been an extensive use of

⁶⁶ Peer review – assessment procedure carried out by peer external experts

⁶⁷ Diploma supplement is a document attached to a HE diploma, which aims to improve international transparency and facilitate academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates, etc.)

⁶⁸ The Law 3374/ 2005 op. cit

the diploma supplement. The first reason for this is based on the fact that the majority of higher education institutions have only started to implement the new study programmes in the academic year 2005/2006. However, the diploma supplement is currently issued in some universities and faculties in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian and English languages, although only when requested by students, and mostly at a fee. Changes for unified diploma supplement issuance are planned for 2008. Secondly, only now when the Law on Higher Education in Bosnia-Herzegovina is awaiting implementation, the issuance of the diploma supplement together with diploma will be obligatory in each accredited higher education institution.

Further contributions and challenges

The diploma supplement first was designed in 1998. Since then many things have happened. Firstly, the QA that was a rare phenomenon has become a norm, and the status of higher education institutions became important. Secondly, with the introduction of ECTS, the years of study are not the index. Thirdly, transnational and borderless education has emerged, and both credits and qualifications started to be linked with learning outcomes. Also, NQFs are being developed in the individual countries. Therefore constant modification and readjustment of the diploma supplement is vital for further development and promotion of the EHEA.

Furthermore, implementation of the diploma supplement has been well under way since 2005 in most of the countries. The new implementers are mostly expected to have several technical difficulties linked to the production of the diploma supplement student records.⁶⁹ The introduction of the diploma supplement proved to be costly in administrative terms, and furthermore, because there is no common understanding about the specific requirements and meaning of learning outcomes in EHEA, employers are not using the diploma supplement appropriately. The lawful implementation does not guarantee practical assimilation and therefore there is a big need to improve communication between higher education institutions and labour market in many countries, including Greece, Lithuania and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

5.3.2. National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention

In the London Ministerial meeting the declaration stated: “Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal

⁶⁹ This was the case in Poland, Finland and it might be the case for Greece and Bosnia-Herzegovina

and informal learning, are essential components of the EHEA, both internally and in a global context.”⁷⁰

At the same time, Ministers of higher education were pleased that 38 countries had already ratified the LRC, adopted appropriate legislation and applied it in practice, so that the following five main principles should be fulfilled:

- Applicants have a right to fair assessment
- There is recognition if no substantial differences can be proven
- In case of negative decisions the competent recognition authority demonstrates the existence of (a) substantial difference(s)
- The country ensures that information on its institutions and their programmes is provided
- An ENIC has been established.

The Division for Qualifications Assessment of the CQAHE, a fully operational Lithuanian ENIC/NARIC equivalent, is responsible for, and fulfils the above-mentioned principles of the LRC. Furthermore, the Division exchanges information with the world ENIC/NARIC Centres as well as with any other higher education institutions or institutions responsible for assessment and recognition of diplomas.

As far as Bosnia-Herzegovina is concerned, since the ratification of the LRC in 2004, several legislative reform initiatives in higher education were launched including the drafting of a state level Law on Higher Education. Despite the progress achieved, the recognition of degrees and study periods is mainly based on the old-fashioned principles of nostrification⁷¹ and specific procedures are not regulated by any law. The above-mentioned principles of the LRC are neither implemented nor fulfilled, and thus the recognition practice is not in full compliance with the LRC even if it is signed. However, due to the final adoption of the new state level Law on Higher Education, Bosnian diplomas will now be recognized within the EHEA and potentially worldwide. For the time being, within the Education Department of the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the Unit for Collecting and Providing ENIC/NARIC information has been formed and the staff has been appointed and trained. In accordance with the new Law on Higher Education, the department is to grow to the fully

⁷⁰ <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/londonbologna/uploads/documents/LondonCommuniquefinalwithLondonlogo.pdf> [22 May 2007]

⁷¹ Nostrification was the procedure undertaken in recognition of foreign diplomas throughout Europe prior to introduction of the current procedure of recognition. Nostrification refers to comparing the higher education diploma of the country of origin with that of the host country and searching for similarities in curriculum. Should there be discovered any differences, the candidate must undertake exams to obtain the same/similar qualification in the host country. Whereas in recognition there is no such comparison, only an identification of the level of diploma within the higher education system in the country of origin, and no further exams

operational Bosnian ENIC/NARIC – the Centre for Information, Recognition and Quality Assessment in Higher Education (CIRQA).

As distinct from LRC signatories, the ministers urged the remaining countries, including Greece, to sign and ratify the LRC as a matter of priority. Today, we cannot know when Greece will sign and ratify the LRC. However, in Greece most of the LRC principles are implemented through the law that has established and is regulating the Agency for Degree Recognition (DOATAP),⁷² a fully operational Greek ENIC/NARIC.

Furthermore, Lithuania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Greece, together with the rest of the signatory countries, have produced National Action Plans for improving recognition practice. Such plans have been prepared for the first time in Bologna Process history and thus were subject to criticism in reporting a *status quo* in recognition rather than procedures in recognition. However, using the best and not-so-good practices according to the National Action Plans, improvements should be made in the future.

Further contributions and challenges

Despite the voluntary nature of the Bologna Process, the LRC is known as the only legally-binding instrument that applies to the higher education reform thus obliging participatory countries to ratify and comply with the Convention. Typically, the mechanism for proper implementation of the principles of the LRC covers ENIC/NARIC recommendations regarding qualifications recognition, and higher education institutions' autonomous decision that is respecting and following the LRC. As a result, even if the higher education institutions are autonomous, they have to obey the law and therefore the LRC principles are transported into national laws.

Another important aspect is differentiation of the recognition practices in various countries caused by confusion of the terminology, different interpretation and lack of information on the principles of the LRC. These are few obstacles that do not secure full embodiment of the spirit of the Convention and as an example we should bear in mind above-mentioned Bosnian case.

Moreover, the learning outcomes and workload should be taken for granted here. The assessment and recognition procedures are designed to focus and evaluate students' competences, knowledge and understanding but not curriculum details. The latter leads to the out-of-date procedure of nostrification within the framework of higher education systems in the country of origin. However, according to the practice of the Lithuanian ENIC/NARIC, the evaluation decision and the way of procedure mainly depends on the previous evaluation and recognition practice of qualification by a particular country. Namely, the amount of determined substantial differences of the

⁷² The Law 3328/2005

qualifications' country of origin is the index. Due to such experiences it is sometimes unavoidable to use a strict comparison thus ignoring the LRC. Despite good progress in implementation of the principles of the LRC and declared success in recognition, rough practices in procedures of recognition are to be found not only in new signatories of the LRC (Bosnia-Herzegovina) but also in the former signatories (Lithuania).

5.3.3. Implementation of the European Credit Transfer System

The ECTS⁷³ is a credit transfer and accumulation system and it is at the heart of the reforms taking place in the European higher education institutions. It has been used for more than fifteen years for the purpose of credit transfer of mobile students. With the Bologna Declaration it became more widely known and was extended. One should bear in mind the link of the ECTS with learning outcomes that embrace competences expressed through students' knowledge, understanding as well as completion of the learning process regardless of its length. The ECTS can be obtained only after completion of work required and assessment of learning outcomes achieved. Therefore, the typical calculation of the credits in the EHEA is the following: the credits in the first-cycle Bachelor degree vary from 180 to 240 ECTS (2–3 years of study and normally 60 accumulative ECTS per year); second-cycle Master's degree varies from 90 to 120 ECTS (with a minimum of 60 ECTS and 1–2 years of study); the third-cycle Doctoral degree has no ECTS range given. Greece, Lithuania and Bosnia-Herzegovina comply with the ECTS calculation and fit into the norm.

However, if we look closer to the particularities of the implementation of the ECTS we realize that not every country applies the system of credit transfer and accumulation, though it is designed for both. Lithuania still today operates its own national credit system⁷⁴ though it is fully compatible with the ECTS which is mainly used as a transfer system (not accumulation) for student exchange purposes. In addition, according to the Rectors' Conference of Lithuanian Universities, the Ministry of Education is preparing the amendments to the Law on Higher Education to fully establish the ECTS by the end of 2007.

Bosnia-Herzegovina has started to implement the ECTS together with the curriculum reform. The establishment of new modern single-semester subject courses aims at harmonizing the curriculum structure with the Bologna Process as well as a fully compatible credit accumulation system. The transfer component is lagging behind as a matter of low students' mobility level, restricted visa regimes, and poor social and economic status. Despite the shortcomings, a strong

⁷³ A student-centered system based on the student workload required to achieve the objectives of a programme – objectives increasingly specified in terms of learning outcomes and competences to be acquired

⁷⁴ 1 national Lithuanian credit equals to 1,5 ECTS

impulse for full implementation of the ECTS in Bosnia-Herzegovina is given through various EU programmes⁷⁵ in collaboration with foreign universities. Furthermore, there has been a great achievement in staff training and gaining know-how in Bosnia-Herzegovina universities. The country is also planning to abolish its existing credit system and to move solely into the ECTS in the academic year 2009/2010.

The Greek credit system is in full compliance with the ECTS and it is established legally.⁷⁶ All universities had to implement the ECTS fully from academic year 2006/2007 and hence the result will be seen in the coming months. The technological education institutions have been operating the ECTS system since 2004. However, another credit system that is operating according to the teaching hours rather than the workload could be still found in Greece, but it is not compatible with the ECTS and thus not officially used.

Further contributions and challenges

Regarding the introduction of the ECTS, at first sight it seems that implementation of the system is very advanced. Deeper analysis of Process' countries revealed the problem⁷⁷ of incorrect use of ECTS thus creating an injustice for students. New programmes workload is simply reallocated and former credits are only renamed. The professors still embrace the teaching-based system and thus undermine that based on learning. In this way competition among the academics emerges: whose course covers the largest amount of the ECTS and secures wider popularity at the university? This does not reflect the primary aim of the ECTS maintaining learning outcomes in student-centred higher education system. It also negatively affects educational quality.

Another serious challenge observed by the EUA Trends V Report⁷⁸ encompasses the final assessment of students. The majority of the higher education institutions including those in Greece, Lithuania and Bosnia-Herzegovina continue to rely on traditional end-of-year examinations to assess student knowledge. From arguments above, one should bear in mind the assessment of learning outcomes is required for credits to be awarded, thus not necessarily the examinations. Therefore, the question remains concerning how profoundly programmes have been restructured when implementing ECTS.

⁷⁵ Project: Introduction of the ECTS at Universities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Spark/EU, 2006, available at: <http://www.spark-online.org/content/view/34/50/> [13 August 2007]

⁷⁶ Law 3374/2005 op. cit

⁷⁷ There appears a danger in relying that one ECTS credit equals another ECTS credit. Further problems arise while students' workload is not measures appropriately, credits are not allocated properly and not all learning activities are taken into account for the workload

⁷⁸ Crosier, D., Purser, L., Smidt, H., *Trends V: Universities Shaping the European Higher Education Area*, EUA publications, Brussels, 2007, p. 39

5.4. Life-long learning

The extent of current economic and social change, the rapid transition to a knowledge-based society and demographic pressures resulting from an ageing population in Europe, all are challenges which demand a new approach to education and training within the framework of life-long learning.⁷⁹ Life-long learning has been given a high priority in the Lisbon Agenda, contributing to a competitive knowledge-based economy. Therefore all kinds of abilities, interests, knowledge and qualifications from the childhood years to retirement as well as various forms of learning⁸⁰ have to be taken into consideration. As a matter of fact, recognition of prior learning in order to develop a fully competitive EHEA is vital in the higher education reform process, though support of the tool is at an early stage as yet.

5.4.1. Recognition of prior learning

In the Greek case the recognition of prior learning is rather limited within the framework of formal educational system and is focused on the knowledge obtained during the period of study in the recognized higher education institutions. Implementation of recognition of non-formal and informal learning is in a pilot phase⁸¹ together with an emphasis on the possible translation of experimental knowledge into academic credits – ECTS.

Lithuania, on the other hand, has progressed in the field of recognition of prior learning when in March 2004 “The Life-long Learning Strategy”⁸² was approved by both the Ministry of Education and Science and Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The main objectives set out in the Strategy are to ensure inter-relation of general and special education, vocational training and higher education. Furthermore, there are already procedures that determine higher education institutions’ rights and obligations to recognize study periods that give access to studies and allow the transfer of accumulated credits. Continuous training is also supported through evening and distant learning including non-formal courses organized by the higher education institutions. However, full implementation of the recognition of non-formal and informal prior learning is intended to be included in the future.

⁷⁹ Life-long Learning: all learning activities undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence, within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective

⁸⁰ Formal learning – such as a degree course followed at university; non-formal learning – such as vocational skills acquired at the workplace; and informal learning – such as inter-generational learning, e.g.: where parents learn to use information and communication technologies through their children, or learning how to play an instrument together with friends

⁸¹ Financed within the framework of the Leonardo Da Vinci Programme

⁸² Financed by the EU Phare Programme; available at:

http://www.phare.lt/lt/?p=projects&project_id=5&prjcat_id=9&catsub_id=12 [16 August 2007]

The life-long learning in some faculties in Bosnia-Herzegovina has existed for the last 40 years, and was called “permanent education” encompassing seminars, courses, practice sessions providing additional knowledge and skills. However, all the mentioned activities did not count for any workload expressed by credits, but only issued the appropriate certificate. Therefore, the intention now is to link the courses to the ECTS in order to allow recognition of subjects in some of the study cycles, and to improve recognition of prior learning. Moreover, Bosnia-Herzegovina is participating in various international conferences and regional projects⁸³ concerning the implementation and development of life-long learning and recognition of prior learning. After the recent adoption of the Higher Education Law in Bosnia-Herzegovina the next major step will lead to the establishment of the Department for Life-long Learning and Adult Education as well as the Andragogy Centre by the end of 2007. This would help to strengthen recognition of prior learning, develop continuous adult upbringing and life-long learning.

Further contributions and challenges

In summary, the practice of recognising prior learning is still at a very early stage in the three countries. Furthermore, from the National Reports the opinion emerged that there was no common understanding of recognition of prior learning, and in many cases the recognition of qualification achieved in other institutions was indicated. This simply ignored the recognition of elements of non-formal and informal learning and could not give a proper evaluation of prior learning.

According to the latest Bologna Process seminar “New Challenges in Recognition: Recognition of Prior Learning and Recognition of European Degrees Outside”⁸⁴ held in Riga, 2007, creation of national life-long learning systems that would include the new style⁸⁵ qualification frameworks should also include facility system for Accreditation for Prior Learning and Accreditation for Prior Experiential Learning (APL/APEL). Such a move would secure solid development of the knowledge-based society and broaden the well-balanced life-long learning where recognition of prior learning would give the access to higher education. Here *inter alia*, the links between prior learning and the development of a NQF and ECTS are important. Therefore the

⁸³ International Conference on Life-long Learning and Adult Education – Key Factors for the Economic and Social Recovery in Southeast Europe, organized by the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Institute for International Cooperation of the German Union of Higher Public Schools (IZZ/DVV), regional Office in Sofia and the Office in Sarajevo, and the OSCE Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina, September 2006, Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina; A Twinning Light Project for Bosnia-Herzegovina with overall objective to prepare Bosnia-Herzegovina institutions for EU organized Community Programmes to the Western Balkan countries: EU Action Programme in the Field of Life-long Learning (2007-2013) and Youth in Action (2007-2013). The project has started in November 2006 and will last for 10 months

⁸⁴ http://www.aic.lv/ace/ace_disk/2005_07/sem05_07/se_riga/index.htm [14 August 2007]

⁸⁵ Non-formal learning and informal learning

ENIC/NARIC Networks could assist in spreading information about APL/APEL and similar systems in various countries in Europe and worldwide.

5.5. Joint degrees

According to the terms of the Lisbon Convention Committee Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees⁸⁶ adopted on 9th June 2004, a joint degree is intended to be issued jointly by at least two or more higher education institutions, or jointly by one or more higher education institutions and other awarding bodies on the basis of a study programme developed and/or provided jointly by the higher education institutions. Therefore the joint degree, in the same way as ECTS and the diploma supplement, is meant to play a key part in developing the EHEA.

5.5.1. Establishment and recognition of joint degrees

Joint degrees were a new priority action line in the Ministerial Summit in Bergen in 2005. Almost all the countries including Greece, Lithuania and Bosnia-Herzegovina, state there are no obstacles in legislation or other documents that would prevent establishment or recognition for higher education institutions to issue joint degrees. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, however, the joint degrees are regulated separately in Republika Srpska and few other cantons envisaging organization of the study programmes and describing the procedure of issuance of joint diploma and diploma supplement. Cooperation with several European states as well as with the United States of America is encouraged. In Lithuania, several amendments were made to the Higher Education Law in July, 2005, and to the Order of the Ministry on the General Requirements for the Joint Degrees in January, 2006. The legal basis was thus established to award joint degrees. Furthermore, in Lithuania joint degrees are issued only in exceptional cases when the study programme that leads to the degree is carried out together with one or more foreign higher education institutions. In Greece, the joint degrees have been allowed between Hellenic and foreign higher education institutions since 2005.⁸⁷

Taking into consideration the cycles of the studies, one should bear in mind several differences in the three countries. For example, in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Lithuania the joint degrees are allowed to be issued in both undergraduate and postgraduate studies. The largest number of current joint programmes is founded at the postgraduate level. As regards Greece, the joint programmes were offered solely in the second cycle although the changes have been made and

⁸⁶ http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/EN/Other/Lisbon_Rec-doc/040609_Recommendation_joint_degrees.pdf [6 September 2007]

⁸⁷ The Law 3404/2005; Article 23 for Joint Postgraduate Study Programmes and Joint Doctorates, which allows the use of a language other than Hellenic in study programmes

progress towards joint doctorate degrees was legalized.⁸⁸ This has the intention of facilitating participation of the Greek higher education institutions in the Erasmus Mundus Programme.⁸⁹

Further contributions and challenges

As QA is one of the most important elements in the growing EHEA, the joint degrees quality has to be assured too as joint programmes are now playing a significant role in constructing the EHEA. Therefore institutions should be strongly supported and be given further opportunities to work together and learn from each other. Taking into consideration those countries which are not EU members although signatories of the Bologna process (such as the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina), the joint degrees assist in securing recognition of their national study programmes. Also, the appropriate employment is facilitated if such qualifications are accredited by an institution recognized in the EU.

Despite the improvements in joint programmes and achievements in recognition of the qualifications, there are still several obstacles to the evaluation and recognition of degrees. The Hague Convention 1961⁹⁰ has determined a specific way to facilitate the recognition of diplomas obtained in foreign countries while simply marking the diplomas by an imprint of the Apostille.⁹¹ Despite the ambitious objectives of the Convention, the practice witnesses rather rough experience in following field: the possibility to obtain Apostille for the joint degree is rather confusing as more than one country is participating in the process and neither is superior in the authorisation of the degree certificate. Therefore, many improvements are required to be made not only in practice in the recognition of joint degrees but also in legislation and QA in the vital processes of establishing the EHEA.

⁸⁸ The Law 3404/2005 op. cit

⁸⁹ The Erasmus Mundus programme is a cooperation and mobility programme in the field of higher education which promotes the EU as a centre of excellence in learning around the world. It supports European top-quality Masters Courses and enhances the visibility and attractiveness of EHEA in third countries. It also provides EU-funded scholarships for third country nationals participating in these Masters Courses, as well as scholarships for EU-nationals studying at Partner universities throughout the world

⁹⁰ http://www.hcch.net/index_en.php?act=conventions.pdf&cid=41 [6 September, 2007]

⁹¹ The *Hague Convention of 5 October 1961 Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents* (Hague Apostille Convention) facilitates the circulation of public documents executed in one State party to the Convention and to be produced in another State party to the Convention. It does so by replacing the cumbersome and often costly formalities of a full legalisation process with the mere issuance of an Apostille (also called Apostille Certificate or Certificate)

6. Summary and Conclusions

This paper has considered the progress of the Bologna Process in three contrasting countries. It must be expected that the different historical, cultural and social characteristics of each nation would result in development along different paths, therefore the Bologna Declaration clearly needed to take such characteristics into account. The study of the three countries exemplifies this situation.

The original goal was for the EHEA to be established by 2010 where the main objective can be summarised as greater mobility of students and academics in higher education with the aim of increased competitiveness in a period of strong globalisation. This would be brought about through inter-institutional cooperation, integrated training and research programmes and quality assurance. Lifelong learning and the further development of the knowledge-based society – a main theme in the Lisbon agenda – were prominent topics in debate.

While the three case studies have shown broad variation in the problems of adapting to the requirements of the Bologna Process, this cannot be considered as unique or an exception to the rule. The London communiqué has already hinted that the targets designed to be achieved by 2010 may be unrealistic. It is interesting to note that the Communiqué did not specify any new date for the goals to be achieved. Rather, the terminology of “2010 and beyond” indicated a degree of uncertainty. Nevertheless, 2010 stands as an important milestone in the process of establishing the EHEA. Rather than deferment of the previously defined goals, it is expected that new goals will be set. This will probably be determined in the final Communiqué before 2010 to be delivered at the Ministerial meeting in Leuven in 2009.

One apparent cause for the present situation is the not the national characteristics alone, but the contrasting approaches to the Bologna Process. As with any voluntary process, adoption of ideas and processes for the achievement of a jointly declared goal will vary. Greece is a case in point where it has been officially stated that the procedures for recognition of foreign qualifications is in compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention. However, this convention has been neither signed nor ratified by the Greek parliament.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina a draft law on higher education was drawn up in 2003 but not ratified until 2007. Nevertheless, funding of higher education continues to be a matter of controversy whereby different systems are employed in the Federation and Republika Srpska.

In Lithuania, new legislation regarding the degree system has been introduced to meet the requirements of the Bologna Process but is in apparent contradiction with existing laws which have

not been repealed or merged with the new legislation. The result has been a divergence in the comparative values of university-level and college-level bachelor degrees.

These examples illustrate a lack of coordination, which is not necessarily the result of a lack of will and the failure to adapt to a Process where shared values have not been sufficiently defined or their international significance emphasised. National reports frequently emphasise the nation's compliance with the Process requirements. In reality however, changes in the national systems of higher education are often legislative but such legislation is not effectively implemented.

The latter statement may be considered to be the most important conclusion of this study. While voluntary implementation of joint declarations remains the basis of EU legislation, the path towards the EHEA clearly requires stronger national adherence, more real and substantial reform situation reporting to the prescribed process, in order to achieve the goal of such declarations. No signatory to the Bologna Declaration would deny loyalty to the principle, but the degree to which implementation has been effectively put into practice can only be measured through a system of effective reporting. Whether the present system of country reports has been efficient in this respect, is something which should be discussed. Moreover, the basis for further research could appear from increasingly frequent assumptions about the Bologna Process as a globalization tool to standardize the higher education. The spread of neo-liberal ideas in higher education system, when it is becoming independent, market-oriented or even profit seeking is also neither scientifically proved nor denied as yet.

However, we should not deny the obvious improvements and developments of the higher education reforms in Europe. The implementation of the goals to make the EHEA more compatible, competitive and more attractive for Europe and rest of the world's students and scholars is under way. Reform was, and will be, crucial if Europe is to match the level of the best performing systems in the world, notably the United States and Asia. There is always room for improvement.

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8. Appendixes

APPENDIX 1. The Bologna Declaration, 1999

THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

The Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999

Joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education

The European process, thanks to the extraordinary achievements of the last few years, has become an increasingly concrete and relevant reality for the Union and its citizens. Enlargement prospects together with deepening relations with other European countries provide even wider dimensions to that reality. Meanwhile, we are witnessing a growing awareness in large parts of the political and academic world and in public opinion of the need to establish a more complete and far-reaching Europe, in particular building upon and strengthening its intellectual, cultural, social and scientific and technological dimensions.

A Europe of Knowledge is now widely recognised as an irreplaceable factor for social and human growth and as an indispensable component to consolidate and enrich the European citizenship, capable of giving its citizens the necessary competences to face the challenges of the new millennium, together with an awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural space.

The importance of education and educational co-operation in the development and strengthening of stable, peaceful and democratic societies is universally acknowledged as paramount, the more so in view of the situation in South East Europe.

The Sorbonne declaration of 25th of May 1998, which was underpinned by these considerations, stressed the Universities' central role in developing European cultural dimensions. It emphasised the creation of the European area of higher education as a key way to promote citizens' mobility and employability and the Continent's overall development.

Several European countries have accepted the invitation to commit themselves to achieving the objectives set out in the declaration, by signing it or expressing their agreement in principle. The direction taken by several higher education reforms launched in the meantime in Europe has proved many Governments' determination to act.

European higher education institutions, for their part, have accepted the challenge and taken up a main role in constructing the European area of higher education, also in the wake of the fundamental principles laid down in the Bologna Magna Charta Universitatum of 1988. This is of the highest importance, given that Universities' independence and autonomy ensure that higher education and research systems continuously adapt to changing needs, society's demands and advances in scientific knowledge.

The course has been set in the right direction and with meaningful purpose. The achievement of greater compatibility and comparability of the systems of higher education nevertheless requires continual momentum in order to be fully accomplished. We need to support it through promoting concrete measures to achieve tangible forward steps. The 18th June meeting saw participation by authoritative experts and scholars from all our countries and provides us with very useful suggestions on the initiatives to be taken.

We must in particular look at the objective of increasing the international competitiveness of the European system of higher education. The vitality and efficiency of any civilisation can be measured by the appeal that its culture has for other countries. We need to ensure that the European higher education system acquires a world-wide degree of attraction equal to our extraordinary cultural and scientific traditions.

While affirming our support to the general principles laid down in the Sorbonne declaration, we engage in co-ordinating our policies to reach in the short term, and in any case within the first decade of the third millennium, the following objectives, which we consider to be of primary relevance in order to establish the European area of higher education and to promote the European system of higher education world-wide:

Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, also through the implementation of the Diploma Supplement, in order to promote European citizens employability and the international competitiveness of the European higher education system

Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate. Access to the second cycle shall require successful completion of first cycle studies, lasting a minimum of three years. The degree awarded after the first cycle shall also be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification. The second cycle should lead to the master and/or doctorate degree as in many European countries.

Establishment of a system of credits – such as in the ECTS system – as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility. Credits could also be acquired in non-higher education contexts, including lifelong learning, provided they are recognised by receiving Universities concerned.

Promotion of mobility by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement with particular attention to:

- for students, access to study and training opportunities and to related services
- for teachers, researchers and administrative staff, recognition and valorisation of periods spent in a European context researching, teaching and training, without prejudicing their statutory rights.

Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies. Promotion of the necessary European dimensions in higher education, particularly with regards to curricular development, inter-institutional co-operation, mobility schemes and integrated programmes of study, training and research.

We hereby undertake to attain these objectives - within the framework of our institutional competences and taking full respect of the diversity of cultures, languages, national education systems and of University autonomy – to consolidate the European area of higher education. To that end, we will pursue the ways of intergovernmental co-operation, together with those of non governmental European organisations with competence on higher education. We expect Universities again to respond promptly and positively and to contribute actively to the success of our endeavour.

Convinced that the establishment of the European area of higher education requires constant support, supervision and adaptation to the continuously evolving needs, we decide to meet again within two years in order to assess the progress achieved and the new steps to be taken.

Signatories:

Caspar EINEM Minister of Science and Transport (Austria)
Jan ADE Director General Ministry of the Flemish Community Department of Education (Belgium)
Gerard SCHMIT Director General of French Community Ministry for Higher Education and Research (Belgium)
Anna Mmia TOTOMANOVA Vice Minister of Education and Science (Bulgaria)
Eduard ZEMAN Minister of Education, Youth and Sport (Czech Republic)
Margrethe VESTAGER Minister of Education (Denmark)
Tonis LUKAS Minister of Education (Estonia)
Claude ALLEGRE Minister of National Education, Research and Technology (France)
Maija RASK Minister of Education and Science (Finland)
Wolf-Michael CATENHUSEN Parliamentary State Secretary Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Germany)
Gherassimos ARSENIS Minister of Public Education and Religious Affairs (Greece)
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Adam KISS Deputy State Secretary for Higher Education and Science (Hungary)
Pat DOWLING Principal Officer Ministry for Education and Science (Ireland)
Ortenzio ZECCHINO Minister of University and Scientific and Technological Research (Italy)
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Erna HENNICOT-SCHOEPGES Minister of National Education and Vocational Training (Luxembourg)
Kornelijus PLATELIS Minister of Education and Science (Lithuania)
Louis GALEA Minister of Education (Malta)
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Eduardo Marçal GRILO Minister of Education (Portugal)
Andrei MARGA Minister of National Education (Romania)
Pavel ZGAGA State Secretary for Higher Education (Slovenia)
Milan FTACNIK Minister of Education (Slovak Republic)
Agneta BLADH State Secretary for Education and Science (Sweden)
D.Jorge FERNANDEZ DIAZ Secretary of State of Education, Universities, Research and Development (Spain)
Charles KLEIBER State Secretary for Science and Research (Swiss Confederation)
Baroness Tessa BLACKSTONE of Stoke Newington Minister of State for Education and Employment (United Kingdom)

Source: http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/990719BOLOGNA_DECLARATION.PDF [10 June 2007]

APPENDIX 2. Bologna Process Stocktaking Report 2005, Bergen (Tables of Greece, Lithuania, Bosnia-Herzegovina)

Colors explanation:

Excellent	Very good	Good	Some progress	Not implemented
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BOLOGNA SCORECARD Greece	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Greece was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. Most of the Bologna action lines are currently the subject of active development. A three-cycle degree structure has been in place since the 1980s, and there has been particularly positive feedback about the access arrangements for students from one cycle to another. Priority is being given to establishing a quality assurance agency, with new legislation being implemented. Use of the Diploma Supplement is becoming more widespread, and a credit system based on ECTS is in place in many higher education institutions.

An extensive consultation process is currently being conducted by the Ministry of Education to disseminate information and to promote the Bologna targets among all partners, especially higher education institutions and students.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD Lithuania	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Lithuania was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. The country has a binary system of higher education. Following adoption of the Law on Higher Education in 2000, university studies conform to the two- (three-) cycle structure, whereas the colleges offer diplomas and professional qualifications. Long integrated study programmes continue to exist in medicine and related fields as well as law. A national credit system compatible with ECTS is in operation. The Diploma Supplement has been made mandatory by law and will be issued on request from 2005, and automatically to all students from 2006.

Study programmes are evaluated on a regular basis, and from 2004 a process of institutional evaluations has been instigated. New study programmes and institutions have to be accredited.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD Bosnia and Herzegovina	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Bosnia and Herzegovina joined the Bologna Process in 2003. Immediately following the Berlin Ministerial Conference, a draft Framework Law on Higher Education was prepared laying the basis for implementation of "Bologna" reforms in the country, such as the two-cycle degree system, establishment of a quality assurance agency/ENIC/NARIC and implementation of ECTS and the Diploma Supplement. The law has yet to be adopted. In the meantime a Bologna handbook has been prepared and widely distributed, and a national seminar involving all major stakeholders is being planned.

Source: <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/BPstocktaking9May2005.pdf> [22 May, 2007]

APPENDIX 3. Bologna Process Stocktaking Report 2007, London (Tables of Greece, Lithuania, Bosnia-Herzegovina)

Bologna Scorecard

GREECE

> DEGREE SYSTEM <

1. Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle
2. Access to the next cycle
3. Implementation of national qualifications framework

> QUALITY ASSURANCE <

4. National implementation of *Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA*
5. Stage of development of external quality assurance system
6. Level of student participation
7. Level of international participation

> RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND STUDY PERIODS <

8. Stage of implementation of diploma supplement
9. National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS

> LIFELONG LEARNING <

11. Recognition of prior learning

> JOINT DEGREES <

12. Establishment and recognition of joint degrees

Greece was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. Key developments since 2005 include: introducing a number of laws to implement Bologna reforms on recognition, quality assurance, ECTS, diploma supplements, lifelong learning, joint programmes and consortia, enhancing student support, increasing institutional accountability, increasing provision in languages other than Greek; increasing student involvement in institutional governance and access to higher education. A working group, chaired by the Secretary for Higher Education, has been set up to develop a national qualifications framework. Greece has not signed or ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention although some of its principles already apply, such as the establishment of a fully operational ENIC, the Agency for Degree Recognition. Measures to recognise non-formal and informal learning are currently being considered, following pilot projects. Future challenges include: reorganising and modernising the higher education system in response to contemporary societal and economic demands; ensuring quality, openness and transparency; increasing institutional autonomy and flexibility; revising research policy and developing new post graduate study programmes; and internationalising the Greek higher education system.

Bologna Scorecard

LITHUANIA

> DEGREE SYSTEM <

1. Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle
2. Access to the next cycle
3. Implementation of national qualifications framework

> QUALITY ASSURANCE <

4. National implementation of *Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA*
5. Stage of development of external quality assurance system
6. Level of student participation
7. Level of international participation

> RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND STUDY PERIODS <

8. Stage of implementation of diploma supplement
9. National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS

> LIFELONG LEARNING <

11. Recognition of prior learning

> JOINT DEGREES <

12. Establishment and recognition of joint degrees

Lithuania was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. Key developments since 2005 include: approving the Lithuanian Higher Education System Development Plan for 2006-2010 and measures for the first stage of its implementation for 2006-2007, to improve the governance and management of higher education institutions; enhance quality and ensure the effective use of financial and other resources; amending the Law on Higher Education to enable colleges to award professional bachelor qualifications; and creating a legal basis for joint degrees. The introduction of professional bachelor degrees in 2007 will facilitate access to the second cycle for graduates from the college sector. A working group has been established to develop a national qualifications framework, drawing on a pilot project undertaken in 2005. Proposals are expected by 2008. The Development Plan for 2006-2010 includes both the development of a national qualifications framework for higher education linked to a national qualifications framework for lifelong learning and the implementation of the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA*. The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education is planning to apply for full ENQA membership in 2007-2008. Future challenges include: developing further the higher education system as a whole as well as individual higher education institutions; implementing successfully the Development Plan for 2006-2010 and the national programme for the Lisbon Strategy.

Bologna Scorecard

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

> DEGREE SYSTEM <

1. Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle
2. Access to the next cycle
3. Implementation of national qualifications framework

> QUALITY ASSURANCE <

4. National implementation of *Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA*
5. Stage of development of external quality assurance system
6. Level of student participation
7. Level of international participation

> RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND STUDY PERIODS <

8. Stage of implementation of diploma supplement
9. National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS

> LIFELONG LEARNING <

11. Recognition of prior learning

> JOINT DEGREES <

12. Establishment and recognition of joint degrees

Bosnia and Herzegovina joined the Bologna Process in 2003. Key developments since 2005 include: implementing first cycle qualifications, based on new curricula and supported by diploma supplements; introducing ECTS for all new study programmes; setting up international projects on quality assurance, recognition of qualifications and study periods and a national qualifications framework; and higher education institutions taking forward Bologna reforms, despite delays in the adoption of new legislation on higher education at State level. The Working Group for Quality Assurance is currently developing procedures for internal and external quality assurance, based on the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA*. The Lisbon Recognition Convention was ratified in 2003 and some progress has been made to implement the principles of the Convention. Future challenges include: adopting at national level the new law on higher education; establishing a national agency for the development of higher education and quality assurance and an ENIC centre; financing and revising the structure of higher education institutions; promoting academic research and adapting learning and teaching to new societal demands.

Source: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/londonbologna/uploads/documents/6909-BolognaProcessST.pdf> [22 May, 2007]

APPENDIX 4. Bologna Process Stocktaking Report 2007, London (Table of participatory countries of the Bologna Process)

BOLOGNA SCORECARD

	Degree system			Quality Assurance				Recognition			LLL	Joint
Country	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Albania												
Andorra												
Armenia												
Austria												
Azerbaijan												
Belgium Flemish												
Belgium French												
Bosnia Herzegovina												
Bulgaria												
Croatia												
Cyprus												
Czech Republic												
Denmark												
Estonia												
Finland												
France												
Georgia												
Germany												
Greece												
Holy See												
Hungary												
Iceland												
Ireland												
Italy												
Latvia												
Liechtenstein												
Lithuania												
Luxembourg												
Malta												
Moldova												
Montenegro												
Netherlands												
Norway												
Poland												
Portugal												
Romania												
Russia												
Serbia												
Slovakia												
Slovenia												
Spain												
Sweden												
Switzerland												
The FYROM												
Turkey												
Ukraine												
UK – EWNl												
UK – Scotland												

Source: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/londonbologna/uploads/documents/6909-BolognaProcessST.pdf> [22 May, 2007]