

Lisbona's Goals and Bolonian Process-Issue of Education in EU Integration

Metod Černetič

Univerity of Maribor, Kranj, Slovenia

Lisbona's (2000) goals and strategy gave us the answers to the question how EU (European Union) can be competitive in the long term and, at the same time, preserve European model of life, that means a balance between economical, social and environmental goals. Knowledge is the focal point of development. That is the reason why many Evropean states (and Slovenia too) strongly support the idea of construction of knowledge society which started with Lisbona's goals and BP (Bologna process). The first condition for maintenance of social sustainability and kindness towards an environment is economical growth. The successful achievement of educational objectives depends largely on the successfulness of co-ordination among all parties concerned. The educational organizations have an objective among others to improve the quality and standard of education. They play an important role in the system of education. There is, by all means, an explicit need of co-ordination with the interested organizations from the environment which is an important element of their success. In this paper, we will deal with educational organizations, whose objectives will be defined from the point of view of their organizational aims which need to be attainable, coordinated, measurable and stimulating. Further, we will deal with policy and strategy of development of the organization. We will hypothesise that the objectives of education are derived from the human need for education and that is the reason why organizations are set up to satisfy this need. A further hypothesis will be that the objectives of all participants are both internal and external, economic social (political) and psychological. We believe that individuals, organizations and state have many of these objectives in common but some of them, however, are not shared. The successfulness in satisfying the educational needs depends on the mutual co-ordination of all interested parties. The educational system is an open system where the changes happen on the levels of organization, society, culture and environment and on the level of external reform of education.

Keywords: Lisbona's goals, BP (Bologna process), educational needs, social cohesion

Lisbona Goals and BP (Bologna Process)

Bologna Process and Higher Education

The BP major reform created with the claimed goal of providing responses to issues, such as the public responsibility for higher education and research, higher education governance, the social dimension of higher education and research, the values and roles of higher education and research in modern, globalized and increasingly complex societies with the most demanding qualification needs.

With the BP implementation, higher education systems in European countries are to be organized in such a

way that (Zgaga, 2009; as cited in Černetič, 2006, p. 314):

(1) It is easy to move from one country to the other (within the European Higher Education Area)—for the purpose of further study or employment;

(2) The attractiveness of European higher education is increased so that many people from non-European countries also come to study and/or work in Europe;

(3) The European Higher Education Area provides Europe with a broad, high quality and advanced knowledge base and ensures the further development of Europe as a stable, peaceful and tolerant community benefiting from a cutting edge European Research Area;

(4) There will also be a greater convergence between the US and Europe as European higher education adopts aspects of the American system.

Effects of BP by State

Contrary to popular belief, the BP was not based on an EU (European Union) initiative. It constitutes an intergovernmental agreement, between both EU and non-EU countries. Therefore, it does not have the status of EU legislation. Also, as the “Bologna Declaration” is not a treaty or convention, there are no legal obligations for the signatory states. The (extent of) participation and cooperation is completely voluntary. This can be regarded both as a positive and a negative thing. On the one hand, one could say that this bottom-up voluntary convergence does justice to the sovereignty of the states, which is especially important in the field of education. On the other hand, the avoidance of EU structures can be regretted for democratic reasons. The “Bologna Declaration” can be said to be a deal done in a smoke-filled room by governmental officials without any participation of the European parliament. Also, the involvement of the national parliaments has been limited (Haug, 2003, p. 221).

Although the “Bologna Declaration” was created outside and without the EU institutions, the European Commission plays an increasingly important role in the implementation of the process. The commission has supported several European projects (the tuning project, the TEEP (the teacher effectiveness programme) project) connected to quality assurance, etc.. Most countries do not currently fit the framework—instead they have their own time-honored systems. The process will have many knock-on effects, such as bilateral agreements between countries and institutions which recognize each others' degrees. However, the process is now moving away from a strict convergence in terms of time spent on qualifications towards a competency-based system. The system will have an undergraduate and postgraduate division with the bachelor degree in the former and the master and doctoral in the latter.

In mainland Europe, five year plus first degrees are common with some taking up to eight years not being unheard of. This leads to many not completing their studies and many of these countries are now introducing bachelor-level qualifications. This situation is changing rapidly as the BP is implemented.

Depending on the country and the development of its higher education system, some introduced ECTS (European credit transfer and accumulation system) and discussed their degree structures and qualifications, financing and management of higher education, mobility programmes, etc.. At the institutional level the reform involved higher education institutions, their faculties or departments, student and staff representatives and many other actors. The priorities varied from country to country and from institution to institution (Zgaga, 2009b, p. 67).

History of Integration Higher Education in EU

BP and EHEA (European Higher Education Area)

To give a general (and now in practice the most often used) description of recent processes in European higher education, we may use the term BP or the emerging EHEA. This new European higher education brand (Zgaga, 2004, p. 98) symbolized a whole set of important policy issues in higher education which have been broadly discussed at institutional, national and European levels since 1999. However, if we look more closely at some of these issues, it becomes obvious that the “Bologna agenda” has an important pre-history. The ideas presented in the “Sorbonne Declaration” of 1998 are its direct predecessor. Yet, these ideas were even emerging in previous debates—in preparing national policy responses to problems of the development of higher education and in comparing and confronting these responses (and the logic behind them) in a broader arena, such as within European Union consultation processes or within the Council of Europe and UNESCO as in the case of the “Lisbon Recognition Convention”.

These debates which would have been very different in having had a decision to enlarge the European Union or having the turbulent events seen in central and east Europe at the end of the 1980s, etc., do not occurred. The background is, thus, expanding. However, our task here is not to start writing a modern history of higher education in Europe which is about summarizing current trends in indifferent parts of Europe. At this point, however, it is necessary to define the turning point at which the issues and problems of modern higher education are rooted irrespective of national contexts. Recent literature reveals a high level of consensus that this turn is most closely linked to the transition from elite to mass higher education. Historically, in the developed countries, it occurred during the period of industrial growth after the Second World War. At the beginning of the 1970s, it was already clear that universities had entered a new era—but which era? The transition from elite to mass higher education involves a shift that we probably still do not understand in all of its dimensions.

The Dimensions of Mass Higher Education and Its Challenges

Thus, the expansion of higher education began during the 1960s. The increased demands for places at universities were a combined result of economic development and a higher number of candidates from the relevant age groups. The greater demand was clearly not some abstract arithmetic outcome. It was not only a simple response to growing employment options. It was also a result of the population's higher social and cultural expectations. Despite the obvious fact that this expansion was driven by economic and political factors which were more or less common to various developed industrial countries of the West, there were clear differences in its national tempos. Behind the increase in particular countries, we can recognize special national circumstances, such as shifts in home politics, social and cultural backgrounds, particularities of the functioning of national higher education systems, etc..

Since the 1980s, changes in the economy, technology and the labor market have further reinforced the existing demand for higher-level training and at the turn of the millennium the academic landscape was totally different from that seen in the 1960s. In the so-called EU-15 countries, the number of students in higher education is more than doubled in the last quarter of the 20th century. A relatively moderate increase can be noticed in traditionally well-developed higher education systems (Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and France), while the highest increases are more characteristic for the “suburbs” (Portugal, Greece, Ireland and Spain)

and/or those countries which joined the EU at later stages.

The political changes in Central and Eastern Europe in the early 1990s brought about *inter alia*, an even more noticeable increase in the number of students in higher education. The relative delay of the 1970s and 1980s was more than compensated for during the 1990s in almost all of these countries. Europe got rid of its internal divisions, and today, it is somewhat easier to make comparisons. When we observe Europe in apolitically non-polarized and geographically broader context, the growth of student numbers in higher education slowed down in Western Europe—in a few cases, it was even negative: Belgium, Germany, France, Italy (Eurostat, 2003, pp. 90-91), whereas it achieved the highest peaks in central and eastern Europe (with the exception of Bulgaria). During the last decade of the 20th century, growth in student numbers is marked by an index of only 105 in the EU-15 and even 150 in the EU-10; and an integrated index for the EU-25 is 111.

Nowadays, Europe (and not just Europe) is being challenged by a population decrease, because there are fewer and fewer young people in almost all countries. The high enrolment ratios achieved during the last few decades will surely continue and even increase to over one-half of the relevant age group; on the other hand, the decrease in the young population is expected to reduce in absolute figures the demand for places in the (now extremely expanded) higher education sector. This shift will pose (in fact it is already posing) new challenges in addition to the already known challenges of mass higher education. At the turn of the millennium, at the entrance to the knowledge society, such expectations seem to have finally encompassed tertiary education. A historic shift is occurring in the second half of the 20th century. Tertiary education is replacing secondary education as the focal point of access, selection and entry to rewarding careers for the majority of young people (OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), 1998, p. 20).

The reasons why people in the modern world decide to commence higher education differ considerably from the past. Nevertheless, we can still fully understand traditional individual aims like the “pursuit of truth” and “disinterested research” or a simple desire to join a profession (or continue a family tradition in practicing a profession) in order to help people care about their body, property or soul—while simultaneously gaining a highly recognized status in society. We can understand our predecessors but we also know that the specific social contexts in which our individual aims and wishes are formed in concrete ways have changed greatly since previous times. Rewarding careers (not for the minority but for the majority of young people) are today offered by advanced training.

Higher education is no longer primarily a personal call or privilege. It is a social demand that modern societies cannot function without increasing the number of educated and skilled people who work in the economy and public services or without expanding the research and knowledge that drive modern civilization. The increasing numbers of students led to criticisms by (not only) teachers regarding falling standards and today's students alleged ignorance. The growth in student numbers was not being accompanied (at least not proportionally) by new teachers. Nevertheless, today there are many more teachers (and many more new higher education institutions) than before but there is also a new popular discourse concerning “excellent”, “average”, “poor” or even “scandalous” teachers and institutions. Yet, these complaints should stem from students not academics! Were universities ready to cope with the challenges of mass higher education when they started to appear? Obviously not! The new situation was quite a surprise for everybody.

Over several years, (some) people understood that the world had changed and that the university is in a position to reconsider its mundane mission. The “splendid”, “optimal” but closed and isolated universe of the ivory tower could be just a myth. If one-third of an age cohort comes instead of 2% then there are not only

“born talents” among them. However, they all deserve active and quality teaching and we should not just wait to see who will succeed and who will be left in the field. It is excellent if the need to know has spread so much! Today, if the government seeks higher enrolment levels and new study programmes with an emphasized vocational dimension for the sake of improved employability and general welfare, then rectors should consider this with due attention. Finally, it would not be in line with academic traditions if they did not hear voices outside closed towers: a part of these traditions has been able to serve society. Modern university is not a monastery. As the “pursuit of truth” might sound a little “transcendent”, the university as a place of learning and research has always been open and connected to society in certain ways. Modern theories on university and higher education institutions generally distinguish between their several genuine roles or tasks. To undertake research and teaching, that is (Zgaga, 2003, p. 108):

- (1) To maintain and develop an advanced knowledge base;
- (2) To train—the young and the not so young—people for their professional careers;
- (3) To prepare them for a life as active citizens in a democratic society;
- (4) To contribute to their personal growth.

On the other hand, since mass higher education emerged numerous writers have been stressing that academic institutions should be responsive to society. This is absolutely correct, yet it is only half of the truth. Precisely for the multiple roles they play in culture and society, today academic institutions should not only be responsive (receptive) but also responsible (pro-active) (Weber, 2002, pp. 62-63):

While responding to society's needs and demands, universities have also to assume a crucial responsibility towards society... The great difference between being responsive and being responsible lies in the fact that in the first case, universities should be receptive to what society expect from them; in the second case, they should have an ambition to guide reflection and policy-making in society. While universities excel at making new discoveries in all disciplines of science and technology, they must also scrutinize systemically the trends that might affect soon or later the well-being of populations, and, if necessary, raise criticism, issue alarm signals and make recommendations.

Universities and External Purposes

Universities do not exist just for some external purposes; and they are (also) a legitimate place to reflect them. Further, reflecting changes in higher education, coping with the challenges of mass higher education, taking part with other institutions in policy analysis and acting with stakeholders is all part of their mission. Higher education has become a recognized field of research because it is an equally important area for external society, as it is for academic institutions themselves. Academics should also deploy their own intellectual resources to take stock of modern changes seen in higher education, the dimensions of internationalization and its challenges to higher education policy. A review of the past few decades shows that the expanding tertiary education sector (in particular the democratizing and liberalizing of access) put the need for systemic reforms firmly on national and institutional agendas. A few years ago, the Eurydice network produced a very useful study of reforms in European higher education in the 1980s and 1990s (Eurydice, 2000; as cited in Zgaga 2009a, p. 10) which provides an insight into these processes at an international level and which we will also draw upon here.

This comparative study allows an insight into systemic changes among the reviewed 18 European countries. In all countries, policy and legislative activities were particularly condensed at the end of the 1980s and in the 1990s. They show a large number of convergent trends in higher education among individual countries but the study states that:

There is no evidence that these developments were the result of a concerted approach between participating countries. The convergent education policies seem more likely to be a by-product of the economic and social policies which, in the context of European integration, underwent a deliberate harmonization process. (Eurydice, 2000, p. 174)

This statement seems a little surprising from today's point of view that the convergent education policies are just a by-product! Within the EU-25 action Education and Training 2010, an OMC (open method of co-ordination) established (Commission, 2001, p. 14).

In the perception of many generations, European universities have predominantly been national universities. This perception may vary according to national circumstances and levels of influencing and co-operating with other countries and universities. Nevertheless, in the 20th century we experienced (national) borders between (national) higher education systems and sometimes even between national institutions. Yet, there were no geographical, political and/or institutional barriers for universities in the middle ages. National (higher) education systems were born parallel to the industrialization processes in modern national states. As a sub-chapter to the protection of domestic markets, protective measures in the field of (higher education) qualifications emerged and various recognition procedures (predominantly for professional recognition) were put in place. However, due to the universal character of science and culture as well as centuries-long academic traditions certain compatible elements persisted throughout the otherwise incompatible national systems. Universities continued to co-operate in the given circumstances and the given extent, and students still went to study abroad but both institutions and individuals encountered many obstacles for either economic or ideological reasons (or both).

Criticism of BP

“Anti-Bologna” demonstrated in Barcelona, Spain, 2008. The process has been criticized because it would allow privatization of the degrees.

The new changes were closer to the UK and Ireland's models than that used in most of Continental Europe. In many countries, the process was not implemented without criticism.

Economic Aspects

There is much skepticism and criticism of the Bologna process from the side of academics. Thus, Lorenz (2003) has argued that (as cited in Zgaga, 2005, p. 110):

The basic idea behind all educational EU-plans is economic: the basic idea is the enlargement of scale of the European systems of higher education ... in order to enhance its “competitiveness” by cutting down costs. Therefore a Europe-wide standardization of the “values” produced in each of the national higher educational systems is called for.

Just as the World Trade Organization and GATS (general agreement on trade in services) propose educational reforms that would effectively erode all effective forms of democratic political control over higher education, so it is obvious that the economic view on higher education recently developed and formulated by the EU Declarations is similar to and compatible with the view developed by the WTO and by GATS.

Academic Aspects

In much of continental Europe, the previous higher education system was modeled after the German system, in which there is a clear difference of vocational and academic higher education. This mostly has an impact on the old engineer's degrees. The conflation of the two types of degrees can be counter-productive in the following cases (Zgaga, 2009a, p. 11):

(1) The vocational three-year degrees are not intended for further study, so those students who also want to advance to a master's degree will be at a disadvantage;

(2) The master's degree effectively becomes the minimum qualification for a professional engineer, rather than the bachelor's degree;

(3) The academic three-year degrees prepare only for continuing towards master's, so students who enter the workforce at that point will not be properly prepared. Yet, they would have the same academic title as the fully trained and vocationally educated engineers (see Fachhochschule).

The end-result of the change is that the agreements between professional bodies will require reevaluation in some cases as qualifications change.

Other Reforms as Riders of BP

The Bologna process has been implemented concurrently with other reforms, which have been attached as "riders" to the implementation itself. These reforms go far beyond the minimum provisions necessary to implement the Bologna process including introducing tuition fees, overhauling departments and changing the organization of universities. These reforms have been criticized as unnecessary and detrimental to the quality of education, or even undemocratic.

For example, in Finland, the official goal was to improve students' performances and enable them to gain diplomas faster by introducing stricter standards. However, students feel that the workload has increased and the new standards lead to a micromanaged and too narrow curricula (so-called putkitutkinto). The Bologna process is said to lead to universities being "diploma factories". Also, for example at ECTS, most students (85%) fail to achieve the official goal of 120 credits in two years—the average is 81 credits. The number of students failing to achieve the minimum credits to receive student benefit has risen 40% following the implementation of the process.

The part of the explanation is that student's life in Finland tends ample extracurricular activities. The silent agreement has been the gain in life experience and extended personal networks more than makes-up for the increased study time. Because these personal networks include alumni in influential positions, students have long been able to resist attempts to improve their nominal studying performance by the sacrificing extracurricular activities. The Bologna process as a pan-European effort has extended over and above these student/alumni networks.

Four Avenues of Improvement BP

One of the authors of the Bologna process (Haug, 2003, p. 213) said that the Bologna process has sometimes become a focus of tension, with institutions perceiving their government as being more interested in the rhetoric of reform than in providing genuine support to institutions.

First Aveny

FQ EHEA (framework qualification European higher education area) (Bergen, 2005) indicated that credits and qualifications are described in terms of learning outcomes, levels and associated workloads. Workload is defined as a quantitative measure of all learning activities that may feasibly be required for the achievement of the learning outcomes (e.g., lectures, seminars, practical work, private study, information retrieval, research and examinations). The feasibility of attaining the learning outcomes required for credit within programmes is important for the credibility of the framework and its helpfulness to learners. Timetable with credit evaluation

of studying obligation has to be considered that: 1 CP (credit point) means 25-30 hours load per student; yearly load is 1,500-1,800 hours; individual year include 60 CP, etc..

A part-time study indicates that in what proportion (in relation to the regular studies) will be carried out by organized forms of pedagogical work (from the suggestions in the process).

Information on the methods and forms studies: program cannot take more than three years, including part-time study! What is our "part-time", "part time study" or perhaps "extraordinary study"? How to get regular and part-time in the Fund with the "spirit" (and not just form) ECTS? (Website <http://docs.google.com/gview?a=v&attid=0.1&thid=11f5c435d1d9fa07&mt=application%2Fpdf>)

Second Aveny

The second aveny is as shown in Figure 1.

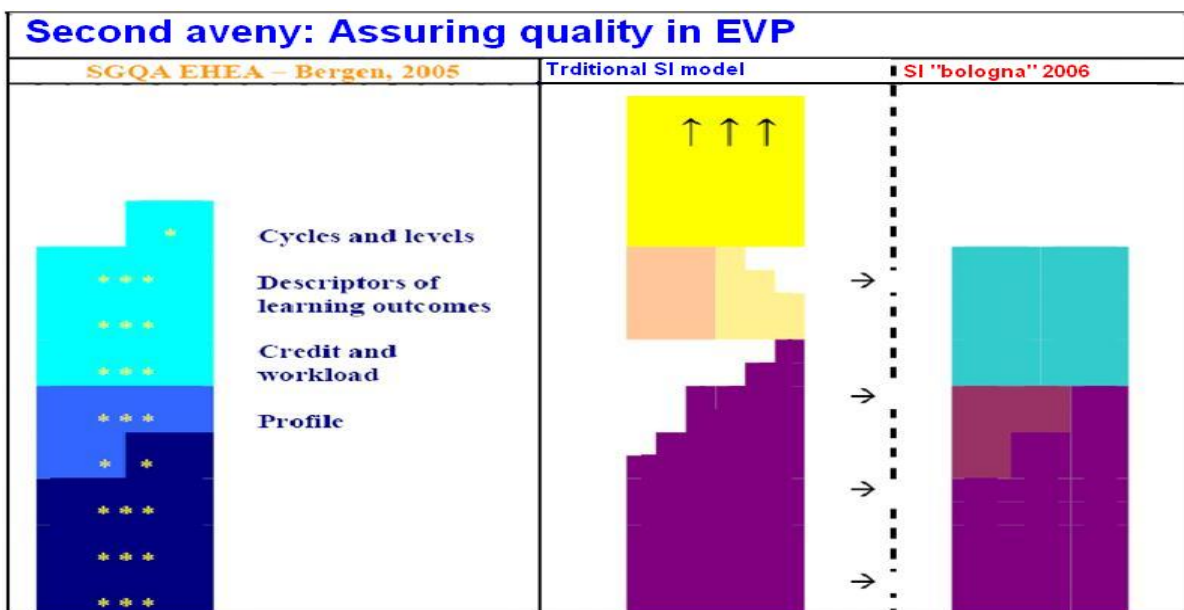


Figure 1. Second aveny. (Source: Retrieved from http://www.cmepius.si/files/cmepius/userfiles/dogodki/drZgaga_posvet040209.pdf)

Third Aveny

Official status. Agencies should be formally recognized by competent public authorities in the EHEA as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis.

Third Avenue. SGQA (survey/group/question/answer) EHEA (Bergen, 2005)

Independence. Agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations and that the conclusions and recommendations made their reports cannot be influenced by third parties, such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders.

Art. 48. Government of RS (Republic of Slovenia) set up a Council of the Republic of higher education as a consultative, accreditation, evaluation and habilitation authority of RS. Council is to carry out their duties and decision-making autonomy. All decisions are in acceptance of independent, professional and impartially.

Art. 50. Professional, organizational and administrative duties for the council are carried out by the body within the ministry responsible for higher education. Individual tasks may be awarded to external contractors.

Constitutional Court (Jan. 2008). The eighth paragraph of 50. Article shall be annulled.

Fourth Aveny

Independence. Agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations and that the conclusions and recommendations made their reports cannot be influenced by third parties, such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders (Website <http://docs.google.com/gview?a=v&attid=0.1&thid=11f5c435d1d9fa07&mt=application%2Fpdf>) (see Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1

Top 10 Erasmus Teachers Mobility 2004/2005

Top 10 Movers		Top 10 Hosts	
Malta	5.65	Malta	5.85
Slovenia	4.13	Finland	3.86
Finland	3.15	Slovenia	3.32
Czech Republic	2.94	Cyprus	2.17
Lithuania	2.50	Belgium	1.88
Estonia	2.15	Latvia	1.75
Latvia	2.11	Czech Republic	1.72
Belgium	2.03	Iceland	1.64
Iceland	1.88	Portugal	1.53
Cyprus	1.57	Lithuania	1.52

Note. Source: Cradden (2007; as cited in Zgaga, 2009a, p. 12).

Table 2

Foreign Tertiary Student in Euro Data and Europe

EURODATA countries	All tertiary students	All foreign students	Foreign (%)	Euro data countries (%)	Other European (%)	Non-European countries (%)	10 most frequent nation. of students (%)
AT Austria	229,802	31,101	13.5	74.6	13.3	11.7	97.1
CZ Czech Rep.	287,001	10,338	3.6	77.0	8.9	12.3	82.0
DK Denmark	210,746	18,120	9.0	36.9	6.3	19.9	38.3
EE Estonia	63,625	1,090	1.7	75.1	11.2	13.7	94.8
FI Finland	291,664	7,361	2.5	38.4	17.3	42.4	58.5
GR Greece	561,457	12,456	2.2	84.9	8.3	6.3	92.5
HU Hungary	390,453	12,226	3.1	63.7	20.9	15.5	84.6
LV Latvia	118,944	2,390	2.0	29.4	15.4	55.2	93.2
NL Netherland	526,767	20,531	3.9	57.8	3.5	38.0	70.0
SE Sweden	414,657	32,469	7.8	53.7	4.6	20.0	44.9
SI Slovenia	101,458	963	0.9	11.2	83.8	3.1	92.9
SK Slovakia	158,089	1,651	1.0	39.4	25.0	35.6	72.0
Total	19,430,382	1,117,725	5.8	42.1	8.0	45.6	56.8

Note. Source: Cradden (2007; as cited in Zgaga, 2009a, p. 14).

A Few Remarks and Some Questions for Reflection

This paper presents an analysis of some trends in contemporary higher education and aims at providing a broader context for the conference entitled “Tertiary Education: Quality, Financing and Linkages with Innovation and Productivity”. Like any paper of this kind it is limited in scope and size. Many notes are

intended for readers who would like to examine in detail particular issues, statements and information sources. The bibliography and some figures in the annex have the same intention to allow deeper insights and further study. Finally, a few questions aim at a recapitulation and connecting the trends observed as well as statements presented in the paper with the objectives of the conference and the background materials (e.g., reports from previous workshops). They also aim at stimulating reflections about the issues raised and consulting other papers produced for the conference and during previous workshops. Since a special website will be set up prior to the conference, at least some of the reflections, questions and comments can be exchanged before the participants meet in October. The questions are as follows:

(1) Mass higher education has had a different time schedule in different parts of Europe. What are main stages in the development of mass higher education and what are main policy challenges at particular stages?

(2) The internationalization of higher education is today a fact. The main drivers of these developments are attributed to economic and social policy as being external to the higher education sector. Are there also internal drivers (inherent to the nature of higher education and its traditions) that can stimulate internationalization? How does the internationalization of higher education also stimulate the internationalization of higher education policy?

(3) It is often stressed that compatible qualification structures as well as quality assurance standards and procedures in higher education should enhance the employability of graduates and increase innovation and productivity. It has been stressed in discussions that broader changes to education systems (not only at the tertiary level) are needed as well as changing the mindset (e.g., Workshop in Riga, 2005; as cited in Zgaga, 2005). How can higher education as the top of the education pyramid help in improving the lower levels (e.g., teacher training, popularizing science and technology, etc..) as well as itself?

(4) The review of trends in higher education showed that the issues of financing higher education systems are not likely to be included in official international documents, e.g., the Bologna Communiqués. On the other hand, recent discussions (Workshop in Warsaw, Riga and Bratislava, 2005; as cited in Zgaga, 2005) have shown that this issue is the most relevant one and that the international consultation and exchange of good practices is very stimulating. Which obstacles have meant that financing issues have not been included (or very rarely) in multilateral political documents as more binding statements? Would their inclusion be at all helpful?

With few exceptions, European higher education systems have traditionally been very influenced by the state. Since the 1980s, this role has started to change that the state has been withdrawing from direct institutional governance. The state's influence started to be restricted to setting general higher education objectives (structures and qualifications) that is, to higher education output (graduates, their employability, etc.) and not to the process. As a rule, legislative provisions were redirected from funds allocated to institutions strictly by budget lines (salaries, equipment, maintenance, etc.) to the allocation of block grants aiming to increase autonomy for its financial dimension.

This is the conceptual turn—a move away from the traditional intervention towards the new facilitator state (Neave & Van Vught, 1991; as cited in Zgaga, 2005, p. 114) which is the most characteristic feature of the policy and legislative changes of the 1980s and 1990s and still retains some relevance today. Institutions got more autonomy but they became more accountable: They are bound to the more efficient use of public funds and encouraged to seek alternative sources and to be more open to the economy and society. A special tool for and proof of institutional accountability has been given by developing and implementing QA methods in higher education. A preliminary result of national developments in this area was the extreme variety of QA provisions

at the beginning of the 1990s. It seems this variety was even larger than that in the case of degree structures. Interestingly, the issue of quality assurance was not an item on the agenda of the Memorandum on Higher Education in the EC (Commission, 1991; as cited in Zgaga, 2005, p. 115).

However, the spirit of European co-operation in higher education well supported during this period by EU member countries and positively influencing the broader European context as well, sparked discussions among countries even in this area. An early EU document stressing quality assessment in higher education was only adopted in late 1991 (Zgaga, 2005, p. 117):

Improving the quality of teaching in higher education is a concern shared by each member state and every institution of higher education within the European communities. The increasing importance of the European dimension in general and more particularly the introduction of a single market will widen the range of interested parties concerned with quality in higher education in each Member State.

Encountering the diversity (or absence in some national systems) of methods used for quality assessment at the national level, the document also stated that it would accordingly be useful for the methods at present used in the Member States for quality assessment in higher education to be investigated in a comparative study.

On the Grounds of Innovation and Productivity

The overarching framework of qualifications and European standards and guidelines has similar logics and supplement each other. They reflect and synthesize numerous previous discussions; they refer to the logic of the higher education developments of the last decades. They mark an important landmark in the internationalization of higher education but they should not be treated as completed. The challenges brought by the development of mass higher education in the global environment are huge to make diverse systems comparable and compatible and promote mutual trust by creating quality culture, while at the same time, the diversity of national contexts, as well as subject areas, should be fully respected. This is a demanding agenda, but contemporary trends in all countries persuade us that different independent national frameworks, which are not linked together in a coherent way, would not fulfill the learners' expectations of a European Higher Education Area of transparency and mobility where qualifications are easily recognized across borders. ... In order to facilitate fair recognition it is necessary for foreign partners to trust that national qualifications also in practice correspond to the levels to which they are attached. In this context, the quality assurance system, however it is organized nationally, has a role to play (Zgaga, 2005, p. 113). Effectiveness as well as innovation and productivity are today expected from higher education: for good reasons.

However, higher education (responsive and responsible) cannot consider innovation and productivity only as external purposes and it (with institutions as the system) should be innovative and productive for itself, internally, searching for a new identity to meet the new challenges. There have been progressive periods and deep crises in the history of European universities. Experience proves that they undertook immense forward steps when they found innovative and productive responses to challenges of the time whereas persisting in the old forms and discourses did not help. We should learn from these lessons. Neither the unlimited commercialization of higher education and research nor the dignified contempt of academic traditionalism can yield truly innovative and productive answers to the key questions of our time. An understanding of these questions should not be caught within the circle of opposite complaints like "there are never enough financial resources for higher education institutions" or "dropout levels from higher education are always too high". Higher education today and tomorrow is not only more or less than yesterday and the day before; if it comes to

a turning point between the previous and the current then it is different. Therefore, the effectiveness of higher education should not only be understood as a quantitative entity, but also qualitative. We should be aware that treating ideas only instrumentally render sterile the soil of human intellect; yet, we should not forget that ideas are sterile if they do not provide in their final results for new instruments to help people and society. At this point, real innovation and productivity have always found firm grounds.

Conclusions

The latest report on implementation of the BP warned that not all objectives will be fulfilled integrally and/or in all countries by 2010. One area where insufficient achievements require vigorous actions in the coming years is introducing lifelong learning into higher education. Slovenia would like to attract an in-depth discussion on the role and possible input of higher education to the concept of lifelong learning with the view of making further progress in this important area.

Higher education partners agree that Europe needs modernized universities, if it hopes to attain the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy, as universities are a key element of the knowledge triangle and, consequently, of a knowledge-based society. Modernizing universities is based on three pillars: autonomy and responsibility, administration and management and financing.

All three of them call for urgent changes. Slovenia will focus on the issue of whether Europe's universities, on facing greater autonomy and requirements for greater responsibility, are capable of responding successfully to new challenges and tasks. In this regard, opinions will be exchanged as to whether Europe's universities have proper governance and management structures in place.

This paper presents an analysis of some trends in contemporary higher education and aims at providing a broader context for the conference entitled "Tertiary Education: Quality, Financing and Linkages with Innovation and Productivity". Like any paper of this kind it is limited in scope and size. Many notes are intended for readers who would like to examine in detail particular issues, statements and information sources.

Finally, the few questions listed above aim at a recapitulation and connecting the trends observed as well as statements presented in the paper with the objectives of the conference and the background materials (e.g., reports from previous workshops). They also aim at stimulating reflections about the issues raised and consulting other papers produced for the conference during previous workshops.

References

- Commission of the European Communities. (2001, January 31). *Report from the commission: Concrete future objectives of education systems* (p. 25). Brussels.
- Weber, E. L. (2002). Universities' responsiveness and responsibilities in an age of heightened. In W. Z. Hirsch, & L. E. Weber (Eds.), *As the walls of academia are tumbling down* (pp. 61-72). London: Economica.
- Černetič, M. (2006). *Education economics management*. Moderna organizacija: Kranj.
- Černetič, M., & Černetič, B. (2006). Researchers and development-young researchers. *Informativa (Ljubljana)*, 30(1), 131-137.
- Černetič, M., & Dečman Dobrnjič, O. (2006). Education planning and change. *Organization*, 39(8) 475-481. Kranj: Modern Organization.
- Černetič, M., & Dečman Dobrnjič, O. (2007). Management of changes and Bologna process. In N. Popov, & M. Černetič, (Eds.), *Comparative education, teacher training and new education agenda* (Vol. 5, pp. 207-215). Sofia: Bureau for Educational Services.
- Haug, G. (2003). Quality assurance/accreditation in the emerging European higher education area: A possible scenario for the future. *European Journal of Education*, 38(3), 229-240.
- Haug, G., & Tauch, C. (2001). Trends in learning structures in higher education (II) (Trends 2). Follow-up report prepared for the

- Salamanca and Prague Conferences of March/May 2001* (p. 91). Finnish National Board of Education, European Commission, Association of European Universities (CRE), ETF.
- Medveš, Z. (2006). Bologna process between university and bureaucracy (introductory discussion). *Contemporary Pedagogy*, 57(4), pp. 113-116.
- Nyborg, P. (2002, May). *National, European global challenges in higher education*. Oslo: Norwegian Council for Higher Education, 2002.
- OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development). (1998). Redefining tertiary education (p. 158). Paris: OECD. Realizing the European higher education area. Communiqué of the *Conference of Ministers Responsible for Higher Education* (Berlin Communiqué) (p. 8). Berlin, September 19, 2003.
- Zgaga, P. (2004). *Bolonjski proces*. CEPS. Pedagoška fakulteta Univerze v Ljubljani: Ljubljana.
- Zgaga, P. (2005). Higher education for a democratic culture—the public responsibility. In L. Weber, & S. Bergan, (Eds.), *The public responsibility for higher education and research* (pp. 107-115). Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.
- Zgaga, P. (2009a). *Current trends in higher education in Europe*. University of Ljubljana. Slovenia
- Zgaga, P. (2009b). A decade of bologna process implementing. *CEPS (National Conference: Higher Education after 2010)*. Ljubljana, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Pedagogy, February 4, 2009.
- <http://docs.google.com/gview?a=v&attid=0.1&thid=11f5c435d1d9fa07&mt=application%2Fpdf>.
- http://www.cmepius.si/files/cmepius/userfiles/dogodki/drZgaga_posvet040209.pdf
- <http://www.bolonja.si/bolonja/index.php/component/content/article/9-novice/70-pavle-zgaga-qbolonjska-reforma-z-zlomljeno-hrbtenicoq.html>.