



Education International
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Higher Education and Research Standing Committee

Oslo, 26 – 28 September 2006 Report

The HERSC Meeting took place in Oslo from 26-28 September, prior to the Bologna Process Seminar on the External Dimension (“Look out: Bologna in a Global Setting” www.bolognaoslo.com) in Oslo. This is a report outlining the main issues discussed during this HERSC Meeting, namely:

1. The Bologna Process
2. The Council of Europe
3. The External Dimension of the Bologna Process
4. The International Context (OECD, UNESCO, GATS)
5. EU Matters Update
6. Research Matters
7. Policy Statements

1. The Bologna Process

1.1 EI Bologna Seminar: “Mobility of Staff and Students” (February 2007)

The session started by a short introduction from Paul Bennett (HERSC Chairperson) on the significance of the EI being in the Process and organising this seminar. Monique Fouilhoux referred to the importance of this seminar in EI visible in the Process, in order to show how important EI is as an actor, and the contribution that it can make. The following presentations ensued:

Ann Fritzell (SULF, Sweden): Ann is EI’s representative at the BFUG Working Group on the Social Dimension and Mobility. She handed out a preliminary version of the report from the working group on mobility and social dimension, to be discussed at the subsequent BFUG meeting in Helsinki (12-13 October 2006). Ann indicated that this is the report that would be submitted to the BFUG, with a few changes. In terms of the social dimension, the document recommended that different countries make their own national strategies as to how they define under-represented groups in their country, what actions they are taking, and what actions they will take in the future. The document also pointed out that the data existing does not cover the whole of Europe, and encourages all organisations that collect data to fill the data gaps. In terms of mobility of staff and students, as far as the rationale goes, Ann indicated that when this text was written and discussed, it was very much focused around the mobility of students, and that they also ought to have given consideration to mobility of staff. A discussion followed Ann’s presentation, in which questions were raised regarding EU policy in relation to the work of the working group; and how different national policies influence different treatment of students and of staff.

Conor Cradden: “The Single Academic Labour Market?”- Preliminary Report on Consequences of Increased Staff Mobility Within the European Higher Education Area: Conor is a researcher carrying out a study on behalf of EI, on the basis of which he will produce a final report for the mobility seminar. Conor stressed that what he had produced by then was only a preliminary report, and that it was important to identify the areas in which it might be possible to continue subsequent work and research. The report is divided into 2:

- Part 1: “A trade union perspective on staff mobility”, examining issues related to socio-cultural and scientific exchange, and labour market reform;
- Part 2: “Aspects of the Bologna Process conceived as labour market reform”, examining issues concerning the reorganisation of the supply side of the market for highly skilled and educated labour, and deregulation of the academic labour market, primarily via measures to remove obstacles to mobility.

Conor identified 3 important questions to be addressed: What counts as an obstacle to staff mobility? Can we simply assume that removing obstacles and deregulation is positive? Are certain obstacles justified? He further referred to the issues of institutional autonomy and academic freedom in relation to mobility. He also identified a number of future steps to be taken towards the completion of his study, referring to “what we need to know” in order for EI to be able to best make a contribution to the Bologna Process, these being: cataloguing the remaining obstacles to mobility; estimating the likely

scale and direction of mobility; and exploring policy options. A discussion followed Conor's presentation, in which it was suggested that Conor try to give good and bad examples practices related to mobility from different countries. Issues of data concerning staff mobility were discussed. The following issues were also tackled: deregulation; regional/geographical equilibrium in mobility; sabbatical leave; intellectual mobility; tackling the issue of mobility from an institutional perspective and the point of view of responsibility of institutions; internationalisation and cooperation, as opposed to marketisation and commercialisation of higher education. Monique Fouilhoux said that Conor would prepare a survey on key issues related to his study, which will be sent out on the network.

Maheer Tekaya: Presentation of the ESIB background Paper on Mobility of Students for the EI Bologna Seminar on Mobility: Maheer referred to the history of mobility in the Bologna Process; the reasons for which students have an interest in being mobile; obstacles to student mobility; and challenges which still need to be overcome. For the latter part, he mentioned access to mobility and information, the academic value of the study period abroad, the reduction of economic and administrative obstacles, access to social services, overcoming language barriers, full academic and social integration, and geographical coverage. In an ensuing discussion, the difference between mobility in Europe and other parts of the world came up, being that mobility in Europe is not of the same cultural and social dimension as e.g. China–America mobility, which is more commercial.

The HERSC participants were presented with a draft agenda for the mobility seminar, to take place over 2 days (8-9 February 2007) in London. The draft agenda outlined a series of plenary sessions, and 4 parallel workshop sessions with the following themes: Social Rights and Conditions; Mobility, the external dimension, and Brain Drain; Recognition of qualifications; and Student mobility. All agreed with the agenda, and Paul Bennet reminded everyone that a HERSC meeting would be taking place on the day prior to the seminar (7 February 2007) in London.

1.2 National Reports on the Implementation of the Bologna Process

Contributions were by affiliates from Croatia, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Spain, France, Denmark, Italy and Portugal. Recurrent themes in these contributions were problems in workload of both students and staff; outcome-based funding; lack of financing to implement Bologna reforms; lack of time to do research with the introduction of new study programmes; delays for students and confusion with the co-existence of old and new (Bologna) systems; exclusion of teachers' unions from discussion and implementation of reforms at national level; qualifications frameworks; quality issues; and issues related to tuition fees. Monique Fouilhoux pointed out that affiliates have to be careful not to fall into the trap of some governments that use the Bologna Process to make some reforms which are unrelated thereto. Monique said that all the countries have already received the questionnaire for the stocktaking process, and that it is important for affiliates to approach those in the government and ministries who are responsible for drawing up the national stock-taking report.

1.3 Reports from Working Groups, Conferences, etc.

Monique Fouilhoux outlined EI's activity in the BFUG, workshops and seminars. Monique's explanation largely explained what was mentioned in the Reader for the HERSC Meeting.¹ In addition, she referred to the issue of joint degrees; the next very important Bologna Seminar on Funding of Doctoral Programmes in Nice, France (7-9 December 2006), organised by EUA; and other conferences organised by the Bologna members, which are also important. Monique mentioned that it is necessary for the HERSC to organise itself better, to have better and wider participation. She also referred to the importance of the CD prepared for the HERSC (including the reader for the HERSC and the reference documents), also for dissemination of information in affiliate organisations.

1.4 Preparation for the London Ministerial Meeting (17-18 May 2007)

Monique Fouilhoux explained that the Ministerial Meeting will be a one and a half day conference and the major theme will be taking stock of the progress over the past period. The Ministers will have to consider what has been done, and then what to do after 2010. Unlike Bergen, there will be no working groups, as the absence of Ministers from the working groups was seen negatively by some participants in Bergen.

¹ Pp.16-17 of the Reader.

1.5 EI's Contribution to the EUA Bologna Handbook

Monique Fouilhoux explained how the handbook is set out, and the fact that there are four updates a year. It is possible for EI to propose to write an article for one of the updates, but she explained that it is necessary to think on what topic to write this exactly. She referred to the small booklet at the beginning of the handbook and mentioned that in the first version of the handbook, EI was mistakenly omitted from this booklet, which gave a short explanation of each BFUG member. However, she pointed out that this mistake had been fixed, as the booklet was re-printed, including EI.

2. The Council of Europe

Mr. Sjur Bergan (Head of the Higher Education and Research Division of the Council of Europe) gave a presentation on higher education within the Council of Europe. He referred to the reasons why education is included in the Council of Europe's programme, mentioning support for democracy, human rights and rule of law. He referred to education as an essential condition for creating democratic culture; and the importance of social cohesion and equal opportunities, to improve opportunities for individuals, to develop a "Europe of competence and skills". He also explained the Council of Europe's higher education programme, comprising the following main areas of work: Contribution to the European Higher Education Area; Recognition of qualifications; Public responsibility for higher education and research; Governance and democratic culture; a new project - "The University Between Humanism and Market: Redefining its Values and Functions for the 21st Century"; the Council of Europe Higher Education for a; a publication series; and a webpage. Mr. Bergan also referred to key challenges in the Bologna Process: vision and values; actors and responsibilities; quality development and the role of institutions; higher education governance; first degree in the labour market; mobility; higher education for sustainable societies; and interaction between higher education policies and other areas of public policy. In an ensuing discussion, Sjur Bergan's was questioned and commented on the participative status of INGOS in the Council of Europe, and the grouping of higher education therein. Mr. Bergan was also questioned on the Council of Europe's recent recommendation on academic freedom, and the implementation thereof.

3. The External Dimension of the Bologna Process

Ms. Toril Johansson (Director General of the Department of Higher Education in the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, and chair of the BFUG working group on the external dimension) gave a presentation of the external dimension of the Bologna Process. She referred to the "attractiveness of the EHEA and cooperation with other parts of the world" as being the main issue. She mentioned that the education ministers in Bergen requested that a strategy document be drawn up on the external dimension of the Bologna Process, and that the BFUG subsequently approved a working group with the mandate to elaborate upon such a strategy. Ms. Johansson briefly outlined the previous and subsequent Bologna seminars on the external dimension, and, in terms of the progress made in the work of the working group, Ms. Johansson mentioned that until the time of her presentation, the working group met 4 times, and agreed to meet again after the Nordic Seminar, and also one last time in November 2006. She stated that a strategy on the external dimension must build upon European values and traditions, stakeholder participation, geographical scope and thematic foci. Ms. Johansson mentioned that a preliminary report ("B") and a draft strategy will be presented to the BFUG in October, also drawing on the Nordic seminar; the report with the proposed strategy will be submitted to BFUG secretariat in December; further work of working group will then take place on the request of the BFUG secretariat; and a decision will take place on the report and strategy by the London Ministerial Meeting (May). In conclusion, in terms of follow-up, Ms. Johansson mentioned that it is planned that the BFUG shall be charged by the ministers to develop a charter on the external dimension, to be submitted to the ministers at their conference in 2009. In addition, the BFUG work programme 2007 – 2009 shall include a working group with the aim to define best practices and indicators. The BFUG work programme shall also include a project on the external dimension (including the recognition issues) and report back to the ministers in 2009, and the external dimension shall be part of the Bologna stocktaking process. In an ensuing discussion on Ms. Johansson's presentation, Monique Fouilhoux explained that in the working group, EI has an

important position as it is an international organisation, and she mentioned that in the working group, EI stresses on cooperation not competition at the international level. Toril Johansson was also questioned regarding the inclusion of academic values in the external dimension strategy, and the inclusion of individual university and higher education teachers are in the whole discussion on the external dimension. She was also asked how it is possible to make European higher education attractive to foreign students. Ms. Johansson said that for the former issue, the Bologna Process has included all kinds of stakeholders who have given their input. As regards the latter question, she opined that such finer matters then have to be included in the national agenda.

4. The International Context (the OECD, UNESCO, GATS)

The OECD: Monique Fouilhoux outlined EI's activity in OECD. Monique's explanation largely referred to what was mentioned in the Reader for the HERSC Meeting.² Monique also referred to the recent OECD Publication "Education at a Glance", and the communiqué that EI published in reaction to this. Angele Attard (Stagiaire in EI's Education and Employment Unit) then reported on an OECD event that she attended – an OECD-IMHE (Institute for Management in Higher Education) seminar on "Funding Systems and their Effects on Higher Education Systems", which took place on 14th September. Angele commented that the main trends are: Ongoing and extensive reform; Introduction of performance-based assessments; and Increase in research funds on a competitive basis.

UNESCO: Monique Fouilhoux gave a small update on what is going on in the UNESCO higher education department and on EI's activity within UNESCO, referring to the re-organisation of the UNESCO education department, and the working seminar that EI had with the UNESCO Director for Higher Education, Georges Haddad, at the EI headquarters in Brussels (20-21 September). She also mentioned a meeting that she attended in Paris (18-19 September) of the Follow-Up Committee of the World Conference on Higher Education, in which there was a preliminary agreement that a new vision for higher education was needed for the 2008 World Conference of Higher education, and that such conference would include 4 possible workshops, one of which would deal with academic staff. Monique referred to the CEART report prepared by EI during the summer, on the Recommendations on the Status of Teachers (1966) and the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel (1997).

GATS: Monique Fouilhoux gave an update on the state of GATS negotiations and EI's work on GATS. She referred to the lobby meetings EI held in Geneva in June and July 2006, to the bi-monthly editions of "TradEducation", and the GATS package being prepared by EI, for affiliates. She pointed out the developments in terms of Domestic Regulations, Plurilateral Requests, and the collapse of trade talks towards the end of July 2006. She mentioned that the EI Executive Board would meet at the end of October and decide on next steps. She stressed that, in relation to GATS negotiations, many things occur at the national level, and that it is not possible for EI to work at this level – rather, she stressed, this is a task for the affiliates, especially in terms of any ongoing bilateral negotiations. She mentioned that the EI-GATS package that was being prepared was nearly finished, and that it would also include sample letters that affiliates could fix to suit national needs. A discussion ensued in which there was reference to: the efforts of the "Group of Friends of Trade in HE", the EU-GATS, dimension, research and intellectual property issues. Monique commented that the 2002 EI GATS package was being updated to a new package, and that at the Berlin congress, EI will have training sessions in English, French and Spanish on GATS, as well as break-out sessions.

5. EU Matters Update³

Martin Romer (ETUCE Secretary General) gave updates on a number of EU Matters:

Proposed EU Directive on Services in the Internal Market ("the Bolkestein Directive"): The European Parliament is in its second reading, and ETUCE is trying to boost the discussion on education, and to re-insert the reference to the Charter of Fundamental Rights that was removed after the Parliament's first reading. Mr. Romer commented that ETUCE had seen an initiative from the Socialist Group in

² Pp.26-28 of the Reader.

³ Jens Vraa-Jensen chaired this session and the following session (Point 9), as vice-chair of the HERSC, instead of Paul Bennett.

the Parliament to come up with a Directive on Services of General Economic interest. This was also discussed in ETUC, which was willing to come up with a proposal, even though ETUCE is reluctant to do so. Martin Romer mentioned that a text has been put forward, which should however be looked at with caution. ETUC will discuss this further in November.

EIT: ETUCE have taken part in many European Institute of Technology meetings, the idea of which is to flag the EU more globally on the research issue. Martin Romer mentioned that the Committee Executive Board delivered a lengthy statement in May 2006, in which it put forward some reservations about the funding and management of the EIT, and how it should relate to structures and institutions all over Europe. Mr. Romer pointed out that at the time of his presentation, some of the technical issues pointed out by ETUCE in May had been solved, but the issue of funding was still one of concern. It is expected that the EIT will drive research and also teaching, and that 6-7 communities will be built up within the EIT within its first years. It is also expected that the role of participation of teachers and researchers should be clarified. Mr. Romer referred to some other issues that should be brought to the board and be clarified, such as collective agreements. He mentioned that the Commission is looking into these issues, and that it would discuss this with the social partners very soon. He said that a EIT proposal would probably show up during October.

The EQF (EU Qualifications Framework): Martin Romer mentioned that ETUCE sent a statement recommending changes to the Commission's preliminary proposal on the EQF, and the Commission has now issued a proposal for a Recommendation. He opined that the proposal is more realistic than the previous one made by the Commission, though there are still issues which can be improved, including the issues of: trade unions at the national level; descriptors; and an increased emphasis on mobility, rather than harmonisation.

European Commission Communication on "Efficiency and Equity in European Education and Training Systems" (September 2006): Martin Romer commented the Communication is broader than just higher education, and that there is therefore a need to respond to it in line with the different policies that ETUCE has on the different sectors of education, and also in relation to transversal issues on economic policies, cultural evaluation, etc.

European Commission Communication on a Modernisation Agenda for Universities (May 2006): Martin Romer opined that ETUCE did not expect very political initiatives to follow this Communication right away, and that any attempts in this direction would only take place long into 2007, at least this was the opinion in the "Towards 2010 Education". He pointed out that it is important to follow the work on Modernisation of Higher Education, and that it would be possible to put together a lengthy statement on the Modernisation of Universities. He mentioned that it would however be advisable to see how it would be possible to play back on evidence-based policy, so that this would not just be a political statement.

The European Quality Charter for Mobility: Mr. Romer mentioned that the EU had committed itself to do something on this, though nothing much has happened. He pointed out that there existed a proposal on this, which in his opinion is very bad.

Teacher Education: Martin mentioned that there had been a possibility of a recommendation on teachers' key competences, but that this idea fell through, as the legal services of the Commission turned it down - they saw it as falling outside EU competence (under art.249 of the EC Treaty). ETUCE is internally trying to revise its 1995 work on teacher education.

In conclusion, Martin Romer mentioned that he hoped that there would be closer cooperation between EI and ETUCE on higher and other education, to address issues in a comprehensive way, and to agree on who is working on what, how and when, to deliver a quality response. In an ensuing discussion, Mr. Romer was questioned on cooperation between EI Pan-European Structure and ETUCE. A comment was put forward that the ETUCE officers need to take the HERSC's role into account, that the HERSC needs to have a more direct place in the way in which higher education unions participate at EU level, and that ETUCE needs to make sure that the HERSC will be better involved in the EU debates. The Committee wished to be more fully involved in discussions on the Bolkestein directive and the EQF. Also, there was a general agreement in HERSC opposing the EIT as at present proposed and the Commission's proposals for the EIT, and HERSC would continue to oppose unless the Commission were to provide satisfactory answers to questions relating to funding degree systems, academic freedom and intellectual property rights, and also the implications for existing institutional funding and staff. Mr. Romer was also questioned on certain aspects of the

Bolkestein directive and the EQF. Reservations were raised on both counts. In terms of the EIT, there was general agreement in the HERSC against the EIT, and Commission proposals on this matter, unless the Commission were to come up with clear, satisfactory answers to issues related to funding, degree systems, academic freedom, and intellectual property rights.

6. Research Matters

6.1 The Status of Doctoral Students and Early Stage Researchers:

Jens Vraa-Jensen (DM) gave an update on the European Code and Charter for Researchers. Jens' explanation largely referred to what was mentioned in the Reader for the HERSC Meeting.⁴ He also referred to a document which was drawn up by a working group set up before the Vienna EU Conference on the Code and Charter (June 2006). He was part of this working group, which drew up a document that addressed issues of academic freedom, and precarious contracts. However, he pointed out that this document was never published. Mr. Maher Tekaya (ESIB – The National Unions of Students in Europe) gave a short presentation, in which he referred to the rights of doctoral students to participate in governance structures, and to monitoring and training, mobility of doctoral students, and the real difficulty of recognition of additional training or qualifications during the time spent abroad, and the ongoing discussion on the possibility of CTS credits for young researchers. In an ensuing discussion, employment of, and social benefits for research students was examined, and different national examples were given in this respect.

6.2 Funding of Doctoral Programmes

Kari Kjenndalen (NAR) gave a short presentation on funding of doctoral programmes in Norway. Prof. Eric Froment (France, former President of the EUA) also gave a short presentation, in which he referred to the relationship between the Bologna Process and funding, and EUA's leading proactive role in the discussion. He mentioned that EUA knows that funding is very important for the third cycle, however, it is also important to note that the Bologna Ministers remained reluctant to consider funding because at the national level, it is the finance ministries, not the education ministries, that are responsible for funding matters, and education ministers cannot commit themselves to financing issues. The problem for London is thus to what extent funding will be discussed by the education ministers. Prof. Froment mentioned that in the days following the HERSC meeting, EUA would meet to prepare for the London Ministerial Meeting. He pointed out that EUA would be carrying out a study on doctoral studies in the 45 Bologna countries, which will consider 4 topics, one of which will be funding. The aim of this is to collect information, which is a difficult exercise, as funding systems are so different in each country.

In a presentation by Mr. Maher Tekaya (ESIB), the following issues were highlighted: doctoral students at universities very often have to look for their own funds; students need a stable financial situation both in personal and in research terms; limitation of funding in terms of time, and is also given only in relation to specific research. He concluded by saying that nevertheless, ESIB was open to considering new funding mechanisms. Monique Fouilhoux also commented on EI's work/policy on funding of doctoral students, mentioning that, in so far as the status of young researchers, and funding of doctoral students are concerned, EI has no policy for the moment. She referred to the statement on the Code and Charter, adopted by the HERSC in 2005, as a first step in EI policy on research. Monique stressed that the HERSC has to follow this issue, in order to come to agreement on a number of basic notions in relation to research, even though national systems are very different.

In an ensuing discussion, different national situations were referred to, the responsibility of universities for doctoral studies, misconceptions about the value of a doctoral degree, and the passage from doctoral studies to the labour market.

7. Policy Statements

4 statements were agreed on, to be presented for consideration to EI Pan-European decision bodies:

⁴ Pp.46-50 of the Reader.

- On the EU Commission May 2006 Communication on “Delivering on the modernisation agenda for universities: Education, research and innovation”.
- On the EU Commission September 2006 Communication on “Efficiency and Equity in European Education and Training Systems”.
- On Academic Freedom.
- On Ranking of Higher Education Institutions.

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