

UNIKE – Universities in the Knowledge Economy

WORKSHOP 1

DPU, Aarhus University
Copenhagen, 14 – 18 October 2013

ASPECTS OF DOCTORAL EDUCATION: HISTORY OF POLITICAL
DEBATES ABOUT DOCTORAL EDUCATION

The history of debates in Europe: up to the Salzburg Principles and beyond

Pavel Zgaga
University of Ljubljana



CENTRE FOR
EDUCATIONAL POLICY STUDIES

1. The aim and approach

The aim: to outline some of the key elements that have contributed to changing the theory and practice of doctoral studies at European universities over the last 15 years.

Changes in the system of doctoral education will be observed from the perspective of the process of *European integration*: when it comes to higher education, it is primarily the *Bologna Process*.



2. The Bologna Process: some key stages

- Early stage (1998-2003): focus on the “two cycles” (Bachelor and Master; BA-MA)
- Time between 2001-2003 one of the most fertile periods: basic concept on the EHEA (*European Higher Education Area*) developed
- The Process: “members” (national ministries) and “partners” (e.g. EUA, ESIB/ESU and others)
- European Commission, the Lisbon Process (2000) and the ERA (*European Research Area*)
- 2003: The Bologna Process; linking EHEA and ERA; the role of EUA (European University Association)



3. From BA-MA to PhD as the “third cycle”

From the **Berlin Communiqué** (September 2013):

“Conscious of the need to promote closer links between the EHEA and the ERA in a Europe of Knowledge, and of the importance of research as an integral part of higher education across Europe, **Ministers consider it necessary to go beyond the present focus on two main cycles of higher education to include the doctoral level as the third cycle in the Bologna Process. They emphasise the importance of research and research training and the promotion of interdisciplinarity in maintaining and improving the quality of higher education and in enhancing the competitiveness of European higher education more generally. Ministers call for increased mobility at the doctoral and postdoctoral levels and encourage the institutions concerned to increase their co-operation in doctoral studies and the training of young researchers.**



4. Doctoral programmes for the EKS

At the Berlin ministerial meeting EUA was mandated to strengthen activities in this area.

2004-2005: “*Doctoral programmes for the European Knowledge Society*” (48 universities from 22 countries).

An “Official Bologna Seminar” in Salzburg (Austria) in February 2005 discussed the project’s results.

A document known as *Ten Basic Principles* appeared as the most important seminar result.

It was submitted to the ministerial meeting in Bergen (May 2005) and influenced its communiqué.



5.1 The Bergen Communiqué (May 2005)

... doctoral level qualifications need to be **fully aligned with the EHEA overarching framework for qualifications** using the outcomes-based approach. The core component of doctoral training is the **advancement of knowledge through original research**. Considering the need for **structured doctoral programmes** and the need for **transparent supervision and assessment**, we note that the normal workload of the third cycle in most countries would correspond to **3-4 years full time**. We urge universities to ensure that their doctoral programmes promote **interdisciplinary training** and the development of **transferable skills**, thus meeting the needs of the **wider employment market**.



5.2 The Bergen Communiqué (May 2005)

We need to achieve an overall **increase in the numbers of doctoral candidates** taking up research careers within the EHEA. We consider participants in third cycle programmes **both as students and as early stage researchers**. We charge the Bologna Follow-up Group with **inviting the European University Association, together with other interested partners,** to prepare a report under the responsibility of the Follow-up Group on the **further development of the basic principles for doctoral programmes ...**



6. “Ten basic principles”

1. The core component of doctoral training is the advancement of knowledge through original research.
2. Embedding in institutional strategies and policies
3. The importance of diversity
4. Doctoral candidates as early stage researchers
5. The crucial role of supervision and assessment
6. Achieving critical mass
7. Duration: three to four years full-time as a rule
8. The promotion of innovative structures
9. Increasing mobility
10. Ensuring appropriate funding



7. The European Doctoral Project”: actors

Over the early years of the Bologna Process national ministries "left" doctoral education to universities (certainly much more than the first two cycles).

Actually, there were two main actors:

- (a) EUA and its series of “Doctoral projects” (financed by the EC) that resulted in creation of the “Council for Doctoral Education” (EUA-CDE; 2008);
- (b) EC and its strategic documents on the "modernization of universities' – and, of course, its financing of joint European projects.



8. Conclusion: open issues

- Transition of doctoral education from “elite” to “mass” stage
- “Unity” and “diversity”: the issue of “professional PhD” etc.
- Doctoral schools: enhancing or inhibiting “early stage research”?
- Quality assurance in doctoral education (across Europe)
- Financing the “mass” doctoral *education* vs. financing doctoral *research*
- Status of doctoral students – early stage researchers (e.g. full time, part time)

