



Mobility and inclusion. The priorities within the European Higher Education Area

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december 9, 2015

Fostering the employability of graduates throughout their working lives. Making education systems more inclusive. Implementing agreed structural reforms. These are the priorities set by the Ministers of education who have taken part to the European Higher Education Area (Ehea) ministerial conference in Yerevan (14-15 May 2015).

The conference was aimed at **analyzing the efficiency of the European higher education area**, where 47 countries with different political, social and academic traditions work together **in order to build the culture of open dialogue, sharing purposes and common achievements**. The Bologna Process is based on public responsibility on higher education, academic autonomy, students and teachers mobility.

In the Conference communiqué, Ministers underline that important progresses have been made such as allowing students and graduates to move within the Ehea and consequently exploit their competence and qualifications. This tendency facilitates the open dialogue promoted by the Ehea, considered a model of structured cooperation.

Nevertheless, Ministers claim the **necessity to face the social and cultural crisis that spreads worldwide**, in the attempt to win the challenge of internationalization and accountability of higher education institutions: «It is confronted with a continuing economic and social crisis, dramatic levels of unemployment, increasing marginalization of young people, demographic changes, new migration patterns, and conflicts within and between countries, as well as extremism and radicalization. On the other hand, greater mobility of students and staff fosters mutual understanding, while rapid development of knowledge and technology, which impacts on societies and economies, plays an increasingly important role in the transformation of higher education and research».

To foster the process of innovation that regards higher education institutions, Ministers ask the governments to promote further institutional reforms also because «tools are sometimes used incorrectly or in bureaucratic and superficial ways». According to this innovation plan, Ministers claim their renewed vision of higher education reform, based on automatic recognition of qualifications, the construction of inclusive societies, innovation and employment, **providing the competences and skills required for European citizenship**.

Furthermore, Ministers require more efficient measurement of performance: «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».

By the 2020 the Ministers are determined to achieve a number of goals:

- enhancing the quality and relevance of learning and teaching: this is the main mission of the Ehea, in the attempt to support higher education institutions and staff in promoting pedagogical innovation in student-centered learning environments and in fully exploiting the potential benefits of digital technologies for learning and teaching;
- fostering the employability of graduates throughout their working lives: this is the main goal of the Ehea, aimed at facing the rapidly changing labor markets, characterized by technological developments, the birth of new job profiles and increasing opportunities for employment and self-employment;
- making our systems more inclusive: Ministers keep on promoting a wider permeability and articulation between different education sectors, in the perspective to enhance the social dimension of higher

- education, improve gender balance and widen opportunities for access, including international mobility;
- implementing agreed structural reforms: this is a necessary condition for the implementation of the Ehea, interested in developing more effective policies for the recognition of credits gained abroad, qualifications for academic and professional purposes, prior learning.

These are the main challenges engaged by the governance and working methods of the Ehea, involved in the commitment to promoting the portability of grants and loans. As a consequence, Ministers ask the Bologna Follow up Group «to review and simplify its governance and working methods, to involve higher education practitioners in its work program and to submit proposals for addressing the issue of non-implementation of key commitments in time for our next meeting». Ministers finally accept the commitment of France to host next meeting in 2018 and to provide the Secretariat of the EHEA from July 2015 through June 2018.

The Yerevan Conference communiqué is available at the following link:

<http://bologna-yerevan2015.ehea.info/pages/view/documents>