

The impacts of the Bologna Process on the EHEA and beyond

Europe at the Global edge, articulating the global dimension of EHEA through recognition, *Fernando Miguel Galán-Palomares (European Students Union)*

Current and Future Prospects for Bologna Process in Turkish Higher Education System, *Dr. Armagan Erdogan (Social Sciences University of Ankara, Turkey)*

The Bologna Process goes East: from 'Third Countries' Jargon to Prioritising Inter-regional Cooperation between the EU and ASEAN, *Que Anh Dang (University of Bristol)*

Future Scenarios for the European Higher Education Area: Exploring the Potential of 'Experimentalist Governance', *Robert Harmsen (University of Luxembourg)*

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The issue of recognition of higher education qualifications has been at the core of the Bologna Process and thus of EHEA since the very beginning, being addressed both in the Sorbonne (1998) and Bologna (1999) Declaration. Nevertheless the interest for this topic goes back to 1947 when at the 2nd UNESCO General Conference the higher education programme was constituted. Since then several initiatives were initiated, and UNESCO promoted the creation of regional conventions: Latin America and Caribbean (1974), Mediterranean (1976), Arab States (1978), Europe (1979, Lisbon Convention 1997), Africa (1981) and Asia-Pacific (1983, revised 2011).

This paper aims to do a comparative analysis of the UNESCO regional conventions of recognition of higher education qualifications, by the different points addressed on those conventions, using as starting point the Lisbon Convention for easy reference, once that is done we will be able to understand better what is the approach of the different conventions and similarities and differences and at the same time looking for any possible trend that could set the ground for articulating a common tool which could generate a global cooperation across regions/conventions for recognition. For adding value to the analysis, our aim is to complement it identifying good practices and challenges existing regarding the implementation of the different regional conventions, highlighting what has been working in some regions and what not, as well as trying to see the reasons for it. By doing so we will be able to indicate what should be the focus of further studies in this field and/or recommendations of any political initiative. The regional convention bureaus might be of great support, as we do already have the contacts with, and they will participate through a short survey plus qualitative interviews.

Through this work we aim to propose a possible clear path for the future of the Bologna Process and how EHEA could articulate its global dimension with other initiatives around the world. Another very interesting outcome of this work could be to set the ground for a possible Global Convention for Recognition as possible long-term political initiative.

Current and Future Prospects for Bologna Process in Turkish Higher Education System, Dr.
Armagan Erdogan (Social Sciences University of Ankara, Turkey)

In its 15th year, the Bologna Process has reached a critical threshold. The international, national and institutional experiences within this period have created valuable common knowledge not only on a regional scale for the 47 member countries of the EHEA but also on a global one. Along with the widespread positive effects during this time, there have been criticisms and even protests in some countries. Certain action lines, such as the three cycle degree systems, have been not very easily implemented in some countries, while others have criticized it for reducing autonomy. However, the EHEA launched in 2010 remains a unique project based on voluntary participation and is expanding beyond Europe. This large and comprehensive structure has been monitored and revised through the intensive work done by BFUG and approved by the Ministerial Conferences on a regular basis. During the past 15 years, socio-political and economic conditions have changed in Europe and worldwide; moreover, both the scope and the area of the EHEA have been expanded thematically and

geographically after 1999. These conditions set the stage for more inclusive and more participative European Higher Education Area for the coming decades.

This paper aims to contribute to the discussion of the future of the EHEA by exploring the Turkish higher education experience, being one of the largest systems in the EHEA. To achieve this aim, it examines the outcomes and lessons of the Turkish higher education system and analyzes focus group interviews with key actors, such as policymakers, rectors, academicians and national student representatives. Moreover, it offers some recommendations to increase global connections, mobility and partnership between national authorities. The recommendations include peer-learning activities and thematic projects to improve the participation and implementation of different authorities; and, more experience sharing and dialogue between the countries and institutions overall to understand, motivate and maintain sustainability of the common tools for the EHEA in the coming decade.

The Bologna Process goes East: from 'Third Countries' Jargon to Prioritising Inter-regional Cooperation between the EU and ASEAN, *Que Anh Dang (University of Bristol)*

The Bologna Process increasingly prioritizes its dialogues and negotiations with regions over individual countries, thus expanding its outreach to a larger scale. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations - ASEAN and ASEAN+3 - which are developing collective mechanisms for regional harmonization, have become one of the strategic regions for the EU partnerships in higher education. This paper draws on policy diffusion approach in regional studies literature and a constructivist approach to policy movement and mutation in geography to examine how Bologna policies have travelled to ASEAN and transformed their features and effects in the new context. Tracing the evolution of the ASEAN regional cooperation in higher education over the last four decades and first-hand empirical data, this paper argues that although the Bologna Process provides a point of reference for ASEAN, the active construction of an ASEAN regional higher education space in its flexible institutional design can become a model in its own right and potentially provide a useful source for reflecting on European Bologna practices.

Future Scenarios for the European Higher Education Area: Exploring the Potential of 'Experimentalist Governance', *Robert Harmsen (University of Luxembourg)*

The establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in 2010 poses in a somewhat different light many central questions asked of the Bologna Process. Questions of substance have, to some extent, assumed a heightened importance, as a feeling takes hold of an 'exhaustion' of the initial process and the need for a redefinition or renewal of core objectives. At the same time, questions of form persist, as the light institutionalization of the process may variably be seen as both an asset and a liability. The present paper seeks to explore these future challenges through the lens of governance processes. The paper first presents the findings of an earlier study examining the Bologna Process in the context of the wider literatures concerned with the 'new models of governance' (NMG). The 'lessons' of this study are then drawn out for the true development of the EHEA, heightening the 'experimentalist' potential of the 'soft law' instruments of governance which already characterize the process.

The earlier research on the Bologna Process in the context of NMG ultimately led to the conceptualisation of the process in terms of three intersecting policy arenas: the arean associated with

the Bologna Process itself; a parallel European Union higher education policy arena; and national higher education policy arenas. The Bologna arena appears, on balance, as a relatively successful instance of the operation of NMG, establishing highly influential pan-European (and international) templates in the policy sector. It further appears as relatively capacious, comparatively inclusive and regards stakeholder participation and broadly ecumenical in relation to competing visions of university governance. Such is not the case, however, as regards either the EU or the national arenas, both of which appear to be marked by strong tendencies towards „discursive closure“. In both cases, norms derived from the Bologna Process may be seen to have been used instrumentally by strategically placed actors in order to restrict the discursive space within which policy debate takes place. Thus, in the case of the EU arena, the Commission may be seen to have constructed a tightly defined ‚neo-liberal‘ reform agenda for the HR on the back of the wider Bologna Process. In various national contexts, ‚Bologna‘ similarity served to legitimate government reform programmes for HE which often went well beyond any stated requirements of the process.

The second part of the paper then looks at the implications of this analysis for the functioning and reform of the EHEA. The starting point is that the EHEA can only realistically develop as an instance of soft law governance – i.e. that a significant ‘hardening’ or legal formalization is not politically tenable, even if it were to be regarded as desirable. The key task in revitalizing the EHEA must thus be seen as that of allowing for the better operation of a soft law system. This is presently modelled with reference to Sebel and Zeitlin’s conception of ‘experimentalist governance’, prohibiting the ways in which existing EHEA structures might be better opened out so as to allow for the ‘democratic destabilisation’ which may be seen as the key to sustaining a robust system of soft law governance. Each of the three arenas identified in the first part of the paper is examined in turn, pointing respectively to: the need to better problematize the representativeness of stakeholder groups in the Bologna arena; the desirability of an EU HE policy more open to providing a platform for a breadth of views on and from the sector; and the central importance of developing multiple channels of contact between national and European policy arenas so as to avoid the emergence of narrowly constraining veto points.

The picture which emerges is one of an EHEA more concerned with the creation of meaningful deliberative spaces and more attuned to a broad range of constituencies, if also correspondingly less focused on issues of detailed implementation.