

Applying fundamental values of EHEA in EaP countries – what steps should be taken?

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«Public participation in HE modernisation: civil society
role in implementation of the Roadmap for HE reform in
Belarus»
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The European Students' Union



The European Students' Union (ESU) is an umbrella organisation of **44 National Unions of Students** from **38 different countries**. Through its members, ESU represents over 20 million students in Europe.

Members: student-run, autonomous, representative and operate according to democratic principles;

open to all students in their respective country regardless of political persuasion, religion, ethnic or cultural origin, sexual orientation or social standing.

Vision: Equal educational and social opportunities in an open and democratic Europe where students shape a sustainable future.

Is the roadmap enough?

Fundamental values: is there a common agreement and why we tend to forget it?

Well, there is:



«The university is an autonomous institution [...] To meet the needs of the world around it, its research and teaching must be morally and intellectually independent of all political authority and economic power.» (Magna Charta, 1988)

«Freedom in research and training is the fundamental principle of university life [...].» (Magna Charta, 1988)

«Each university must – [...] – ensure that its students' freedoms are safeguarded [...].» (Magna Charta, 1988)

«European higher education institutions, for their part, have accepted the challenge and taken up a main role in constructing the European area of higher education, also in the wake of the fundamental principles laid down in the Bologna Magna Charta Universitatum of 1988. This is of the highest importance, given that Universities' independence and autonomy ensure that higher education and research systems continuously adapt to changing needs, society's demands and advances in scientific knowledge.»

- Sorbonne declaration, 1998

What we can conclude is:



That **decentralisation** plays number one role in the further implementation of the Bologna Process.

- Only amending legislation on national level is not sufficient and nearly enough;
- Ministry needs to give power to HEIs to decide on the curriculum;
- HEIs should be able to implement Bologna Reforms without political and administrative burdens.

- **Education as a solely «employment oriented» institution:**

Decentralisation of education system would mean abandoning systematic economic planning at the current level.

Opening up space for critical thought, innovation and democratic culture.

Making access to education a reality to everyone.

- HE Governance strongly centralised without means to fully participate

Allowing free organising for students and staff – free registration;

Shaping the role of students' involvement in HE governance – shaping the meaning of active citizenship;

Exercising all student freedoms and rights – freedom of choice, right to quality education on desired path, including flexible learning.

Putting students at the centre of change



Historical perspective – learning from transitioning countries: former Soviet republics or satellite countries;

Mechanical implementation will do only the damage to HE content: implementing 3 cycles, ECTS system and LOs.

Main challenges in EaP countries

EaP countries

Implementation of the Roadmap should be strictly followed up:

- 1) Wise cooperation in BFUG and Advisory Group on Belarus and outside;
- 2) Recognising interests and pushing democratisation above them.
- 3) Gap between government, civil society and shaping Academia;
- 4) Struggle with academic freedom;
- 5) Democratic governance, including students as equal partners, and **transparency.**

What is BWSE?



- Provides independent in-depth analysis of the Bologna Process implementation from the students' perspective
- Published in 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2012 and in 2015
- Aims at being a mirror of the governments view in the implementation report
- Gives policy recommendations

BWSE 2015 - time to meet expectations from 1999.



Challenges in a nutshell

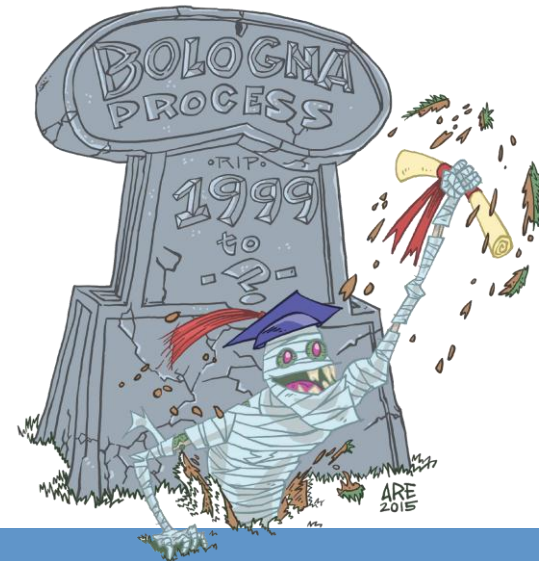


- Minimum requirements for implementation of structural reforms should be fulfilled by the countries.
- Countries cannot choose in an ‘à la carte’ manner which reforms they prefer, but must take a holistic perspective.
- In order to ensure the transformation of the structures, the development of reforms must involve the academic community and cannot be a top-down, forced process.
 - Partially implemented reforms and changes in legislation - ECTS; NQF etc.
 - Countries must create and apply accessible, clear and transparent procedures for recognition, without bureaucratic burden.
 - Student involvement at all levels must be ensured!
 - Need of “fit-for-purpose” data followed by concrete measures in social dimension.

What is the future of Bologna Process?

Main challenges in EHEA:

- Lack of resources & sustainable funds
- Lack of knowledge – inefficient governance and peer learning
- Lack of general interest or interest in only part of the reforms
- Permanent secretariat vs. Temporary one
- Different stages of implementation - Two-speed process?
- EU's role in higher education
- **Education as the main democratic institute**



Is the roadmap enough?

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**Thank you for your
attention**

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