

t h e m a

Salamanca Convention 2001

The Bologna Process and the European
Higher Education Area

Convention de Salamanque 2001

Processus de Bologne et Espace européen
de l'enseignement supérieur

WHAT IS EUA ?

The European University Association represents more than 620 individual, collective and affiliate members, located in 45 countries: higher education institutions; national rectors' conferences and national associations of other higher education institutions; finally, regional and international associations and networks, as well as interuniversity institutions.

Founded on 31 March 2001 to strengthen the representation of higher education institutions in Europe, EUA is the result of a merger between CRE (Association of European Universities) and the Confederation of European Union Rectors' Conferences.

EUA aims to promote and safeguard values and the case for university autonomy, to represent higher education and research in policy-making circles, to develop a European dimension in members' activities, to provide information and other relevant services to members, to promote partnerships in higher education and research within Europe, and between Europe and the rest of the world. The goal of building a common European area for higher education and research activities guides EUA's endeavours.

QU'EST-CE QUE L'EUA ?

L'Association Européenne de l'Université représente plus de 620 membres individuels, collectifs et affiliés, situés dans 45 pays: institutions d'enseignement supérieur; conférences nationales de recteurs d'université et associations nationales d'autres institutions d'enseignement supérieur; enfin, associations et réseaux régionaux et internationaux, ainsi qu'institutions interuniversitaires.

L'EUA a été fondée le 31 mars 2001, suite à la fusion de la CRE (Association des Universités Européennes) et de la Confédération des Conférences des Recteurs de l'Union européenne pour renforcer la voix du monde de l'enseignement supérieur en Europe.

Elle a pour objectif de promouvoir et maintenir les valeurs de l'université ainsi que son autonomie, de représenter le monde européen de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche dans les discussions politiques le concernant; de développer la dimension européenne des activités de ses membres; de leur fournir de l'information et d'autres services; de susciter des partenariats pour l'enseignement supérieur et la recherche au sein de l'Europe ainsi qu'avec les autres régions du monde. La participation à la construction d'un double espace européen de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche oriente l'ensemble des activités de l'EUA.

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UNIVERSITIES AND THE BOLOGNA PROCESS
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EDITORIAL

This issue of *Thema* is a first in various ways.

On the one hand, it includes the proceedings of the conference that concluded with the creation of EUA. On the other hand, it launches a new thematic publication series that will highlight important aspects of the association's activities.

Another first: the Salamanca Convention. With support from the Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities, the Spanish government and the European Commission, the Convention aimed at preparing the position of universities regarding the Bologna Process. The conclusions of the Convention served as a basis for the intervention of the newly-appointed EUA President, Prof. Eric Froment, at the Prague meeting of Ministers, on 18-19 May, where he confirmed the political presence of the new association in the process of integration of European higher education.

Therefore you will find hereafter the Salamanca message, a result of the consultation of members on the development of a European Area of Higher Education, followed by the main contributions to the debate which enabled the drafting of this message. You will also find at the end of the publication the background document provided to participants in order to structure the discussion of the six main themes included in the *Bologna Declaration*, a document prepared by CRE and the Confederation — which merged on 31 March into EUA.

This publication and much of the preparatory work carried out for the meeting of Salamanca were made possible thanks to the generous support of the Swiss Confederation.

Andris Barblan, Secretary General

Ce numéro de *Thema* est une première à plusieurs points de vue.

D'une part, il présente les Actes de la conférence qui déboucha sur la création de l'EUA. D'autre part, il lance une nouvelle collection de cahiers thématiques qui mettra en lumière des points importants de l'activité de l'association.

Autre première: la Convention de Salamanque. Soutenue par la Conférence des Recteurs des Universités espagnoles, par le gouvernement espagnol et par la Commission européenne, elle avait pour but de préparer la prise de position des universités face au processus de Bologne, et c'est sur cette base que le nouveau Président, le professeur Eric Froment, s'est adressé à la rencontre des Ministres à Prague, les 18 et 19 mai, affirmant par là la présence politique de la nouvelle association dans le processus d'intégration européenne de l'enseignement supérieur.

Vous trouverez donc ci-après le message de Salamanque, résultat de la consultation des membres sur le développement d'un Espace européen de l'enseignement supérieur, suivi des interventions principales qui ont nourri les débats conduisant à la formulation de ce message. Figure à la fin du cahier le document de base proposé aux participants pour structurer la discussion des six thèmes principaux de la *Déclaration de Bologne*, document préparé par la CRE et la Confédération — qui fusionnèrent le 31 mars pour donner naissance à l'EUA.

Cette publication a été rendue possible, comme une bonne partie des travaux menant à la réunion de Salamanque, grâce au soutien généreux de la Confédération Helvétique.

Andris Barblan, Secrétaire général

MESSAGE FROM SALAMANCA SHAPING THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

Over 300 European higher education institutions and their main representative organisations gathered in Salamanca on 29-30 March 2001. Their purpose was to prepare their input to the Prague meeting of the Ministers in charge of higher education in the countries involved in the Bologna Process; they have agreed on the following goals, principles and priorities:

Shaping the future

European higher education institutions reaffirm their support to the principles of the *Bologna Declaration* and their commitment to the creation of the European Higher Education Area by the end of the decade. They see the establishing of the European University Association (EUA) in Salamanca to be of both symbolic and practical value in conveying their voice more effectively to governments and society and thus in supporting them shape their own future in the European Higher Education Area.

PRINCIPLES

Autonomy with accountability

Progress requires that European universities be empowered to act in line with the guiding principle of autonomy with accountability. As autonomous and responsible legal, educational and social entities, they confirm their adherence to the principles of the *Magna Charta Universitatum* of 1988 and, in particular, to that of academic freedom. Thus, universities must be able to shape their strategies, choose their priorities in teaching and research, allocate their resources, profile their curricula and set their criteria for the acceptance of professors and students. European higher education institutions accept the challenges of operating in a competitive environment at home, in Europe and in the world, but to do so they need the necessary managerial freedom, light and supportive regulatory frameworks and fair financing, or they will be placed at a disadvantage in cooperation and competition. The dynamics needed for the completion of the European Higher Education Area will remain unfulfilled or will result in unequal competition, if the current

over-regulation and minute administrative and financial control of higher education in many countries is upheld. Competition serves quality in higher education, is not exclusive of cooperation and cannot be reduced to a commercial concept. Universities in some countries in Europe are not yet in a position to compete on equal terms and are in particular faced with unwanted brain drain within Europe.

Education as a public responsibility

The European Higher Education Area must be built on the European traditions of education as a public responsibility; of broad and open access to undergraduate as well as graduate studies; of education for personal development and lifelong learning; and of citizenship as well as of short and long-term social relevance.

Research-based higher education

As research is a driving force of higher education, the creation of the European Higher Education Area must go hand in hand with that of the European Research Area.

Organising diversity

European higher education is characterised by its diversity in terms of languages, national systems, institutional types and profiles and curricular orientation. At the same time, its future depends on its ability to organise this valuable diversity effectively to produce positive outcomes rather than difficulties, and flexibility rather than opacity. Higher education institutions wish to build on convergence — in particular on common denominators shared across borders in a given subject area — and to deal with diversity as an asset, rather than as a reason for non-recognition or exclusion. They are committed to creating sufficient self-regulation in order to ensure the minimum level of cohesion so that their efforts towards compatibility are not undermined by too much variance in the definition and implementation of credits, main degree categories and quality criteria.



KEY ISSUES Quality as a fundamental building stone

The European Higher Education Area needs to build on academic core values while meeting stakeholders' expectations, i.e., demonstrating quality. Indeed, quality assessment must take into consideration the goals and mission of institutions and programmes. It requires a balance between innovation and tradition, academic excellence and social/economic relevance, the coherence of curricula and students' freedom of choice. It encompasses teaching and research as well as governance and administration, responsiveness to students' needs and the provision of non-educational services. Inherent quality does not suffice, it needs to be demonstrated and guaranteed in order to be acknowledged and trusted by students, partners and society at home, in Europe and in the world.

Quality is the basic underlying condition for trust, relevance, mobility, compatibility and attractiveness in the European Higher Education Area.

Trust building

As research evaluation has an international dimension so does quality assurance in higher education. In Europe, quality assurance should not be based on a single agency enforcing a common set of standards. The way into the future will be to design mechanisms at European level for the mutual acceptance of quality assurance outcomes, with "accreditation" as one possible option. Such mechanisms should respect national, linguistic and discipline differences and not overload universities.

Relevance

Relevance to the European labour market needs to be reflected in different ways in curricula, depending on whether the competencies acquired are for employment after the first or the second degree. Employability in a lifelong learning perspective is best served through the inherent value of quality education, the diversity of approaches and course profiles, the flexibility of programmes with multiple entry and exit points and the development of transversal skills and competencies such as communication and languages, ability to mobilise knowledge, problem solving, team work and social processes.

Mobility

The free mobility of students, staff and graduates is an essential dimension of the European Higher Education Area. European universities want to foster more mobility — both of the "horizontal" and the "vertical" type — and do not see virtual mobility as a substitute for physical mobility. They are willing to use existing instruments for recognition and mobility (ECTS, Lisbon Convention, Diploma Supplement, NARIC/ENIC network) in a positive and flexible way. In view of the importance of teaching staff with European experience, universities wish to eliminate nationality requirements and other obstacles and disincentives for academic careers in Europe. However, a common European approach to virtual mobility and transnational education is also needed.

Compatible qualifications at the undergraduate and graduate levels

Higher education institutions endorse the move towards a compatible qualification framework based on a main articulation in undergraduate and postgraduate studies. There is broad agreement that first degrees should require 180 to 240 ECTS points but need to be diverse leading to employment or mainly preparing for further, postgraduate studies. Under certain circumstances a university may decide to establish an integrated curriculum leading directly to a Master-level degree. Subject-based networks have an important role to play in reaching such decisions. Universities are convinced of the benefits of a credit accumulation and transfer system based on ECTS and on their basic right to decide on the acceptability of credits obtained elsewhere.

Attractiveness

European higher education institutions want to be in a position to attract talent from all over the world. This requires action at institutional, national and European levels. Specific measures include the adaptation of curricula, degrees readable inside and outside Europe, credible quality assurance measures, programmes taught in major world languages, adequate information and marketing, welcoming services for foreign students and scholars,

and strategic networking. Success also depends on the speedy removal of prohibitive immigration and labour market regulations.

European higher education institutions recognise that their students need and demand qualifications which they can use effectively for the purpose of their studies and careers all over Europe. The institutions and their networks and organisations acknowledge their role and responsibility in this regard, and confirm their willingness to organise themselves accordingly within the framework of autonomy.

Higher education institutions call on governments, in their national and European contexts, to facilitate and encourage change and to provide a framework for coordination and guidance towards convergence. They affirm their capacity and willingness to initiate and support progress within a joint endeavour

- to redefine higher education and research for the whole of Europe;
- to reform and rejuvenate curricula and higher education as a whole;
- to enhance and build on the research dimension in higher education;
- to adopt mutually acceptable mechanisms for the evaluation, assurance and certification of quality;
- to build on common denominators with a European dimension and ensure compatibility between diverse institutions, curricula and degrees;
- to promote the mobility of students and staff and the employability of graduates in Europe;
- to support the modernisation efforts of universities in countries where the challenges of the European Higher Education Area are greatest;
- to meet the challenges of being readable, attractive and competitive at home, in Europe and in the world; and
- to continue to consider higher education as an essential public responsibility.

MESSAGE DE SALAMANQUE BÂTIR L'ESPACE EUROPÉEN DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR

Plus de 300 institutions européennes d'enseignement supérieur ainsi que les principales organisations les représentant se sont réunies à Salamanque les 29 et 30 mars 2001, afin de préparer leur contribution à la réunion de Prague rassemblant les Ministres responsables de l'enseignement supérieur des pays participant au Processus de Bologne; elles ont convenu des priorités, des objectifs et des principes suivants:

Bâtir l'avenir

Les institutions européennes d'enseignement supérieur réaffirment leur soutien aux principes de la *Déclaration de Bologne* et leur engagement en faveur d'un Espace européen de l'enseignement supérieur mis en place avant la fin de la décennie. Elles considèrent que la création à Salamanque de l'Association Européenne de l'Université (EUA) revêt une valeur à la fois symbolique et pratique car l'Association peut devenir leur porte-parole efficace auprès des gouvernements et de la société dans son ensemble, tout comme elle peut les soutenir dans la construction de leur propre avenir au sein de l'Espace européen de l'enseignement supérieur.

PRINCIPES **Autonomie et responsabilité**

Pour aller de l'avant, les universités européennes doivent être assurées des conditions permettant à la fois autonomie et engagement responsable. En tant qu'institutions autonomes et responsables, répondant à une mission éducative et sociale reconnue par la loi, les universités confirment leur adhésion aux principes énoncés dans la *Magna Charta Universitatum* de 1988, en particulier celui de la liberté académique. Dans ce contexte, les universités doivent pouvoir élaborer leurs stratégies, définir leurs priorités en matière d'enseignement et de recherche, allouer leurs ressources, déterminer leurs programmes et fixer les critères d'intégration de leurs professeurs et étudiants. Les institutions d'enseignement supérieur acceptent les défis de l'environnement concurrentiel dans lequel elles opèrent au niveau national, européen et mondial mais, pour ce faire, elles ont besoin de la liberté nécessaire en matière de

gestion, d'un cadre réglementaire plus souple et plus positif comme de financements équitables à défaut desquels elles seront placées en situation désavantageuse tant pour affronter la concurrence que pour développer la coopération. La dynamique requise pour l'Espace européen de l'enseignement supérieur restera inopérante, ou provoquera une concurrence inégale, si se maintiennent l'excessive réglementation et la mainmise financière et administrative qui pèsent actuellement sur l'enseignement supérieur en de nombreux pays.

La concurrence peut promouvoir la qualité de l'enseignement, n'exclut pas les liens de coopération et ne peut être réduite à un concept purement commercial. En effet, en plusieurs pays européens, les universités ne sont pas encore sur un pied d'égalité avec leurs concurrentes et sont en particulier confrontées à une fuite de cerveaux à l'intérieur même de l'Europe.

L'enseignement, une responsabilité publique

L'Espace européen de l'enseignement supérieur doit se construire sur la tradition européenne d'un enseignement tenu pour une responsabilité publique; mais aussi sur un accès ouvert et extensif aux niveaux *undergraduate* et *postgraduate*, sur une éducation de la personnalité débouchant sur un apprentissage tout au long de la vie qui favorise l'esprit citoyen et une meilleure adéquation aux besoins de la société — à court comme à long terme.

La recherche, condition de l'enseignement supérieur

La recherche constituant l'identité motrice de l'enseignement supérieur, la création de l'Espace européen de l'enseignement supérieur doit aller de pair avec celle d'un Espace européen de la recherche.

Une diversité organisée

L'enseignement supérieur européen se caractérise par des langues, des systèmes nationaux,

des types d'établissement, des profils institutionnels et des orientations de programmes très divers. Son avenir dépend cependant de sa capacité à tirer parti de cette diversité qui fait sa richesse pour aboutir à des résultats constructifs plutôt que contraignants, comme à plus de flexibilité que d'opacité. Les institutions d'enseignement supérieur désirent ainsi recourir à des politiques de convergence — et notamment à la recherche de dénominateurs communs, par-delà les frontières, à un domaine disciplinaire donné. Ainsi la diversité devient atout plutôt que motif d'exclusion ou de non-reconnaissance. Les institutions entendent donc élaborer un système d'auto-régulation permettant d'assurer un niveau suffisant de cohésion afin que leurs efforts pour davantage de compatibilité ne soient pas sapés par trop de volatilité dans la définition des crédits, des catégories de diplômes et des critères de qualité.

QUESTIONS FONDAMENTALES

La qualité en tant que pierre angulaire

L'Espace européen de l'enseignement supérieur doit non seulement prendre forme autour de valeurs académiques essentielles mais aussi répondre aux attentes des différentes parties prenantes en faisant preuve de la qualité de ses prestations. Leur évaluation doit tenir compte des objectifs et de la mission des institutions comme de leurs programmes, ce qui demande un juste équilibre entre innovation et tradition, entre excellence académique et pertinence socio-économique, entre cohérence des cours et liberté de choix des étudiants. L'évaluation englobe enseignement et recherche ainsi que gouvernance et administration ; elle s'intéresse à la réponse apportée aux besoins des étudiants et à la fourniture de services extra-académiques. La qualité intrinsèque d'une institution d'enseignement supérieur ne suffit pas: elle doit être prouvée et garantie afin de pouvoir être visible et crédible aux yeux des étudiants, des partenaires institutionnels et de la société en général, à l'intérieur de son pays comme en Europe et dans le monde.

La qualité est la condition nécessaire de la confiance, de la pertinence, de la mobilité, de la compatibilité et de l'attrait des institutions parties de l'Espace européen de l'enseignement supérieur.

Mériter la confiance

Si l'évaluation de la recherche revêt une dimension internationale, il en va de même pour l'assurance qualité appliquée à l'enseignement supérieur. En Europe, l'assurance qualité ne devrait pas reposer sur une seule et unique agence imposant un ensemble unique de normes communes. Pour construire l'avenir, il faut bien plutôt à l'échelle européenne des mécanismes de reconnaissance mutuelle des résultats émanant des divers systèmes d'assurance qualité, dont «l'accréditation» constitue un moyen parmi d'autres. Ces mécanismes doivent respecter les différences nationales et linguistiques et le caractère des différentes disciplines, cela sans surcharger les universités.

Assurer la pertinence

L'adéquation aux besoins de l'emploi doit se refléter différemment dans les cursus selon que les compétences acquises ont pour objectif l'entrée sur le marché du travail à l'issue du premier ou du second niveau de qualification. Ce sont la valeur intrinsèque d'un enseignement de qualité, la diversité des approches et des profils des cours proposés, la flexibilité de programmes dotés de points d'entrée et de sortie multiples, le développement de compétences et d'aptitudes transversales telles que la communication et les langues, comme la capacité à exploiter ses connaissances, à résoudre des problèmes, à travailler en équipe et à s'insérer dans la société qui nourrissent le mieux l'employabilité durable dans la perspective d'un apprentissage tout au long de la vie.

Développer la mobilité

Le libre mouvement des étudiants, du personnel académique et des diplômés constitue une dimension essentielle de l'Espace européen de l'enseignement supérieur. Les universités européennes veulent le développer — tant au plan «horizontal» que «vertical» — mais estiment que la mobilité virtuelle ne saurait remplacer la mobilité des personnes. A cet effet, elles sont prêtes à utiliser de façon constructive et flexible les instruments existant en matière de reconnaissance et de mobilité, (ECTS, Convention de Lisbonne,

Supplément au Diplôme, réseau NARIC/ENIC). Vu l'importance des besoins en personnel enseignant formé à l'Europe, les universités souhaitent voir éliminer le critère de nationalité et tout autre obstacle dissuadant de s'engager dans une carrière académique européenne. Il est par ailleurs également nécessaire d'adopter une approche commune à l'ensemble des pays européens concernant la mobilité virtuelle et l'éducation transnationale.

Rendre compatibles les formations en deux phases

Les institutions d'enseignement supérieur acceptent de développer un cadre commun de qualifications s'articulant en deux phases. Il existe ainsi un consensus pour que le premier diplôme exige de 180 à 240 points ECTS mais soit très diversifié, préparant principalement à un emploi ou à la poursuite d'un cycle plus approfondi de formation. Sous certaines conditions, une université doit pouvoir décider de mettre en place un programme d'un seul tenant conduisant directement à un niveau de maitrise. Les réseaux centrés sur une discipline académique donnée peuvent jouer un grand rôle dans de telles décisions. Les universités sont persuadées que le système d'accumulation et de transfert de crédits basé sur l'ECTS, assorti de leur droit fondamental à décider de la validité des crédits obtenus dans un autre établissement, ne présente que des avantages.

Rendre attrayant l'enseignement supérieur européen

Les institutions européennes d'enseignement supérieur désirent pouvoir attirer les talents venant du monde entier, ce qui exige des mesures à prendre aux plans tant institutionnel que national et européen. Il s'agit d'adapter les cursus, de rendre lisibles les diplômes dans et hors d'Europe, de donner crédibilité à l'assurance qualité, de dispenser des programmes dans les langues internationales les plus répandues dans le monde, d'assurer des informations et un marketing adaptés, d'améliorer l'accueil des étudiants et des chercheurs étrangers, tout cela en favorisant la mise en réseau stratégique des institutions. Le succès d'une telle politique dépendra de la levée rapide des réglementations pénalisantes restreignant l'immigration et l'accès au marché du travail.

Les institutions européennes d'enseignement supérieur ont conscience que leurs étudiants ont besoin et demandent la mise en place de qualifications qu'ils peuvent effectivement utiliser pour la poursuite de leurs études et leur carrière dans l'ensemble de l'Europe. Ces institutions, de même que leurs réseaux et organisations, reconnaissent leur responsabilité et leur rôle à cet effet, confirmant ainsi leur désir de s'organiser pour y arriver, cela dans le cadre de leur autonomie institutionnelle.

Les institutions d'enseignement supérieur en appellent aux gouvernements, dans un contexte national et européen, pour qu'ils facilitent et encouragent le changement en assurant des conditions propices à la coordination et à la mise en place de la convergence. Elles se savent capables et désireuses de susciter le changement pour contribuer au progrès d'une entreprise commune permettant :

- de donner une définition nouvelle de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche valable pour l'ensemble de l'Europe;
- de réformer et mettre à jour programmes et systèmes d'enseignement supérieur;
- de s'appuyer sur la dimension recherche pour renforcer l'enseignement supérieur;
- d'adopter des mécanismes d'acceptation mutuelle des modes d'évaluation, d'assurance et de certification de la qualité;
- de développer des dénominateurs communs à valeur européenne pour rendre compatibles la diversité des institutions, des diplômes et des cursus ;
- de promouvoir en Europe la mobilité des étudiants et du personnel académique ainsi que l'employabilité des diplômés;
- de soutenir les efforts de modernisation entrepris par les universités des pays où la création de l'Espace européen de l'enseignement supérieur représente un défi particulièrement important;
- de relever les défis pour être plus lisibles, plus attrayantes et plus compétitives à l'échelle nationale, européenne et mondiale; et
- de réaffirmer que l'enseignement supérieur constitue une responsabilité publique fondamentale.

BOTSCHAFT VON SALAMANCA GESTALTUNG DES EUROPÄISCHEN HOCHSCHULRAUMS

Über 300 europäische Hochschulen und die wichtigsten Organisationen, die sie vertreten, tagten vom 29. - 30. März 2001 in Salamanca. Ziel dieser Konferenz war die Vorbereitung des Beitrags für das Treffen der für Hochschulwesen zuständigen Minister in den Ländern, die am Bologna-Prozess teilnehmen; die Teilnehmer haben folgende Ziele, Grundsätze und Prioritäten vereinbart :

Gestaltung der Zukunft

Die europäischen Hochschulen bekunden erneut ihre Unterstützung der Grundsätze der Erklärung von Bologna und ihr Engagement für die Schaffung eines Europäischen Hochschulraums bis zum Ende dieses Jahrzehnts. Sie betrachten die Gründung der Europäischen Hochschulvereinigung (*European University Association – EUA*) in Salamanca als eine symbolische und praktische Handlung, um ihrer Stimme bei den Regierungen und in der Gesellschaft mehr Gehör zu verschaffen und sie somit bei der Gestaltung ihrer eigenen Zukunft im Europäischen Hochschulraum zu unterstützen.

GRUNDSÄTZE

Autonomie und Rechenschaftspflicht

Der Fortschritt verlangt, dass die europäischen Universitäten in der Lage sein müssen, gemäß dem leitenden Prinzip der Autonomie mit Rechenschaftspflicht zu handeln. Als autonome und verantwortliche Rechts- Bildungs- und Sozialeinheiten bekennen sie sich zu den Grundsätzen der *Magna Charta Universitatum* von 1988 und vor allem zum Prinzip der akademischen Freiheit. Die Universitäten müssen die Möglichkeit haben, ihre Strategien festzulegen, ihre Prioritäten für Forschung und Lehre zu setzen, ihre Mittel zuzuteilen, ihre Studienpläne zu erstellen und ihre Kriterien für die Aufnahme von Dozenten und Studenten zu bestimmen. Die europäischen Hochschulen nehmen die Herausforderung einer Tätigkeit in einem wettbewerbsorientierten Umfeld im eigenen Land, in Europa und in der ganzen Welt an, sie müssen jedoch zu diesem Zweck über die notwendige Freiheit des Managements, leichte und unterstützende

Regulierungen und eine faire Finanzierung verfügen, denn ohne diese Bedingungen wären sie bei der Zusammenarbeit sowie im Wettbewerb gegenüber anderen benachteiligt. Die für die Schaffung des Europäischen Hochschulraums nötige Dynamik wird ungenutzt bleiben, oder zu einem unausgeglichene Wettbewerb führen, wenn die gegenwärtige Überregulierung und die umständliche verwaltungs-technische und finanzielle Kontrolle der Hochschulen vieler Länder aufrechterhalten werden.

Der Wettbewerb fördert die Qualität der Hochschulbildung, er schließt die Zusammenarbeit nicht aus und kann nicht auf ein kommerzielles Konzept beschränkt werden. In einigen europäischen Ländern können die Universitäten sich heute noch nicht zu gleichen Bedingungen am Wettbewerb beteiligen; sie erleben insbesondere eine unerwünschte Abwanderung von Wissenschaftlern, sogar innerhalb von Europa.

Bildung als öffentliche Verantwortung

Der Europäische Hochschulraum muss auf der europäischen Tradition beruhen, die Bildung als einen Bereich der öffentlichen Verantwortung betrachtet, offenen Zugang zu Studien der ersten sowie der weiteren Stufen bietet, Bildung als persönliche Entfaltung und lebenslanges Lernen fördert und dem Bürgersinn sowie der sozialen Relevanz auf kurze und lange Sicht Rechnung trägt.

Auf der Forschung beruhende höhere Bildung Da die Forschung eine treibende Kraft der Hochschultätigkeiten darstellt, muss die Schaffung des Europäischen Hochschulraums mit der Schaffung des Europäischen Forschungsraums einhergehen.

Organisation der Vielfalt

Das europäische Hochschulwesen ist geprägt durch die Vielfalt der Sprachen, der nationalen Systeme, der Art und Profile der Institutionen und der Orientierung der Studienpläne. Seine Zukunft hängt aber auch von der Fähigkeit der

Hochschulen ab, diese wertvolle Vielfalt wirksam zu organisieren, um positive Ergebnisse eher als Schwierigkeiten und Flexibilität eher als Undurchsichtigkeit zu erzielen. Die Hochschulen wollen auf der Konvergenz aufbauen — insbesondere auf gemeinsamen Nennern, die jeweils auf einem bestimmten Gebiet grenzüberschreitend gültig sind — und sie wollen die Vielfalt als Vorteil betrachten und nicht als Ursache für eine Verweigerung der Anerkennung oder für einen Ausschluss. Sie setzen sich für die Schaffung einer ausreichenden Selbstregulierung ein, die ein Mindestmass an Kohäsion gewährleistet, damit ihre Bemühungen um die Kompatibilität nicht durch zu starke Unterschiede bei der Bestimmung und Einführung von Krediten, Kategorien der Diplome und Qualitätskriterien untergraben werden.

SCHLÜSSELFRAGEN

Qualität als grundlegender Baustein

Der Europäische Hochschulraum muss auf akademischen Kernwerten beruhen und gleichzeitig den Erwartungen der Beteiligten entsprechen, d.h. Qualität nachweisen. Bei der Bewertung der Qualität müssen die Ziele und Aufgaben der Institutionen und Programme berücksichtigt werden. Sie erfordert ein Gleichgewicht zwischen Innovation und Tradition, zwischen akademischer Exzellenz und sozial/ökonomischer Relevanz sowie zwischen der Gestaltung der Studienpläne und der Wahlfreiheit der Studenten. Die Qualitätsbewertung umfasst Lehre und Forschung ebenso wie Führung und Verwaltung, die Aufgeschlossenheit für die Bedürfnisse der Studenten und die Bereitstellung von Dienstleistungen, die nicht dem Bildungsbereich angehören. Inhärente Qualität genügt jedoch nicht, sie muss dargestellt und garantiert werden, damit sie von den Studenten, den Partnern und der Gesellschaft in dem jeweiligen Land, in Europa und weltweit anerkannt wird und Vertrauen gewinnt.

Qualität ist die grundlegende Bedingung für Vertrauen, Relevanz, Mobilität, Kompatibilität und Attraktivität im Europäischen Hochschulraum.

Vertrauensbildung

Ebenso wie die Bewertung der Forschung hat auch die Gewährleistung der Qualität im Hochschulwesen eine internationale Dimension. In Europa sollte die Qualitätssicherung nicht Aufgabe einer einzigen Organisation sein, die gemeinsame Normen setzt. Der Weg in die Zukunft wird in der Schaffung von Mechanismen auf europäischer Ebene für die gegenseitige Akzeptanz von Qualitätsgarantie-Entscheidungen bestehen, wovon die "Akkreditierung" eine mögliche Form darstellt. Diese Mechanismen sollten die nationalen, linguistischen und fachlichen Unterschiede respektieren und die Universitäten nicht überbelasten.

Relevanz

Die Relevanz in Bezug auf den europäischen Arbeitsmarkt muss auf verschiedene Weise in den Studienplänen zum Ausdruck kommen, je nachdem ob die erworbene Kompetenz einer Beschäftigung nach der ersten oder nach der zweiten Studienstufe dienen soll. Die berufliche Einsatzfähigkeit im Sinne des lebenslangen Lernens wird am erfolgreichsten durch den inhärenten Wert einer ausgezeichneten Bildung, durch die Vielfalt der Lernmethoden und der Studiengangprofile, durch die Flexibilität der Programme mit multiplen Eintritts- und Austrittsmöglichkeiten und durch die Entwicklung transversaler Kenntnisse und Fertigkeiten — wie Kommunikation und Sprachen, die Fähigkeit, Wissen zu mobilisieren und Problemlösungen, Teamarbeit und soziale Prozesse voranzubringen — gefördert.

Mobilität

Die freie Mobilität der Studenten, des Personals und der Hochschulabsolventen ist eine wesentliche Dimension des Europäischen Hochschulraums. Die europäischen Universitäten wollen eine stärkere Mobilität fördern — sowohl die "horizontale" als auch die "vertikale" Form; sie sehen die virtuelle Mobilität nicht als Ersatz für die physische Mobilität an. Sie sind bereit, die bestehenden Instrumente für Anerkennung und Mobilität (ECTS, Abkommen von Lissabon, Diplom-Zusatz, NARIC/ENIC-Netz) auf positive und flexible Weise zu nutzen. Angesichts der Bedeutung der Lehrkräfte mit europäischer

Erfahrung möchten die Universitäten die Anforderungen hinsichtlich der Nationalität und andere Hindernisse für die akademische Laufbahn in Europa abbauen. Ein gemeinsamer europäischer Ansatz für die virtuelle Mobilität und die transnationale Bildung wird ebenfalls erforderlich sein.

Kompatible Qualifikationen auf beiden Diplomebenen

Die Hochschulen unterstützen den Trend zu einem kompatiblen Qualifikations-Rahmen mit einer deutlichen Unterteilung in zwei Diplomstufen. Man stimmt dahingehend überein, dass für die erste Studienstufe 180 bis 240 ECTS-Punkte erforderlich sein sollten, dass diese Diplome aber unterschiedlichen Studienprofilen entsprechen müssen, je nachdem ob sie zur Aufbau einer beruflichen Tätigkeit oder zur Vorbereitung für weitere Studien dienen sollen. Unter bestimmten Umständen kann sich eine Universität für die Einführung eines integrierten Studienplans entscheiden, der direkt zum "Master-level" führt. Auf Sachgebieten beruhende Netzwerke spielen bei diesen Entscheidungen eine wichtige Rolle. Die Universitäten sind überzeugt von dem Nutzen eines Systems der Akkumulierung und des Transfers von Krediten, das auf ECTS beruht, und von ihrem Recht, über die Zulässigkeit der Annahme von Krediten von anderer Seite zu entscheiden.

Attraktivität

Die europäischen Hochschulen wollen in der Lage sein, Talente aus allen Teilen der Welt anzuziehen. Das verlangt Aktionen auf institutioneller, nationaler und europäischer Ebene. Zu den besonderen Maßnahmen gehören: die Anpassung der Studienpläne, akademische Grade, die innerhalb und ausserhalb von Europa bekannt sind, glaubwürdige Maßnahmen zur Qualitätssicherung, Programme, die in den wichtigsten Weltsprachen unterrichtet werden, adäquate Information und Marketing, gute Empfangsdienste für ausländische Studenten und Dozenten und strategisches Networking. Der Erfolg hängt auch von der raschen Abschaffung der prohibitiven Zuwanderungs- und Arbeitsmarktregulierungen ab.

Die europäischen Hochschulen stellen fest, dass ihre Studenten Qualifikationen brauchen und verlangen, die sie wirksam für ihr Studium und ihre Karriere überall in Europa nutzen können. Die Hochschulen, ihre Netzwerke und Organisationen erkennen ihre Rolle und Verantwortung in diesem Zusammenhang und bekunden ihre Bereitschaft, sich im Rahmen ihrer Autonomie in dieser Hinsicht zu organisieren.

Die Hochschulen fordern die Regierungen dazu auf, in ihrem nationalen sowie im europäischen Bereich den Wandel zu erleichtern und zu ermutigen und einen Rahmen für die Koordination und die Hinführung zur Konvergenz bereitzustellen. Sie kundigen ihre eigene Fähigkeit und Bereitwilligkeit zur Anregung und Unterstützung des Fortschritts in dem gemeinsamen Bestreben

- die Hochschulbildung und die Forschung für ganz Europa neu zu definieren;
- die Studienpläne und das gesamte Hochschulwesen zu reformieren und zu erneuern;
- die Dimension der Forschung im Rahmen der Hochschulbildung zu fördern und auszubauen;
- gegenseitig annehmbare Mechanismen für die Bewertung, die Gewährleistung und die Zertifizierung von Qualität zu entwickeln;
- auf gemeinsamen Nennern mit einer europäischen Dimension aufzubauen und die Kompatibilität zwischen verschiedenen Institutionen, Studienplänen und akademischen Graden zu gewährleisten;
- die Mobilität der Studenten und der Mitarbeiter sowie die berufliche Einsatzfähigkeit der Absolventen in Europa zu fördern;
- die Modernisierungsbemühungen der Universitäten in denjenigen Ländern, wo die Herausforderungen des Europäischen Hochschulraums am grössten sind, zu unterstützen;
- die Herausforderung, im eigenen Land, in Europa und weltweit bekannt, attraktiv und wettbewerbsfähig zu sein, anzunehmen und
- die Hochschulbildung auch weiterhin als Gegenstand der öffentlichen Verantwortung anzusehen.

MENSAJE DE SALAMANCA PERFILANDO EL ESPACIO EUROPEO DE LA ENSEÑANZA SUPERIOR

Más de trescientas instituciones europeas de enseñanza superior con sus principales organismos representativos se han reunido en Salamanca los días 29 y 30 de marzo 2001, con el fin de preparar su aportación a la Conferencia de Ministros responsables de Enseñanza Superior de los países firmantes de la Declaración de Bolonia que tendrá lugar en Praga. En dicha Convención se aprobaron las metas, los principios y las prioridades siguientes:

Perfilando el futuro

Las instituciones europeas de enseñanza superior reiteran su apoyo a los principios de la *Declaración de Bolonia* y su compromiso de crear un Espacio Europeo de la Enseñanza Superior antes de finalizar este decenio. Consideran que la creación en Salamanca de la *European University Association* (EUA), por su valor tanto simbólico como práctico, servirá a transmitir con mayor fuerza su mensaje a los gobiernos y a las sociedades, ayudándoles así a perfilar cada uno su propio futuro dentro del Espacio Europeo de la Enseñanza Superior.

PRINCIPIOS

Autonomía con responsabilidad

El progreso exige que se faculte a las universidades de manera que puedan aplicar el principio fundamental de autonomía con responsabilidad. Como entidades jurídicas, educativas y sociales, autónomas y responsables reafirman su adhesión a los principios de la *Magna Carta Universitatum* de 1988 y, en particular, al de la autonomía universitaria. Por lo tanto, las universidades deben poder elaborar sus estrategias, elegir sus prioridades en cuanto a docencia e investigación, asignar sus recursos, desarrollar sus currícula y fijar sus criterios de admisión de estudiantes y profesores. Las instituciones europeas de enseñanza superior aceptan el reto que supone funcionar dentro de un sistema competitivo en su propio país, en Europa y en el mundo entero pero necesitan para ello una autonomía administrativa suficiente, una normativa ligera y propicia y una financiación adecuada sin las cuales se encontrarían en desventaja a la hora de competir y cooperar. En efecto, de mantenerse en nume-

rosos países el exceso de reglamentación y control administrativo y financiero de las instituciones de enseñanza superior o bien faltará el dinamismo necesario para lograr la plena realización del Espacio Europeo de la Enseñanza Superior, o bien éste no garantizará una competencia en condiciones de igualdad.

La competencia es útil para mejorar la calidad de la enseñanza superior, no impide la cooperación y no es una noción exclusivamente comercial. Las universidades de ciertos países europeos todavía no están en condiciones de poder competir en condiciones de igualdad lo cual les expone, en particular, a un inevitable éxodo de cerebros hacia otros países europeos.

La educación es un servicio público

El Espacio Europeo de la Enseñanza Superior deberá respetar los principios de la tradición europea en materia educativa: la educación es un servicio público; acceso amplio y abierto a los estudios de pregrado y de postgrado; educación con vistas a una realización personal y educación a lo largo de toda la vida; educación a la ciudadanía y educación con significación social tanto a corto como a largo plazo.

La enseñanza superior se sustenta en la investigación

Puesto que la investigación es el motor de la enseñanza superior la creación del Espacio Europeo de la Enseñanza Superior y la creación del Espacio Europeo de la Investigación deben completarse.

La articulación de la diversidad

La enseñanza superior en Europa se distingue por la diversidad de idiomas, sistemas nacionales, tipos y perfiles de institución y desarrollo curricular. Su futuro dependerá precisamente de su capacidad para articular con eficiencia esa valiosa diversidad afin de que genere ventajas y no inconvenientes, flexibilidad y no opacidad. Las instituciones de enseñanza superior aspiran a desarrollarse basándose en la convergencia — en especial en los denominadores

comunes a los países dentro de una determinada disciplina — y a considerar la diversidad como cualidad positiva y no como motivo de no-reconocimiento o exclusión. Están dispuestas a facilitar la suficiente autoregulación para garantizar la cohesión mínima necesaria para no paralizar el progreso hacia la compatibilidad, por excesiva diversidad en la definición y aplicación de créditos y entre las principales categorías de grados y criterios.

TEMAS PRINCIPALES

La calidad como pilar esencial

El Espacio Europeo de la Enseñanza Superior tiene que desarrollarse en torno a unos valores académicos fundamentales y cumplir a la vez las expectativas de todas las partes interesadas y, en particular, dar pruebas de buena calidad. En efecto, la valoración de la calidad debe tener presente la misión y los objetivos asignados a cada institución y a cada programa. Requiere un equilibrio entre innovación y tradición, excelencia académica y pertinencia social y económica, coherencia de los currícula y libre elección del estudiante. Comprende la función docente e investigadora pero también la dirección y la administración, la capacidad de respuesta a las necesidades de los estudiantes así como la prestación de otros servicios además de los educativos. La calidad no basta con que se dé, hay que poder demostrarla y garantizarla para que la reconozcan y aprecien los estudiantes, los responsables y toda la sociedad del país, de Europa y del mundo.

La calidad es la condición sine qua non para dotar al Espacio Europeo de la Enseñanza Superior de confianza, pertinencia, movilidad, compatibilidad y atractivo.

Granjearse la confianza

Al igual que la evaluación de la investigación, también la garantía de calidad de la enseñanza superior comporta una dimensión internacional. La garantía de calidad en Europa no puede correr a cargo de un solo organismo que aplique una serie uniforme de normas. El planteamiento futuro consiste más bien en diseñar mecanismos de reconocimiento mutuo de garantía de calidad a nivel europeo, siendo la "acreditación" una opción posible. Dichos mecanismos deberán respetar

las diferencias entre países, idiomas y disciplinas y no suponer una carga de trabajo excesiva para las instituciones.

Pertinencia

La adecuación de la enseñanza a las necesidades del mercado laboral deberá reflejarse convenientemente en los currícula, en función de que las competencias adquiridas estén pensadas para un empleo consecutivo al primero o al segundo ciclo de enseñanza. Dentro de la perspectiva del aprendizaje a lo largo de toda la vida como mejor podrá lograrse la empleabilidad será mediante la buena calidad intrínseca de la enseñanza, la diversidad de orientaciones y tipos de cursos, la flexibilidad de los programas con múltiples posibilidades de entrada y de salida así como el desarrollo de habilidades y competencias transversales tales como comunicación e idiomas, capacidad de manejar la información, de resolver problemas, de trabajar en equipo y de desenvolverse socialmente.

Movilidad

La libre circulación de estudiantes, profesores y diplomados constituye un aspecto esencial del Espacio Europeo de la Enseñanza Superior. Las universidades europeas quieren fomentar una mayor movilidad tanto "horizontal" como "vertical" y no piensan que la movilidad virtual pueda reemplazar la movilidad física. Tienen intención de utilizar de manera flexible y positiva los instrumentos de reconocimiento y movilidad existentes (ECTS, Convención de Lisboa, Suplemento al Diploma, Red NARIC/ENIC). Dada la importancia que se atribuye a que el profesorado adquiera experiencia europea las universidades desean eliminar los requisitos de nacionalidad y demás trabas que desalienten a seguir una carrera académica europea. Pese a todo seguirá necesitándose un enfoque común en materia de movilidad virtual y de educación transnacional.

Compatibilidad de las cualificaciones a nivel de pregrado y de postgrado

Las instituciones de enseñanza superior apoyan una dinámica de creación de un marco para

regular la compatibilidad de las cualificaciones basado esencialmente en la distinción entre dos ciclos de estudios: de pregrado y de postgrado. Existe amplio acuerdo en que el primer ciclo o pregrado debe comportar entre 180 y 240 ECTS si bien los créditos no serán los mismos según se trate de una titulación destinada a ejercer un empleo o de una preparación para proseguir estudios de posgrado. En ciertos casos una universidad podrá crear un currículo integrado que lleve directamente a la obtención de un Master. Las redes de cooperación universitaria por materias influirán de manera decisiva dichas decisiones. Las universidades están convencidas de las ventajas que representa un sistema de acumulación y transferencia de créditos como el ECTS y reafirman su derecho fundamental a decidir acerca de la aceptación o no de los créditos obtenidos en otros lugares.

Atractivo

Las instituciones europeas de enseñanza superior desean reunir condiciones para poder atraer personas del mundo entero. Ello exige un esfuerzo por parte de la institución y de las autoridades nacionales y europeas. Entre las medidas concretas cabe destacar la adaptación curricular, un sistema de titulaciones fácilmente legible dentro y fuera de Europa, medidas convincentes de garantía de calidad, cursos impartidos en las principales lenguas internacionales, campañas de información y marketing adecuadas, servicios de acogida para estudiantes y becarios extranjeros e implantación de redes estratégicas. El éxito dependerá igualmente de la pronta eliminación de las restricciones a la inmigración y al acceso al mercado de trabajo.

Las instituciones de enseñanza superior son conscientes de que los estudiantes necesitan y reclaman titulaciones que les sirvan realmente para seguir estudios o ejercer una carrera en cualquier parte de Europa. Las instituciones con sus respectivas organizaciones y redes reconocen la responsabilidad y el papel que les incumbe a este respecto y reiteran su propósito de organizarse para lograrlo respetando el principio de la autonomía universitaria. Las instituciones de enseñanza superior lanzan un llamamiento a los gobiernos

para que, tanto en el contexto nacional como europeo, impulsen y alienten el cambio y proporcionen un marco de coordinación y asesoramiento que facilite la convergencia. Afirman su capacidad y voluntad de iniciar y respaldar el progreso de una acción común destinada a:

- volver a definir una enseñanza superior e investigación para toda Europa;
- remodelar y actualizar todos los currículos de la enseñanza superior;
- ampliar y desarrollar la labor investigadora de la enseñanza superior;
- aprobar mecanismos de aceptación mutua para la evaluación, garantía y certificación de la calidad;
- reforzar la dimensión europea partiendo de los denominadores comunes y asegurar la compatibilidad entre instituciones, currículos y grados;
- promover la movilidad de estudiantes y profesores y la empleabilidad de los diplomados en Europa;
- apoyar los esfuerzos de modernización de las universidades en los países donde el desafío de un Espacio Europeo de la Enseñanza Superior es más difícil de lograr;
- lograr un sistema legible, atractivo y competitivo a nivel nacional, europeo e internacional; y
- seguir defendiendo la enseñanza superior como un servicio público esencial.

ACTO DE INAUGURACIÓN DE LA CONVENCION DE INSTITUCIONES DE LA ENSEÑANZA SUPERIOR

Palabras de su Alteza Real, el Principe de Asturias

Señoras y Señores,

Permitidme que al iniciar mi intervención os exprese mi gran alegría por estar de nuevo en Salamanca y en especial por tener la oportunidad de volver a esta ciudad con motivo de un acto universitario. Agradezco, por tanto, al Rector Magnífico de la Universidad de Salamanca la invitación a presidir este acto inaugural que convoca a la comunidad de Enseñanza Superior Europea a un acertado ejercicio de debate y análisis que no puede más que generar consecuencias positivas para todos nosotros y nuestro futuro común.

La relevancia e interés de los temas que se debatirán a lo largo de las sesiones de trabajo, junto al elevado grado de participación alcanzado en esta convocatoria, son muestra del dinamismo de las universidades europeas y de su capacidad para cooperar y coordinar sus acciones de forma autónoma y responsable.

Es evidente el papel destacado que las universidades y otras instituciones de enseñanza superior han jugado, y deben seguir jugando, en la construcción europea. La Europa que queremos se basa en el capital intelectual y la gestión del conocimiento, con los que formula un proyecto de libertad, convivencia y participación que exige una apuesta decidida por la educación, la ciencia y la cultura.

Los programas de movilidad académica de la Unión Europea han permitido impulsar las relaciones entre nuestras instituciones de enseñanza superior y desarrollar, de manera natural, el principio de confianza mutua y un intercambio que promueve la calidad de nuestros sistemas universitarios. Se abre ahora un nuevo escenario, en el que deberéis saber combinar acertadamente la diversidad, reflejo de la riqueza cultural de nuestros pueblos y de la demanda plural de nuestras sociedades, con la accesibilidad y la compatibilidad de nuestras estructuras de enseñanza superior, con el fin de asegurar

que el aprendizaje de los Europeos no quede limitado más que por la voluntad, mérito y capacidad de cada uno de ellos.

En este contexto, la construcción de un espacio europeo de la enseñanza superior merece toda nuestra atención. Garantizar la calidad, promover la cooperación entre instituciones, favorecer la movilidad y facilitar el aprendizaje a lo largo de la vida son algunos de los aspectos a los que debe dedicarse especial interés y esfuerzo.

Pero carecería de sentido definir un ámbito de cooperación universitaria que no mirara más allá de nuestro continente, que no reflejara la riqueza de las intensas relaciones ya existentes con las universidades de otras regiones. Nuestro horizonte ha de ser caminar juntos hacia espacios de interrelación más amplios y, por ello, saludo con especial afecto y simpatía la presencia de una importante delegación de Rectores y responsables universitarios de la comunidad iberoamericana de naciones.

Contáis con todo nuestro apoyo para la definición de nuevas fórmulas que propicien el debate y la reflexión sobre los problemas comunes, faciliten el intercambio de información y experiencias, garanticen la coordinación de iniciativas y, en definitiva, fomenten la cooperación entre las universidades iberoamericanas. El encuentro entre nuestras comunidades universitarias es a la vez reflejo y catalizador del encuentro entre nuestros pueblos, de nuestra solidaridad y de nuestro respeto mutuo.

Señoras y Señores, en términos generales, y con resultado incierto pero a todas luces abrumador, vemos cómo el rápido y continuo desarrollo de las tecnologías de la información y de las comunicaciones está cambiando nuestra forma de vida y generando profundas transformaciones en nuestra sociedad. Las limitaciones temporales y espaciales han desaparecido y las tecnologías multimedia ofrecen nuevas oportunidades y

retos en nuestra forma de acceder y divulgar información, al tiempo que abren nuevas posibilidades para el aprendizaje.

Cuanto mayor es la cantidad de información generada por una sociedad, mayor es la necesidad de convertirla en conocimiento. En la sociedad del conocimiento, la creatividad y la capacidad de aprendizaje a lo largo de la vida serán imprescindibles para garantizar el empleo, del mismo modo que la capacidad de innovación es y continuará siendo clave para el buen desarrollo empresarial. La educación, la ciencia y la tecnología están llamadas a jugar en este proceso un papel insustituible y constituyen, hoy más que nunca, recursos estratégicos para el desarrollo y el progreso de los individuos y los pueblos.

Pero el nuevo horizonte que se abre no está exento de riesgos ya que, si es evidente que la ingente cantidad de información que se genera no está todavía accesible en igualdad de oportunidades a todos los ciudadanos, aún lo es más el peligro de generar barreras cada vez más infranqueables entre los ricos en conocimiento y los pobres en conocimiento.

Pero aún con ello está muy claro que invertir en conocimiento es invertir en futuro; y la medida más importante de nuestro éxito en este terreno será nuestra capacidad para adaptar las instituciones de enseñanza superior de forma que puedan dar respuesta a los nuevos retos. Retos que se nos plantean cada vez en mayor número, y que son consecuencia, por un lado, de la diversificación de las sociedades en el mundo y su composición crecientemente multicultural;

y por otro, de la incorporación de nuevas tecnologías a la vida cotidiana, las nuevas dimensiones del trabajo basadas en la capacidad de iniciativa personal y colectiva, la mutación permanente de los perfiles profesionales, el carácter interdisciplinar de los puestos de trabajo y la movilidad geográfica y cultural.

Por tanto, creo que es un motivo de esperanza y por ello de alegría que se tome conciencia de estos retos, se tomen las medidas necesarias para afrontarlos, y que esas medidas sean producto en gran parte de un profundo análisis conjunto por parte de las Universidades Europeas y siempre abierto a otras comunidades educativas.

El próximo sábado se constituirá, en el Paraninfo de la Universidad de Salamanca, la Asociación Europea de la Universidad. Quiero adelantarme a daros ya hoy mi más sincera enhorabuena por esta iniciativa. Ese día ha de ser también ocasión para expresar nuestro agradecimiento a cuantos durante años han trabajado en favor del desarrollo universitario europeo.

Mi felicitación a los organizadores de esta Convención y a todos los que han hecho posible este importante hito en la construcción del Espacio Europeo de la Enseñanza Superior.

Os deseo un fructífero debate y el mayor acierto en vuestras conclusiones. Y que disfruten de su estancia en Salamanca.

Declaro inaugurada la Convención de Instituciones Europeas de Enseñanza Superior.

CÉRÉMONIE D'OUVERTURE DE LA CONVENTION DES INSTITUTIONS D'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR

Discours de Viviane Reding, Membre de la Commission européenne, responsable de l'Éducation et de la Culture

Votre Altesse Royale, Madame le Ministre, Mesdames, Messieurs,

C'est avec grand plaisir que j'ai accepté de participer aujourd'hui à l'ouverture de cette Convention des institutions européennes de l'enseignement supérieur, dans ces lieux extraordinaires qui témoignent de l'importance de la communauté universitaire et scientifique au cours des siècles passés et qui rappellent au monde de l'enseignement supérieur contemporain les attentes de la société du 21^e siècle.

Il est des moments importants, et celui que nous vivons aujourd'hui en est un. En effet, nous avons aujourd'hui la possibilité de donner à la coopération européenne en matière d'enseignement supérieur un nouvel élan et une nouvelle dimension.

Dois-je rappeler que les initiatives des Ministres de l'Éducation visant à créer les conditions favorables à une convergence accrue entre des systèmes parfois très divergents et en même temps étanches, qui se sont matérialisées dans les *Déclarations d'abord de la Sorbonne puis de Bologne*, ont en fait complété et généralisé les mesures et actions communautaires mises en oeuvre depuis plus de deux décennies. C'est pourquoi la Commission a appuyé sans aucune réserve les propositions de coopération qui lui ont été soumises par la Confédération des Conférences des Recteurs de l'Union européenne et par la CRE dans le cadre de ce que l'on appelle maintenant communément le processus de Bologne. Elle se félicite notamment de la **raison d'être** de cette Convention qui s'attachera à identifier les défis que nous pose le nouveau siècle, ainsi que les grandes opportunités qu'il nous ouvre, et à en faire part aux Ministres de l'Éducation réunis à Prague les 18 et 19 mai prochain.

Nul ne contestera qu'il est important d'**adapter les systèmes éducatifs** au nouveau contexte européen, dans une perspective de **mondialisation** et de **compétitivité** que la société contemporaine nous impose, que nous le voulions ou non. Nul ne doute que les uni-

versités, qui ont toujours incarné le savoir, l'avenir de la société, doivent apporter leur part de réflexions et de propositions de solution aux multiples défis qui sont désormais connus de tous. Nul ne songe que la survie des universités et des établissements d'enseignement supérieur pourrait de quelque façon être menacée: les besoins en enseignement de qualité, à un niveau supérieur, n'ont peut-être jamais été autant identifiés comme constituant un élément indispensable à l'épanouissement personnel de l'individu et au développement économique et social de nos sociétés. Le Conseil européen de Lisbonne a reconnu et fortement souligné le fait que le savoir constitue un atout essentiel pour l'Union.

Le **leitmotiv** des rapports d'experts ayant eu pour mission ces dernières années d'évaluer les systèmes éducatifs — tant au plan national qu'europpéen — est qu'il faut **moderniser nos universités**, proposer des cursus flexibles, réduire les différences entre qualifications professionnelles et universitaires, mieux répondre aux besoins de nos sociétés pour favoriser l'employabilité et répondre aux attentes individuelles en vue d'un épanouissement personnel. De plus en plus, les employeurs souhaitent que leur personnel soit capable de résoudre des problèmes nouveaux et de prendre des initiatives. Il faut donc que les universités continuent à pouvoir répondre à cette demande, en assurant une excellente formation générale, d'une part, et en adaptant sans cesse des filières spéciales aux besoins du marché de l'emploi permettant ainsi aux apprenants d'acquérir de nouvelles compétences, d'autre part.

Il est donc indispensable de renforcer la coopération entre les universités et tous leurs partenaires potentiels, d'instaurer un dialogue et d'infléchir, si besoin est, les programmes pour les adapter aux multiples besoins nouveaux et publics nouveaux. Ce n'est donc pas un hasard si les questions liées à l'employabilité sur le marché du travail européen feront l'objet d'une réflexion approfondie dans le cadre de cette Convention.

L'université doit dépasser la rivalité entre deux logiques que l'on oppose à tort: celle du service public et celle du marché du travail. Elle confortera ainsi le sens de sa **mission intellectuelle et sociale** au sein de la société. La Commission y voit des raisons pertinentes pour plaider en faveur d'une plus grande autonomie des universités, thème qui sera abordé dans l'atelier I consacré à l'autonomie et la responsabilisation des établissements d'enseignement supérieur.

Cependant, pour que les réformes éducatives nécessaires aboutissent, il faut convaincre les **trois acteurs principaux** qui contribuent à leur succès:

- en tout premier lieu la communauté locale, notamment les chefs d'établissement, les enseignants, les étudiants, qui sont représentés dans cette convention et que j'encourage vivement à faire entendre leur voix pour faire connaître leurs besoins et leurs attentes ;
- en deuxième lieu, les autorités publiques ;
- en troisième lieu, la communauté européenne.

Bien des exclusions et des échecs ont été dus dans le passé à l'engagement insuffisant de l'un ou l'autre des partenaires.

Vous êtes réunis ici aujourd'hui et demain pour réfléchir sur les solutions concrètes à apporter aux problèmes qui se posent à l'enseignement supérieur: accès démocratique, nouveaux publics, interdisciplinarité, nouvelles filières, nouvelles technologies, dialogue avec le monde socio-économique, compétitivité, employabilité, éducation transnationale, qualité, certification, etc. De nombreuses initiatives répondant partiellement à ces défis ont déjà vu le jour, tant au niveau national que communautaire. Il s'agit de les identifier, de diffuser les bonnes pratiques, et d'aller au-delà de ce qui existe déjà en faisant preuve d'initiative, voire d'audace.

Les **résultats**, les **recommandations** issus des groupes de travail de cette conférence serviront de base à l'élaboration du rapport qui sera présenté aux Ministres de l'Education à Prague.

Pour ma part, je m'engage aussi à ce que mes services, dans le respect du principe de subsidiarité, soutiennent vos projets et vos idées en vue de réaliser ensemble cet espace euro-

péen de l'éducation. A vous donc d'indiquer, parmi vos recommandations, celles qui relèvent de la compétence de la communauté locale et que vous serez donc en mesure de mettre en œuvre à court terme, celles qui relèvent de la compétence nationale et celles qui relèvent de la compétence européenne.

En ce qui concerne les programmes communautaires, la **Commission** continuera de jouer son rôle de **catalyseur** dans le domaine de l'éducation et de la formation. A cet égard, permettez-moi de souligner que les établissements d'enseignement supérieur, dont beaucoup sont déjà engagés dans des actions de collaboration européenne dans le cadre du programme Leonardo et de l'action Erasmus du programme Socrates, trouveront dans l'action Grundtvig de ce dernier programme l'occasion d'expérimenter concrètement des collaborations innovantes avec des partenaires extérieurs, qu'il s'agisse d'entreprises, d'autres pourvoyeurs de formation, de collectivités locales ou d'associations dans le cadre de leur contribution à l'éducation tout au long de la vie. Afin de préciser ses objectifs en ce domaine, la Commission a élaboré un *Mémoire sur l'Education et la Formation tout au long de la vie*, qui a été présenté aux Conseils des Ministres de l'Education, de la Jeunesse, de l'Emploi et des Affaires Sociales en novembre 2000, sous présidence française.

Nos divers **programmes** serviront à **nourrir la réflexion**, à **soutenir les nouvelles initiatives** et à **faire connaître les exemples de bonne pratique**.

A cet égard, je tiens à souligner une fois encore le rôle transversal des établissements d'enseignement supérieur dans les programmes communautaires. La Commission considère depuis toujours que les universités, qui représentent l'élite du monde de l'éducation, ne doivent plus se limiter à dispenser des cours traditionnels. Elles doivent permettre une construction continue de la personne humaine, de son savoir et de ses aptitudes, de sa faculté de jugement et d'action. Elles doivent permettre aux étudiants, quels que soient leur origine, leur âge, leur expérience préalable, de prendre conscience d'eux-mêmes et de leur environnement et leur permettre de jouer leur rôle social dans le travail et dans la cité.

L'ouverture de l'université à d'autres publics ne saurait se traduire par une dévalorisation des programmes et des diplômes.

Plusieurs expériences ont déjà été tentées dans les Etats membres. La Commission a lancé des projets pilotes dans le domaine de l'accréditation des acquis préalables (*Accreditation of Prior Learning*, *Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning*) et attend vos recommandations dans ce domaine. Il semblerait d'ailleurs que les questions relatives à la qualité et à l'accréditation qui seront examinées dans l'atelier V, se situent aujourd'hui au centre des préoccupations du monde éducatif. Le Réseau européen d'assurance de la qualité dans l'enseignement supérieur (ENQA), créé en mars 2000, sera vraisemblablement appelé dans un proche avenir à jouer un rôle plus actif dans l'élaboration d'une approche de la qualité au niveau européen, en consultation et en étroite collaboration avec les universités.

Même si nous avons déjà bien avancé dans la création d'un «Espace éducatif européen», même si nous avons, notamment grâce à vous, progressé dans la voie de la coopération, il reste beaucoup à faire. Personne n'ignore que, dans le cadre de la mobilité étudiante et enseignante, des **obstacles politiques, financiers, pratiques et liés à la reconnaissance** demeurent. Je compte sur vous pour identifier des pistes d'action réalistes et concrètes dans l'atelier III, en ce qui concerne non seulement la mobilité physique mais surtout la mobilité virtuelle, avec tous les défis nouveaux qu'elle suppose.

La Commission est en train de réfléchir, avec des experts nationaux, sur la possibilité d'établir un système de crédits d'accumulation et de transfert qui permettrait à tout un chacun **d'acquérir et d'accumuler des crédits tout au long de la vie**, basé sur les principes du **système européen de transfert de crédits ECTS** qui a connu pour sa part un succès incontestable dans les milieux universitaires. C'est l'un des thèmes qui seront abordés au cours de cette conférence. A ce sujet, je tiens à vous informer que le projet «*Tuning of Higher Education Structures*», la mise en convergence des structures de l'enseignement supérieur en Europe, auquel participent directement ou indirectement plus de deux cents

établissements d'enseignement supérieur, a été lancé voilà six semaines. J'imagine que ce projet sera au centre des débats de l'atelier IV, qui se penchera sur la compatibilité des structures de l'enseignement supérieur en Europe.

J'ai examiné attentivement le programme de la conférence préparé par le comité d'organisation, que je tiens à remercier pour le travail accompli. Je sais que le nombre de participants a dû être limité et que toutes les demandes n'ont pu être satisfaites. Eu égard cependant à l'excellence des participants présents, je n'ai aucun doute quant à la pertinence et à la qualité des résultats des débats.

Les **thèmes** abordés dans les ateliers ne sont **pas nouveaux**. Les recteurs, qui ont mis en place des organisations très efficaces au niveau européen leur permettant de se réunir régulièrement pour discuter de problèmes d'intérêt commun — je pense ici entre autres au réseau Coimbra auquel participe l'université de Salamanque — se sont déjà penchés sur ces thèmes et suivent d'ailleurs de près la réflexion organisée par la Commission autour de plusieurs d'entre eux. La Commission attend donc de vous des **propositions concrètes, pratiques, réalistes, des pistes d'action** afin qu'elle puisse jouer son triple rôle d'initiateur, de catalyseur et d'intermédiaire auprès des autorités compétentes nationales et des autres institutions européennes comme le Conseil, et le Parlement européen.

Pour terminer, je réitère donc mon engagement à adapter les programmes communautaires, le cas échéant, pour tenir compte de vos recommandations et à diffuser vos propositions au niveau européen. Je vous souhaite deux journées de travail fructueuses et vous demande d'identifier, parmi les recommandations que vous ferez, ce que vous pouvez réaliser de manière autonome et ce que vous attendez de vos gouvernements nationaux et de la Commission.

Je vous remercie de votre attention.

POTENTIAL CONVERGENCE AND THE COST OF STATU QUO

Keynote speech by Josep M. Bricall¹, Universitat de Barcelona

1. Twelve years ago, in the Rector's Office at the University of Barcelona, as we were preparing to draft the *Magna Charta Universitatum*, Professor Alfredo Romanzi, the then President of the CRE, told me: "Dear Josep, a university professor is a man like any other, but he doesn't know it".

Often we deem our institution to be so peculiar, that it cannot be influenced by historical evolution or social development. Sometimes we even boast of it. To think that was perhaps not so important in the past. To pursue such a behaviour today would demonstrate dramatic irresponsibility among the leaders of universities and other institutions of higher education.

Indeed, over many centuries, there have been few moments when, as at present, the risk of losing the sense of history's influence on our institutions has been so high. This is particularly true as we are not only supposed to react to recent social transformation but also to adopt a proactive behaviour if we are to control and even to steer change.

I would like to deal with my subject along the lines evoked by the title given to me by the organisers. Thus, in a first section, I will point to those trends of the last thirty years that play a decisive role in the shaping of higher education today; I will then focus on particular aspects of this evolution, which speak more to the concerns of a European approach to higher education. In a second section, I shall comment some of the universities' responses to the pressures exerted by the trends mentioned above and I shall underline how risky and dangerous it would be for higher education to proceed with no clear set of references. Finally, in a third section, I will attempt to indicate some lines of thought for the future and how risks can become opportunities.

From trends to pressures

2. Let me begin with the trends!
Often we refer to our past as troublesome.

Have not universities had to cope with more students, with new types of students, with new demands from society, with more social accountability, with less funding, and so on? And often our institutions reacted by ad hoc responses. Why? Because they have lacked a coherent vision of their future. And a sensible view of the future very much depends on a careful gaze at the present reality, born out of the pressures exerted by enduring historical forces. I would like to suggest four of them.

First, **technological change** as indicated by information processing, the major productive activity of human beings interested in process control. Following the Industrial Revolution, the largest contribution of human labour was — and still is — to control the means of production, machines and equipment in particular, those tools that actually carry most of the physical work. Human control was not always easy to separate from the work function itself. The separation of both functions increased slowly over the centuries: as a result, external energy (i.e., non-human power) progressively substituted for human arm and leg strength when operating machines.

The influence of this technological development has been enormous on the education system. At the beginning, in the core countries of the Industrial Revolution, vocational studies became important in secondary education, while vocational training in higher education remained limited to certain technical fields, engineering or business management, for instance. In the 19th century, however, the need for highly qualified skills provided the background for new technical universities.

Recent progress in technology has started a new phase in the application of science and technical knowledge to economic, cultural and social aspects in our life. Thus, even in control and organisation activities, now man has often been replaced by machine, individuals being offered more room for creativity, change and innovation, or for the develop-

¹ I am very grateful to Dr A. Barblan for his cooperation.

ment of critical views about our technical and social life. In modern societies, human work is less and less equivalent to physical labour.

At this new stage of development, the recent changes in information and communication technologies have deeply affected the scope of education and research. From there on, the high level of jobs has required the sophisticated training higher education institutions can offer. Thus, higher education — understood as post-secondary education — increased its scope much beyond the traditional fields of academic training. Moreover, the application of science is no longer considered as a mere transfer from university research to society but represents an interactive process requiring the cooperation of very different research agents and users.

Such an evolution explains many recent developments in our institutions. Thus we have more students, indeed, but of a different kind too. A recent study of OECD² points to the diversification of students enrolled in higher education: "young adults", that is to say, students older than the traditional ones, people in their late twenties; "second biters", who come back to higher education in order to complement or update their knowledge; and "new chancers" asking to benefit from further training opportunities. The purpose of such students is often professional or linked to the labour market, but it is certainly not their only goal.

These new students will not represent the exception in the future; on the contrary, they will be the rule. In fact, traditional university students, on one side, and new learners, on the other, refer to different strands of the education path. Their merger is possible when learning is considered as an activity spread along the citizens' entire life. Probably, in not too distant a future, only slight differences will divide initial education from continuing education. However, the design of such a new learning path will breed trouble and such an evolution is doomed to hurt many interests, individual or corporate. Weaving together initial learning and continuing education into a lifelong learning structure requires the integration of part-time studies and work interruptions leading to important curricula changes.

For instance, the duration of initial studies will evolve with the need to provide knowledge in an endless and continuous flow. As jobs are changing with innovation and social evolution, students also know that their future is linked to their training and re-training at different periods of their life. As a result, they demand for more learning to learn rather than the teaching of well proven data.

Moreover, in some cases and at some moments, students require access to scientific disciplines, while at other times, they need the techniques and knowledge implicit for work performance that will help them fit into the pecking order of the labour market: most students want to be prepared for a job in trade and business rather than be trained in liberal arts and the traditional professions. To perform a job, they must learn how to behave in their professional life, how to innovate, how to deal with the problems they face, etc. In other words, they need competencies as much as intellectual references.

Answering this demand in order to adapt to change is not easy, especially if universities must put at risk the format and organisation of scientific disciplines which represent not only the input of their education processes but also the set curricula which give students the right to a degree or a diploma. Curricula do not only churn out diplomas, however, they also prepare for jobs and train for new positions, even in a traditional make-up. That is why academics, from the point of social efficiency, can also understand the radical view³ that "specific educational experience may replace a university degree".

Next to individual demands for structured information, the technical development has placed knowledge at the centre of social and economic development. Therefore, our institutions are also requested to engineer an evolution characterised by an innovation drive transforming research outputs into growth engines. In this context, higher education institutions become thus agents for the economic development of communities, regions or even continents.

When there are such clear demands for higher education as well as people ready to pay for access to knowledge, on one side, and, on the

2 OECD (1999), *Education Policy Analysis 1999*, Paris.

3 Hoyer, H. in *F2000 – Responding to challenges for European Universities*, Report, European Commission, Eucen, July 2000.

other, when there are institutions willing to offer education services, there is a market of higher education. But beyond that evidence and more important than such a market, higher education has become a branch of the productive activities, i.e., a sector necessary to provide inputs used by society as a whole: and this has longer-lasting effects on our institutions than market behaviour. Why? Because universities are not alone in the field, far from it. Our institutions compete with other institutions of higher education or with newcomers, powerful — and sometimes prestigious — distance education institutions, for instance, or for-profit providers. In the field of research too, next to public institutions, corporation laboratories and private centres now take their place; in developed countries, more than 50% of national research activities are financed or run by the private sector! In other words, trends in the production processes have turned into external pressures as far as universities are concerned. Does this mean that universities are not subject to new pressures, also from the inside? Let us look to a second historical trend to discuss that point.

3. Yes. An important consequence of technical change is the increased importance of **services in society**. Services are not only more numerous today and representing a greater percentage of social activity than before but they are also organised in a very different way. If industry, from the very beginning, made of machines and energy the new tools of production, services remained activities performed with a personal touch referring to traditional norms of craftsmanship. Until recently at least! For long, services refused to be organised in a standard form like industry. And the jobs the universities were preparing for were in fact activities needing to be performed as services, the traditional way.

This is no longer true as information and communication technologies are transforming the framework and system of labour. Services today tend to be organised as if they were part of an industrial production, now that they dispose of tools which master the internal division of work in such a way that the service output becomes easily identified by its users.

As providers of services tending towards industrial organisation, higher education institutions have started to adapt to the new situation. There are some clear signs of that change, for instance, the growing priority given to the GATS (*General Agreement on Trade and Services*) negotiations organised as part of the Millennium Round of the *World Trade Organisation*. Another sign is the growing number of studies interested in obstacles "to trade in education".

These external signs express pervasive developments inside the institutions of higher education. Services as an industry induce phenomena such as mergers and fusions, spin-offs or downsizing now considered parts of university policies in several countries. But, interestingly enough, in several instances, in comparison with social services other than educational, universities seem to cling to traditional ways of face-to-face iterative action. The contrast between these two poles of understanding is fascinating if one is to grasp better the inner concept a university may have of itself.

May I take some examples? To deal with the multiplicity of functions that need to be fulfilled, the institution can become multipurpose in its set up. The incentives can be based on those activities linked to strategic goals; this evokes a transformation in institutional governance; but stimulation has to count on non-monetary rewards and on institutional facilities not so often important in other activities. Other approach: should universities improve their service function by taking the format of conglomerates or, otherwise, should they concentrate on their core business? The choice between the conglomerate and core activities is indeed not framed in the world of higher education as in other social sectors.⁴

If we turn away from institutions, the new patterns of service organisation also play on individual attitudes as far as they promote new behaviour. "New managerialism" or "academic capitalism" are some of the expressions attached to such behaviours. "New managerialism" underlines the role of decision made at intermediate level and is interested in the earmarking of funds allocated

⁴ *The strategic analysis of universities: microeconomic and management perspectives*, ed. by Dewatripont, M., Thys-Clement, F. and Wilkin, L. Brussels, 2001.

to the university, for instance. As for "academic capitalism", it analyses the way higher education institutions "seem to grasp the encroachment of the profit motive into the academy" and the way "faculty and professional staff expend their human capital stocks increasingly in competitive situations. In this environment university employees are simultaneously employed by the public sector while becoming increasingly autonomous from the public, corporate body".⁵

We can observe traces of such conducts in the higher education sector, even if in a rather incipient manner for the moment.

The above-mentioned pressures are trickling down in territories with no really fixed borders — leading to the build up of new pressures.

4. A third pressure, for example, comes from **the enlargement of the framework** of higher education activities. At present, university work tends to spill over its usual limits, be they national or administrative.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the wish of governments to recruit a qualified elite and to set up a national culture did seriously threaten the universality of universities. Now this state demarcation is cracking, not only among universities.

Thus, the process of production is fragmenting while the spread of global market is growing; a similar phenomenon arises when transnational public opinion rises to express worries about civil rights disruptions. Public authorities and regional organisations like the European Union have also new concerns, some of them being translated as "the European dimension" now pervading higher education curricula.

The evolution of the Socrates and Erasmus programmes was built on the wish of Europeans to overcome frontiers and to look further, at the continent as a whole. Thus started a snow-balling process characterised, like in production by recourse to "vertical references" reducing the "horizontal fragmentation" developing in several territories; in other terms, the territorial, geographical mobility of students calls for the counter

weighing force of vertical mobility in which "a significant proportion of those holding Bachelor degrees change universities (and possibly subject and/or country) for their post-graduate studies". This trend will increase in the future with the integration of the labour market and physical or virtual mobility will become the rule instead of exceptions or complementary actions.

The access to mobility, however, is still hampered by large obstacles, which, as usual, hurt the weakest among the students. That is why pressure is mounting on several fronts: the need for improved information and transparency in order to gauge learning possibilities and their fitness to the students' and stakeholders' demands; the need for convergent and compatible curricula, particularly to allow for the vertical mobility mentioned above; the need to protect learners, citizens and firms⁶ by recognition, quality assessment and accreditation coordination, be it at the European or transnational level; the need for grants and scholarships following the beneficiaries across administrative borders.

To summarise, on one hand, powerful forces push higher education to more similar approaches: "young Europeans seem less preoccupied with national differences and more concerned with the acquisition of a qualification giving access to the labour market, and usable internationally"⁷, while mobility and employability concerns interact with each other; on the other hand, "no nation can afford the full coverage of all aspects of knowledge. No government can effectively govern the national higher education"⁸.

This last remark drives us to the fourth trend of interest for the higher education sector.

5. Tight budgets. I do not refer to conjuncture problems like the balancing of public budgets, not an easy one to solve. I am thinking rather of structural developments: in most wealthy countries, for instance, it is difficult to increase the burden of taxation to cover the large expenditures required in the next years by education and research; simply because higher education is being generalised and research becomes the core tool of progress.

5 Slaughter, S. & Leslie, L.L., appointed by Thys-Clement, F., *ibid.*

6 Machado dos Santos, S. (2000), *Introduction to the theme of Transnational Education*. Haug, G. (2000), *Response to Prof. Sergio Machado's presentation "Introduction to the theme of Transnational Education"*. Conference of the Directors General for Higher Education and the Heads of the Rectors' Conferences of the European Union. Aveiro, 3-4 April 2000.

7 Haug, G., *op. cit.*

8 Aaviksoo, J. (2000), *Networking, a tool of convergence for a European Area of Higher Education*. Keynote speech to the 54th biannual conference of CRE and CEPES. Cracow, 26-27 October 2000.

When analysing university budgets, it is clear that sixty or seventy per cent of their amount represents the minimum share coming from public and charity funding. In Europe — at least in the short term — the structure of public finance as well as academic tradition do not allow to count on alumni support or to expect sufficient endowment from private foundations in order to pay for the enormous overheads and investments needed by universities. Resource supply does not meet the demand, also when invoking private funding. We need to be clearly reminded of this if we are not to daydream the future.

Student fees and revenue generated by applied research or lifelong education are other streams of income but they cannot cover more than a part of the institution's overheads.

Moreover, in European society, the gratuity of higher education is considered part of the public service provided by universities. This idea is now being questioned because education also represents a private good increasing input for job opportunities of specific individuals. A new balance is far from being achieved however.

All the more so as a second reason for gratuity is the guarantee for equal opportunities granted to all citizens. Lifelong learning is enlarging the scope of this principle by offering to "second chancers" and "second biters" similar rights to equal opportunities. As indicated by OECD⁹, the removal of an elite society does not mean a fair society: "students from high socio-economic groups are more likely to be able to choose from the full range of tertiary education options... The issue for policy and practice is how to ensure that all learners will both have access to a wide range of learning options and be enabled and encouraged to progress and succeed in study programmes, pathways and combinations which best meet their interest and backgrounds as well as wider social and economic needs."

Risky responses to pressures

6. Every university is doing its best in order to respond to the challenges imposed by

change. Our institutions, however, cannot resist pressures resulting from so deep trends. Their influences are being felt in institutions thanks to two mechanisms of social regulation: the market and the governments.

To sway such agents and steer the process of change, universities must plan their future, look ahead in order to re-arrange the present situation. In responding to pressures, their first reaction, however, too often consists in building up new structures and setting up new units alongside the traditional ones, without reforming the latter. This juxtaposition induces complex management methods, whose sheer complication requires the creation of a professional bureaucracy. Moreover, juxtaposition is often practised not at the level of individual institutions but in the higher education system as a whole. Nevertheless, juxtaposition does not seem to be the solution. Why?

In higher education, some courses give a broad multidisciplinary approach in their first stages while offering later a more specialised focus in one discipline so that the student develops a solid basis in a specific field. Other courses begin with the vocational training from the first cycle of studies, even, in some cases, preparing the ground for basic skills in a very short period of time — in the shape of sub-degrees. These examples of divergence clearly point to the growing diversification of academic institutions, internally and among them, as well.

Nevertheless in spite of the diversity of purpose and in each case different patterns of learning, inter-institutional boundaries tend to blur because of bridges being built between curricula with the help of credit transfer or credit accumulation, for instance. Indeed, such blurring of limits, even of those recently raised, responds to a deep yearning for unity, a coherence achieved through the mobility of students. Even obstacles existing as legal requirements by national authorities could be gotten rid of with the creation of a global space of higher education. But the spontaneous drift of market mechanisms soon displays its limits when Europeans long for some kind of intellectual cohesion to accompany the single market of goods and

capital. Consequently, a conscious policy is required to balance the different forces that make coherence a challenge!

Contradictions need to be solved. For instance, by combining a student tailored curriculum with the institution's commitment to curricula fit for vocational or disciplinary needs. Universities reason in terms of content, methodology and the academic progression of the programme: can they guarantee the "graduateness" of curricula when society demands skills made interchangeable by the use of the credit systems everywhere? Another example, considering that research, education and labour has obvious European or transnational dimensions, how should national policies on research and higher education be reconciled with European or global strategies? Finally, given "the risk of being driven only by business needs with separation of education activities inside universities between those clearly linked to business and those which are not",¹⁰ how should the empirical approach needed to develop vocational courses and employability feed into a European understanding of the role of the humanities or of the environment in learning practice or in the university community life?

7. Diversification and convergence thus represent two complementary aspects which should not be reduced to each other — this implies the capacity to accept tensions that become rewarding if used in a conscious way.

Let me introduce another area where we can suffer the risks of following this spontaneous drive of the market: competition. We are often told that the new era of competition among institutions of higher education and distance learning could induce death among universities. This is probably true but, rather than announcing future tragedies, it would be wiser to try and understand through which channels competition works.

"The appearance of new providers of higher education... and the fast emergence of global English as an alternative to the national language" mean "systems will be less and less protected from foreign competition by their monopoly on education offered in the national language".¹¹ It seems to me that competition

only works among universities and other higher education institutions — be they offering face-to-face experience or virtual learning — if students can apply for educational services and if they have the resources to pay for them; true, when "students carry no money with them there is no need to compete for them".¹² However, with the falling number of traditional students and the growing gap in funding, competition will increase among institutions. They will fight also for teachers and professors, luring them by better facilities and incentives, at the risk of imposing brain drain to weaker regions or institutions. They will of course struggle also for privileged contacts with corporations, government and civil society.

But such a competition, if not framed in a strategy with explicit aims, could prove disastrous for the university. It could be positive, however, if institutional policies could use comparative advantages to create a niche for the university to prosper.

Of course competition has advantages when mobilising an institution away from routine. But, in many instances, it could also evoke centrifugal temptations leading to different departments and programmes breaking up from institutional control under the pretext of empowering agents shackled by administrative routine and the traditional organisation of disciplines with the development of innovative action and services. But the loss of internal cohesion could damage the mission of the university, waste its resources or stifle its capacity to allocate resources according to academic criteria of excellence. Hence, the counter-drive aiming at reinforcing the university governing bodies so that they can resist "short term" requests by the institution's sub-units or by individuals. In other words, the market is no panacea to control the pressures of deeply entrenched trends of change.

8. Is government a better tool of regulation for society and for university life? Not as long as traditional, pervasive, *ex ante* regulations of higher education prevail: they do not make sense for the future. Indeed law cannot foresee a changing environment — it is part of it — and the urgency of decisions can no longer wait for slow legal reforms. Neither can higher education institutions hold to uniform patterns

¹⁰ Froment, E. (2001), *Some Thoughts on Accreditation in Europe*. Keynote speech to a conference of CRE. Lisbon, 8-10 February 2001.

¹¹ Haug, G., *op.cit.*

¹² Aaviksoo J., *op.cit.*

of organisation. When the pace of change accelerates, institutions need in fact more autonomy in order to steer their course of action in function of their own capacity to react¹³. Such capacity expresses various responses to many demands, responses whose correct mix binds several functions around a core, defining activity informed by conscious strategic choices.

As a consequence, dynamic universities seriously fear over-regulation by government as well as all the additional rules edicted by transnational organisations. Protectionist legislation stifles adaptability and competitive ability.

But universities are needed by society for guaranteeing its progress. Hence the right role governments should play consists in encouraging the universities' fitness to social goals by supporting quality assessment, i.e., by developing the social accountability of institutions clearly held responsible for the qualitative preferences made by public authorities.

Government policy must be transparent. Otherwise universities run the risk of being granted wider autonomy in a context of no real structural reform. This is true in some countries where change has been incremental, keeping to legal regulations rather than to political drive¹⁴.

Now that European governments have agreed to develop policies of convergence in different areas, some voices have also pleaded for a common policy in research and higher education. And, since the Lisbon summit of last year, research has been put on the European agenda as a priority, should the continent improve its model of society, also in social and economic terms. To reach such an objective, the European Commission has been suggesting the adoption of ten measures, research and ICT being part of the package deal, in particular through the 6th Framework Programme.

As for higher education, in line with the *Sorbonne and Bologna Declarations*, European governments have engaged in "coordinating policies to reach in the short term, and in any case within the first decade of the third millennium, objectives considered 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".

Interestingly enough, the governments, in Bologna, decided to move by proposing strong cooperation to European higher education institutions, the latter being committed to the fundamental principles laid down in the *Magna Charta Universitatum* also signed in Bologna in 1988, because "the universities' independence and autonomy ensure that higher education and research systems continuously adapt to changing needs, society's demand and advances in scientific knowledge". In other words, governments, as regulators, are betting on universities and we are here in Salamanca to bet on our governments' capacity to sustain openness and partnership in the long run. Such sustainability is needed to reward institutional autonomy.

From risks to opportunities Challenges to autonomy

9. "If universities do not demonstrate their capacity and willingness to plan their futures, explain the constraints on their action, engage dialogue and find help for solutions to those constraints, they are not using the power of autonomy, nor showing responsibility" state the *notes for discussion groups* prepared for the Convention.¹⁵

The exercise of autonomy entices risk, i.e., openness and daring, and we have to confess that courageous decisions are not so frequent in universities when they are challenged to fulfil their role in today's world. Routine is the most formidable foe of universities.

Risk, a way to consider future open, involves dialogue, a dialogue that needs institutional forms, for example, by introducing stakeholders and partners in the decision-making process or, even, on the structures of governance.

Dialogue also means accepting how obsolete our supposed self-sufficiency is. Thus dialogue leads to a networking policy sharing among institutions different strategic functions in order to establish long-term cooperation with university partners in the public sector, civil

¹³ O'Mahony, M. (2001), *Universities and the Bologna Process*, see hereafter p. 45.

¹⁴ Dewatripont, M., Thys-Clement, F. & Wilkin, L., *op.cit.*

¹⁵ O'Mahony, M., *op.cit.*

society and business. Therefore higher education institutions are made accountable not only to governments, the representatives of society, but also to international bodies, as soon as they recover a sense of their ambitions, European and universal.

May I quote the *notes for discussion groups*¹⁶ further? As a public service, they say, "the responsibility of universities in Europe has traditionally been heavy and it has become more complex: for example, to reflect critically upon the development of society, in an increasingly global context, or to create a sense of European citizenship. These and ethical issues, for instance, demand a leadership role from higher education institutions".

So complex responsibilities represent the added value of universities. And our concern as university leaders is to preserve such an **added value** to society in the institution's policies.

Three areas of concern are particularly relevant in this context.

10. First, the difficult balance between science and vocational training. The cross-fertilisation of teaching and research has distinguished the universities from other institutions of higher education.

Referring to the Paris case, Classen¹⁷ wrote, "From the beginning, in the 12th century, education suffered a strain between the fundamental push of searching the truth and the sensible desire of learning a practical preparation for the jobs".

When, at the end of the 18th century, the scientific revolution made science experimental, the universities were radically transformed. The drive in experimental sciences turned a new idea of truth now considered as a provisional statement, something to be discovered and then applied.

Then, at the beginning of the 19th century, particularly after the Humboldtian reform, the close link between teaching and scientific progress was enhanced.

At present, this primary relation deserves updating, even if some strands of higher education no longer feel concerned by such

complementarity, especially in a world of institutional diversification.

Second, Humanism. May I quote the fourth fundamental principle of the *Magna Charta Universitatum*: "The university is a trustee of the European humanist tradition".

This tradition points to the importance of human dignity, and, therefore, to the values of liberty and democracy. It is rooted in the Renaissance, where rediscovered classical authors and classical views entered in the universities in a progressive way.

At the beginning, Erasmus' idea to bring back theology to its sources turned into a new approach to scientific disciplines. From 1500 until 1800, it was accompanied by a deep change in the social functions of universities asked to meet the social needs prevailing in centres of trade and commerce: thus, the practice of humanism in our institutions shifted. After a first stage of reliance on the authority of the classics — the source of *studia humaniora* enlightening human understanding — the universities' interest moved to the application of such an understanding to new humanistic disciplines. "It was no longer a question of the way in which the ancients should be imitated, but rather of a comparison of the progressive present with the antiquated achievements of the ancient world".¹⁸

Therefore, the answers to problems did not depend any longer on their dogmatic correctness, but rather on their confrontation with situations they faced in function of subjective experience and knowledge.

Humanism had a pervasive influence on all disciplines and their teachers. Its dissemination helped universities to give a meaning to the unity of knowledge, envisaging different disciplines as part of knowledge taken as a whole.

This humanist tradition also needs reintegration into present reality, if our world is to cope with the fragmentation of specialised demands for studies and research.

Third value added by university work: personal and social promotion. Education and higher

¹⁶ O'Mahony, M., *op.cit.*

¹⁷ Quoted by Rüegg, W. in *A History of the University in Europe – Universities in Early Modern Europe*, Volume II, CRE. Cambridge 1996.

¹⁸ Rüegg, W., *op.cit.*

education have played a double role when sustaining the learners' personal development, on one side, and upgrading their social and economic status, on the other. Since the 19th century, an enormous effort has been made to disseminate primary and secondary education to all citizens. Now, it is the turn of higher education to spread to all corners of society. Official surveys foresee the practical generalisation of higher education, not in its traditional shape, but in a lifelong learning format. Education has already become a normal sector of business and social activity. It means that education progress is no longer a matter for the individual but that it has turned into a social affair — with full consequences on the development of society, now dependent on the positive effects of research and education, particularly if Europe is competing with other areas in the world. The socialisation of higher education also involves an obligation to suppress social

exclusion. In other words, our times of change gave a new meaning to the old understanding of our mission as higher education.

The Convention has an ambitious aim. To help "build the European Higher Education Area on the principles of autonomy and diversity, balanced with the need to show responsibility and to organise the variety of education to offer to students". May I set this objective in a humanistic perspective by quoting Pascal:

"Il faut savoir douter où il faut, assurer où il faut, en se soumettant où il faut. Qui ne fait ainsi n'entend pas la force de la raison. Il en a qui faillent contre ces trois principes, ou en assurant tout comme démonstratif, manque de se connaître en démonstration, ou en doutant de tout, manque de savoir où il faut se soumettre, ou en se soumettant en tout, manque de savoir où il faut juger".

CHANGES NEEDED AT UNIVERSITIES AND OTHER HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ORDER TO CREATE A COHERENT, COMPATIBLE, OPEN AND COMPETITIVE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

Keynote speech by Klaus Landfried, President, Hochschulrektorenkonferenz

I feel very honoured to have been invited to address this unique gathering of rectors and experts from other higher education institutions. Before I turn to changes needed and values which must be kept alive to create the European Higher Education Area, let me briefly recall why we need such an area in the first place.

Europe as organised in the European Union but also beyond the EU present borders is facing ever growing challenges. The toughest one is globalisation, another is the integration of several new Member States from central and eastern Europe in the years to come, all of them signatories to the *Bologna Declaration*. In the final conclusion of the Lisbon summit in March 2000, the Council of Ministers formulated the ambitious objective for the next decade to transform the European Union into the most competitive and dynamic science-based economic area world-wide. An essential element of such a science-based economic area must obviously be education and, in particular, higher education.

European higher education institutions will have a two-fold task in this process: by achieving excellence in education, training and research, they will help to increase European competitiveness. At the same time, the challenges for European citizens with regard to mobility, flexibility, language skills and openness to the unknown will increase gently. Universities can support citizens in dealing with these challenges by open discussion of the roots of social conflicts, prejudices and xenophobia, and above all by living up to their own principles.

Therefore you will probably share my point of view that the European Higher Education Area is indeed an indispensable project for the whole of Europe. Needless to say, cultural diversity must remain an element of profile, but no longer a reason for closing the doors. It is precisely the openness of the Bologna

Process that must prevent any notion of a "fortress Europe".

I will now present you seven theses, which try to encompass the traditional, present and future tasks of higher education institutions as I see them. And I will not hesitate to talk frankly about good and bad practice. And everyone will know for herself or himself where changes are needed at his or her own institution.

1. The mission of the **university** has always been simple and complex at the same time. It is to generate new knowledge; to preserve and critically review existing knowledge; to make students, both old and young, learn for themselves in classroom, lab, library and nowadays by digital networks; to follow ethical codes that transcend mere know-how, to promote economic application of newly generated knowledge in those areas where ethical responsibility says "go". All these complex tasks make it obvious that "state guidance" should limit itself to the provision of general objectives and rules of procedure for the sake of fairness and transparency, to the establishment of contracts with the university and then monitoring of these contracts by both parties, with the possibility of sanctions. This is the modern form of autonomy.

2. The organisation of higher education, training and research is and should remain primarily a public task. This does not mean that the actual realisation of these duties always requires a public or state structure if other solutions appear more promising. And private commitment is always welcome.

3. Research needs the liberty to evolve in the expectation of the unexpected, university life must allow for creativity and innovative thinking. This liberty, of course, may be misused, but we cannot do without it. And at the same time, freedom of research and teaching does **not** imply that staff cannot be dismissed if

they do not do their job, nor does it imply that students can remain indefinitely in their study programmes.

4. Terms like "buyers' market" or "sellers' market" are inadequate to describe the universities' attempt to accomplish these missions in a reasonable timeframe. On the other hand, ignoring the labour-market or questions of efficient use of resources like staff, books or lab equipment can pose a high risk to the sustainability of scientific and cultural work. This ambivalence is not easily overcome.

5. The practice of more autonomy and accountability in universities requires professional management by academics trained for this purpose. The collegial principle of traditional academic guilds with its pretended egalitarian implications of office-rotation and the time-consuming procedures of corporative academic self-administration are insufficient tools to face the new challenges. But neither is the handling of these matters by benevolent but detail-addicted civil servants in the ministry an appropriate solution. On the contrary, this will lead to a disastrous ratio of costs and return.

6. Academic self-management in a system where responsibility is decentralised and given to reasonably sized units which compete with each other, provides opportunities both for academic freedom and for the economic functioning of the institution. However, it also carries the risk of parochialism and an uneconomic muddling-through of small academic brotherhoods that remain aloof of the rest of the institution. The only remedy against the perpetuation of worn-out academic paradigms, or against the dull pressures of anticipating obedience in the face of a self-righteous "political correctness", is not structure but character. There is no easy way to promote the change of paradigms in and among the diverse academic cultures. Reality is not organised along scientific disciplines. Room for individual intellectual manoeuvre, material and immaterial incentives and prudent guidance from the management board provide necessary, but by no means sufficient, conditions for noticeable innovations. A further condition, which is equally necessary but

not in itself sufficient, is adequate funding. For this we still have to campaign continuously in the public arena.

7. The regular assessment of departments' performance in accomplishing these tasks is undoubtedly needed to improve quality. Equally necessary are new systems of incentives in the allocation of posts and funding, and in the salary structures for employees in universities and research institutions. A more performance-oriented grants and loans system for **all** students is also a requirement. In paraphrasing a famous sentence from the American Declaration of Independence, I say: "In God we trust. But all others have to prove their quality". However, none of these measures should be taken as a panacea. Only if we exercise sober judgement, based on good practice and common sense, will we preserve what needs to be preserved and change what needs to be changed.

What does all this mean for the European Higher Education Area?

The tools to operate those changes spelled out in the *Bologna Declaration* — a system of easily comparable degrees, the Diploma Supplement, ECTS, etc. — have all been discussed in detail in numerous national and European meetings since the Bologna Conference.

There are three tasks, however, which I consider of particular importance at this stage of the process:

- Firstly, the message is there. But who listens to it? So far, not too many. We have to get it through — to professors, staff, students, and by the media to the general public. With the *Bologna Declaration* and in the ensuing discussions, a majority of higher education institutions and governments in Europe agreed on a common higher education agenda for the next decade. This is in itself a major achievement, difficult to imagine only a few years ago. But, dear colleagues, this is not the end of a development, it is just the beginning. Ask a professor or a student in your institution, mention "Bologna" to journalists or politicians in your country, and you will quickly

realise: it is high time to leave the high level of insider discussions and solemn statements, and move to the strenuous task of confronting the ignorant and the unbelieving with information and arguments. In each country, university leaders and government representatives will have to make an analysis of the present situation and decide how to proceed from there. In Germany, for instance, the plenary assembly of the Rectors' Conference adopted a position paper on the Bologna Process last month. Now we will have to make sure that the message reaches also the "belly" of the universities, so to speak, and see how best to support the institutions in the implementation of the Bologna objectives. Regional workshops in which experts discuss the issues with representatives from the disciplines, professors, staff and students alike, may be a tool to generate understanding.

- The second task refers to the need for coordinating quality assurance and accreditation on a European level. You are aware of the conclusions of the CRE project on accreditation schemes for higher education in Europe. At the validation seminar in Lisbon in February 2001, the participants agreed that "there was a need for a trans-European quality assurance framework which would ensure the international visibility, compatibility and credibility of European higher education degrees." While there was a wide range of opinions on how best to organise such a framework, it was generally agreed that the solution must not be a centralised European evaluation or accreditation agency. We should rather envisage a network of national and regional agencies for quality assurance and accreditation which should be developed in dialogue with the competent state authorities in the participating countries. The aim of such a network should be to facilitate the mutual recognition of standards and procedures across Europe. I am fully aware that this may appear for the time being a rather controversial topic, but I consider it of great importance to place it high on the agenda for the next phase after the Prague conference.
- The third task refers to the importance of stimulating staff exchange. Everybody focuses

on the importance of student mobility which I am by no means denying. A more sustainable European dimension in education, however, can also be achieved by increasing staff mobility — and it reaches more students, too. I am not only talking about short-term mobility as it is supported, for instance, by Erasmus. We should aim at making mid- and long-term intra-European mobility of professors a much more common phenomenon than it is nowadays. You will recall that with regard to university staff, the *Bologna Declaration* calls explicitly for the "recognition and valorisation of periods spent in a European context researching, teaching and training, without prejudicing their statutory rights". There remains indeed important work to be done in national employment regulations and social security systems to ensure an easier transferability of pension rights, etc. But the rules and procedures, not to mention mental attitudes, in our own university faculties as well as administrations also leave much scope for change. This change would have to start with internationalising all the vacancy announcements by advertising them in international publications relevant to the higher education sector, and also on the internet. At some places there may be mental reservations to be overcome among colleagues who might not exactly welcome the idea that globalisation and competition — to which we all pay lip service — literally knock on their door in the threatening shape of a highly qualified young colleague from abroad who just moved into the office next door. But this has to become an indispensable element of a European higher education area really deserving such a name.

Let me end all these demands for changes by quoting a sentence from one of the really universal scientists, who at the same time was one of our greatest artists in Europe, and who once wrote: "Science rejuvenates the soul and decreases the bitterness of ageing".

His name was Leonardo da Vinci.

CONDITIONS FOR THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONVERGENCE PROCESS IN EUROPE

Roundtable of Stakeholders

DAVID COYNE
Director, Directorate A -
Education,
European Commission

1. The expectations society has of universities are changing. Society expects more of universities — for example contributions to employability, to developing regional growth (including therein more links with industry and the economy), to the maintenance of regional or local cultures and identities, to civil society or to social capital. In particular there is a new role for universities in developing and sustaining lifelong learning. Overall, a greater engagement with society and the economy is expected of universities, and their demands for funding have to be seen in that context.

2. The issue of university autonomy must be seen in that context as well. It is increasingly difficult to argue that universities must be funded because they exist, because they are the only way of "preparing for the unpredictable" and because academic freedom is the only way forward (the Humboldtian concept); now, arguments about funding have to have a perspective of value for money for society. As public finance becomes scarcer, the need for this perspective will grow in importance. Demands for increased autonomy will need to make the relationship with engagement that society increasingly demands.

3. Competition within the university world is here to stay — it is not something over which there is a choice. Information and communication technologies (and on-line learning) merely add another dimension to the choices which undergraduate and graduate students already have. While undergraduate students

will probably continue, to a large extent, to stay within normal patterns of choice of universities, we can already see a drift of postgraduate and research activity to a more limited number of institutions, not necessarily within Europe. Success in research attracts funding; funding enables equipment and more generous stipends; these attract better researchers and teams; they breed further success — which makes the process a virtuous cycle. Although this may not yet affect all universities (or disciplines) in Europe, it is an inescapable trend. Universities increasingly need to be able to demonstrate the quality and usefulness (for employment) of the courses they offer; and that they have a solid reputation behind them.

4. Ensuring quality is an important part of the solution to these issues. Academic quality needs to be ensured on an independent and impartial basis, drawing on internal self-evaluation and external peer review. Evaluation and quality assurance systems should be agreed mutually, so that their reputations can be established at a European and international level, and the qualifications they cover be recognised as being of high quality. Without such international recognition, international competitiveness cannot be ensured, and the virtuous cycle referred to above will work against European universities, not in their favour. At the same time, it has to be recognised that universities have become such complex systems that their administration and management processes need to be professional, and must themselves be subject to quality assurance.

GERD KÖHLER
Gewerkschaft Erziehung
und Wissenschaft (GEW),
The European Trade
Union for Education

Shaping the future of higher education and research in Europe means to realise that the times of ivory-tower thinking — institutionally as well as nationally — passed by. We have to rethink the relation between higher education and research institutions on the one hand, and of state and society on the other. Therefore, I would like to say thank you for the invitation of a trade unionist to partici-

pate in the Roundtable of Stakeholders at Salamanca. Higher education has to become an issue of a global social dialogue, of the "social dialogue" in the European Union and of course in the institutions themselves.

Within the given space, I cannot present a coherent concept of a European Higher Education and Research Policy. Therefore,

I will do it in presenting the trade unions' challenges we have to face.

Challenge: regional development

The "green-card debate" in Germany, the lack of engineers in information technologies, and the lack of teachers — all this shows that we have to think about the contributions of higher education to the qualification of the labour force within our countries. But a policy of "closer links" between higher education and the labour market has to respect that higher education is more than the uncritical adaptation to the *status quo*, that it is more than fulfilling the demands of a market which mainly follows short-term expectations of shareholders. A fashionable and market-driven system will primarily produce a mainstream. But mainstream is the opposite of fantasy and creativity, which do and have to play a significant role in a science-based society.

Higher Education and Research both have to show that they are able to find adequate solutions to society's questions. This is the other side of academic freedom. When we are asking for the strengthening of individual and institutional autonomy, we have to fulfil a social responsibility. This includes the discussion on quality and accountability. The institutions of higher education as well as the academic, technical and administrative staff and the students have

- to show what they are good for — that is the debate on quality;
- to show that they are using the given money in an effective and efficient way — that is the debate on effectivity.

Only when we are doing this in a convincing way, we shall survive in the distribution fights for public budgeting.

Challenge: conditions for employment and work of academic staff

When society, when the governments and parliaments are asking for the improvement of the quality of academic work, they have to accept the remark whether they are willing to offer employment conditions which allow and enhance the quality of academic work. My own union supported an international compar-

ative study on the Employment and Working Conditions of Academic Staff in Europe, which shows the growing casualisation of academic work, the non-comparability of employment conditions and the unwillingness of the employers to accept and respect the rights to collective bargaining. The trade union position is clear: we want to sit equally at the table to develop concepts for a European area of higher education and research without barriers, for the mobility of students and researchers with a Europe-wide accepted status for young researchers, with guaranteed social security and pension rights for academic staff which is willing to change and improve the work places throughout Europe. Why shouldn't the representatives of the European University Association and the *European Trade Committee for Education* talk about the issue of enhancing the quality of higher education through improvement of the working conditions of the "scientific workers"? We need more than the free flow (floating) of money, we need the free flow of productive and critical heads throughout Europe.

Challenge: Bachelor and Master degrees

The trade unions cooperating in the *European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE)* and — within wider range — the *European Regional Conference of Education International (EIE)* are supporting the policy to enhance the mobility of students, teachers and researchers in Europe and world-wide. But we are concerned with the ambivalences related to its implementation. We want to have a guaranteed permeability between shorter and longer, between the more practice- and the more theory-oriented, and between the more regionally- and the more internationally-oriented study programmes. We do not want to be confronted with new barriers of selection; we want to reach more than the reform of structures, we are willing to engage ourselves in the content reforms. Asking for the "European dimension" means for us at the same time to respect the diversity of the national identities.

The empowerment of the higher education institutions by the decentralisation of governmental competencies and decision-making is challenging the self-governance to a great

extent: higher education institutions have to develop clear policies for quality assessment, evaluation and accreditation. They have to find new ways for participation of students and teachers. Innovation through participation is the trade unions' position. To enhance these processes it will be helpful to create a clearing house for the dialogue on quality, evaluation and accreditation standards on the European level. A common platform has to be developed — step by step — to prepare European answers to the challenges from the North-American providers of educational services on the globalised market. Because these providers are playing a crucial role in the talks

at the *World Trade Organisation (WTO)*, we should commonly ask the European Commission to prepare a White Book on the "Consequences of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)". The necessary "internationalisation" of the academic work should not lead to a "global marketisation" of higher education and research. Through intensified cooperation between the higher education and research institutions on the one hand, and the trade unions on the other, we could strengthen the individual freedom and institutional autonomy of an academic workforce that is willing to fulfil its tasks of social responsibility.

STEFAN BIENEFELD
Member of ESIB
Executive Committee

ESIB — the National Unions of Student in Europe and the voice representing more than 8 million European students in 41 countries — generally welcome the Bologna Process and the increased cooperation between European states in the field of higher education in recent years. The increased cooperation at governmental level is a step which students, rectors and higher education institutions have already taken some years ago. In this respect, ESIB is so-to-say the student voice behind the *Bologna Declaration* and its intentions, just as the CRE and the Confederation present the voices of university rectors and higher education institutions in the process. ESIB has been actively involved in the follow-up of the *Bologna Declaration* and will continue its work in this decisive field of policy-making.

The students in Europe welcome the opportunity of outlining their points of priority in this important meeting. From a student perspective, the following points, which will be discussed below, are of great importance:

- access to higher education
- the social implications of the process
- quality of education
- mobility
- student involvement.

As regards **access to higher education**, it must be stressed that access to HE needs to be free. ESIB is opposed to tuition fees, entrance exams, *numerus clausus*, and other mechanisms that lead to student selection. Higher education must be accessible to everyone who is qualified to enter the system: it is an important force in society and must by no means be

changed into a tradable good or mere service only available to those who can pay for it.

The **social implications of the Bologna Process** must be taken into account more thoroughly. We have to take into consideration the extremely different socio-economic context in the different parts of the European continent and mechanisms must be developed to ensure that students from all the signatory states benefit from the Process. This includes the fact that sufficient social welfare systems for students need to be developed in every country, and based on study grants that should be portable to any other country in the European Higher Education Area.

Quality assurance mechanisms must be continuously developed and improved to enhance the quality of education offered in the institutions throughout the region. Accreditation mechanisms must be more thoroughly exchanged and good practices promoted. ESIB supports the setting up of a European body consisting of the EUA, ENQA and ESIB, to monitor the accreditation process in the different countries, collect information and spread good practices in accreditation throughout the European region. In addition, ESIB supports the setting up of a system of credits based on workload, which shall be used both for transfer and accumulation to ensure a better compatibility and comparability of studies in different countries. Recognition mechanisms for degrees such as the Diploma Supplement must be implemented in all states.

With regard to **mobility**, ESIB would like to state its full support of the existing EU programmes but also remind everyone of the fact that this is not sufficient to promote mobility of students, teachers and HE staff in Europe. Potential mobility of an increasing number of people must be tackled and existing obstacles, such as overcomplicated regulations in foreigners' laws, restrictions on working rights, restrictions on the portability of student grants and loans and the payment of teachers, must be removed.

Last but not least, **student involvement** on every level of decision-making and in every

country must be strengthened to ensure that the voice of the largest group in higher education is heard and taken into account in decision-making. Students should be involved in every decision-making process which is affecting them as active, constructive partners, who have their own expertise when it comes to student issues. Good practices in some countries can serve as examples of possible efforts to strengthen the role of students in decision-making.

Finally, ESIB would like to thank the organisers for inviting them to this event and would like to state its interest in future cooperation with the European University Association (EUA).

CONCLUSIONS OF THE WORK OF THEMATIC GROUPS

By the Rapporteur, Konrad Osterwalder, Rector, ETH Zürich

The main purpose of the Salamanca Convention was a political one: higher education institutions wanted to formulate in an easily readable way their goals and intentions, the leading principles, major requirements and some of the difficulties that need to be overcome on the way towards the European Higher Education Area.

European universities showed that they want to shape their own future in the new European context. They clearly expressed their will, their intention and their determination to take up the challenge of the *Sorbonne and Bologna Declarations* and to be proactive in the process of building by 2010 the European Higher Education Area.

This short document — also a basis for the *Message from Salamanca*¹ to the European Ministers of Education when they meet in Prague on 18-19 May 2001 — sets out the main results of the work of the twelve groups which, during the Convention, debated six key themes taken from the *Bologna Declaration* of June 1999.

Freedom with responsibility: empowering universities

Universities need new freedom if they are to adjust rapidly to "environmental changes" and to new local, national and international partners. The variety of their new tasks calls for freedom of action as the only way towards more efficiency. Universities have to be able to enter into new partnerships, including with commercial partners, and they need to be able to act quickly. This calls for new leadership, the conditions of which depend on the institutions' ability, flexibility and independence to plan strategically.

Universities are not just requesting more freedom, however. They are also willing to accept the corresponding responsibility: they want to be held accountable for what they are doing and for how they use the freedom granted to them.

Thesis 1: Freedom with responsibility

As legal entities, universities need autonomy in, and want to be held accountable for:

- strategic planning, setting of goals and priorities
- funds allocation
- selection of partners, locally, nationally and internationally, in research and in teaching
- selection of research areas
- definition of curricula
- management of human capital, in particular recruiting professors
- setting of admission rules for students.

Mutual trust between government and universities on a partnership basis is a prerequisite. Last but not least, nursing intellectual autonomy is still the core task and requirement of academic institutions.

Employability on the European labour market

Study programmes have to be valid academically and relevant to the labour market at the same time. Flexibility in curricula and study courses, as well as diversification, respecting different talents and employment prospects are prerequisites. Curricula must meet well-defined targets. The introduction of first-cycle programmes is important because of the growing number of students. The articulation of programmes and degrees in two main cycles is a meaningful option if the curriculum takes care of employability (in terms of the competencies acquired) both for students transferring to employment after the first degree and those doing so after the second degree.

Thesis 2

Higher education institutions see the employability of their graduates as an important goal and a necessity. This requires greater programme flexibility and the development of curricular concepts promoting the lifelong employability and adaptability of students. Furthermore, it means diversity and multiplicity of entry and exit points in each learning experience.

Thesis 3

Employability in a university context means:

- a well-developed imagination

¹ *Message from Salamanca*, see pp. 7-18.

- the ability to approach and to solve a problem systematically and methodically applying substantial knowledge
 - the capacity to lead social processes.
- The overall structure of university programmes and each element thereof must be targeted towards the development of the above-mentioned personal skills, while allowing for a great variety of curricular approaches and for competing course designs.

Thesis 4

Institutions of higher education should contribute to transparency and recognition by explaining their curricular approach and the competencies they strive for in a way that is meaningful for students, employers and others concerned. In other words, they should prepare their students to cope with the labour market and their future professional role (preparation for job search and managing one's career). In conjunction with their public and private partners, they should establish career centres for such purposes.

Mobility in the European Higher Education Area

Mobility of students and staff promotes the ability to cope with a new cultural and learning environment and to understand other cultures. It is a requirement in view of today's globalisation but it also promotes European coherence and enriches the scientific outlook.

Two types of mobility should be promoted: horizontal mobility (i.e., the student stays with a host university for one or two terms and then returns to complete a degree from his/her home institution) and vertical mobility (i.e., the student finishes a period of study at a first institution and then moves to a second one to continue his/her studies and earn a degree; an ideal point for changing institutions in this way is after the completion of one of the cycles).

Necessary conditions for mobility are:

- ECTS credits used both for exchange and for accumulation
- the Diploma Supplement
- a more generous approach to recognition issues

- the possibility for both virtual and physical mobility, the former not being a substitute to the latter
- the availability of funding for staff and student mobility
- transparent quality assurance systems in all countries and subject areas.

Thesis 5

Mobility is a core value of the European Higher Education Area. Existing instruments of recognition should be fully implemented:

- ECTS (extended to accumulation and life-long learning)
- Lisbon Convention
- Diploma Supplement
- NARIC/ENIC network.

Thesis 6

Physical mobility should be promoted as an educational experience and cannot be substituted by virtual mobility. A common European approach to virtual mobility is needed, however. The benefits (i.e., the added value) associated with mobility for staff, students and researchers should be publicised. Administrative and structural barriers and obstacles to mobility must at long last be removed. Countries party to the Bologna Process should commit themselves to abolish any law/regulation imposing nationality requirements for holders of permanent and temporary positions at their higher education institutions. Portable grants and loans should be made available to students, together with other suitable incentives to both individuals and institutions.

Thesis 7

The creation and development of the European Higher Education Area depends on the recognition of the essential role of higher education institutions. They are a driving force in the whole process. Their clear internationalisation policy needs to take into consideration:

- the crucial importance of teaching staff with international experience;
- realistic language provision (this requires the abolition of any law/regulation prohibiting teaching in a foreign language) and the

provision of certain courses in widely spoken foreign languages;

- the need to offer all students in undergraduate education, regardless of their field of specialisation, the possibility to take a number of credits in foreign languages;
- good quality, user-friendly information of students concerning international opportunities.

Compatibility: a common, but flexible qualification framework

Thesis 8

Higher education needs to be structured in such a way that after 3-4 years (or rather 180-240 ECTS credits) a student should be eligible for a Bachelor-type degree. This degree should either lead to immediate employment or provide preparation for further studies leading to a Master's degree. Under certain circumstances a university may decide to structure a curriculum as a 5-year integrated (i.e. unbroken) programme leading directly to a Master-level degree. Professional and discipline networks have an important role in informing such decisions.

Thesis 9

ECTS should be used by universities not only for credit transfer but also for credit accumulation:

- by giving credits for assessed learning gained inside or outside the university;
- subject to the requirements of regulated professions and the right of universities to decide whether credits gained outside are acceptable or not.

Quality assurance is an essential part of this process.

Quality assurance and quality certification

Thesis 10

The internationalisation of quality assurance is a necessary response to the current globalisation trends and to the challenges of building a European Higher Education Area. Accreditation is one answer to these challenges and quality assurance mechanisms are a prerequisite for good accreditation procedures.

Some kind of European platform or clearing system needs to be organised with the full support of higher education institutions in order to disseminate good practice and advise accrediting bodies on appropriate procedures. It should foster the mutual acceptance of quality assurance decisions in Europe while preserving national and subject differences and institutional autonomy and not overloading universities. The role of ENQA in this process should be considered.

Competitiveness at home and in the world

Competition promotes quality and is therefore good for students. But universities need more operational freedom and a fair financing scheme to enter true competition. More diversity of curricula will further competition. More competitiveness is needed to attract students from overseas. Competitiveness and cooperation are not mutually exclusive. Competitiveness means academic quality in the first place and cannot be reduced to a commercial concept only.

Europe needs to be in a position to attract the best brains from all over the world, but this requires the speedy removal of inadequate immigration and labour market regulations.

Competition raises issues within Europe (East versus West, South versus North) and there is the danger of an inner-European brain drain. Specific measures could be:

- the introduction of study programmes taught in major world languages;
- more marketing in non-European countries, developing educational trade marks and brands;
- the development of adequate services for foreign students and scholars, allowing European higher education institutions to be perceived as welcoming institutions;
- competition with other continents through strategic networking.

Thesis 11

Higher education institutions are willing to take the responsibility of operating in a competitive education arena, but this requires

more real managerial autonomy (going beyond classical academic freedom), a flexible regulatory framework and fair financing.

Thesis 12

Competition serves the quality of education and is good for students, higher education institutions and other stakeholders. It must be accepted and promoted and at the same time underpinned by reliable quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms that are readable inside and outside of Europe.

Thesis 13

Being globally more competitive also calls for more openness, transparency and competition at home. It requires a revision of our service and marketing culture in line with the realities and values of European higher education, such as cultural diversity, research orientation and social responsibility. Universities in certain accession countries are not yet equipped to compete on an equal basis and need special help.

Conclusions

European universities and their organisations are willing and capable to take the lead in the joint effort:

- to renovate and rejuvenate higher education
- to redefine it at a European scale
- to promote the employability of their graduates and the mobility of their students and staff
- to further the compatibility between institutions and curricula
- to assure quality in the European Higher Education Area
- to be more competitive, not excluding cooperation
- to address the specific difficulties of universities in certain parts of Europe.

Prerequisites are enough freedom and appropriate funding, as well as the removal of immigration and labour market restrictions.

European higher education institutions want to be in a position to shape their future in the European Higher Education Area. If they all want it, their message will be heard and it will happen.

UNIVERSITIES AND THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

by Mary O'Mahony, EUA expert

INTRODUCTION The Salamanca Statement

The Salamanca Convention is a unique opportunity for European higher education institutions to produce a public statement on the future Higher Education Area and on how they wish it to be shaped.

The statement will have different audiences: within the academic community — teachers, students and administrators; outside the community — politicians at national and international level, business and industry and the general public. An immediate target will be Ministers of Education meeting in May in Prague to evaluate progress towards the European Higher Education Area outlined in the *Bologna Declaration of 1999*.

Higher education institutions in Salamanca could claim:

- that higher education is making an enormous contribution to the development of the continent;
- that universities and extra-university higher education institutions can and will do more to keep Europe and their institutions competitive;
- that changes in the conditions under which they operate are necessary so that they can increase their efforts
- **that their primary motivation to construct a European Higher Education Area is so that citizens — students of all ages, and especially the young — can benefit concretely from it and use their qualifications throughout the region and beyond.**

From freedom to responsibility — a competitive Europe

A distinctive trait and a perceived strength of European universities is that they combine missions of research and education (teaching and learning). This is one of the factors that can contribute to making Europe attractive to the rest of the world as a privileged destination for higher education and research activity. In parallel to the ministerial initiative

to create a European Higher Education Area, the European Commission has planned a European Research Area. This should be kept in mind during the Convention.

Six action areas are the pillars upon which the Salamanca Statement should be constructed:

- **freedom with responsibility:** empowering universities
- **employability** on the European labour market
- **mobility** in the higher education area
- **compatibility:** a common but flexible qualifications framework
- **quality assurance** and **certification** (accreditation)
- **competitiveness** at home and in the world.

These areas for policy convergence — each of which will be explored by two groups at the Convention — were identified in the *Bologna Declaration* and they fit around wider issues of higher education development. Some have taken on a new significance recently and debate is at times confused. The six themes are linked and hence contain overlapping points for reflection. It will be the responsibility of the *rapporteur* in Salamanca to identify the main proposals for action resulting from discussion.

The context for the discussion is that ministers have linked the development of higher education to the process of European integration: "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" (the *Bologna Declaration*). The pledge for convergence has come at a time of greater diversity within higher education. There is tension between continuing diversification and emerging convergence in some of these areas. There is increasing conflict between the national context of universities and the processes of internationalisation and of globalisation. And, to complete the challenge, we are trying to shoot at moving targets.

To bridge some of these divides in the European Higher Education Area, one method is undoubtedly that of networking. "This Area has its origin in the rather uniform national approaches but develops through multifaceted networking processes, which will never result in a uniform and harmonised 'European model', but rather a dynamic multi-layered educational business shaped to the need of the local, regional and global communities, (labour) markets and individual preferences. Networking is the key (to convergence)."¹

The Salamanca challenge: can higher education institutions lead the way?

The challenge awaiting higher education institutions in Salamanca is to organise themselves the European Higher Education Area, in cooperation with governments, international organisations and external partners.

Institutions are aware that they face increasing competition when carrying out their core missions of research and teaching and when they are providing additional services to society, the amount and range of which is now vast. In order to exploit the new cooperation opportunities accompanying the threat of external competition from other providers of research, education and training — some coming from other parts of the world —, institutions need within their national systems:

- the autonomy so that they can show responsibility;
- the freedom to put more effort into reflecting demands for qualifications relevant to the labour market;
- the possibility to promote mobility;
- the trust to make qualifications more transparent; and
- the confidence to guarantee the quality of their activities.

Institutions should work with their external partners in order to advance on these issues.

"Convergent change is being introduced or planned by governments and institutions not simply because they feel an obligation to comply with the *Bologna Declaration*, but because there is a compelling need for them

to move in that direction in their own interest..."² What would be the price of not taking action now?

For governments, if countries do not converge their reform efforts, "an undesired division would be created in Europe, with possible negative consequences for the competitiveness of these 'non-convergent' systems and for the flows of students from these particular systems to others, which better guarantee the quality and thus the recognition of qualifications."³

For institutions, to continue as present in any of the areas is likely to "create internally in Europe a new split between certain higher education institutions that have fully integrated the world dimension of higher education, and others that have not".⁴ At least those institutions that have fully taken on board and prepared themselves for competition will prosper, but their prospects will be weakened if their proactive stance is constrained by continuing problems of over-regulation, inflexible learning structures, impenetrable qualifications, lack of freedom to compete — problems that will not disappear. Higher education institutions will find themselves in different leagues. Alternative scenarios are those in which countries rely on protectionist higher education legislation to stave off competition, or work through international organisations like the European Union to achieve convergence in some policy areas.

If the higher education institutions want to build the European Higher Education Area on the principles of their autonomy and diversity, balanced with the need to show responsibility and to organise the variety of education on offer to students, Salamanca is the place to make a statement.

There follow notes on each of the six group themes, as background to discussions. Each note gives pointers for the discussion, summarises recent developments in the field, sketches future scenario and highlights points for reflection.

1 Aaviksoo, J. (2000). *Networking, a tool of convergence for a European Area of Higher Education*. Keynote speech to the 54th biannual conference of CRE and CEPES. Cracow, 26-27 October 2000.

2 Haug, G. & Tauch, C. (2000). *Towards a coherent European Higher Education Area : from Bologna to Prague*. EAIE Forum. www.eaie.nl/pdf/bologna.asp.

3 Campbell, C. & van der Wende, M. (2001). *International initiatives and trends in quality assurance for European higher education, an exploratory trend report*. For the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). www.enqa.net.

4 Haug, G. (1999). *Visions of a European future: Bologna and beyond*. Keynote address to the 11th EAIE Conference. Maastricht, 2 December 1999.

**THEME 1 — FREEDOM
WITH RESPONSIBILITY:
EMPOWERING THE
UNIVERSITIES**

Pointers for the discussion

- If they want to take the future into their own hands, higher education institutions need to anticipate change that would otherwise be forced upon them. An opportunity like the Salamanca Convention arises seldom.
- Universities need and want autonomy. In many countries in Europe, over-regulation inhibits progress and innovation and constitutes a serious handicap in the European and worldwide environment. Universities request the power to plan their own futures, striking the right balance between autonomy and responsibility and between diversity and organisation.
- Institutions are prepared to take fresh initiatives now, in all areas where they have the power to do so. A lot can be achieved, in particular in the area of curriculum design and renovation and for the recognition of studies abroad. Significant progress towards the European Higher Education Area can be achieved in Europe through subject-based cooperation and networks.
- More effective self-organisation at the European level is an imperative both in the university and in the college/polytechnic sector.

Autonomy and accountability

Autonomy and freedom are values endorsed by the *Magna Charta Universitatum*. An Observatory to oversee the implementation of the principles of the Magna Charta has been established by the CRE-Association of European Universities and the University of Bologna. Higher education institutions are thus taking responsibility for the preservation of their core values — as well as their adaptation to changing times. When the pace of change accelerates, institutions need even more the autonomy to steer their course of action.

Accountability is the counterpoint to autonomy and institutions have to prove that they provide a wide range of services in addition to their core mission of education and

research. The responsibility of higher education in Europe, as a public service, has traditionally been heavy and it has become more complex: for example, to reflect critically upon the development of society, in an increasingly global context, or to create a sense of European citizenship. These, and ethical issues, for instance, demand a leadership role from higher education institutions.

As preparation for the Bologna conference, a report on *Trends in Learning Structures* identified a trend across the continent in giving institutions more autonomy in relation to curricula. But, when universities are responsible for the degrees that they award, higher education institutions present in Bologna recognised that this right "equalled a responsibility requiring acceptance of an...external quality assurance system." Quality assessment, with a focus on responsibility towards the learner, is now generally accepted as an essential part of accountability.

In the face of demands to assume increasing responsibilities, higher education must keep its distinctive characteristics, and different types of institutions should cover the breadth of responsibilities. Sometimes, it is other parts of the education chain that share, or should assume entirely, the responsibility for an issue. Institutions need regular dialogue with state authorities to maintain the balance between their freedom and autonomy and their responsibility and accountability to society.

Reflecting on how hard it is to reconcile aspirations for higher education policy and institutions on different levels, a Finnish ministry representative has remarked that: "the only way we can cope with the situation is to strengthen institutional autonomy. This would allow the institutions to genuinely work on their individual profiles; they need to define the role they want to play in the national and international higher education communities. Such profile building is credible and sustainable only if the institutions can do it themselves without interference from the government."⁵ Higher education institutions must be free to make strategic choices, to concentrate on their core areas, to develop individual identities, to choose their partners,

and to position themselves to compete to deliver quality education, research and services.

Dialogue with partners

Being more autonomous should help universities be more confident in their interaction with partners. For example, they may envisage installing a regular dialogue with the government or local business community, with a rolling agenda of issues, including an annual review, rather than occasional discussion with sporadic meetings, sometimes linked to crises. Institutions may then explain their plans for their future and their constraints.

There is a challenge for institutions to operate effective networks at different levels. The "vast majority of higher education institutions cater for...local needs. Growing contacts to their national and international partners and...academic exchange will not basically affect their local mission, but...develop their European and/or international dimensions".⁶ Some institutions see themselves as regional or cross-border and develop an extensive network for their services. Others build global networks in their fields of academic strength, sometimes involving industry and trying to establish educational benchmarks from which they may establish a brand name. At its most sophisticated, such a network can develop joint products, combine marketing efforts and provide entirely new services. But, the present competencies of most higher education networks are more limited.

Freedom to compete

The most significant consequence of increased institutional autonomy should be improved teaching, research and related services. The freedom to compete implies the right for institutions to design their curricula, determine their research priorities and implement their action plans for innovation. In order to guarantee the quality of their activities, institutions are responsible for designing strategies. These strategies differ according to individual missions but, to be implemented successfully, they generally require autonomy in financial, personnel and operational matters.

Signs of such autonomy are, for example:

- the transfer of property and infrastructure from the state to the institution;

- transparent lump sum funding from government, allowing the university to implement its strategic choices;
- institutions being able to generate, spend to generate and retain income, without prejudicing their state grant;
- the freedom to charge tuition fees and set their level;
- institutions deciding the employment terms and salaries of staff.

Other areas where the issue of autonomy is at stake include:

- the regulation of student places (number and selection of students)
- external representation on the institution's governing body.

True autonomy and accountability make more demands on institutions and on their leadership. If institutions do not demonstrate their capacity and willingness to plan their futures, explain the constraints on their action, engage dialogue and find help for solutions to those constraints, they are not using the power of autonomy, nor showing responsibility.

Future scenario

The European Higher Education Area will be composed of multiple networks for different purposes. Institutional and subject-based networks and associations will be used to achieve research excellence, to exchange ideas and experience connected with using information and communication technologies (ICT) in education, etc... Different networking patterns are already emerging. The networks will increasingly contain partners from outside higher education, e.g., a network on using ICT innovatively will integrate the multimedia business sector, ICT companies, publishers, ministries and associations.

Points for reflection

Autonomy and accountability

- Should all types of higher education institutions bear the same sorts of responsibilities?
- Can institutions demand total autonomy and unlimited state funding?

- Are higher education institutions using the Bologna Process to examine their curricula in the light of today's requirements (the demand for more choice within higher education — updated content, alternative learning paths, new methods of teaching and learning, a European dimension, etc.)?
- How could institutional autonomy be preserved if there were a common European framework for the recognition of qualifications and for quality assurance?

Freedom to compete

- Should decentralisation of power allow institutions to select their students, fix study fees, recruit professors, or diversify salaries? For which categories of students should institutions have the right to request fees?
- Would a "non-profit legal entity status" at European level give higher education institutions more freedom in financial, personnel and operational matters?

THEME 2 — EMPLOYABILITY ON THE EUROPEAN LABOUR MARKET

Pointers for the discussion

- Students will increasingly demand and enrol for qualifications that can effectively be used throughout the continent. Higher education institutions accept that it is their responsibility to award such qualifications and want to be in a position to do so.
- Higher education systems and institutions that respond to the demand for relevant curricula, flexible learning paths and innovative delivery will attract more students, also from other parts of the world.
- All degrees do not have to be "relevant to the European labour market" (*Bologna Declaration*) to the same extent and in the same way. In particular, first degrees earned at different institutions may differ in their purpose, orientation and profile. They may, nonetheless, all fit into a transparent and cohesive system of understandable and compatible qualifications.
- Higher education institutions acknowledge the need to build bridges between different types of institutions and with other parts of the education system, so as to improve recognition of learning acquired in different contexts, including non-traditional education.

The type of expectations of higher education and the response

In the knowledge economy, wealth depends on the development and application of new knowledge — by workers, among others. Research is creating new jobs more than

before, while lifelong learning is perceived as a necessity for all. Expectations of higher education have risen in the areas of knowledge transfer, of producing graduates for work — including for self-employment — and of retraining workers. It is the responsibility of higher education institutions and of governments to meet these expectations.

Previously, the responsibility of universities for their graduates ended at graduation. The growing number of unemployed graduates in the 1970s and 1980s intensified discussion of their "employability". Governments required universities to take responsibility for their students not just by educating them, but also by giving them "transferable" skills to make them more employable. New higher education institutions were created next to universities, which had more of an orientation towards the labour market. Today, governments feel a responsibility to replace the big post-war cohorts of employees now slowly retiring from the labour market, with new graduates — for new types of jobs, including for self-employment — or with retrained people.

Employers stress that graduates should have "learnt to learn" and that they should thus be able to contribute to the development and application of knowledge required to maintain economic competitive advantage. But employers are also concerned that their other workers acquire similar skills. Hence, the commitment to lifelong learning, with its implication of knowledge updating and renewal and, sometimes, complete retraining.

If the traditional idea of combining research and teaching and thus encouraging the devel-

opment of a solid disciplinary and methodological knowledge in the student remains valid, it is expected now too to include the acquisition of skills such as communication or teamwork aptitudes. The transferable skills that graduates are supposed to obtain are supposed to be included in the process of "learning to learn". Universities argue that one of the best ways that they can show responsibility for their graduates is by awarding them qualifications that are recognised to be of high-quality, internationally competitive, including knowledge of research methodologies and how to learn. The general elements in higher education should be emphasised and specialisation would be left to a more advanced academic level or to life-long learning programmes.⁷ Another response to demands for more employable graduates is for institutions to include more multi-disciplinarity at the first level of higher education, so that workers can communicate better with specialists from other fields.

Growing professional mobility in Europe

As the economy becomes more global, a European labour market grows more real. Higher education systems and institutions are not just being asked to ensure that the people they are educating are employable, but also that they are employable on a European (or world) scale.

The *Sorbonne Declaration* in 1998 justified the idea of a European Higher Education Area by saying that it was a key way to promote citizens' employability and mobility — and the continent's overall development. The statement is reiterated in the *Bologna Declaration*.

Employability and mobility are two different objectives for people, even if a link is made in this context. To be employable is necessary for the person who aspires to travel or not. To be mobile is an additional objective of more citizens now: young people who are conscious that Europe is a continent where national borders are less and less important (due mainly to the achievements of the European Union in many areas, notably in freeing the movement of goods, services, capital, and, to a lesser extent, of people). It is in this last area that

action is being sought urgently, not just for the mobility of young students or of recent graduates, but also for workers seeking professional mobility. The prospect of an enlarged European Union adds to the attractiveness of the continent, for people in Europe and for people in other parts of the world, as a space within which people can theoretically gain professional experience in different countries. And, it is partly increased student mobility that has reinforced the idea that studying abroad is one of the most effective means of preparing future graduates for the needs of an increasingly international professional life.

Those people expecting a higher education experience to make them not just more employable, but also to increase their prospects of employment at European level and success in a competitive labour market are interested to acquire another set of skills. "The internationalisation of higher education within the EU...reflects the general upgrading of European labour: skilled future professional labour [acquiring] not only formal academic qualifications, but also linguistic and cultural capital".⁸

The labour market is also calling for these kinds of skills when globalised business is giving multi-culturalism a new value and foreign languages, for example, are seen as a way to increase understanding of different cultures.

"It has become very clear that the higher education sector is expected to contribute more to making the European labour market an everyday, effective reality".⁹ This has been one of the stimuli for higher education institutions to incorporate external partners more into their consultation procedures or even their governing structures. The use of external examiners from industry in the assessment of courses, the organisation of work placements for students, joint research and the increase in continuing education for workers have also contributed to the improvement of links between institutions and the economy.¹⁰ The dialogue between higher education institutions and their stakeholders is important, given the high and varied expectations of higher education and the

7 Confederation of EU Rectors' Conferences (1998). *Universities' responsibilities for their graduates*. Statement based on a decision of the 64th Confederation Assembly, Namur, 13 March 1998. www.unige.ch/eua (publications, former Confederation publications, higher education texts).

8 Green, A., Wolf, A. & Leney, T. (1999). *Convergence and Divergence in European Education and Training Systems*. University of London, Institute of Education.

9 Haug, G. & Tauch, C. (2000), *op.cit.*

10 EURYDICE (2000). *Two Decades of Reform in Higher Education in Europe: 1980 Onwards*. EURYDICE Studies. Brussels. www.eurydice.org

different responses possible. Institutions must develop open-ended strategies, enabling them to preserve a long-term view of disciplinary developments and a shorter-term view of graduates' needs.

The need for flexible learning paths

"Higher education should offer opportunities for everyone capable of profiting from degree-level work, with financial support as necessary to ensure access for everyone who can benefit" (*G8 Cologne Charter*). Widening access to higher education is one of the main motivations for systems and institutions to offer more flexible learning paths.

Another stimulus for flexible learning paths is a change in the profile of learners. The diversity in student profiles has resulted in the last two decades in the emergence of a vast range of new study options and combinations, of more flexible and modular design, and more distance learning.¹¹

Recognising learning in different contexts

In the context of lifelong (or lifewide) learning and the development of people's employability in Europe, at national and at European level, there is a call to move towards academic and professional recognition of learning acquired in formal and informal learning contexts through the use of mechanisms such as credit accumulation and transfer. For example, higher education institutions must consider whether to award credit for prior and experiential learning.

The certification in one way or another of all knowledge and skills acquired until a certain exit-point could help reduce drop-out rates in formal education, which is a worrying financial problem in some European countries, and failure patterns. It could also represent a competitive advantage internationally. But certification by higher education institutions of skills acquired in some contexts remains a challenge.

Employers wish to better understand the qualifications of those applying for jobs and businesses operating globally are requesting qualifications that can be more easily understood

and compared internationally. This is giving impetus to the objective of the *Bologna Declaration* for European higher education to adopt a framework system of easily understandable and comparable degrees and, within that, to make full use of recognition instruments such as the Diploma Supplement.

Extending bridges between sectors

Vocational training, for example, imparts skills attuned to the needs of the labour market and opens up pathways to higher qualifications. But, until now, higher education "required the creation and maintenance of autonomous spaces...and of separate and distinctive institutions. So did research. In contrast, lifelong learning requires the...transcendence of...boundaries. So does knowledge production. Both depend upon...ever-closer partnerships between different types of institutions and organisations..."(Peter Scott). What type of bridges exist and which can be imagined as desirable to the higher education sector from other learning sectors?

Future scenarios

Students expect increasingly to receive a broad higher education that gives them flexibility on the labour market, since they will change jobs more often. They will choose to enrol for qualifications that allow them to work in different countries of Europe.

The demographic trend in Europe is towards an ageing population. The consequences are beginning to be an increase in adult learners and a likely increase in the demand for short Master degree programmes. The latter may also be interpreted as a response to the situation whereby more and more people enter to compete on the labour market with a first-cycle (Bachelor) degree.

Higher education systems and institutions that respond to the demand for flexible learning paths will attract more students, also from other parts of the world.

If the higher education sector is not clear on which learning in different contexts it is recognising, the European Union or another

¹¹ *ibid.*

international organisation may pursue the question, perhaps issuing a recommendation or a directive, or drafting a convention.

In the United States, where the transparency of qualifications is clearer for employers than in Europe but still not clear enough, a private enterprise "interprets" qualifications of job applicants for companies. If higher education institutions in Europe do not try and render their collective offering more understandable and use instruments being developed like the Diploma Supplement, a similar idea may emerge in Europe.

Points for reflection

- How can all types of higher education institutions organise themselves to respond better to the varied expectations to provide employable graduates with the sort of transferable skills now being requested and to offer lifelong learning? What are the differences between the extra-university and the university sector?
- Who will pay for lifelong learning? The *G8-Cologne Charter* states that an investment can be expected of government, investing to enhance education and training at all levels; of the private sector, training employees; of individuals, developing their abilities and careers. Are, for example, those companies concerned that their workers acquire additional skills for lifelong learning willing to pay higher education institutions to provide some of those learning experiences?
- The *Bologna Declaration* states that: "the degree awarded after the first-cycle shall also be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification". But, all degrees should not be professional to the same extent and in the same way. What might a system of differentiated degrees resemble?
- Will higher education institutions — especially universities — recognise and credit learning acquired outside the higher education sector?

THEME 3 — MOBILITY IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

Pointers for the discussion

- Students should be able to choose from among the entire range of courses on offer in the European Higher Education Space and mobility should become a central value of European higher education.
- The mobility of students, teachers and graduates is hampered by recurrent obstacles, in particular cumbersome recognition processes. The institutions want to increase significantly mobility of different types, working together to overcome structural obstacles and to free up the European Higher Education Area, by making their education and research programmes easier to understand, by organising the diversity of these programmes and their qualifications, and by using better instruments of academic recognition.
- Better mutual recognition of qualifications in Europe would also promote their better recognition in other world regions, thus enhancing the competitive edge of Europe in the global higher education world.

Mobility as a tool for internationalisation

The European Union (EU) — with governments and institutions — is still aiming to increase the mobility of students, teachers and administrative staff in education but the percentage of mobile higher education students in Europe remains less than 5%.¹²

Mobility is a tool for internationalising institutions, as well as for improving European citizens' linguistic and intercultural skills. Mobility has become central to internationalisation policies: the motivation to help people go abroad mixes the collective and individual benefits.

"After a first period of individual student mobility ('free movers') and a second phase of mobility and exchange based on institutional agreements, an internationalisation of academic content and processes...is taking place. That is likely to have a more structural and longer-term impact on the institution itself, whereas the effects of mere mobility and exchange are limited to the individual students".¹³ In the early years of the Erasmus

¹² Campbell, C. & van der Wende, M. (2001), *op.cit.*

¹³ Kameoka, Y. (1996). "The Internationalisation of Higher Education" in *The OECD Observer*, October/November 1996.

programme, it was expected that teaching staff mobility would result in an added European dimension in curricula. But teachers, if they went abroad at all, stayed for only short periods and the impact on curricula remained small; it was more contact between professors and incoming and returning students that inspired curricular change.

The rationale for mobility of students and teachers has changed somewhat in recent years. Now, in addition to the traditional motivations for moving students, a growing part of international student mobility is increasingly market-driven. Institutions compete to recruit students from other countries, to whom they can sometimes charge tuition fees.

Different types of mobility

The EU programmes have promoted more organised academic exchange. Its purpose was "to deal with diversity and its consequences and complexities, but without pushing for structural changes in the national systems".¹⁴ "Vertical" mobility — when a student obtains a qualification in one institution and moves to another institution to obtain a second — and "free movers" could function better if fewer structural obstacles existed. The *National Union of Students in Europe (ESIB)* has called for equal treatment under national law for this kind of mobile student (rights to health care, accommodation etc., if not domestic grant support).

Inter-university collaboration has traditionally taken the form of physical mobility. Virtual mobility is slowly becoming a viable alternative, sometimes to complement physical mobility, as more creative ways of using technology to internationalise education emerge. And, transnational education, when education moves to the learner rather than the other way around, is expanding dramatically in some disciplines and countries. Under the right conditions, the latter can provide an alternative international education opportunity for students who are not mobile.

These developments are reflected somewhat in the new generation of EU education and training programmes. Socrates for higher

education maintains the aim of promoting quality education through internationalisation, but has added the objective of including more people — Erasmus should be less of an opportunity for a privileged minority of students.

Obstacles to mobility and structural improvements

Despite the increase in student mobility in Europe during the last twenty years, the same difficulties of incompatible calendars, credits and degrees persist. The diversity of systems, institutions and qualifications has, in fact, been described as "the single biggest obstacle to more mobility in higher education in Europe."¹⁵ Structural improvements — the setting up of a transparent framework of compatible qualifications, the elimination of regulatory or administrative obstacles, easier access to more complete information and the provision of freer choice — are necessary to improve organised exchange and individual mobility.

In Bologna in 1999, student representatives prioritised increased funding — for higher education in general, and for mobility grants in particular — and highlighted the difficulty of transferring grants and scholarships.

The report on *Trends in Learning* called for better information and advice to students, through reorienting databases and publications, or by training further careers officers and student counsellors. The European Commission has begun work on an electronic Gateway to the European Learning Area, to provide better public on-line access to information on learning opportunities throughout Europe.

The European Council in Nice in December 2000 approved a resolution for a Mobility Action Plan, focused on removing remaining barriers to mobility. EU Member States should coordinate the implementation of measures to increase and democratise mobility in Europe. Problems like unequal access to information, financial constraints, inadequate social security cover and career hindrances should be tackled. The main ideas are to:

- create a portal for accessing information on mobility opportunities

¹⁴ Haug, G. (1999), *op.cit.*

¹⁵ Haug, G. (1999), *op.cit.*

- examine the interaction of financing possibilities at different levels
- promote multilingualism
- train administrative and academic resource staff to give advice on mobility
- examine the organisation of study programmes into semesters.

The *European Association for International Education (EAIE)* has called for the introduction of the legal status of "student-trainee" for full-time students who are on internships abroad of six months or less (those staying longer should be considered as workers). A European student-trainee agreement should be developed, detailing the relationship between the student, the home institution and the host institution during the training period. Within it, all legal formalities should be resolved, e.g., residence permit, health insurance, taxation, professional and personal liability.

Although some of the difficulties encountered by mobile research trainees have been resolved, others remain, related mainly to legal formalities. EAIE recommends that universities offer the visiting fellow a "fellowship contract" (based on the principles of education and training), or an employment contract, whichever is more appropriate. In the early 1990s, an evaluation of European research fellowships revealed that around a quarter of fellows had no contract at all. For researchers, teachers and administrative staff, the *Bologna Declaration* calls for the recognition and valorisation of periods spent researching, teaching and training in the European Higher Education Area, without prejudicing their statutory rights.

Interest in freeing up mobility focuses attention on the issue of the recognition of qualifications. An increasing number of citizens seek fair recognition of their qualifications. Generally, a qualification, even if not completely equivalent, is recognised, provided it passes a "fitness for purpose" test — a foreign qualification may be at a comparable level and have a comparable function, even though it may differ in details. Recognition has replaced the earlier approach of evaluating diplomas on a course-by-course basis to establish full equivalence.¹⁶

Since each country is responsible for its education system, the only EU instruments imposing

mutual recognition of diplomas are directives on recognition for professional purposes for certain regulated occupations. Two general directives established generally acceptable minimum requirements for qualifications. If these requirements are fulfilled, the host country must prove that the foreign qualification is not up to standard.

For academic recognition, higher education institutions should use more the *Council of Europe/UNESCO Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region*. Credit transfer systems, and especially the *European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)*, are facilitating academic recognition. More and more institutions have taken the basic step of allocating 60 ECTS credits to a study year.

One of the problems encountered when people move for either professional or academic purposes is that original credentials produced for employers or host higher education institutions provide insufficient information. The Diploma Supplement, developed by UNESCO/CEPES, the Council of Europe and the European Commission, to improve transparency of qualifications and their recognition, and of Europass, a system recording work-based study periods abroad and facilitating the translation of learning experiences into credit accumulation, could help higher education institutions, employers and public authorities throughout the world to better understand qualifications. These instruments aim to improve the international transparency of qualifications and their academic and professional recognition. The Supplement presents the national higher education system, so the diploma can be understood in its national context, and gives information on examinations passed and the level obtained.

More legislation and instruments are not needed at the moment — the challenge is for institutions to implement those that exist and for governments to ensure that national policy decisions are compatible.

Mobility outside the European Area

The *Bologna Declaration* concentrates on mobility within the European Area, but exchange

¹⁶ Campbell, C. & van der Wende, M. 2001, *op.cit.*

with other regions of the world, and especially attracting more researchers, teachers and students to Europe, is a way to improve the competitiveness of European higher education. Higher education institutions could cooperate to organise activities abroad, e.g., to arrange mobility, and thereby add a new meaning to international cooperation.

Future scenarios

There may be a change in the type of mobility in Europe, particularly if the objective of the *Bologna Declaration* to arrive at a common framework for compatible qualifications is achieved. Besides short-term organised mobility (exchange), we can expect to see a trend towards long-term free mobility of students, who will continue their graduate studies abroad, having obtained a first degree in their home country. Such a trend may in time have an impact on the European programmes for cooperation and mobility".¹⁷ Free movers would test the limits of free choice and if they were to receive equality of treatment with home students, this might contribute to balancing presently uneven student mobility patterns in Europe.

"It is likely that, in the long-term, traditional student mobility will be eclipsed by study programme mobility, as more transnational

programmes are offered. It is becoming cheaper relatively to move courses rather than students. However the initial cost of developing (hard-copy and software) mobile programmes is very high".¹⁸

Networks of universities across Europe, and beyond, will play an important role in academic recognition, by developing more mechanisms like benchmarking and cooperation in quality assessment beyond the national level.¹⁹

Points for reflection

- Which obstacles to mobility are higher education institutions able to overcome on their own (individually or by collaborating among themselves), and which require action from governments or from international organisations?
- What are the most urgent actions needed to achieve more and easier student, staff and researcher mobility?
- How can mobility be made possible for a wider range of students?
- How can non-European students be attracted to the continent?
- How can plans for mobility take into account the growth in transnational education?

THEME 4 — COMPATIBILITY: A COMMON, BUT FLEXIBLE QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

Pointers for the discussion

- The diversity of study programmes and of qualifications strengthens Europe's competitive position internationally, but potential learners within the region and in the rest of the world must be able to understand the rich variety of education on offer so as to choose between courses, qualifications and institutions.
- A common framework is needed to show compatibility among different systems of higher education. Within a common but flexible qualifications framework, a basic articulation of studies into an undergraduate and postgraduate phase must accommodate the great variety of first degrees, reflecting their different purposes,

and of postgraduate degrees, spanning different research methods.

- European credit accumulation and transfer procedures, respecting the principles of structured learning and institutional autonomy to recognise credit or not, are a powerful tool to arrive at a common, yet flexible European framework.
- Higher education institutions are willing to work more through disciplinary networks, in cooperation with professional bodies, in order to identify core features of curricula, qualifications and professional profiles.

Diversity of qualifications

Increased demand for higher education has

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸ Confederation of EU Rectors' Conferences, with the support of the European Commission. (2001). *Transnational Education project report and recommendations*. www.unige.ch/eua (publications, former Confederation publications, higher education texts).

¹⁹ *ibid.*

led to the greater diversity of study programmes, qualifications and institutions. The survey of trends in higher education structures "shows the extreme complexity and diversity of curricular and degree structures in European countries."²⁰ Different types of degrees, diplomas, certificates, etc. take a general, scientific, professional, technical or vocational orientation. They are being offered to new publics: adults, lifelong learners, students at universities who have come from polytechnics or colleges, etc.. "Widened access...means further diversification, personalised learning paths, better information about content of courses and combinations, flexible learning structures and transparent recognition and assessment systems."²¹

Establishing a common framework

The Bologna Process is a search for a "common European answer to common European problems".²² The report prepared for the Bologna conference identified these trends affecting the structure of degrees/qualifications in Europe:

- a governmental push towards shorter studies
- an increasingly blurred divide between the university and non-university sectors
- more academic credit transfer (and, to a lesser extent, accumulation) systems
- greater autonomy of universities, often accompanied by initiatives for quality evaluation
- challenges from abroad, notably via transnational education.

Suggested lines of action are:

- the adoption of a common, but flexible frame of reference for qualifications
- the gradual adoption of an ECTS-compatible credit accumulation system
- an enhanced European dimension in quality assurance, evaluation and accreditation.

The *Bologna Declaration* calls for organising higher education studies into the two phases of Bachelors and Masters. Despite discussion of such a move in a context influenced in 1999 by reflection in France on a 3-5-8 year system, the *Trends Report* showed that Bachelor degrees in Europe usually require 3 to 4 years of study; that there is a high degree of conver-

gence to a 5-year Master; and that there is no 8-year standard duration for doctoral degrees. What the report suggests instead is qualifications equivalent to credit years of study:

- Sub-degree level (certificate, diploma): 1-2 years of equivalent ECTS credits first degree level (Bachelor): no less than 3, no more than 4 years of equivalent ECTS credits
- Master level: about 5 years of equivalent ECTS credits, of which at least 12 months worth of Master-level credit
- Doctoral level: about 7 to 8 years of ECTS equivalent credits.

In addition, the first-degree level should be gauged on the basis of the knowledge and competencies acquired rather than the time spent.

When establishing a common framework for existing qualifications, the possibility should be built in for new qualifications to find their place in that structure.

Moving from comparability to compatibility

A step towards transparency of diverse systems and towards compatibility of different qualifications is to develop credit transfer and accumulation systems. Credit systems complement general legal instruments of academic or professional recognition. For example, since university and extra-university institutions both use modular credit-based courses, student transfer between the two sectors has been greatly facilitated.²³

The *European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)* was established in the 1980s to facilitate student exchange and it functions on the basis of individual student learning agreements. It is a framework within which institutions agree to recognise quite automatically study courses and thus facilitate credit transfer. To make curricula more transparent, credit points are assigned to study programmes (one year of full-time study has a maximum of 60 credits). But, students are dependent on their professors and, if they take courses not included in their learning agreement, they do not necessarily

20 Haug, G. & Kirstein, J. (1999). *Trends in Learning Structures in Higher Education*. Report prepared for the Bologna conference on behalf of the Confederation of EU Rectors' Conferences and the Association of European Universities (CRE), with the support of the European Commission. www.rks.dk/rapport/Trends/trends1.htm

21 Knudsen, I. (2000). *European-wide initiatives to widen participation*. Presentation to the European Access Network (EAN) conference, Santiago de Compostela, 6 September 2000.

22 Confederation of EU Rectors' Conferences and Association of European Universities (CRE). (1999). *The Bologna Declaration: an explanation*.

23 EURYDICE (2000), *op.cit.*

get credit for them. Even if the system took a long time to gain acceptance and it is still not always applied completely, the tools have proved effective and ECTS has made a noteworthy contribution to making curricula more transparent and to facilitating recognition of study abroad. ECTS is compatible with other credit systems in Europe, even if these have been designed to achieve different local, regional, national or international objectives.

An overarching European credit accumulation and transfer framework is now needed. The *Trends Report* suggested that ECTS should *inter alia*:

- be applicable within all sectors of higher education
- cover all forms of learning
- recognise equivalent rather than identical learning abroad
- distinguish between different levels of credit — general, specialised, Master
- respect institutional autonomy to recognise credit or not.

The European Commission feasibility study on developing ECTS into a credit accumulation system to encompass different types of learning argues for a new credit-based lifelong learning framework that would:

- include professional, vocational and corporate qualifications
- be designed for use outside the EU (particularly in view of its scheduled enlargement) and take on board the fact that there is high demand for student exchange with the US
- permit integration of students into degree programmes on the basis of accreditation of prior experiential learning.

The report concluded that it is feasible to extend ECTS, even if it requires further embedding in institutions and that expanding the system would mean that mutual recognition would be more difficult to achieve. "Therefore, it is recommended that the development of a European credit-based lifelong learning framework should be connected to existing Commission initiatives to link existing national quality assurance mechanisms".²⁴

But, there is a difference between a credit transfer system and an accumulation system.

Credit systems make it possible to underline the learning path — whether it includes education at universities, extra-university higher education institutions, or other bodies offering education and training. Concerns have been expressed that a credit accumulation system creates an *à la carte* framework, within which the student is free to mix credit from different types and levels of education and then demand a qualification; this would not guarantee the intellectual development associated with obtaining qualifications. But, since it is the university that decides to validate study programmes and award a qualification — or not, credit-based curricula are not incompatible with a structured, progressive learning experience.

And, some doubt that ECTS has in fact the potential to become a model for credit transfer and accumulation on a larger scale.²⁵ The main criticism is that in the drive to find a pragmatic solution to the problem of academic recognition that was hindering student mobility, ECTS bypassed the question of quality, which has become central to the present debate on the compatibility of European qualifications.

The possible extension of ECTS to incorporate vocational education and training has raised questions in some countries. Presently, most traditional European universities do not apply credits to vocational or to professional training. "There is a need to develop a credit system that takes into account competencies (widely used in vocational education and training) that is compatible with a credit system based on workload (currently used in higher education)."²⁶ The fact that education is being delivered in more different ways makes notional time measures of credit increasingly problematic. But, the idea is to keep the student workload approach at the core of any future system.

A pilot project to see how to measure student workload in terms of learning outcomes, knowledge, skills and competencies in five disciplines is being launched with the support of the European Commission. It will also examine in each discipline commonly accepted professional profiles, levels of study and curricula.

24 Adam, S. & Gemlich, V. (2000). *ECTS Extension feasibility study*, carried out for the European Commission, Directorate-General Education and Culture.

25 van Damme, D. (2000). *Internationalisation and assurances : towards worldwide accreditation*. www.esib.org/links/quality.htm.

26 *ibid*.

Future scenarios

New Master courses will be offered by individual institutions or by consortia in areas where there is no short, or separate, programme at this level. They will be open to students who have done their undergraduate studies at a different institution or in a different country.

"The development and introduction of an ECTS credit-based lifelong learning framework will be a complex process, best achieved at the strategic policy level through processes enabling a wide dialogue between European higher education institutions, initial education providers, professional bodies and employers". The *Bologna Declaration* is perceived in this context as "an indication of the political support offered by European governments to such a process".²⁷

Points for reflection

- Will qualifications come to be described in terms of credit-compatible years?

- Will higher education institutions accept credit for learning acquired in non-higher education contexts?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of ordinary and advanced degrees?
- Will employers accept new intermediate qualifications, particularly in the professional disciplines that usually require an integrated curriculum?
- Will there be a standard nomenclature for European qualifications? Will there be national and "international" titles (in English)?
- How can quality assurance contribute to improving the recognition of higher education qualifications? Which methods would facilitate comparability and could be linked to recognition mechanisms such as credit transfer and accumulation?
- Can more curricular convergence be achieved within broad disciplines?

THEME 5 — QUALITY ASSURANCE AND CERTIFICATION (ACCREDITATION)

Pointers for the discussion

The European Higher Education Area can only be built on high quality education and research, and thus on more cooperation in the crucial areas of quality evaluation and quality assurance.

The European higher education community wants to organise itself in order to design and implement the mechanisms required for quality assurance/certification with a European dimension. When carried out in cooperation with partners in government and society, this will be the best answer to the pressing need for transparent quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

All forms of transnational education must be subject to the same quality standards as other education, both in the providing and in the receiving country.

The Europeanisation and internationalisation of higher education demand a European dimension to quality assurance/certification

mechanisms. The appropriate answer is not a European agency enforcing a single set of standards, but a system based on the development and recognition of quality assurance/certification at the level of a country, a region, a network or a discipline.

The need for international quality assurance procedure: the transnational context

Quality assurance systems in Europe have a national perspective, when the globalisation of the economy and the emergence of virtual learning have created an international higher education environment. Academic and professional mobility are on the increase and institutions and curricula are crossing borders. The rise of transnational education constitutes a challenge to quality assurance; the urgent need is to protect students and employers from fraudulent institutions and awards. While national quality assurance is geared towards accountability and improvement, there is a need to contribute to the international visibility and compatibility of European qualifications on the international level.²⁸

²⁷ Adam, S. & Gemlich, V. (2000), *op.cit.*

²⁸ Campbell, C. & van der Wende, M. (2001), *op.cit.*

Despite its obvious growth, there are no reliable data on the current size of the transnational education sector in Europe, partly because of the difficulty to agree on what should come under the term.²⁹ Transnational education is particularly present in regions where there are high selectivity rates in traditional education and little diversification.³⁰ The United Kingdom (UK) is by far the biggest exporter of higher education in Europe, while Greece, Spain and Italy are the main importers.³¹ The widespread knowledge of English facilitates exportation of education from the United States, the UK, Australia and other English-speaking countries, which earn money from their educational services abroad.³² Disciplines are also affected unequally: the most visible challenge is in business and management (especially MBAs), computer science and information technology, and foreign language learning.³³ Much activity is at postgraduate level or in continuing education.

Transnational education brings opportunities and challenges. It can improve access to higher education and contribute to diversification of learning paths. It can promote innovation in curricula and delivery methods; further internationalisation of higher education; promote intercultural cooperation; and help make the sector more competitive. For some institutions, there is the possibility to raise income; for others, there can be a loss of income. Conflict with national education systems surfaces when non-official unregulated providers (often franchised institutions and branch campuses) are not subject to internal or external quality audit. There is, then, a concern to protect consumers from exploitation, as well as to recognise quality transnational education. Global quality is more than academic excellence: it balances academic learning with transversal skills, professional competencies, and ethical and civic values. That is why quality assurance of transnational providers should involve all the actors in the process: creators, importers, exporters, students and stakeholders.

Strategies to deal with transnational education should fit with other national education goals, e.g., to promote lifelong learning, transmit culture or increase competitiveness. This is not a domain that is easily regulated through conventional legal measures. Current national regulation is fragmented, mainly requiring foreign providers to be registered, licensed or in some other way approved by local quality assurance authorities or by the Ministry of Education.³⁴ Pressure to define higher education as a service that should be covered by international trade agreements is growing — a US proposal has been made in the framework of the *General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)*.

The *Council of Europe/UNESCO Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region* does not treat recognition issues arising from all kinds of transnational education. But, their Code of Good Practice tries to give a normative framework for countries sending and receiving transnational education.

While, "in the short-term, the potential impact of transnational education is likely to stay as it is now, relatively small scale...in the longer term...its impact will intensify and broaden."³⁵ "Transnational education touches on all dimensions of the current European educational debate engendered by the *Bologna Declaration*, including matters of recognition, transparency, accreditation, cultural and academic autonomy, convergence and divergence."³⁶

Different actors and types of evaluation

In nearly all European countries, some form of external quality assurance of research and of teaching is in operation. Quality assurance is a continuous process, which takes place at the level of a course, a faculty or an institution. It can serve to improve the quality of education, research or management, facilitate the recognition of courses and qualifications,

29 While there is no widely-accepted definition, one emerging is that of the Council of Europe/UNESCO Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education: "activities in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based."

30 Machado dos Santos, S. (2000). *Introduction to the theme of Transnational Education*. Presentation to the Conference of the Directors General for Higher Education and the Heads of the Rectors' Conferences of the European Union. Aveiro, 3-4 April 2000. www.unige.ch/eua (publications, former Confederation publications, higher education texts).

31 Campbell, C. & van der Wende, M. (2001), *op.cit.*

32 Haug, G. (2000) *Response to Prof. Sergio Machado's presentation "Introduction to the theme of Transnational Education"*. Conference of the Directors General for Higher Education and the Heads of the Rectors' Conferences of the European Union. Aveiro, 3-4 April 2000.

33 Confederation of EU Rectors' Conferences, with the support of the European Commission (2001), *op.cit.*

34 *ibid.* An exception in Europe is the UK, where the Quality Assurance Agency audits systematically "collaborative provision", with the higher education institution making awards in its name being responsible for their standard, *ibid.*

35 *ibid.*

36 Campbell, C. & van der Wende, M. (2001), *op.cit.*

and help increase the mobility of students and researchers. But, the scope of national evaluations varies: for instance, some countries evaluate programmes, others institutions. A European Institutional Evaluation is offered by CRE, and an Internationalisation Quality Review by CRE, OECD/IMHE and the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA). In addition, there are accreditation activities in many countries, carried out by a national agency or through mutual agreements between institutions, with institutions sometimes seeking American accreditation. The only European-wide accreditation initiative is the EQUIS model for business education, launched by the *European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD)*.

The growth and variety of evaluation activities in Europe prompted the creation in 1999 of the *European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)*, founded on a recommendation of the European Council of Ministers of Education. The network assembles national quality assurance agencies to exchange information and experience and to develop jointly their work, but this has not resulted yet in translating national outcomes of evaluations into international ones. ENQA is expected to play a strong role in the future in monitoring and exchanging information and good practice related to quality assurance for transnational education.

Accreditation

The question of external accreditation of courses and institutions is increasingly raised in the context of quality assurance, because evaluation without certification is perceived as unfinished business for those who wish clear information about minimal quality standards of qualifications, including transnational ones. There is pressure from the United States, where accreditation procedures are used widely and give information to potential students as well as competitive tools to institutions. European institutions are more motivated to seek accreditation as a way to enhance international recognition, as well as to attract students, teachers and researchers and facilitate mobility. Employers are interested in accreditation ensuring a minimal quality of standards. The debate on accreditation is new in Europe, confused and controversial, and

what can appear to be a technical question is in fact a fundamental question for the building of a European Higher Education Area.³⁷

The basic idea of accreditation (of which there are different interpretations) is that it is a formal, published statement on the quality of a programme or institution, following an evaluation based on agreed standards. Accreditation is a process and a status: a process in that it gives the opportunity and incentive for improvement and a status in that it provides public certification of acceptable quality. A CRE project had identified five principles that should inform the development of European quality assurance:

- create a space for European convergence, while preserving national diversity
- preserve institutional diversity to meet differentiated learners' needs
- balance institutional autonomy and external accountability
- build in flexibility and the capacity to adapt to new developments
- add value to current quality assurance systems, while preserving their improvement function.

Any move to validate accreditation procedures, while based on European values, should nevertheless be placed in the global context of higher education and research and should integrate both domains.³⁸

A system of multiple accreditation organised at different levels (country, region, subject area, institutional type, network, linguistic/cultural area) would suit Europe. Some areas could move to multilateral agreements for the mutual recognition of qualifications in specific subjects, for example. Mechanisms might be designed to extend locally-gained accreditation to the whole European area and scenarios could be developed for European cross-border accreditation in certain disciplines. This would have the advantage of combining internal quality assurance and external accreditation processes aimed at guaranteeing the highest possible level of quality and relevance of curricula and of higher education institutions.

Future scenarios

In the long term, a European quality assurance framework may emerge to complement the

37 Froment, E. (2001). *Some Thoughts on Accreditation in Europe*. Keynote speech to a conference of CRE. Lisbon, 8-10 February 2001.

38 *ibid.* The notion of including research in accreditation would not be to replace current research evaluation, but simply to take account of research activities to the extent that they enrich learning and have an impact on teaching.

existing common framework for recognition of qualifications. In the meantime, national initiatives, with an increasingly open, international perspective, point the way forward. A step-by-step scenario could be implemented, building on current quality assurance processes.

If European higher education does not evaluate the potential of accreditation to contribute to its quality assurance procedures, evaluation of the quality of transnational education and eventual recognition of some courses and providers (accreditation or some alternative certification) will take place at national levels, in an uncoordinated manner. But, national accreditation is unlikely to be able to make decisions in a short time about the large number of courses now on the market. And, conflicting decisions will add to the confusion.

If nothing changes from the present situation, or if Europe moves very slowly to incorporate a more international dimension to quality assurance (on the basis, for example, of many bilateral and multilateral accreditation agreements), accreditation bodies may emerge from the private sector, or from outside Europe (the *Global Alliance for Transnational Education – GATE*, for example, could offer an accreditation procedure). US accreditation agencies are interested in Europe (e.g., those for Management (AACSB) or Engineering and

Technology (ABET), the latter having already evaluated engineering courses in a couple of European countries).

The CRE project recommends that a working platform of European higher education institutions and relevant partners be established to clarify concepts of quality assurance and accreditation, analyse needs, test different approaches — such as validation of existing procedures, for instance, through pilot projects. An extra bureaucratic layer is not welcome.

Points for reflection

- How could national quality assurance systems incorporate an international dimension?
- How can national quality assurance systems judge the quality of education offered by new types of providers? What is the optimal way to protect students against fraudulent claims? If national legislation is developed for transnational education, what effect does this have on other countries in the European Area?
- Would it be possible to forge consensus on principles for a European platform to test mechanisms of cooperation and validation in the field of quality assurance and accreditation, based on an agreed set of principles?

THEME 6 — COMPETITIVENESS AT HOME AND IN THE WORLD

Pointers for the discussion

- Competitiveness is mainly the ability to be attractive to local and international students and teachers/researchers, in the global competition for reputation, talent and resources.
- Competition in global and European higher education is inevitable and growing. The main question raised for institutions and governments by transnational education is why students choose imported education over national higher education in situations where they have a choice, and what effect their choice has on enrolment patterns and related funding of institutions and disciplines.
- Systems and institutions can use a European Higher Education Area to be more attractive at home and abroad, to students, researchers and staff. They can strengthen their individual positions and need to build collaborative competitive strength.
- European higher education needs and wishes to present an understandable identity to the rest of the world, based on high quality, positive diversity and transparency. European higher education needs to be more present in the world, internationalising its quality assurance, developing flexible curricula, offering efficient admission procedures and providing user-friendly information.

Competition from where?

Competition in higher education is a relatively new development. Many new providers of education and training have emerged, some of which deliver transnational education. In Europe, competition between the established higher education institutions and these providers (traditional universities offering distance education, franchising operations and/or establishing branch campuses, corporate universities, for-profit organisations and consortia uniting public and private organisations) is likely to intensify.

American universities are increasingly attractive for European students, while European universities are less attractive for American students. The top American universities attract students, researchers and professors from all over the world, and even the second rank institutions receive large numbers of foreign students.³⁹ Part of the explanation is the use of English as the *lingua franca* of contemporary science and the most commonly mastered first foreign language.

An appeal to foster mobility and links between European and Latin American institutions was signed by CRE and its Latin American equivalent in Turin in November 2000. On both continents, the lack of a transparent qualifications framework and international quality assurance mechanisms inhibits cooperation. There is an opportunity for Europe to increase its potential in Latin America as an alternative to other destinations for mobility.

Progress in Europe in providing better information on qualifications, as well as in improving recognition practices, could help similar steps to be taken in other parts of the world, thus contributing to global mobility and cooperation, the other side of competition.

Competing for what?

More competition across boundaries for students and for staff would be a clear sign of the existence of a truly open European Higher Education Area. With demographic decline, fewer students are emerging from the traditional age cohort and institutions compete for students more at national level

and, sometimes, internationally. The majority of a sample of universities responding to a CRE survey named other national universities their main future competitor for students, with foreign universities, non-university higher education, virtual universities and private universities following. Other national universities also topped the list of future competitors for recruiting staff, but competition from foreign higher education providers and private companies was regarded as nearly as big.⁴⁰ To help universities attract researchers from abroad, the Confederation of EU Rectors' Conferences, in its comments on the European Research Area, has proposed a "green card model" in Europe, where it is still too complicated for people to obtain permission to do research.

Higher education institutions also compete to keep from having research, particularly cutting-edge basic research, moved to specialised institutes or to for-profit organisations. And, they compete for financial resources, influence, reputation and prestige.

How to compete?

The first condition for higher education institutions to compete is that they are not over-regulated and free to innovate. In a less regulated environment, higher education institutions rely increasingly on market or market-like signals to make decisions and a shift occurs in rules about their positioning.⁴¹ There is, then, a shift from regulation by legal standards to regulation by market standards. But, less regulation and the freedom to innovate needs to be accompanied by changes in institutions' internal structures and decision-making processes.

To compete more on the global level, European higher education needs to have grown used to competition within the continent, and even at national level. Being competitive requires a certain culture of behaviour and not just rhetoric. Once institutions have specific proposals to make themselves more attractive to students, researchers, and staff, they could request more support from governments and from international organisations like the European Union.

39 van Damme, D. (2000), *op.cit.*

40 Jongbloed, B. with the help of Amaral, A., Kasanen, E. Wilkin, L. (2000). "Spending strategies : a closer look at the financial management of the European university", *CREguide* No. 3. EUA, Geneva.

41 Grin, F., Harayama, Y. & Weber, L. (2000). *Responsiveness, responsibility and accountability : an evaluation of university governance in Switzerland*. Bern: Federal Office for Education and Science.

What are, or should be, the distinctive qualities of European higher education compared with that offered on other continents? What are its strengths? In Bologna in 1999, institutions agreed that competing in Europe ought to be by emphasising "high quality rather than by attempting to compete on prices." This highlights the importance of quality assurance. "In an increasingly competitive international market in higher education, quality will have to become a distinguishing characteristic guiding consumers and institutions in their strategic behaviour."⁴² But, comparatively low costs of European higher education could also be turned into a global competitive advantage.

Under which conditions can diversity be a selling-point for European higher education? Is international success possible for institutions delivering courses in lesser-known languages? The EU Lingua action finances transnational projects to develop, for example, new language learning methods, Internet proficiency tests, marketing videos to attract students to learn a language in Europe. The market should be interpreted as the global one.

Some of the capacity of European higher education to be competitive will depend on national policy decisions and on whether there is convergence between these.

Future scenarios

Countries will have to decide how they wish to position their national education, against the backdrop of the European Higher Education Area and in the global context.

The way forward is for universities to use their autonomy to organise themselves to compete better, but a reasonable compromise must be negotiated between deregulation to allowing for a free market and the preservation of national interests related to higher education. Less regulation would result in even more diversification of qualifications — a common qualifications framework would then be even more necessary than it is now.

In the face of increased competition, higher education systems will try to close the competitive gap at home so as to compete bet-

ter abroad, e.g., they will weed out poor quality, introduce more quality labels, introduce nomenclature to allow their extra-university sector to compete internationally.

The competitive gap will widen among institutions. More large-scale, transnational university networks will develop, clustering around some prestigious institutions. They will trade in the global educational marketplace as a collective, but with the constituent members maintaining their respective national identities. Qualifications, however, will be awarded within the legal framework of foreign higher education systems. Such networks will look for the most marketable compromise of image building on the one hand, using the names of the most prestigious partners, and freedom from national regulation in the areas of recognition of diplomas and quality assurance on the other.⁴³

Another scenario is the emergence of some transnational higher education institutions, for example in a border region, where two traditional institutions could plan close cooperation in education, eventually leading to a merger. The new university could then integrate its research and educational programmes and degree-awarding capacities. National legislation is not today prepared to deal properly with such institutions.⁴⁴

Transnational education or study abroad will become more and more of an alternative to studying in the national system, which would redirect resources.

Points for reflection

- Can Europe afford its "structural egalitarianism",⁴⁵ according to which all universities are supposed to carry out research and teaching and state funds are spread among them? How does this situation affect the ability of individual institutions to compete?
- What can European higher education institutions change themselves so that they are in the strongest position to maintain and improve their competitiveness?

⁴² van Damme, D. (2000), *op.cit.*

⁴³ *ibid.*

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁵ Aaviksoo, J. (2000), *op.cit.*

- Do higher education institutions have the links with stakeholders, especially employers, to reinforce their competitive position? For example, should they seek greater participation of stakeholders (employers, recent graduates, students) in their processes and in their governance to tackle the new competitive situation?
- What changes in national higher education legislation do institutions want so that they would be freer to compete?

NB - A French version of this document is available from the EUA office in Geneva.