Taking Stock of the Bologna Process at 20

The Possibilities and Limits of Soft Law Governance[1]

Ligia Deca and Robert Harmsen

Abstract
The Bologna Process stands as both an exemplar of regional cooperation in the higher education policy sector and as a comparatively successful instance of the use of so-called 'soft law governance' policy instruments. While the formal launch of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in 2010 represents a significant milestone in the process, it nevertheless left many politically sensitive questions unanswered. Today, as this pan-European process now marks two decades of existence, many of the questions concerned with the direction and purpose of the process are being addressed with increasing urgency. Against this background, the present paper specifically focuses on recent debates surrounding the (non-)implementation of key commitments; on the functioning of the EHEA as a policy forum in relation to both its own membership and the wider international higher education policy landscape; and on the manner in which the EHEA may respond to increasingly serious challenges to the fundamental values that underpin the process. The authors draw on both the substantial body of scholarship that has emerged on the process and practitioner insights to examine its past achievements and current challenges, while having in mind the specificity of the EHEA as a policy process in a complex European context. Finally, the paper underlines the need for a more nuanced understanding of the EHEA governance model, based on an overall balance sheet that suggests the likely direction(s) of the process going forward.

The Bologna Process has been widely portrayed as a 'success story'. On the one hand, it is often presented as an (infrequent) instance of the effective functioning of a mode of soft law governance, serving in the European context as something of a precursor for the European Union's subsequent development of the Open Method of Co-ordination (Ravinet 2008; Haskel 2009). On the other hand, it is also often seen as having provided a model for regional cooperation in higher education subsequently followed in other global regions (Huisman *et al.* 2012) or, in more multipolar terms, as one of the major models of a 'higher education regionalism' that has also seen significant developments elsewhere (Chou and Ravinet 2015).

Yet, somewhat paradoxically, the period since the formal consolidation of the process as the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in 2010 has been marked by an increasing questioning of its core purpose or continuing utility. For example, a key strategy document submitted to the 2015 Yerevan ministerial meeting, on the basis of deliberations in the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG), affirmed in its opening sentence that the EHEA 'has come to a turning point where a new sense of direction is needed in order to move ahead' (EHEA 2015a). Commentators have similarly asked whether the process has 'exhausted' itself (Harmsen 2015: 795) or simply risks 'running out of steam' (Bergan and Deca 2018: 298-302).

[1] A previous version of this paper was presented at the session 'The Bologna Process, 20 Years On', at the Annual Conference of the Canadian Political Science Association, University of British Columbia (Vancouver), 6 June 2019.

These interrogations are, in part, the product of the very success of the Bologna Process. It has undoubtedly created an 'agora' (Zgaga 2012: 30-32) or shared higher education policy space at a continental level (cf. Dakowska and Serrano Velarde 2018) where none previously existed. Yet, at the same time, this growing questioning of the process also stems from its (perceived or real) shortcomings. It is clear that the implementation of key Bologna commitments, seeking to facilitate the comparability and recognition of qualifications and with it enhanced continent-wide mobility, remains markedly uneven across the 48 participating countries (Sin *et al.* 2016; Huisman 2019). Indeed, there is significant sentiment that, after an initial wave of reforms during the first decade of the process, the more recent period has perhaps seen something of a slowing down, if not a stalling of reforms (cf. Viðarsdóttir 2018). This, in turn, could be seen as pointing to the potential limits of a soft law governance process itself. At the same time, attention has also been focused on a further expansion of the objectives or topics to be covered within the process – indicating an aspiration for renewal beyond an initial agenda focused primarily on issues of structural reform.[2]

It is against this background that the present paper is conceived, intended – to use the (earlier) terms of the Bologna Process itself – as a 'stocktaking' exercise. The paper broadly surveys the current state of play as regards the EHEA, probing the major topics of current discussion, likely medium-term developments, and what this portends for the future direction(s) of this now twenty-year old experience of regional higher education cooperation. To this end, the first three sections of the paper examine: the recent, intensified treatment of the issue of non-implementation; the development of the EHEA as a 'policy forum' as regards both its member states and wider international cooperation through the Bologna Policy Forum; and the role of the EHEA as a 'community of values', focusing on its capabilities and limits as regards the promotion and/or enforcement of those values. The paper concentrates on the period since the formal founding of the EHEA at the Budapest-Vienna ministerial conference in 2010, with a particular emphasis on the more recent period encompassing the Yerevan (2015) and Paris (2018) ministerial meetings. It draws both on publicly available documentary sources and commentaries and on the authors' own involvement in different aspects of the Bologna Process.[3]

(Non-)Implementation

Preparations for the formal establishment of the EHEA in the mid- to late- 2000s saw discussions within the BFUG as to whether a 'hardening' of the essentially soft governance process might be either possible or desirable. There was some discussion as to whether a formal legal instrument might be adopted on the model of the Council of Europe/UNESCO Lisbon Recognition Convention and, relatedly, whether provision might be made for the exclusion or suspension of non-compliant contracting states (Zgaga 2012: 24). In a similar vein, there was some consideration as to whether the move from the 'informal' Bologna Process to the more formally constituted EHEA might be used as a form of selection mechanism, possibly restricting membership to only those states that had already met key commitments or alternatively placing conditions on the membership of those states that had not yet achieved such a level of compliance (Bergan and Deca 2018: 309). These discussions within the process also found an echo in (and were to some extent reinforced by) the academic literature.

[2] One of the working groups constituted after the 2015 Yerevan ministerial meeting focused on 'policy development for new EHEA goals' (EHEA 2017). As Bergan and Deca (2018: 302) note, however, the group 'seems to have faced serious difficulties in defining clear policy measures that lend themselves to the particular context of the EHEA'.

[3] Ligia Deca was a member of the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) in 2008-2010 as the Chairperson of the European Students' Union and was also the Head of the Bologna Secretariat in 2010-2012, hosted by Romania. In her latter capacity, she was involved in the drafting of the Bucharest communiqué (2012) and coordinated the organisation of the 2012 EHEA ministerial conference.

Most notably, Garben's (2011; 2010) critical legal analysis of the Bologna Process put forward the argument that it both could and should have been adopted through the instruments of EU law, which in her view would have provided for more effective implementation as well as for a more transparent decision-making process. Such arguments, however, were able to gain little political foothold; any idea of putting the process on a more formal legal basis was relatively quickly taken off the table.

With such a 'legal' option being an apparent non-starter, this left essentially two competing perspectives as to how implementation might be conceived within the framework of the EHEA (as contrasted in Bergan and Deca 2018: 310). On the one hand, there are those who view the process primarily in terms of policy learning (e.g. Harmsen 2015). In this view, the EHEA is 'essentially an area of peer learning, where countries develop good practice by learning from each other but where it is either not desirable or not possible – or neither desirable nor possible – to take measures where countries do not implement commitments' (Bergan and Deca 2018: 310). On the other hand, there are those who argue that the EHEA, while significantly relying on peer learning, nevertheless requires some form of effective enforcement mechanism so as to maintain its credibility and thus to secure the existence of a pan-European higher education space in which qualifications are readily and unproblematically recognised across borders (e.g. Bergan 2015). Viðarsdóttir[4] (2018: 391-392) evocatively makes the case for this latter vision of the process, drawing a strong distinction between an initially voluntary participation and the need, nevertheless, to ensure consistent compliance once that initial commitment has been undertaken:

> It is, however, essential that for the Bologna Process to function, the voluntary nature of the agreement only applies to participation but never to implementation. In short–once you sign up to take part in the Bologna Process, you should not expect to find yourself in front of a smörgåsbord of educational delicacies where you might choose to have two slices of salmon but ignore both the ham sandwiches and the potato salad. Instead, you sit down to a set lunch, carefully nutritionally balanced but not catered to individual tastes. It may look less appetising than the smörgåsbord but its constituent parts have been carefully thought through so that unless you consume all the individual components you miss out on its full benefits and it will function less than optimally.

The presentation of these two positions is necessarily somewhat stylised and an understanding of the underlying dynamics of (non-)compliance within the EHEA undoubtedly requires a more fine-grained analysis of the possibilities and limits offered by the full spectrum of instruments – including positive socialisation, 'name and shame' mechanisms and the adoption of more formal sanctions – potentially operable within a soft governance framework. Nevertheless, the basic distinction between a predominately 'peer learning' approach on the hand and an approach concerned to ensure the 'collective enforcement' of commitments on the other may usefully serve to frame much of the discussion surrounding (non-)implementation in the EHEA from 2010 onwards.

From Bucharest to Yerevan

The 2012 Bucharest ministerial conference saw some moves in the direction of strengthening implementation within the EHEA. Following on the decision taken at the 2009 Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve ministerial conference, the previous 'stocktaking' exercises were replaced by a 'Bologna Process Implementation Report', developing more fine-grained indicators of compliance with key commitments. Consequently, as observed in the report, 'the colour dark green is less prevalent in some action lines than before' (EACEA 2012: 7) – i.e. relative to the 'traffic light' (green-amber-red) bands used to indicate compliance, fewer countries were able to meet the more rigorous standards

[4] The author, an official in the Icelandic Ministry of Education, was also a co-chair of the Non-implementation Advisory Group (2016-2018) whose work is discussed below.

applied for a determination of full compliance. The final communiqué of the Bucharest meeting (EHEA 2012) also stated that the EHEA would 'encourage the development of a system of voluntary peer learning and reviewing in countries that request it', with a view to helping 'to assess the level of implementation of Bologna reforms and promote good practices'. This commitment in the Bucharest communiqué was made having in mind the already existing EU funded peer learning activities (PLA) and with a view to better use EU funds for Bologna Process implementation.

Three years later, at the Yerevan ministerial conference, the issue of non-implementation figured with much greater prominence in the final communiqué. While noting the progress that had been made by the Bologna Process, the introductory preamble to the communiqué nevertheless also underlined that 'implementation of the structural reforms is uneven and the tools are sometimes used incorrectly or in bureaucratic or superficial ways' (EHEA 2015b). This was then amplified later on in the document, with a call to redouble efforts to ensure 'full and coherent implementation of agreed reforms at the national level', to be achieved by further instilling a vision of the 'shared ownership' of those reforms on the part of policy-makers and academic communities, while also more actively engaging stakeholders.

The framing of the issue of non-implementation broadly reflected the logic of the 'collective enforcement' position outlined above, affirming that the credibility of the EHEA crucially depends on the existence of effective mechanisms to ensure that consistent standards of compliance are maintained. In the words of the communiqué:

> Non-implementation in some countries undermines the functioning and credibility of the whole EHEA. We need more precise measurement of performance as a basis for reporting from member countries. Through policy dialogue and exchange of good practice, we will provide targeted support to member countries experiencing difficulties in implementing the agreed goals and enable those who wish to go further to do so (EHEA 2015b).

On the basis of the Yerevan conclusions, an advisory group was then established to deal specifically with the issue of 'non-implementation', working in liaison with the existing working groups on monitoring and implementation. The work of the group proved to be extremely contentious by the usual standards of the EHEA, giving rise to 'difficult discussions' within the BFUG (Bergan and Deca 2018: 320). In effect, as detailed in the section below, the group's deliberations touched directly on the different visions which the participating states might hold of the nature of the EHEA itself – in particular, pointing to differing understandings of the nature of the 'commitments' made within the process and the extent to which these could or should give rise to more or less public and constraining instruments of enforcement.

The Advisory Group on Non-Implementation

The group worked from early 2016 through early 2018, following the usual format with regular meetings and regular reports to the BFUG.[5] It decided early on to concentrate only on the (non-)implementation of three key commitments: 1). A 3-cycle system compatible with the EHEA Qualifications Framework and making use of ECTS; 2). Compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention; and 3). Quality Assurance in compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG), implying external QA performed by independent agencies, preferably those registered on the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR). While recognising that these commitments 'in no way represent all EHEA tools, reforms and common values', the group nevertheless stressed that these

[5] The major proposals and regular reporting documents produced by the group (including the documents cited below) are conveniently collected at: http://www.ehea.info/cid105406/ag-non-implementation-2015-2018.html, last accessed on 16 December2019.

commitments 'are central to the Bologna Process' and that 'their correct implementation is a necessary prerequisite to any higher education system that embraces the fundamental values of the Bologna Process' (EHEA-AGNI 2016a).

The scope of the commitments to be (initially) dealt with thus defined, the group moved to tackle the question of how implementation might be improved. The initial work of the group in this regard appeared broadly consistent with the 'collective enforcement' approach identified above, again stressing that 'the Bologna Process will lose credibility if no consequences are visible for non-implementation' (EHEA-AGNI 2016b: 3). An initial proposal was drafted and discussed for an eight-stage cyclical process to deal with non-implementation, whereby national problem areas would be identified by an implementation committee on the basis of regular national reports (1), leading to a request for information from the state concerned (2). The state would then reply to the committee (3), opening a dialogue (4) and developing an action plan (5) on which the implementation committee would provide feedback (6). Progress would then be subject to regular updates within the normal cycle of business defined by ministerial conferences (7). Data would further be collected and collated in view of the next ministerial conference (8). Non-implementation procedures would be 'highlighted' during ministerial conferences, allowing for exchanges and follow-up in a new cycle. The implementation committee, as envisaged in this original model, would be a standing committee of the BFUG, made up of BFUG members and external experts where relevant. Pointedly, in this first draft, states subject to non-implementation procedures would have been excluded from membership of the non-implementation committee.

Work continued in this vein through much of 2016 and 2017, including the presentation of two draft model letters that would be sent respectively to countries with 'good' implementation records and to those where implementation was deemed to be 'insufficient' (EHEA-AGNI 2017a). Yet, though the proposal appeared to have garnered substantial (majority) support, it was also clear that significant apprehensions, if not outright opposition, also existed in relation to the approach adopted.

These doubts and oppositions found clear expression at the meeting of the BFUG in Tartu in November 2017, at which a number of states, led by France, made clear that they could not accept the proposal on the table. The French delegation argued against a system which they argued would 'stigmatise' rather than 'encourage' states, further noting that the process lacked adequate legal and governance provisions to move in the direction proposed. They were joined by Italy and Russia, as well as to varying degrees by a number of other states, in this opposition (EHEA-AGNI 2017b).

Faced with this opposition, the advisory group was sent back to the drawing board to work out a new compromise, with a Flemish proposal based on the use of 'reverse peer groups' emerging from the discussions as the most likely way ahead. Meeting jointly with representatives of Working Groups 1 (Monitoring) and 2 (Implementation) in Brussels in December 2017, the group sought to thrash out the contours of a new proposal, in particular seeking to allay French (and others') fears that the initially envisaged approach would risk appearing to put countries 'on trial' (EHEA-AGNI 2017c).

This led to the proposal of a new document on 'Support for the Implementation of Key Bologna Commitments', communicated to the BFUG meeting in Sofia in January 2018 (EHEA-AGNI/WGI 2018a). Relative to the earlier model, the new proposal streamlined the cyclical procedure (reduced to six steps with less onerous administrative requirements) and significantly changed the tone of the overall presentation so as to stress its essentially supportive character – 'a change in overall language to better reflect the positive and incentive-based aspects of the process' (EHEA-AGNI/WGI 2018b). Crucially, the role of the implementation committee in identifying national problem areas was also removed from the process. This would be replaced by a practice of self-identification as regards both

areas where countries sought additional assistance and areas where countries felt themselves positioned to offer such assistance on the basis of the successful implementation of commitments.

Under the revised proposal, after the collection and collation of data for the Bologna Implementation Report prior to each ministerial conference (1), states will then self-identify as having successfully implemented key commitments or as having not or insufficiently implemented such commitments, expressing an interest in joining one or more peer groups on this basis (2). The Bologna Implementation Group will then play a coordinating role, facilitating the constitution of peer groups on the basis of the responses received (3). The peer groups will then begin their work, initially focused on the three key commitments already identified above (4). The peer groups will regularly update the Bologna Implementation Committee on their progress (5) and countries will then submit their reports on implementation prior to the next ministerial conference, restarting the cycle (6). Positive implementation experiences may be highlighted at the ministerial conference, while provision is also made to bring to the attention of the conference any instances where countries have failed to make significant progress on the implementation of key commitments across two reporting cycles. It would then be for the ministerial conference to make a (political) determination as to such action as might be taken in these circumstances.

It is this revised proposal that was adopted by the May 2018 Paris ministerial conference. The overall trajectory of the drafting process bears underlining. Having started from a comparatively strong 'collective enforcement' position, significant (minority) resistance produced a progressive push back, ultimately resulting in the adoption of a model clearly on the 'peer learning' end of the spectrum. This, indeed, is evidenced in the final document itself, which describes the adopted model in the following terms:

> The proposal follows the Bologna philosophy of peer- and process review which fits well with the collegiate and improvement-oriented ethos of the EHEA and aims to make implementation of key commitments more transparent (EHEA 2018a).

Reflecting the general tenor of developments, it is perhaps noteworthy that the Paris ministerial conference was also the first time since 2003 when national implementation reports were not made publicly available for all EHEA member countries (leaving this option open only for those countries that specifically wanted to make their self-reporting available to wider audiences).

From Paris to Rome

The 2018 Paris communiqué devoted two sections to questions of implementation, noting the progress made, but also affirming that continuing efforts must be undertaken so as 'to unlock the full potential of the EHEA' (EHEA 2018b). Echoing the terms of the Yerevan communiqué three years earlier, the conclusions to the 2018 ministerial meeting further noted that better implementation may only be achieved through ensuring 'a full ownership' of the agreed reforms across the EHEA, engaging governmental and institutional actors, as well as staff, students, and the wider community of stakeholders.

As noted above, the Paris meeting further agreed to proceed on the basis of the final, revised proposals put forward by the Non-implementation Advisory Group together with the Working Group on Implementation. To that end, the period since the 2018 meeting has seen the constitution of a Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG), as well as three peer groups dealing with the three key commitments identified as being of central importance for ensuring the credibility of the EHEA: the qualifications frameworks and ECTS; recognition (including both the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the Diploma Supplement); and quality assurance.

At the time of writing, the three peer groups have been constituted and have begun to lay the foundations for their work, both identifying thematic orientations and clarifying the concept of peer support itself (BICG 2019a). There has been a good overall uptake as regards participation in the groups. As of November 2019, there are 24 countries participating in the qualifications framework group, 38 countries in the recognition group and 37 countries in the quality assurance group (BICG 2019b). Only one jurisdiction (the United Kingdom as regards England, Northern Ireland and Wales) has not (as yet) manifested its intention to participate in any of the peer support groups. Of course, the jury must remain out at this stage as to the effectiveness of the newly agreed process, which will be reviewed at the scheduled June 2020 ministerial conference in Rome. Some speculative observations might, however, be permitted as a means to frame future discussions.

On the one hand, the model adopted offers a perhaps underestimated possibility for process learning. Thematically focused peer exchange may effectively allow for both the identification of common impediments to the fulfilment of key commitments and the means by which these may be overcome. It may also, perhaps even more importantly, facilitate a deepening and reshaping of our understanding of those commitments, helping to ensure their continuing relevance. For example, group work in the area of recognition could push beyond a simple scorecard approach to understand how recognition operates in practice across the EHEA, at both official and institutional level, in terms that could better facilitate mobility without necessarily insisting on a (perhaps unattainable, if not undesirable) convergence of institutional forms.

This view of the process, relative to the models outlined at the beginning of this section, would see it fully embrace its potential as a model of peer learning, concerned not only with the implementation of existing commitments, but also in creating dynamic processes of iterative adaptation. In relation to wider concepts of soft governance, this corresponds to the logic of the influential experimentalist governance model of Sabel and Zeitlin (2010: 3), which specifies that 'the framework goals, metrics, and procedures themselves are periodically revised by the actors who initially established them, augmented by such new participants whose views come to be seen as indispensable to full and fair deliberation'.

On the other hand, there is, of course, no guarantee that the process will necessarily realise this full potential. Moreover, given the model agreed, it appears unlikely that the operation of the process will satisfy those whose primary concern is that of ensuring the consistent, if not uniform, implementation of key commitments at the level of individual participating states. Viðarsdóttir (2018: 397) gives voice to such concerns in her discussion of the model adopted, making an appeal (unheeded at Paris) for the adoption of a stronger sanctioning mechanism within the process:

> The most notable problem with the model as proposed is that it contains no endpoint and no obvious consequences for those countries who are either unable or, more worryingly, unwilling to participate in it and for whom no improvement is noted over the course of the cycle. It is theoretically possible within the model as it stands that it becomes a perpetual cycle of "support" for countries in which no improvement is ever seen or judged likely. Having noted the near standstill that some countries have come to with regard to the implementation of some key commitments makes it necessary that an escalation or endpoint to the model be put forward for discussion and eventual decision by the EHEA ministers at their next conference in Paris in 2018.

Across these two positions, there is perhaps also a further point to be made concerning research on the EHEA. It is clear that participating states have differing views of the nature of the 'commitments' which they have made in joining the process, and that these are expressed in terms that often call to

mind the differing 'worlds of compliance' identified by Falkner *et al.* (2005; 2008) in their studies of the implementation of EU directives. These 'cultures of compliance' deserve more attention in the context of the EHEA, not only as a means to understand differing patterns and degrees of implementation, but also as potentially structuring factors that must better be accounted for in our overall conceptualisation of the limits and possibilities of the EHEA itself.

The EHEA as a Policy Forum

As a voluntary inter-governmental process, which 'has soft law in its DNA' (Harmsen 2015: 796), the structures of the EHEA readily lend themselves to functioning as a policy forum, facilitating policy dialogue and peer learning for its member countries, as well as between the European Higher Education Area and other interested parties worldwide. While the previous section discussed the tensions between those wishing to move to stricter interpretations of what it means to be an EHEA member country and those emphasizing the need to focus (only) on policy dialogue as a tool to reach the commonly assumed goals, this section will look at this wider dimension, taking stock of how the Bologna Process has developed itself as a policy forum in recent years. Attention is first focused internally on the (limited) development of the social dimension, before turning to the Bologna Policy Forum and the EHEA's efforts to engage in enhanced dialogue and cooperation with other global regions.

The Social Dimension

The social dimension of higher education is deemed essential in order for higher education to fulfill its societal mission, especially in view of contributing to social cohesion in the EHEA member states. As social policy broadly conceived is *par excellence* an area of national specificity and jurisdiction, policy dialogue was considered to be the best way forward by which the EHEA could support each higher education system to meet the goal of inclusive higher education. One particular three-year (2012-2015) project – Peer Learning for the Social Dimension (PL4SD)[6] – foresaw a number of activities that were aimed to support EHEA countries in their efforts: drafting country profiles regarding existing policies on social inclusion, two peer learning activities at the European level, and developing a database of over 300 good practice examples, as well as three in-depth country reviews. Besides the PL4SD project, the Report of the Working Group on the Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning was complemented by a dedicated strategy for the topic, bearing the title '*Widening Participation for Equity and Growth: A Strategy for the Development of the Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning in the European Higher Education Area to 2020*'. However, despite the call made in the 2009 Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve ministerial communiqué for all countries to set 'measurable targets for widening overall participation and increasing participation of underrepresented groups in higher education, to be reached by the end of the […] decade', less than 20 % of systems had set targets for inclusion for under-represented groups in 2015 (EACEA 2015). It was mainly the countries that had anyway focused on the social dimension (Belgium – Flemish Community, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, etc.) that could show concrete progress when the latest EHEA implementation report was being drafted (EACEA 2018). It can therefore be argued that peer learning works primarily when the involved parties are already ready, willing and able to pursue a specific agenda. Since the EHEA member countries left out this dimension when identifying key Bologna Process commitments, it is highly likely that the EHEA will focus on its 'policy forum' role and attempt to promote innovative ways of increasing the policy

[6] PL4SD was developed by the Institute for Advanced Studies Vienna (Austria), in partnership with a number of partners including the European Students' Union (ESU) and was funded by the European Commission. More information can be found at: https://www.esu-online.org/?project=pl4sd-social-dimension-observatory-sdo, last accessed on 16 December 2019

learning process for willing and interested parties, without attempting a more coercive approach, despite the modest progress made in the past decade.

The Bologna Policy Fora – Between Policy Export and Global Dialogue

The issue of policy dialogue between the Bologna Process and other regional initiatives first appeared in the EHEA context in the Berlin ministerial communiqué (2003), where the ministers sought to encourage cooperation with other parts of the world, namely by opening Bologna events to those interested coming from non-Bologna countries. It was however not until 2007 that a report on the *Bologna Process in a Global Setting* was drafted (Zgaga 2007) and a Strategy on the External Dimension of the EHEA was adopted by Bologna Process member countries. The Strategy focused on five main policy aims: '1. Improving information on the EHEA; 2. Promoting European higher education in order to increase its attractiveness and competitiveness; 3. Strengthening cooperation based on partnership; 4. Intensifying policy dialogue and 5. Furthering recognition of qualifications' (Bologna Process 2007).

The fourth policy priority focused specifically on intensifying policy dialogue and it was further detailed by the work of the Bologna Working Group on European Higher Education in a Global Setting (2007-2009), which recommended that ministerial conferences should be complemented by Bologna Policy Fora, as events opened to non-EHEA members. Five such Bologna Policy Fora have been organised since 2009, back to back with each EHEA ministerial conference. The Bologna Policy Fora enjoyed initial enthusiasm from EHEA and non-EHEA members alike, but political participation dropped significantly in following editions. The format ranged from plenary debates only to a combination of plenary debates and thematic parallel sessions, with a recent gradual opening of the EHEA ministerial sessions to non-EHEA countries in order to increase the attractiveness of the event.

These events have been largely deemed unsatisfactory, due to various reasons: lack of political focus evident in the superficial discussions between participants, insufficient political representation (in recent years particularly from the side of EHEA countries), lack of follow-up in between these events, and a general difficulty in finding the right balance between national interests and internationally relevant topics of discussion (Bergan and Deca 2018: 313-314). The relative lack of involvement of non-EHEA members in organising these events has also led to a European centric approach, which lowered the level of relevance for non-European dialogue participants. In the experience of one of the authors in organising an edition of the Bologna Policy Forum, most EHEA ministers were more interested in organising parallel meetings with minsters with whom they had something to discuss rather than being involved in an attempt to make the overall event more adapted to their interests. The final list of participants, despite being a BFUG prerogative, was always heavily influenced by the interests of the country organising the Bologna Policy Forum. This meant that sometimes the invitations went out very late and the concept was rather a poor attempt at reconciling overarching EHEA (and oftentimes EU, due to funding allotted for the event) interests and the foreign policy priorities of the host. But these organisational aspects were not the only factors weighing in on the success of the five editions of the BPF. The discussions that revolved around the preparations of each edition always involved a clash between those mainly considering the policy dialogue aspect (which emphasised the need also to focus on the priorities of those outside of the EHEA) and the EHEA members which were more interested in the 'export' value of the event (e.g. prior to the first BPF, the European Commission put forward a proposal to promote 'Bologna labels' – a tool that would recognise the efforts of countries that wish to align their higher education system to the EHEA, without actually becoming members).

Despite the difficulties encountered by the EHEA as a whole to make the BPF a success, EHEA members have successfully intensified their policy dialogues in various contexts. Notably, the European University Association (EUA) forged solid partnerships with counterparts in Asia, Africa and Latin America, the European Students' Union (ESU) increased its global student dialogue with the help of

UNESCO, and the EU intensified its efforts to expand its Erasmus programme to non-EHEA countries, etc.

Perhaps some of the difficulties faced by the BPF to fulfill its purpose are also linked with the lack of enthusiasm of the countries with globally competitive higher education systems to embark on a common EHEA promotion effort. One telling example is the failure of the Information and Promotion Network, which was designed to support the International Openness Working Group in the 2010-2012 timeframe with enhancing the exchange of good practices related to HE promotion and to work towards an EHEA plan in this sense. The reluctance of many of the members actually to embark on EHEA wide efforts to promote not just their higher education system, but the EHEA as a brand, prompted the group to not ask the BFUG to renew its mandate, though the group nevertheless stressed the need for more concerted marketing efforts, which would pre-suppose financial efforts (EHEA-IOWG 2012). The European Commission funded a project in 2015 to further the activity set out in the IPN Terms of Reference, but its implementation gave rise to several conflicts between higher education promotion agencies.

Is the EHEA a Successful Policy Forum in all of its Dimensions?

Looking at the relative achievements of the EHEA in its attempts to become a policy forum, both for its members and for interested external parties, a few observations can be made. Firstly, the topics on which the debates are most constructive in terms of policy learning are those that benefit from an overlap with national political priorities (structural reforms, recognition, etc.) or by a non-challenged prominence (e.g. transparency tools). In other cases, such as for the social dimension of higher education, the effectiveness of the soft governance mechanisms which mainly rely on policy dialogue are limited by factors outside of the EHEA's reach – political prioritisation and stability, national socio-economic context, perceived role of the higher education sector, capacity etc. Furthermore, the limits for policy dialogue are also set by the perceived or presumed added value of the EHEA for each individual member – in the case of EHEA's policy dialogue with other regions, some aspects are seen as best kept in the national remit, such as international marketing efforts, especially for those that would not necessarily benefit from a very strong image of the EHEA to the detriment of marketing efforts for their national system.

The influence of the wider political climate must also be borne in mind, marked by growing levels of Euroscepticism. Also, European values have been challenged in a number of countries, from the rule of law to freedom of expression and university autonomy. This policy mood could not remain without consequences and the EHEA has seen a lack of appetite even for some of its initial trademarks (such as the publicly available national implementation reports). In this context, policy dialogue could not remain untouched and the effectiveness of this tool will depend on the willingness of national and institutional representatives to buck the political trend, which appears in many cases to point towards a more inward-looking approach to policy. These past years have also brought the issue of fundamental values in the EHEA to the forefront, as any effective policy learning process must be embedded in a community of shared purpose and values. The next section will look at how some of the debates on EHEA values have evolved and will discuss the potential need to focus more on this aspect if the EHEA is to continue to be a successful policy forum in the future.

The EHEA as a Community of Values

The Bologna Process, from the outset, has represented a 'community of values'. The 1999 Declaration notably made explicit reference back to the 1988 Magna Charta Universitatum, which set out a broad, humanist vision of the university as an autonomous institution rooted in an expansive vision of

academic freedom and the unity of teaching and research.[7] These underlying values themselves have not, however, for the most part been subject to explicit monitoring within a process that has largely concentrated on more technical questions of structural reform as discussed in previous sections.

Recent developments have, nevertheless, pointedly underlined that core principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy cannot be taken for granted across the member states of the EHEA. Reflecting this situation, a 2016 background document surveyed key issues surrounding academic freedom and institutional autonomy across the EHEA and further raised the question of what role the EHEA itself might play in the promotion or defence of such core values (Bergan *et al.* 2016). This challenge was then, in turn, taken up in the 2018 Paris communiqué, which strongly affirmed these 'fundamental values' in one of its opening paragraphs:

> Academic freedom and integrity, institutional autonomy, participation of students and staff in higher education governance, and public responsibility for and of higher education form the backbone of the EHEA. Having seen these fundamental values challenged in recent years in some of our countries, we strongly commit to promoting and protecting them in the entire EHEA through intensified political dialogue and cooperation (EHEA 2018b).

On the basis of this affirmation, a task force has been established 'for future monitoring of values', with a view to making a proposal for adoption at the 2020 Rome ministerial meeting. This task force is essentially confronted with two main challenges.

On the one hand, it is clearly a number of high-profile, egregious violations of core principles of institutional autonomy and academic freedom that have led to the renewed interest in bringing the monitoring of such values into the process. Worrying developments may be identified across a range of EHEA countries, including high profile cases such as the measures taken by the Erdoğan government in Turkey in the aftermath of the failed 2016 military coup or the actions of the Orbán government in Hungary as regards the Central European University in the context of wider restrictive moves concerning academic freedom.

Yet, it is precisely in such severe instances of the limitation of academic freedom that the EHEA is arguably least able to act because of the political sensitivity of the issues raised. As Bergan and Deca (2018: 317) comment, 'Facing challenges in the implementation of one's national qualifications framework is one thing, and the responsibility lies squarely with the public authority responsible for education. Facing challenges in implementing democracy and human rights is quite another story, and it is not one that lies primarily in the remit of the Minister of Education'. While one may find it regrettable, this comment accurately reflects the limits of the EHEA, which cannot reasonably be extended to encompass a wider political dimension. Indeed, its core logic and structures reflect these limits, essentially providing for monitoring as regards the (non-)fulfilment of commitments, in terms qualitatively different from an enforcement mechanism designed to allow for the sanctioning of violations.

The partial exception in this regard has been the case of Belarus, initially refused admission to the EHEA (Gille-Belova 2015) and then later admitted only on condition of following a 'roadmap' of supervised post-accession reform (cf. EHEA 2018c). Even here, however, there has been significant political pressure from a number of participating states to end the country-specific monitoring process, despite clear evidence of the non-fulfilment of key commitments.

---

[7] The declaration is available on the site of the Magna Charta Observatory at http://www.magna-charta.org/resources/files/the-magna-charta/english, last accessed on 16 December 2019. The Charter has acquired a resonance well beyond its initial European context, and had by mid-December 2019 been signed by 889 universities in 88 countries.

On the other hand, this leaves open the question of what may reasonably be accomplished within the process. Relative to this challenge, the most useful starting point is to take stock of the situation at European level as regards the existence of relevant benchmarks and standards. Here, as Matei and Iwinska (2018) convincingly argue, a notable imbalance may readily be detected, in which a comparatively well-articulated European model of 'university autonomy' has emerged in recent decades, but in the absence of a correspondingly well-developed notion of academic freedom as a necessary complement and counterweight. The European University Association has effectively played a strong agenda-setting role (Nokkala and Bacevic 2014), notably through the development of its national university autonomy scorecards, framing the discussion in terms reflecting the concerns of its membership (essentially university rectorates/central administrations). As such, a conception of autonomy has emerged that is primarily shaped by organisational considerations. The central focus has been to ensure that university leadership has the necessary capacity to respond to the growing external demands placed on higher education institutions – the product of a generalised 'autonomy-accountability two-step' (Harmsen 2014). Individual level academic freedom has, however, been relatively little considered within this wider policy turn, and may indeed have suffered significant erosion in the face of both increasing managerial centralisation and the growing importance within universities of externally defined priorities (cf. Christensen 2011).

The EHEA process might thus usefully address this situation by focusing on a definition and monitoring of academic freedom. In part, this may build on existing work that has mapped a range of possible indicators that could be used in such an exercise (Karran *et al.* 2017). Beyond the identification of indicators, further (and potentially more difficult) discussions will also be required as to how or where such monitoring might fit in relation to existing EHEA structures. While one might conceive of new structures, the more likely option would see an academic freedom dimension mapped on to existing reporting requirements in relation to the implementation report, to peer support structures or (in some proposals) to quality assurance mechanisms. Consideration might further be given to expanding the range of sources used and/or actors involved in reporting beyond the self-reporting of participating states – though, depending on the specific mechanisms adopted, this evidently risks being an area of considerable political sensitivity.

Overall, if considerations of academic freedom (or other fundamental values) are to be brought within the process, it is thus very likely that their treatment will be fundamentally shaped by the limits and possibilities of the existing soft governance model, rather than marking a significant departure from this model as regards any putative (let alone punitive) notion of enforcement. With this, we thus return, in our conclusion, to a balance sheet concerned to understand the operation of this distinctive governance model as it has evolved over the past two decades.

Conclusion

Reflecting its soft law character, perhaps the most important accomplishment of the EHEA continues to be that of the construction of an 'agora' or of a 'policy space' as noted in the introduction. The EHEA continues to facilitate structured, continent-wide dialogue on major issues of higher education policy to an extent largely unparalleled in other global regions. The major focus and most productive areas of discussion remain those concerned with the structural reform of higher education systems, where clearly articulated European-level templates have emerged as shared reference points, even if their implementation remains uneven (see below). Beyond a core of structural reform issues, where participating states have often appeared willing to invest in the European process so as to gain added leverage for desired, difficult changes at the domestic level, developments have been more limited. The much discussed, but relatively little acted upon social dimension of the Bologna Process is a case

in point. As discussed above, significant advances in this area have to date appeared largely restricted to a small group of participating states already committed to relatively ambitious policy agendas, with the European-level influence as such appearing correspondingly marginal. It remains to be seen whether this will change in the aftermath of the upcoming 2020 Rome Ministerial Meeting, where ministers will be invited to adopt a set of Principles and Guidelines on the Social Dimension.[8]

Implementation remains uneven, here again reflecting the character of a soft law process whose basic design does not lend itself to providing for strong mechanisms of enforcement. The contentious discussions surrounding the work of the non-implementation working group between the Yerevan and Paris ministerial meetings (2015-2018) provided a stark representation in this regard of both the in-built limits of the process and the differing understandings of it across the participating states. A proposed move to create a still comparatively light touch form of 'authority' in the process, allowing for states to be identified as non-compliant and to be required to develop a monitored action plan to address the indicated shortcomings, was blocked by a vocal minority of participating states. Instead, a final compromise was reached which relies entirely on self-identification and voluntary peer support groups – and this in a context where the previously systematic publication of country-specific implementation reports had also slipped off the table. Underlying this controversy were two quite distinct, contradictory views of the Bologna Process itself. On the one hand, there are those countries (including France, Russia, Greece, Poland, Spain and Italy) which appear to view the 'voluntary' character of the process as not permitting any meaningfully binding enforcement of the commitments entered into within it. On the other hand, there also appears to be a larger group of countries (including the Nordic states, the Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom) who view the 'voluntary' character of the process as applying only to the initial decision to join, after which they hold that there should be an enforceable obligation to abide by the commitments entered into. As previously highlighted, these different understandings of the process, and the 'worlds of compliance' that underlie them, have been comparatively neglected in research on the Bologna Process and merit much greater scrutiny going forward.

This, in turn, connects the EHEA to the wider European political landscape, where it cannot entirely escape the rise of Euroscepticisms and the growing forms of questioning of the European political project. Like all forms of European cooperation at present, the Bologna Process must now invest greater efforts in securing its own legitimacy, pushing beyond a comparatively narrow policy community. More directly, the EHEA is also faced with growing threats to its fundamental values, most particularly as regards core tenets of academic freedom and institutional autonomy. How or whether the process is able to deal with such threats – effectively affirming its foundational principles while not succumbing to the risks of a potentially destabilising politicisation – will undoubtedly be one of the major challenges of the coming years. The potential development of a definition and indicators of academic freedom within the EHEA context may, for example, prove to be something of a litmus test of both the possibilities and limits of the normative 'soft power' of the process.

Finally, as a governance model, the experience of the EHEA to date affords us some potentially interesting lessons of wider applicability. The process has displayed a significant degree of innovation in the creation and deployment of a diverse toolkit of policy instruments. Evolving practices of benchmarking, stocktaking and peer learning have been introduced, refined, and reformed over the course of the past two decades. Such practices, moreover, sit within the framework of a wider policy community that has displayed strong socialising dynamics, developing shared templates and understandings of higher education policy across the continent. Despite markedly uneven patterns of implementation, the anchoring of these broad structures is in itself an important achievement. It is

[8] The draft of the European Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education available at the time of writing the article was last accessed on 16 December 2019, at: http://ehea.info/Upload/BFUG_FI_TK_67_5_5b_AG1_Principles_and_Guidelines.pdf

the nature of this achievement which, moreover, points to the direction of future development for the process. As in the past, the EHEA will be able to advance only by a careful calibration and adaptation of policy instruments to realities on the ground – fostering consensus, facilitating learning and prodding participating states towards the individual fulfilment of collectively defined objectives where necessary. As such, it will also continue to be an exemplary instance of soft governance in practice, illustrating both the possibilities and limits of a governance model that must – in the absence of both significant legal constraint and substantial financial resources – ultimately rely on normative suasion.

References

Bergan, Sjur. 2015. 'The EHEA at the Cross-roads: The Bologna Process and the Future of Higher Education', pp. 737-752 in Adrian Curaj et al. (eds.), *The European Higher Education Area: Between Critical Reflections and Future Policies* (Cham: Springer).

Bergan, Sjur, Eva Egron-Polak, Sijbolt Noorda, and Patricia Pol. 2016. Academic Freedom and Institutional Autonomy – What Role in and for the EHEA? Background document prepared for the thematic session at the meeting of the BFUG, Bratislava, 8 - 9 December. http://ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/20161024_Podgorica/75/1/Board_SK_ME_51_5_FundamentalValues_642751.pdf , last accessed on 16 December 2019

Bergan, Sjur and Ligia Deca. 2018. 'Twenty Years of Bologna and a Decade of EHEA: What Is Next?', pp. 295-319 in Adrian Curaj et al. (eds.), *European Higher Education Area: The Impact of Past and Future Policies.* Cham: Springer.

BICG 2019a. Bologna Implementation Coordination Group, Update to the Bologna Follow-up Group, BFUG Meeting 65, Bucharest, 26 March. http://www.ehea.info/Upload/65_BFUG_meeting_Bucharest/BFUG_RO_MK_65_6_BICG.pdf, last accessed on 16 December 2019

BICG 2019b. Implementing the Bologna Key Commitments through Peer Support, Draft Final Report, BFUG Meeting 67, Helsinki, 12-13 November. http://www.ehea.info/Upload/BFUG_FI_TK_67_5_1_BICG.pdf, last accessed on 17 December 2019.

Bologna Process. 2007. European Higher Education in a Global Setting: A Strategy. Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, September. http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/EHEA_in_a_Global_Context/24/2/Strategy_plus_possible_actions_597242.pdf, last accessed on 16 December 2019.

Chou, Meng-Hsuan and Pauline Ravinet. 2015. 'The Rise of "Higher Education Regionalism": An Agenda for Higher Education Research', pp. 361-378 in Jeroen Huisman et al. (eds.), *The Palgrave International Handbook of Higher Education and Policy Governance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

Christiansen, Tom. 2011. 'University Governance Reforms: Potential Problems of More Autonomy?' *Higher Education* 62: 503-517.

Dakowska, Dorota and Kathia Serrano Velarde. 2018. 'European Higher Education Policy', pp. 260-272 in Hubert Heinelt and Sybille Münch (eds.), *Handbook of European Policies: Interpretive Approaches to the EU*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

EACEA. 2018. *The European Higher Education Area in 2018: Bologna Process Implementation Report.* Brussels: Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency. https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/2fe152b6-5efe-11e8-ab9c-01aa75ed71a1/language-en?WT.mc_id=Selectedpublications&WT.ria_c=677&WT.ria_f=706&WT.ria_ev=search, last accessed on 16 December 2019

EACEA. 2015. *The European Higher Education Area in 2015: Bologna Process Implementation Report.*

Brussels: Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency. https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/european_higher_education_area_bologna_process_implementation_report.pdf, last accessed on 16 December 2019

EACEA. 2012. *The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report*. Brussels: Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency. http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2012_Bucharest/79/5/Bologna_Process_Implementation_Report_607795.pdf, last accessed on 16 December 2019

EHEA. 2018a. Paris Communiqué, Appendix 1: Structured peer-based support for the implementation of the Bologna Key Commitments, 24-25 May. http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2018_Paris/77/3/EHEAParis2018_Communique_AppendixI_952773.pdf, last accessed on 16 December 2019

EHEA. 2018b. Paris Communiqué, 24-25 May. http://www.ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/EHEAParis2018_Communique_final_952771.pdf, last accessed on 16 December 2019

EHEA. 2018c. Advisory Group 2, Support for the Belarus Roadmap: Final Report, submitted to the BFUG Meeting, Sofia, April. http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2018_Paris/72/3/MEN_conf-EHEA_AG2_03_950723.pdf. last accessed on 16 December 2019

EHEA. 2017. Policy Development for New EHEA Goals: Final Report. October. http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2018_Paris/72/7/MEN_conf-EHEA_WG3_03_950727.pdf, last accessed on 16 December 2019

EHEA. 2015a. The Bologna Process Revisited: The Future of the European Higher Education Area. 15 May. http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2015_Yerevan/71/1/Bologna_Process_Revisited_Future_of_the_EHEA_Final_613711.pdf, last accessed on 16 December 2019

EHEA. 2015b. Yerevan Communiqué, 14-15 May. http://www.ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/YerevanCommuniqueFinal_613707.pdf, last accessed on 16 December 2019

EHEA. 2012. 'Making the Most of Our Potential: Consolidating the European Higher Education Area', Bucharest Communiqué, 26-27 April. http://www.ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/Bucharest_Communique_2012_610673.pdf, last accessed on 16 December 2019

EHEA-AGNI/WGI. 2018a. Support for the Implementation of Key Bologna Commitments: Proposal to the BFUG from Advisory Group 3 on Dealing with Non-Implementation and Working Group 2 on Implementation, BFUG Meeting 58, Sofia, 31 January. http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/20180205-06-Sofia/71/7/BFUG_BG_SR_58_4c_AG3WG2Proposal_889717.pdf, last accessed on 16 December 2019

EHEA-AGNI/WGI. 2018b. Explanatory Note by Advisory Group 3 and Working Group 2 to the proposal

to aid implementation of Bologna key commitments, BFUG Meeting 58, Sofia, 31 January. http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/20180205-06-Sofia/71/7/BFUG_BG_SR_58_4c_AG3WG2Proposal_889717.pdf, last accessed on 16 December 2019

EHEA-AGNI. 2017a. Draft Letter (Specimen) to Countries: Proposal to the BFUG from AG3 on Dealing with Non-Implementation, BFUG Meeting 54, Gozo, 16 May. http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/20170524-25-Gozo/34/4/BFUG_MT_NO_54_5f_3_AG3_DraftLetter_765344.pdf, last accessed on 16 December 2019

EHEA-AGNI. 2017b. Notes from AG Discussion in Tartu, 12 December. http://www.ehea.info/cid119426/ag-non-implementation-2015-2018.html,last accessed on 16 December 2019

EHEA-AGNI 2017c. Advisory Group 3: Dealing with Non-Implementation, Minutes, Brussels, 7 December. http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/20171207-Brussels/49/1/AG3Minutes5meeting_901491.pdf, last accessed on 16 December 2019

EHEA-AGNI. 2016a. Advisory Group 3 Dealing with Non-Implementation: Working Paper 1, presented at BFUG Meeting 50, Amsterdam, 7 March. http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/20160307-08-Amsterdam/23/0/BFUG_NL_MD_50_8a_AG3_working_paper_I_615230.pdf, last accessed on 16 December 2019

EHEA-AGNI. 2016b. Advisory Group 3: Dealing with Non-Implementation, Minutes, Reykjavik, 12 September. http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/20160912-Reykjavik/04/4/AG3_20160912_Reykjavik_Minutes_832044.pdf, last accessed on 16 December 2019

EHEA-IOWG. 2012. Bologna-Follow Up International Openness Working Group Report. 2009-2012 http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2012_Bucharest/85/8/IO_WG_Final_Report_605858.pdf, last accessed on 16 December 2019

Falkner, Gerda. et al. 2008. *Compliance in the Enlarged European Union: Living Rights or Dead Letters?* Aldershot: Ashgate.

Falkner, Gerda et al. 2005. *Complying with Europe: EU Harmonisation and Soft Law in the Member States.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Garben, Sacha. 2011. *EU Higher Education Law: The Bologna Process and Harmonization by Stealth*. Dordrecht: Wolters Kluwer.

Garben, Sacha. 2010. 'The Bologna Process: From a European Law Perspective', *European Law Journal* 16 (2): 186-210.

Gille-Belova, Olga. 2015. 'The Limits of the European Higher Education Area: The Case of Belarus', *European Journal of Higher Education* 5(1): 83-95.

Harmsen, Robert. 2015. 'Future Scenarios for the European Higher Educational Area: Exploring the Possibilities and Limits of "Experimentalist Governance", pp. 795-813 in Adrian Curaj et al. (eds.), *The European Higher Education Area: Between Critical Reflections and Future Policies* (Cham: Springer).

Harmsen, Robert. 2014. 'The Governance of the Global University: Leadership and Policy Challenges', pp. 36-52 in Sjur Bergan *et al.* (eds.), *Leadership and Governance in Higher Education: A Handbook for Decision-makers and Administrators* (supplemental volume 2014-3). Berlin: Josef Raabe.

Haskell, Barbara. 2009. 'Weak Process, Strong Results: Cooperation in European Higher Education', pp. 273-288 in Ingeborg Tömmel and Amy Verdun (eds.), *Innovative Governance in the European Union: The Politics of Multilevel Policymaking.* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Huisman, Jeroen. 2019. 'The Bologna Process in European and Post-Soviet Higher Education: Institutional Legacies and Policy Adoption', *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, published online 25 March. https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2019.1597686, last accessed on 16 December 2019

Huisman, Jeroen et al. 2012. 'Europe's Bologna Process and its Impact on Global Higher Education', pp. 81-100 in Darla K. Deardorff *et al.* (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of International Higher Education*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Karran, Terence et al. 2017. 'Measuring Academic Freedom in Europe: A Criterion Referenced Approach', *Policy Reviews in Higher Education* 1(2): 209-239.

Matei, Liviu and Juilia Iwinska. 2018. 'Diverging Paths and Institutional Autonomy in the European Higher Education Area', pp. 345-368 in in Adrian Curaj *et al.* (eds.), *European Higher Education Area: The Impact of Past and Future Policies.* Cham: Springer.

Nokkala, Terhi and Jana Bacevic. 2014. 'University Autonomy, Agenda Setting and the Construction of Agency: The Case of the European University Association in the European Higher Education Area', *European Educational Research Journal* 13(6): 699-714.

Ravinet, Pauline. 2008. 'From Voluntary Participation to Monitored Coordination: Why European Countries feel increasingly bound by their commitment to the Bologna Process', *European Journal of Education* 43 (3): 353-367.

Sabel, Charles F. and Johnathan Zeitlin (eds.). 2010. *Experimentalist Governance in the European Union: Towards a New Architecture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sin, Cristina, Amélia Veiga and Alberto Amaral. 2016. *European Policy Implementation and Higher Education: Analysing the Bologna Process.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Viðarsdóttir, Una Strand. 2018. 'Implementation of Key Commitments and the Future of the Bologna Process', pp. 387-400 in Adrian Curaj *et al.* (eds.), *European Higher Education Area: The Impact of Past and Future Policies.* Cham: Springer.

Zgaga, Pavel. 2012. 'Reconsidering the EHEA Principles: Is There a "Bologna Philosophy"?', pp. 17-38 in Adrian Curaj *et al.* (eds.), *European Higher Education at the Crossroads: Between the Bologna Process and National Reforms* (Part 1). Cham: Springer.

Zgaga, Pavel. 2007. 'Looking Out: The Bologna Process in a Global Setting. On the "External Dimension" of the Bologna Process'. Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research. https://media.ehea.info/file/WG_External_dimension/34/3/ExternalDimension_report2007_581343.pdf, last accessed on 16 December 2019