

REFORMING THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH SECTOR FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY



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Introduction

- Transformation of the world concerns also Europe!
 - Globalization, scientific and technological progress
 - Increased competition and mobility
 - Aim of the Council of Ministers of EU countries (Lisbon 2000): *Europe should become the most competitive economy in the world by 2010 thanks to the development of the knowledge economy*
 - For HiEd&R, strong acceleration over the last 4-5 years: main lines of political discussion and action:
 - Improve the competitiveness of Europe thanks to the promotion of knowledge (mainly under EU leadership)
 - Improve the efficiency of the sector and of each institution
 - Reaffirm the central role of universities for the creation of new knowledge, the transfer of knowledge and the training of researchers (main university preoccupation)



Content

- THE REFORM OF THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH SECTOR
 - Characteristics of Europe
 - Main reforms
 - The European Higher Education Area (EHEA)
 - The European Research Area
 - Main related reforms
- CHALLENGES AND PROMISING STRATEGIES FOR THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH INTENSIVE UNIVERSITIES
 - Threats and opportunities for Universities in general
 - Threats and opportunities for research intensive universities
 - Strategies for research intensive universities



THE REFORM OF THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH SECTOR



Characteristics of Europe

- European political organization:
 - Council of Europe: 45 States (out of approx. 50) and 800 millions inhabitants
 - EU: 6 countries in 1957: 15 members today, enlarged to 25 in Mai 2004. One currency for 12 countries since 2002
- Characteristics of European HiEd&R
 - Binary and unified systems
 - Nearly exclusively public institutions in the west; more than 1000 private institutions in east and central Europe
 - Basic research in universities and/or research centers
 - Size from 100 to more than 100'000 students (one "research" (?) university for 500'000 inhabitants)
 - Over Europe, teaching in more than 20 different languages
 - Numerous barriers to mobility





Main reforms

- Two political initiatives in HiEd&R
 - (1) European Higher Education Area (EHEA) without border in 2010
 - (2) European Research Area (ERA): Council of Ministers of EU in Lisbon (2000)




The European Higher Education Area (EHEA)

- The Bologna process
 - Launched in 1998 by the Ministers of 4 countries (F, UK, D and I)
 - Confirmed in 1999 with the Bologna Declaration (29 countries)
 - Follow-up ministerial conferences in:
 - Prague, 2001, enlarged to 33 countries, and
 - Berlin, sept. 2003, enlarged to 40 countries)
- Aim:
 - Create a transparent higher education space
 - Promote the mobility of students and teachers
 - Develop the European identity
 - Improve the attractiveness of Europe for “overseas” students



■ Tools:

- creation of a transparent system based on a bachelors and masters system and, since Berlin, doctorates (PhD)
 - Bachelor: preparation to a professional career and to further university studies
 - Master: specialization (academic and vocational)
 - Doctorate (PhD) (link between EHEA and ERA)
- Generalized introduction of a credit transfer and accumulation system (improvement of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)): BA 180-240 credits, MA 90-120 credits, with a total of 300 ECTS for the MA; PhD level still open
- Development of the Diploma supplements
- Promotion of the recognition convention of UNESCO-COE)

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- Difficulties:
 - The process is extremely decentralized, as it is applied in 40 sovereign countries by one thousand more or less autonomous universities
 - There is no leader: succession of leading countries and uneasy role for the EU
 - Each country, and even each university, and even each department, is implementing the Bologna declaration with its own interpretation
 - Many universities do not realize that it is a fantastic opportunity to revise the programs' pedagogy: in particular move from teaching to learning



The European Research Area (ERA)

- Idea launched in 2000
 - European council meeting, Lisbon 2000: *Europe should become the most competitive economy in the world by 2000 thanks to a knowledge economy*
 - Tools: create a European research area without border
 - Integrate the EU and the national research programs
 - Improve the EU Framework Programs (FP6)
 - Networks of excellence
 - Integrated projects
 - Accompanying measures
 - Reduce the barriers to the mobility of researchers
 - Promote the transfer of knowledge (European patent?)
 - Clarify the ownership of the intellectual property rights
 - Find new ways to finance research (and higher education)
 - Develop a set of rules to secure a fair collaboration university-industry

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- Other efforts (EU communications)
 - On research (2001)
 - On research effort: research should reach 3% of GDP (2002)
 - On the role of Universities (2003)
 - On the career of researchers
 - Create a European Research Council, mainly to finance fundamental and curiosity driven research at a European scale



■ Difficulties

- European paradox: the level of fundamental research is excellent, the transfer of knowledge is lagging behind
- The EU support to research
 - Only 5% of total research expenditure in the member countries (agriculture has a much higher priority)
 - Does not attract some of the best researchers
 - Bureaucratic and not always quite transparent



Main related reforms

■ Promotion of a culture of quality assurance

- The quality of teaching and research has become one of the most important issues (necessity to create trust and improve accountability)
 - Governments or university associations are setting up accreditation or evaluation agencies
 - Frequent confusion between
 - Accreditation (of institutions or programs and minimum standard or specified standard)
 - Evaluation, ranking
 - Quality assurance
 - However, many countries made unsatisfactory experiences (UK)
- Strong position of EUA;
 - System should be based on
 - Autonomy and the missions statement of each university
 - Trust
 - Subsidiarity
 - Pay due respect to the complexity of teaching and research
 - Avoid bureaucracy
 - Universities should be responsible for evaluating quality internally and evaluation agencies should control how they are doing it. These agencies should be themselves accredited



- Autonomy, governance, leadership and management

The changing environment, budget shortage and increasing dissatisfaction on the part of the political proposal force institutions to streamline the decision process and **to make** decisions. This concerns mainly

- Secure University autonomy (implies accountability)
- University governance, in particular creation of boards
- Leadership
- Management



- General agreement on trade in services (GATS)

European Universities accept the internationalization of higher education, but defend the following position:

- It should be a public responsibility (provision and/or regulation)
- Institutions should be recognized and have a culture of quality
- Equal access based only on merit (not on money!)
- Public funding should still be possible and no obligation should be made for the State to subsidize private universities





■ Other objects of reforms

- Promotion of learning
- Use of information technologies
- Life-long learning
- Underrepresentation of low income social classes
- Quality of pre-college education
- Relationship of universities with their community
- Unionization (variable degree)
- Political correctness
- Replacement of the teachers who are leaving



CHALLENGES AND PROMISING STRATEGIES FOR THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

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- Most important threats and opportunities for universities in general
 - Increasing competition
 - Institutions will be forced to better profile and position themselves
 - This raises a multitude of strategic issues
 - Secure enough funding
 - Quality research will continue to become more expensive
 - Teaching will continue to be labor intensive
 - Regaining trust from the public authorities and the population

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- Threats and opportunities for research intensive universities
 - They could lose students
 - They could also be threatened by small or specialized organizations
 - They are expensive
 - They are affected by the present public and political mistrust in science



■ Strategies for research intensive universities

- Recruitment policy: Continue to apply with great rigor one policy which has been key to the success of the best ones
- Revising their missions: search for the right balance between
 - Curiosity driven research and research that tries to be useful to society
 - Research-led teaching programs and programs more labor-market orientated
- Better profiling and positioning (strategic thinking)
 - Best institutions had in general a policy of “laissez-faire”; will such a policy be sufficient in the future?
 - What will be the impact of the Bologna process; how to secure a critical mass?



Strategies for research intensive universities (continued)

- Increased autonomy
- Strong management and governance, as well as strong leadership are essential to run a more determined strategy
- Develop a culture of quality
- Secure the necessary financial resources



- Useful websites

- <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/>
- <http://www.eua.be/eua/>