The European Context:
Trends in European Higher Education

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I. The European University Association (EUA)

**EUA - established in 2001**
- Represents European universities, supports institutional development & encourages universities to act together

**Membership**
- 700 individual universities (must have teaching and research mission & award doctoral degrees) & Europe’s 34 National Rectors’ Conferences

**Role in the Bologna Process**
- Represents universities in the Bologna Follow-Up Group and Board
II. The policy context since 2000: Converging Higher Education and Research Agendas

**The Lisbon Process:**
- Europe to become the world’s most competitive and dynamic knowledge economy by 2010
- Key role of education & research

**The Bologna Process:**
- Set in the Lisbon framework (2003)
- Mid-term goals set –> from legislative reform to implementation on the ground

**The European Research Area:**
- Growing emphasis on fundamental research (e.g., ERC debate), & on research training & careers
- Universities are at the centre if the EHEA/ERA goals are to be reached
III.1. The Bologna Process: How it works

- International process: 29 - 40 - 45 signatories in 2005
- Much wider than the EU
- Voluntary process
- To build an European HE Area through convergence in degree structures
- Decision making through biannual Ministerial meetings (Bologna, Prague, Berlin, Bergen)
- Participation of Higher Education Institutions (EUA and EURASHE) and students (ESIB) in the decision-making processes
III.2. The Bologna Process mid-way to 2010 - The good news

- The legal structure is generally in place
- HEIs embrace Bologna: General acceptance of the need for reform – an opportunity to address long standing problems
- Bologna about more than harmonising structures: a complex social & cultural transformation process in each institution
- Growing awareness in universities of the importance of quality enhancement – linked often to degree of autonomy
- Some of the “reluctant disciplines” are coming on board
III.3. The Bologna Process mid-way to 2010 - The so-so news

- Change accepted but not always supported
- Much done to implement 2/3 cycles but curricular restructuring (including student-centred learning) still has a long way to go
- Employability of first cycle graduates a major concern in continental Europe
- Recognition of qualifications: systematic use of ECTS and DS still at the top of the agenda => mobility in question
- National rather than European debate
III.4 Trends and Challenges (1)

- Conditions and process of implementation – success factors and managing institutional change agendas:

  - Money/national support for reform
  - Degree of autonomy to take decisions
  - Inclusion of key actors in the process
  - Institutional leadership
  - Dialogue and consultation
III.4 Trends and Challenges (2)

- The degree to which the Bologna process brings out underlying systemic tensions in higher education?
  - Relationship between universities and other institutions
  - Diversification of institutions, degree profiles, learning paths
  - Time, resources & quality enhancement of teaching & research
  - Competing pressures to support excellence & increased participation
  - Managing European integration and internationalisation in a global context
Next steps toward the London meeting

- Overarching European Qualifications Framework
- QA:
  - implementing the European Standards and Guidelines
  - exploring the feasibility of a QA Register
- Doctorate (and master level) = reforming postgraduate education
- Social dimension
- Mobility
- International dimension
V. Conclusion: Challenges for European higher education

- Reforming higher education and optimising research performance at the same time
  - Means managing multiple institutional missions
  - Makes institutional differentiation & profiling essential
  - Requires rethinking governance, ensuring leadership & effective management...

- Managing major reform processes & strengthening the European dimension in an increasingly global environment
  - Avoiding ‘Eurocentrism’
  - Ensuring that ‘Bologna’ is open to the world
  - But Bologna also has an impact on the rest of the world

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