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Ministers, Commissioner, Delegates and Colleagues

Let me thank you for this opportunity to express the views of academic staff across the Bologna area, as key stakeholders who work to transform the Bologna objectives from rhetoric to everyday reality.

Since the beginning of the Process, we have come a long way but we still have a huge distance to travel.

Inclusion of higher education staff at national and institutional level

Whereas EI has been actively involved in the development of the Bologna Process at the European level, there is still reluctance to involve academic unions in the implementation of Bologna at institutional and national levels. As the people who implement the Bologna agenda on a daily basis, academics *must be central to all* Bologna-related initiatives, and it is essential that they be *supported* and participate fully in the Process at all levels.

As the Process has gained momentum, implementation has been uneven between countries and institutions of the EHEA.

We cannot afford to have this uneven implementation of the Bologna reforms. *As higher education Ministers, you need to work with other relevant ministries to implement Bologna.*

Institutions need to take more responsibility for the implementation of the actions lines. Reforms must be well-planned, in terms of financial and human resources, and applied consistently throughout the institutions. Reforms have often resulted in increased staff workloads while employment in higher education is more precarious than ever.

Staff issues

Only since EI became a consultative member, have academic staff issues been seriously addressed. However, little substantial progress has been made. Staff working conditions have deteriorated in a number of countries, as well as rights including academic freedom, rights which are guaranteed by the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel.

Mobility

Together with the ESU, Education International has worked on the mobility action line since the Bergen conference. Many national and institutional obstacles to staff and student mobility remain. Institutions must now take up their responsibilities in enhancing mobility opportunities for students and staff, and Ministers must now seriously commit to this action line by setting a target for 20% of students within the EHEA to be mobile by 2020. It is imperative to give substance to our words and really enhance staff and student mobility, as the key element of the EHEA.

Rankings and Classification

Although national systems in the EHEA have been realigned through Bologna, there is a clear need for more transparent information about higher education systems and institutions. At grassroots level, networks of academic or student peers share information about other institutions. Despite attempts to make this

information more understandable, we have not yet been able to respond to the needs of students and academic staff, enabling them to take an informed decision on an institution. But we consider that Rankings are not the answer - nor classification tools. They give an incomplete picture of the diversity and effectiveness of systems and institutions. They will lead to very simplistic conclusions about the quality of complex and highly differentiated systems, processes and institutions. Quality, which from our point of view, has to do with a range of factors, including the conditions and activities of teaching and free enquiry

Conclusion – Funding, Financial Crisis

As the Bologna Process evolves, we must remember our starting point and the objectives we agreed on.

Globally, this is a trying time for institutions and governments. The financial crisis has brought the realisation while there are severe consequences if we commit economic blunders, we would be nothing without our strong, democratic societies based on sound values and with a strong university sector

The principles of the Bologna Process have helped countries re-think, their higher education systems. These principles require proper implementation, adequate funding, support for staff, institutions and students. *We must stand by these ongoing principles if we consider education to be the key tool for real, sustainable recovery.*

Thank you for your attention.