

The Bologna Process brings not only opportunities, but also challenges to the teaching community. The public sector status and accessibility of higher education will remain key demands for EI. Professional status, proper research and teaching opportunities and the working conditions of academic staff are equally vital to the future of higher education and research in Europe.

BOLOGNA PROCESS

ACADEMICS ARE ON TRACK WITH EI



COMMERCIALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The globalisation of higher education is rooted in a drive towards the globalised and commodified higher education market. EI continues to strongly oppose this, while asserting the genuinely international character of higher education and research, and seeking to protect the positive opportunities and contributions brought by the greater mobility of teachers and students.

In 2003, at the Berlin Conference, ministers reaffirmed that: *"higher education is a public good and a public responsibility"*. In 2005, in Bergen they reiterated that they: *"share the common understanding of the principles, objectives and commitments of the Process as expressed in the Bologna Declaration and in the subsequent communiqués from the Ministerial Conferences in Prague and Berlin"*. EI expected a clearer commitment from the Bergen conference on measures opposing the commercialisation of education and research.

EI is aware that the European higher education and research system remains a tempting target for the liberalizers in the international debate on the liberalisation of trade in services, and we are determined that **education must remain a public good** and not degenerate into a commodity.

MOBILITY

The Bergen communiqué recognises that mobility of students and staff remains one of the key objectives of the Bologna Process and that efforts need to be intensified *"to lift obstacles to mobility by facilitating the delivery of visa and work permits and by encouraging participation in mobility programmes."*

EI calls for an expansion of mobility programmes for both students and staff. There are still many obstacles to mobility, ranging from problems in gaining entry to and permission to reside in a foreign country, or problems in home countries recognising courses and qualifications obtained abroad, to portability of pensions, social benefits, financial support, student fees and future professional opportunities.

EI encourages academic staff unions to promote and support the mobility of their members through entering into reciprocal membership agreements¹.

STAFF CONDITIONS

The Ministers in Bergen maintained that *"time is needed to optimise the impact of structural change on curricula and thus to ensure the introduction of the innovative teaching and learning processes that Europe needs"*. This is one of a number of areas in which the speedy and full engagement of staff representatives is essential, giving reality to their inclusion in Bergen.

EI believes that to achieve the highest quality from higher education institutions, working conditions must exist that are conducive to creativity and innovation in both teaching and research.

Academic staff need to work under conditions which enable them to exercise a degree of autonomy and respond to diverse demands.

¹ www.ei-ie.org/hiednet

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To have meaning, any analysis of the issues – quality, accreditation, the relationship of teaching to research, student mobility, and the massive restructuring needed to conform to the Bologna structures – must include consideration of academic staff's workloads, pay levels and working conditions.

In view of recent demographic developments, notably the ageing of the academic profession in many European countries, and the growing significance of higher education and research for the 'knowledge society', action must be taken to renew the profession, and to recruit and support young academics so that the 'European Higher Education and Research Area' can become a reality.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

The Ministers in Bergen underlined *"the importance of higher education in further enhancing research and the importance of research in underpinning higher education for the economic and cultural development of our societies and for social cohesion"* and recognised *"the need to improve the synergy between the EHEA and the European Research Area"*.

EI recognises and supports the fundamental relationship between teaching in higher education and research, and ensuring that courses leading to the new qualifications benefit from research-based content. Bologna must also address the poor employment conditions of research workers and teachers – many of whom have an increasing teaching and administrative burden – which marginalises their research activities. To deal with these problems, EI urges the adoption and implementation of the European Researchers' Charter.

EI calls for the doctorate to be recognised as the first stage in an academic/research career. It should be the only formal requirement for promotion to higher academic positions.



HOW TEACHERS' UNION CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE MINISTERIAL BOLOGNA PROCESS

EI member unions are urged to:

- (Establish working relationships with student organisations, governments, institutions and relevant authorities.
- (Promote the UNESCO/Council of Europe Lisbon Recognition Convention and campaign for its ratification.
- (Campaign for the implementation of the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation on the status of higher education teaching personnel.
- (Press for the right of all education staff to engage in collective bargaining so that they can improve the terms and conditions of their employment.
- (Lobby for quality teaching, research and professional development.

EI and its members must maintain pressure on governments and:

- (Promote higher education being a 'public good'.
- (Press for equal access based on academic ability.
- (Demonstrate the indivisible link between teaching and research.
- (Highlight and safeguard academic freedom and collegiate governance.
- (Champion adequate public funding.
- (Address issues of staff mobility.



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EI AND THE BOLOGNA PROCESS



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The Education International Pan-European Structure, including ETUCE, is the voice of academic staff and researchers in Europe. EI represents over three million academic and research staff worldwide, of whom about 650,000 work in the geographical area now included in the Bologna Process. ETUCE provides, through a network, a forum for these unions. The EI Pan-European Higher Education and Research Standing Committee has actively developed and represented the views of its member organisations in the sector since the inception of the Bologna Process.

EI and the higher education and research staff unions of Europe welcome and support the Bologna Process as a means of protecting and enhancing higher education and research across Europe as a means of increasing transparency and mobility. We believe that Bologna places this on the public agenda. Although we welcome the emphasis on quality, we assert that this will require greater public investment in the system and its staff if quality is to be sustained and enhanced (EI policy statement February 2005).

The inclusion of the EI Pan-European Structure is a recognition of its strong commitment to the Bologna Process.



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The Bologna Process aims to establish an open area for higher education across Europe, involving 45 countries by 2010. To build this area, it is necessary that all actors – students, teachers, professors, researchers, technical and administrative staff – get the chance to play an active role in the Europeanisation process. In May 2005, the Bergen Ministerial Conference officially recognised academics, represented through EI, as partners in the Bologna Process.

Through the Bergen Declaration, the 45 Bologna Member States formally acknowledge academic staff as partners in the implementation of the Bologna Process.