European Higher Education at the Crossroads
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Between the Bologna Process and National Reforms

Part 1
Preface

Romania is the host country for the 2012 Bologna/European Higher Education Area Ministerial Conference and the Third Bologna Policy Forum. In preparation of these ministerial meetings the “Future of Higher Education Bologna Process Researchers’ Conference” (FOHE-BPRC) was organized in Bucharest on 17–19 October 2011 by the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI) with the support of European University Association and the Romanian National Committee for UNESCO. The event aimed at bringing the researchers’ voice into higher education international level policy making. The conference results of the FOHE-BPRC are presented further in this book, which will be distributed to the participants attending the 2012 ministerial events.

The innovative character of the Bologna Process Researchers’ Conference was given by an unprecedented opportunity for researchers dealing with higher education matters to interact and contribute to the political process shaping the European Higher Education Area, as well as national policy agendas.

With the Bologna Process reaching a new level of maturity, reflections on higher education policy themes are being done in a more broader and systemic way. In this context, the authors aim to reach a better empirical and conceptual understanding of the Bologna action lines and their implementation. The following pages aim to bring an added value with the fresh and constructively critical analysis of different features of the Bologna Process, as well as national higher education reforms in general.

As stated in the introduction, “Going beyond Bologna” is about moving ahead by recognizing and realizing the creative potential of the Bologna Process. The next Chapters make headways on issues presented and discussed in the eight thematic tracks of the conference regarding: European Higher Education Area (EHEA) principles, learning and teaching, quality assurance, governance, funding, differentiation, mobility and foresight/futures of higher education, all under the motto

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1The event was organised in the frame of the six higher education strategic projects carried out by UEFISCDI and funded through the European Social Fund, the Sectoral Operational Programme for Human Resources Development.
launched at the start of the event: “Be(e) a visionary!”. The ‘visionary bee’ is also
the logo of ForWiki portal (www.forwiki.eu), as the on-line host of the Bucharest
Dialogues on Higher Education.

The “European Higher Education at the crossroads: between the Bologna Process
and national reforms” calls for an innovative, systemic and visionary approach to
higher education. As the Bologna Process is in a phase of consolidation, the focus
on the role of new research and on enhancing further dialogue on the nature and
future of European Higher Education was timely. The book intends to respond to
these challenges and offer the reader a stimulating and enriching experience.

We wish that you enjoy the reading and join in the future debates!

Head of the BFUG Secretariat (2010–2012) Ligia Deca
Member of the FOHE-BPRC Editorial Board
Contents of Part 1: Bologna Process Principles, Teaching and Learning, Quality Assurance, Mobility

1 Going Beyond Bologna: Issues and Themes
Peter Scott

Part I European Higher Education Area Principles

2 Reconsidering the EHEA Principles:
Is There a “Bologna Philosophy”? Pavel Zgaga

3 Principles, Problems, Politics … What Does the Historical
Record of EU Cooperation in Higher Education
Tell the EHEA Generation? Anne Corbett

4 Institutional Autonomy and the Attractiveness of the European
Higher Education Area – Facts or Tokenistic Discourse? Terhi Nokkala

5 Tensions in the Policy Objectives of the European Higher Education
Area? Public Good and Public Responsibility Versus Service
Liberalisation: Equality Versus Institutional Diversity Elsa Hackl

6 Implications of the Bologna Process for Equity
in Higher Education Marina Elias Andreu and John Brennan

7 Academic Values Against the Commodification
of Higher Education: An Episode in Constructing the Discursive
Meaning of Higher Education in the Bologna Process Klemen Miklavič
Part II  Teaching and Learning

8  Education as Transformation – Transforming
   European Higher Education ............................................................... 141
   Hanne Smidt

9  Time for Student-Centred Learning? .............................................. 153
   Koen Geven and Angele Attard

10 Widening Access to Higher Education – What Can
    EUROSTUDENT Say About the New Challenges Emerging
    for Teaching and Learning? ............................................................. 173
    Dominic Orr

11 The Embedding of the European Higher Education Reform
    at the Institutional Level: Development of Outcome-Based
    and Flexible Curricula? ................................................................. 191
    Åsa Lindberg-Sand

12 Mobility, ECTS and Grades: Problems
    with the Comparability of Grades .................................................... 209
    Michael Huber

13 On the Tracks of Students and Graduates: Methods
    and Uses of Tracking Procedures in the European
    Higher Education Area ................................................................... 223
    Kai Muehleck

Part III  Quality Assurance

14 Quality Assurance and the European
   Transformational Agenda ................................................................. 247
   Andrée Sursock

15 External Quality Assurance Between European
   Consensus and National Agendas .................................................... 267
   Achim Hopbach

16 Many Voices, One Song: The Role of Discipline-Based
   Europe-Wide Evaluation Tools in Emphasising Enhancement
   and Promoting the Modernisation Agenda of the EHEA .......... 287
   Jeremy Cox

17 A Snapshot on the Internal Quality Assurance in EHEA .............. 303
   Tia Loukkola
18 Internalizing Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Challenges of Transition in Enhancing the Institutional Responsibility for Quality ........................................................... 317
Mihai Păunescu, Bogdan Florian, and Gabriel-Marian Hâncean

19 European “Transparency Instruments”: Driving the Modernisation of European Higher Education ............ 339
Ellen Hazelkorn

20 Consequences of the Student Participation in Quality Assurance: Why should there be students involved in QA? ........................... 361
Fernando Miguel Galán Palomares

Part IV Mobility

21 Mobility Key to the EHEA and ERA .............................................. 377
Peter van der Hijden

22 Student Mobility in Europe: Recent Trends and Implications of Data Collection ........................................ 387
Bernd Wächter and Irina Ferencz

23 The Offspring of a Mobile Generation: Students with an Immigrant Background in Higher Education ............... 413
Chripa Schneller

24 Student Mobility Between Europe and the Rest of the World: Trends, Issues and Challenges ................................. 431
Hans De Wit

25 Student Mobility in the EU – Recent Case Law, Reflections and Recommendations ........................................ 441
Sacha Garben

26 The PhD in Europe: Developing a System of Doctoral Training That Will Increase the Internationalisation of Universities ......................................................... 461
Conor O’Carroll, Lewis Purser, Magdalena Wislocka, Sinead Lucey, and Nina McGuinness

27 Student Mobility in Europe: The Informational Value of Official Statistics and Graduate Surveys .................. 485
Ulrich Teichler

28 Internationalisation and Competitiveness of Universities Through Different Types of Researchers’ Mobility – Facing the Future ................................................................. 511
Snežana Krstić
Contents of Part 2: Governance, Financing, Mission Diversification and Futures of Higher Education

Part V Higher Education Governance in the European Higher Education Area

29 Governance Within the EHEA: Dynamic Trends, Common Challenges, and National Particularities .................................................. 527
Robin Middlehurst and Pedro Nuno Teixeira

30 A Cross-National Comparison of Higher Education Markets in Western Europe ................................................................. 553
Harry de Boer and Ben Jongbloed

31 Tools and Implementation for a New Governance of Universities: Understanding Variability Between and Within Countries ............ 573
Catherine Paradeise

32 University Governance in Changing European Systems of Higher Education ................................................................. 599
Roberto Moscati

33 The Decline of an Academic Oligarchy. The Bologna Process and ‘Humboldt’s Last Warriors’ ............................... 613
Hans Pechar

34 The Changing Conceptions of Student Participation in HE Governance in the EHEA ................................................................. 631
Manja Klemenčič

35 Higher Education Reforms in Europe: A Comparative Perspective of New Legal Frameworks in Europe .................................. 655
Alberto Amaral, Orlanda Tavares, and Cristina Santos
Part VI  Funding of Higher Education

36  A Policy Gap: Financing in the European Higher Education Area ................................................................. 677
Liviu Matei

37  Accountability and the Public Funding of Higher Education: A Comparison of Stakeholder Views and Institutional Responses in the US and Europe .............................................................................. 691
Kata Orosz

38  European Universities Diversifying Income Streams .................................................. 709
Enora Bennetot Pruvot and Thomas Estermann

39  Who Is to Pay for Mobile Students? ........................................................................ 727
Marcel Gérard

40  Entrepreneurialism and Financing for Improved Academic Enterprise in Higher Education: Coaching for Leadership and Innovation Reflecting True Demand ..................... 749
James A. Powell and Beliz Ozorhon

41  Relating Quality and Funding: The Romanian Case .............................................. 791
Adrian Miroiu and Lazăr Vlăceanu

Part VII  Diversification of Higher Education Institutions

Missions as a Response to Global Competition

42  Refocusing the Debate on Diversity in Higher Education ................................ 811
Sybille Reichert

43  “Everyone Wants to Be Like Harvard” – Or Do They? Cherishing All Missions Equally ........................................................................................................ 837
Ellen Hazelkorn

44  Institutional Diversification and Homogeneity in Romanian Higher Education: The Larger Picture ................................................................. 863
Liviu Andreescu, Radu Gheorghiu, Viorel Proteasa, and Adrian Curaj

45  U-Map, University Activity Profiles in Practice .................................................. 887
Frans Kaiser, Marike Faber, and Ben Jongbloed

46  How to Measure Institutional Profiles in the Norwegian HE Landscape: The Norwegian ‘Institutional Profile Project’ ........ 905
Ole-Jacob Skodvin

47  Diversity of Higher Education in Europe and the Findings of a Comparative Study of the Academic Profession .................. 935
Ulrich Teichler
Part VIII  Higher Education Futures and Foresight

48 Transmodern Journeys: Futures Studies and Higher Education        963
   Ziauddin Sardar

49 Multiple Futures for Higher Education
   in a Multi-level Structure .................................................... 969
   Attila Havas

50 Systemic Foresight for Romanian Higher Education ...................... 995
   Liviu Andreescu, Radu Gheorghiu, Marian Zulean, and Adrian Curaj

51 Re-imagining the Role and Function of Higher Education
   for Alternative Futures Through Embracing
   Global Knowledge Futures ...................................................... 1019
   Jennifer M. Gidley

52 The Politics and Consequences of Eurocentrism
   in University Disciplines ...................................................... 1039
   Vinay Lal

   the Bologna Principles .......................................................... 1057
   Eddie Blass

About the Editors ............................................................................. 1073

About the Authors ........................................................................... 1075

Index .................................................................................................. 1089