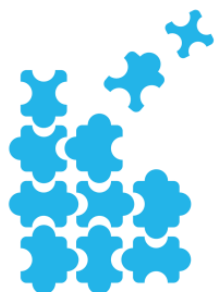


A New Concept for the Future EHEA

Prof. Ann Katherine Isaacs
Vice Chair, Bologna Follow Up Group
Co-Chair, BFUG Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue

Bucharest, 30 January 2020



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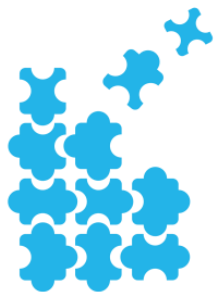
Map

1. This paper
2. Something about the origin and the nature of the Bologna Process
3. Universities in Europe in the 1990s
4. The Bologna Process at 21 years of age
5. Looking to the future: The BFUG reflects after Paris
6. Vision? System? Community?
7. What is needed? How to name and define it? Can it be achieved?

1. This paper

A record and **reflection** on a current debate, with the intent of creating a space for **open discussion** and input.

From the point of view of a participant and ‘witness’



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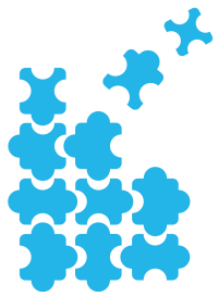
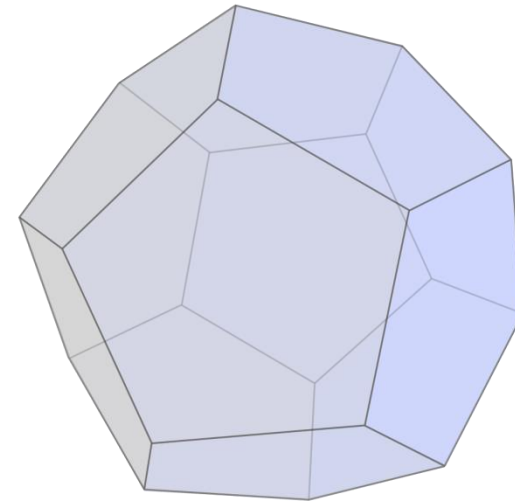
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2. The Bologna Process: a time, a place, a need....or **many** needs.

A plurality of actors, having partially convergent motivations: a **polyhedral** creation



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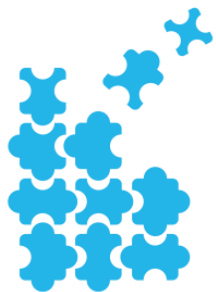


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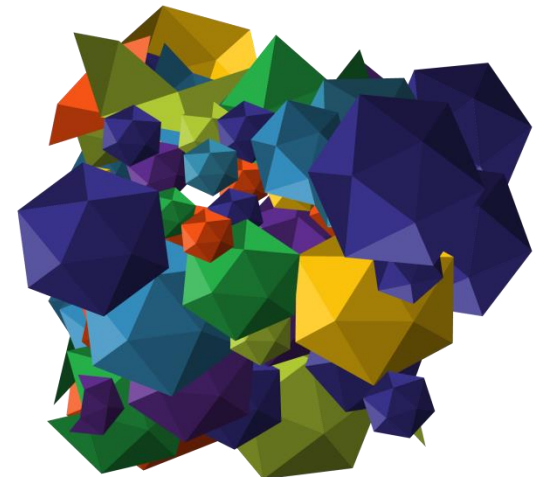
....Lowering barriers, facilitating mobility, connecting the diverse systems, creating shorter degree programmes able to prepare for employment, responding to the increase in the numbers of young people aspiring to enter higher education....countries engaged in a process of reform (or not) not wanting to be left behind



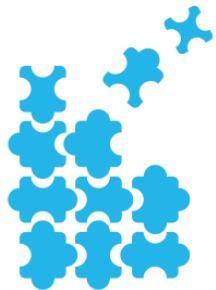
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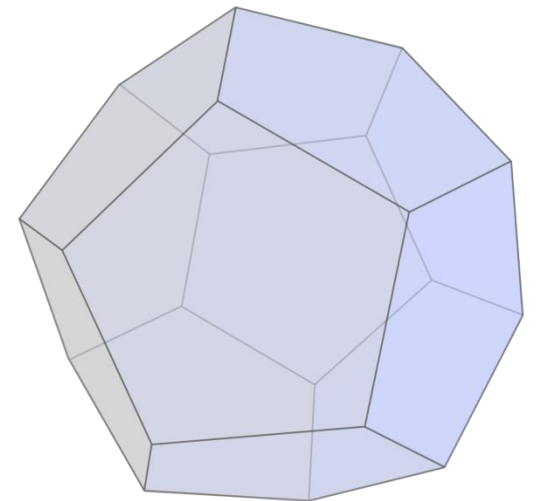
In this context, the important fact is that the response to the plurality of needs, in the end, was orchestrated by public authorities: i.e. **Ministries**, rather than by Universities and their organizations...



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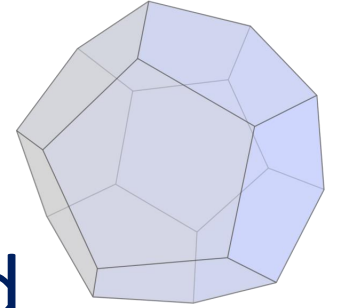


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3. European Universities in the 1990s

Legally and culturally limited in their outlook and ability to act, to modify their structures and orchestrate their response to change -- or foresee and influence the direction of change -- **more national than international**, and subject to their public authority.



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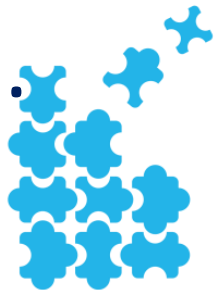


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The ECTS Pilot Project, promoted and supported by the European Commission and starting in 1989, made evident the **great differences** between the various national university systems. It also demonstrated the power and the creativity of motivated academics working in **transnational subject area groups**.



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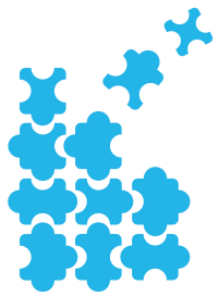


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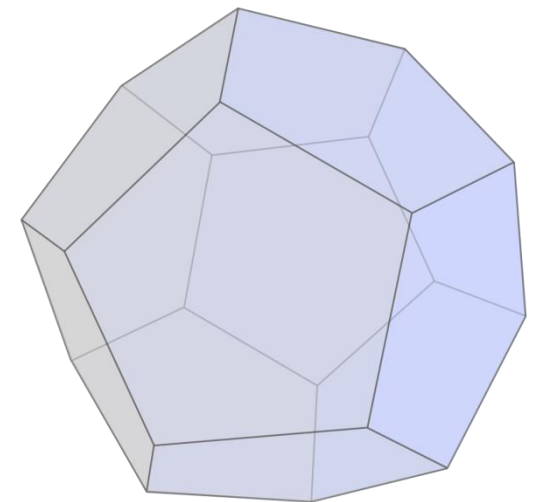
Ministers (some academics) took the lead, at the **Sorbonne**, and then, inviting 30 (it seems) countries to **Bologna**, to begin an agreed process of reform to make the national systems more comparable and compatible.



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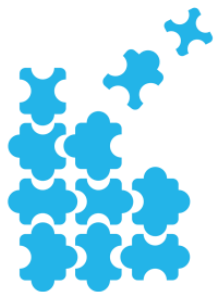
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4. The Bologna Process at 21

After 20 years, **much** has been achieved. But **not all** of what was hoped for and ‘committed to’ --- even more than once --- has been accomplished.

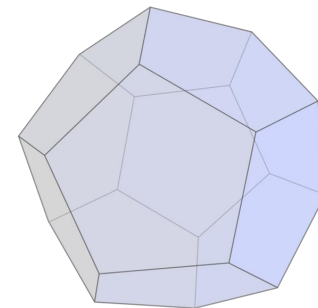
Soon, “Bologna” will be 21, an important birthday, a coming of age which will be celebrated in **Rome in June.**



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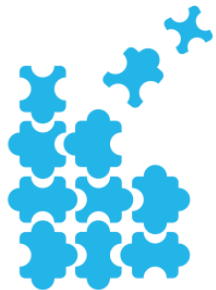


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5. Looking to the future (2030): **the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG) reflects** after Paris (June 2018)

- Consultation within the BFUG on future priorities
- Discussion by the BFUG : vision of the future HE
- Consultations in countries and organizations
- Discussion by the BFUG: vision of the future EHEA.

A new world, and a new concept, maybe.



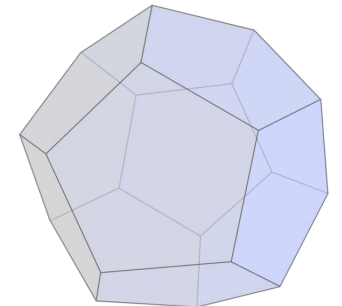
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6. Vision? System? Community?

Vision: the **future higher education world** and what will be needed, a time of new challenges and rapid transformation:

Flexibility, mobility, choice between numerous learning paths, according to personal, civic and professional needs. Digitalization.

Lifelong learning and ‘microcredentials’ as a/the mainstream business of higher education institutions.



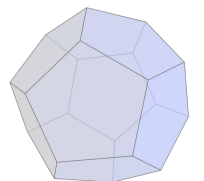
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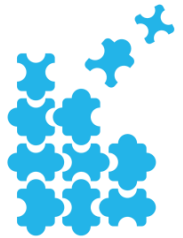


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Vision 2: the future EHEA and what will be needed:

- Smooth compliance with all the current “key commitments”: QF+ECTS; LRC+DS; QA+ESG
- Focus on L&T; ‘social dimension’ (the “Core Commitments”) and meeting the UN SDGs
- Stronger and deeper cooperation with the people and institutions that must accomplish this and (maybe) a motivating concept



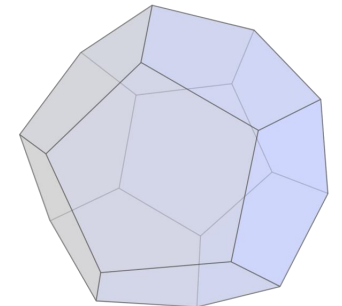
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The European Higher Education Area in 2030: A European Higher Education “**System**”? A European Higher Education “**Community**”?

Objection to **both**:

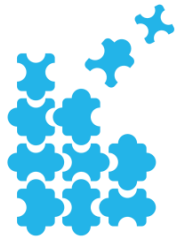
People will be confused

Objection to **System**

There is no single public authority that can be responsible for it

Objections to **Community**

It might suggest a community of belief, or a closed community.



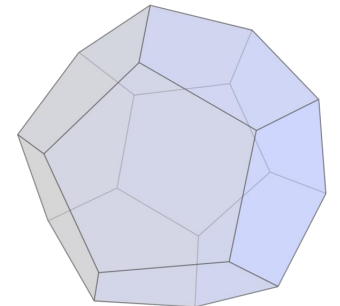
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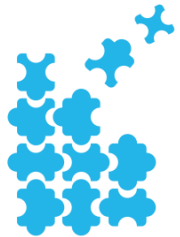


European Higher Education **System** vs European Higher Education **Community**?

On the positive side:

System/system: everything works

Community/community: suggests greater connection and communication between the ministerial level and the people and institutions ... the 'stakeholders' ... that actually should be the protagonists and the raison d'être of the EHEA.



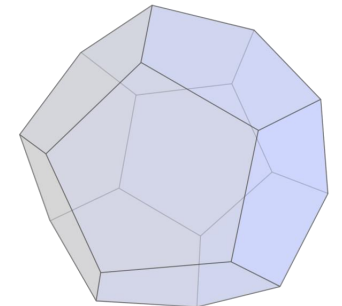
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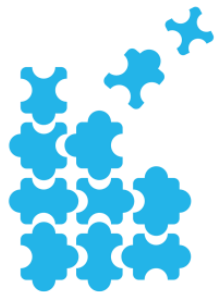


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EHEA and the BFUG need to have a more constant and positive relationship with the higher education world.

Higher education institutions are not ‘innocent bystanders’ passively waiting to hear from the EHEA (or from their organizations) what they should do next.



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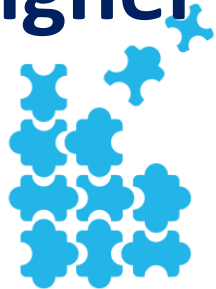


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The ‘future priorities’, the ambitious goals to be expressed as ministerial commitments in the Rome communiqué can only become real if there is a **fuller, closer and reciprocal connection and cooperation** between the EHEA as ‘a loose intergovernmental framework’ organised and guarded by the BFUG, and the diverse vital and varied world of **real-life higher education**.



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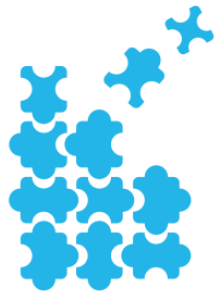
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Is this something that **the BFUG / EHEA can actually do?**
Promote? Accomplish?

Can the idea/ideal of a **European Higher Education Community** help to orientate efforts?



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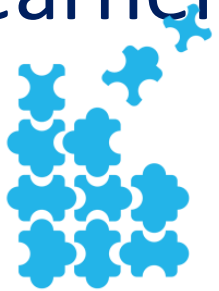


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Possible answers:

“**No**”: the communication channels, and links of reciprocal knowledge and trust, were weakened long ago.

“**Maybe**”: ways can be found to reactivate the positive connection with the higher education community of learners, academics/teachers/researchers and society.



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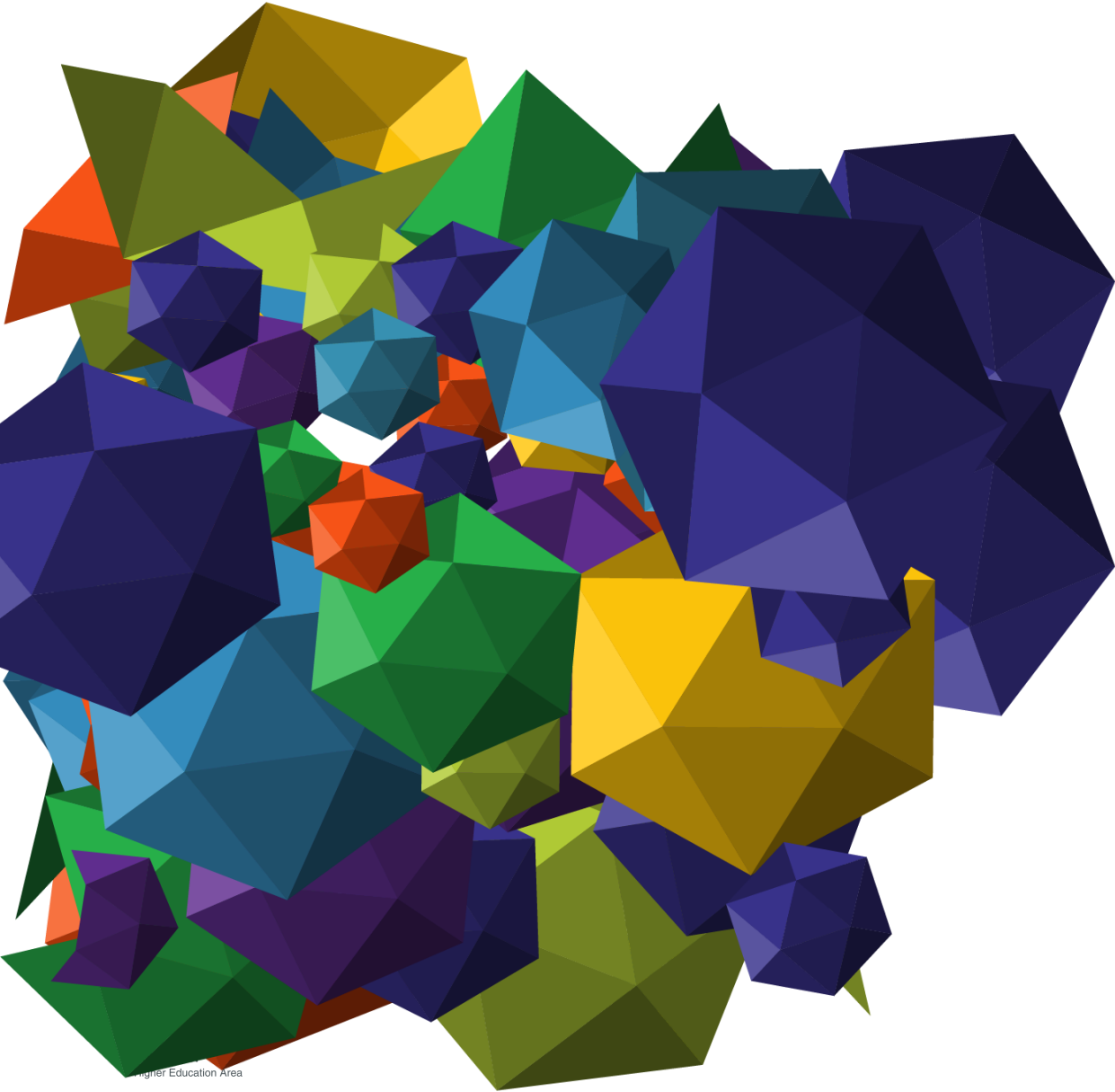
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Can we interrupt the circle of 'reciprocal ignorance'?

Once upon a time there were Bologna seminars, Bologna experts, thematic networks and interaction of many kinds.

Can we reestablish the positive links?

Can we build the **ethical equitable excellent** European Higher Education Community that we need?



That is the question

Thank you!
k.isaacs@unipi.it

