

# UNIKE – Universities in the Knowledge Economy

## **WORKSHOP 1**

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### COMPLEMENTARY SKILLS

# International networking and collaboration: the 'Bologna' case

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# 1. The “Bologna pre-history”

The European integration process after WW2: education (as well as some other “soft areas”) excluded.

Education has been kept in the “national responsibility”.

The first meeting of Education Ministers of European Communities member states: only in 1971.

Erasmus programme was launched in 1987.

Rapid changes in the 1990s:

- The Maastricht Treaty
- Tempus programme
- Political changes on European East



## 2. Between Maastricht (1991) and Lisbon (2000)

The Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging co-operation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organization of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity.

The Union has today set itself a ***new strategic goal*** for the next decade: *to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.* (...) Europe's education and training systems need to adapt both to the demands of the knowledge society and to the need for an improved level and quality of employment.

# 3. The Open Method of Coordination

Implementation of the strategic goal will be facilitated by applying a **new open method of coordination as the means of spreading best practice and achieving greater convergence** towards the main EU goals. (...) A **fully decentralised approach** will be applied in line with the **principle of subsidiarity** in which the Union, the Member States, the regional and local levels, as well as the social partners and civil society, will be actively involved, using variable forms of partnership. **A method of benchmarking best practices on managing change** will be devised by the European Commission networking **with different providers and users**, namely the social partners, companies and NGOs. (Lisbon Strategy, 2000)



## 4. From intergovernmental to 'European' process

This was the context and background of the 'Bologna style' networking and collaboration.

NB: the initiative came from a group of nation-states – not from the European Commission (EC).

The *Sorbonne declaration* (1998) and the *Bologna declaration* (1999): four 'big' vs. 29 'equal' – but without the EC.

However, until 2001 (the Prague meeting) the European Commission got the voting right in the Bologna process.

We can now move to the question of how it the Bologna process has been led and managed.



# The growth of the ‘follow-up’ structure

1999: “Convinced that the establishment of the European area of higher education requires constant support, supervision and adaptation to the continuously evolving needs, **we decide to meet again within two years** in order to assess the progress achieved and the new steps to be taken.”

The Sorbonne and Bologna ‘**follow-up groups**’:

‘SFUG’ (1998-1999) and ‘BFUG’ (1999-2001): treated as an ‘operational’ issue to be dealt by senior officials from Ministers’ cabinets – ‘behind the curtain’.

BFUG since 2001: a ‘political’ issue.



# 6.1 Prague: The birth of the ‘political BFUG’

2001: “Ministers welcomed **new members** to join the Bologna process after applications from Ministers representing **countries for which the European Community programmes Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci or Tempus-Cards** are open. They accepted applications from Croatia, Cyprus and Turkey.

Ministers decided that **a new follow-up meeting** will take place in the second half of **2003 in Berlin** to review progress and set directions and priorities for the next stages of the process towards the European Higher Education Area. **They confirmed the need for a structure for the follow-up work, consisting of a follow-up group and a preparatory group. The follow-up group should be composed of representatives of all signatories, new participants and the European Commission, and should be chaired by the EU Presidency at the time.**



## 6.2 Prague: The birth of the ‘political BFUG’

The preparatory group should be composed of representatives of the countries hosting the previous ministerial meetings and the next ministerial meeting, two EU member states and two non-EU member states; these latter four representatives will be elected by the follow-up group. The EU Presidency at the time and the European Commission will also be part of the preparatory group. The preparatory group will be chaired by the representative of the country hosting the next ministerial meeting.

The European University Association, the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), the National Unions of Students in Europe and the Council of Europe should be consulted in the follow-up work [i.e., ‘observers’].

In order to take the process further, Ministers encouraged the follow-up group to arrange seminars to explore the following areas: (...)





# 7.1 The ‘Berlin amendment’ (2003): membership eligibility

“Ministers consider it necessary to adapt the clause in the Prague Communiqué on applications for membership as follows:

Countries party to the European Cultural Convention [1954] shall be eligible for membership of the European Higher Education Area provided that they at the same time declare their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the Bologna Process in their own systems of higher education. Their applications should contain information on how they will implement the principles and objectives of the declaration.”



## 7.2 Berlin: the 'extended' BFUG

“Ministers entrust the implementation of all the issues covered in the Communiqué, the overall steering of the Bologna Process and the preparation of the next ministerial meeting to a **Follow-up Group**, which shall be composed of the representatives of all members of the Bologna Process and the European Commission, with the Council of Europe, the EUA, EURASHE, ESIB and UNESCO/CEPES as consultative members. This group, which should be convened at least twice a year, shall be chaired by the EU Presidency, with the host country of the next Ministerial Conference as vice-chair.

A **Board** also chaired by the EU Presidency shall oversee the work between the meetings of the Follow-up Group.

The overall follow-up work will be supported by a **Secretariat** which the country hosting the next Ministerial Conference will provide.”



# How does the Bologna steering structure operate?

Two perspectives – briefly:

- (a) Perspective of a member (representative of the Ministry)
- (b) Perspective of an observer (consultative member)

