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REPORT

on the Bologna Process and student mobility
(2008/2070(INI))

Committee on Culture and Education

Rapporteur: Doris Pack

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the Bologna Process and student mobility (2008/2070(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 149 and 150 of the EC Treaty,
 - having regard to the Communication from the Commission entitled "Delivering on the Modernisation Agenda for Universities: Education, Research and Innovation", (COM(2006)0208),
 - having regard to the Communication from the Commission entitled "Mobilising the brainpower of Europe: enabling universities to make their full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy" (COM(2005)0152),
 - having regard to the report entitled "Focus on the structure of higher education in Europe National trends in the Bologna Process" - 2006/07, Eurydice, European Commission, 2007,
 - having regard to the Eurobarometer survey on "Perceptions of Higher Education Reforms", European Commission, March 2007,
 - having regard to its position at first reading of 25 September 2007 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the production and development of statistics on education and lifelong learning¹,
 - having regard to the Council Resolution on modernising universities for Europe's competitiveness in a global knowledge economy of 23 November 2007,
 - having regard to the Presidency Conclusions of the European Council of 13 and 14 March 2008,
 - having regard to Rules 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture and Education and the opinion of the Committee on Budgets (A6-0302/2008),
- A. whereas the aims of the Bologna process are to establish a European Area of Higher Education by 2010, including higher education reforms, elimination of remaining barriers to the mobility of students and teachers, and the improvement of the quality, attractiveness and competitiveness of higher education in Europe,
- B. whereas the mobility of students and the quality of education must remain among the core elements of the Bologna process,

¹ Texts adopted, P6_TA(2007)0400.

- C. whereas student mobility forms new cultural, social and academic values and creates opportunities for personal growth and for enhancing academic standards and employability at the national and international level,
- D. whereas student mobility is still beyond the reach of many students, researchers and other staff, especially in the newer Member States, principally because of insufficient grants, while the obstacles are well known, and have been indicated repeatedly by many stakeholders involved in the debate,
- E. whereas particular attention should be paid to the appropriate funding of students' learning, living costs and mobility,
- F. whereas Parliament has constantly made the mobility of students its budgetary priority and endeavoured to ensure an appropriate level of funding for EU programmes in the field of education; whereas its firm position on that issue led, despite cuts operated by the Council on the Commission's proposal, to an increase of appropriations for the Lifelong Learning and Erasmus Mundus programmes negotiated under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2007-2013 and recent budgetary procedures,
- G. whereas reliable statistical data on student mobility are required in order to observe, compare and evaluate as well as to develop adequate policies and measures,
- H. whereas recognition of informal and non-formal learning form the cornerstone of a lifelong learning strategy, and points out the importance of adult learning in this process,
- I. whereas the choice to go abroad should not be hindered by any administrative, financial or linguistic barriers,
- J. whereas mobility encourages foreign language learning and the improvement of overall communication skills,
- K. whereas it is urgent to reform and modernise universities in terms of quality, studies structure, innovation and flexibility,
- L. whereas the quality of teaching is as important as the quality of research and must be reformed and modernised throughout the European Union, and whereas these two dimensions are closely linked,
- M. whereas different national recognition systems constitute a significant obstacle to equal treatment of students and to progress in the European Higher Education Area and the European labour market,
- N. whereas mobility can be hindered by both the failure to give full and proper recognition for courses attended and the lack of equivalence of grades obtained,
- O. whereas it is urgent to implement, coordinate and promote a coherent approach among all countries that signed the Bologna Process,
- P. whereas the Bologna Process must create a new progressive model of education, guaranteeing access to training for all, the principal objective being to transmit knowledge

and values, creating a sustainable society for the future which is self-aware and free of social imbalances,

1. Considers that an increase in student mobility and the quality of the different educational systems should be a priority in the context of redefining the major goals of the Bologna Process beyond 2010;
2. Stresses that in order to achieve student mobility, actions must be taken across different policy areas; various aspects of mobility go beyond the scope of higher education and concern the scope of social affairs, finance, and immigration and visa policies;
3. Notes that, considering the limited room for manoeuvre due to the narrow margins left in Heading 1a of the Financial Framework, the efforts of Member States made within the framework of intergovernmental cooperation in order to enhance the quality and competitiveness of education in the EU by, in particular, the promotion of mobility, ensuring recognition of qualifications and quality assurance, are particularly welcomed;
4. Is convinced that the consultation method undertaken by all stakeholders involved in the process should continue: institutions as well as student representatives should closely cooperate in order to tackle the remaining barriers to mobility and problems related to quality and the implementation of the Bologna Process;
5. Points out that while implementing the Bologna Process, particular attention should be devoted to close and intensive co-operation and coordination with the European Research Area;

Student mobility: Quality and Efficiency

6. Insists on the urgent need for comparable and reliable statistics on student mobility and the socio-economic profile of students, such as common indicators, criteria and benchmarks, in order to overcome the current lack of data and promote the exchange of good practices;
7. Calls on universities to improve and simplify the information provided online and off-line, both for incoming and outgoing students; universities, and Erasmus National Agencies should collaborate with student organisations in order to make available all the necessary information in due time; universities should support student rights, in line with the commitments they have made by adhering to the Erasmus University Charter;
8. Emphasises that in order for the Bologna Process to fulfil its objectives, reciprocity in terms of the flow of students and scholars is necessary; underlines the disproportion in current trends, and in particular the poor mobility towards the Member States which acceded to the EU in 2004 and 2007;
9. Points out the importance of mentoring for the social, cultural and linguistic integration of incoming students;
10. Stresses that improved command of languages is a considerable asset and one of the reasons for student mobility, and that it is important for intensive language courses to be

offered to incoming students, before and/or during Erasmus study periods;

Higher education reform and modernisation of universities: quality, innovation and flexibility

11. Calls on European universities to undertake an innovative, far-reaching and methodical curricular reform: an ambitious and high quality content and organisation restructuring is crucial for student mobility and for greater flexibility; a «mobility study period » should be introduced in all degree programmes to enable students to go abroad;
12. Calls for emphasis to be given to the need for joint European doctoral programmes promoting doctoral student mobility and the creation of a framework for a European doctorate;
13. Stresses the essential role of the quality and excellence of teaching: qualified teachers in all sectors of studies, their development and ongoing training are crucial for their attractiveness and effectiveness and for achieving the Bologna Process objectives;
14. Reiterates the need for more trans-national dialogue and exchange of information and experiences to facilitate a convergence of teacher education, including primary teacher education, and the effectiveness of continuing professional development;

Funding and investment in student mobility and the social dimension

15. Special assistance should be provided to students from disadvantaged groups in society by, for example, proposing inexpensive and decent accommodation; extra support after arrival is often necessary;
16. Suggests the introduction of a single European Student Identification Card, in order to facilitate mobility and to enable students to get discounts for accommodation and subsistence;
17. Calls on the Member States and the competent authorities to guarantee an equal and universal access to mobility by simple, flexible and transparent grant awarding procedures and by additional financial support for high cost destinations and for those students who need it; considers it essential for students to receive this support before their departure to avoid placing an excessive financial burden on them;
18. Welcomes the fact that in the context of the mid-term review of the Multiannual Financial Framework provided for in the Declaration attached to the Interinstitutional Agreement on budgetary discipline and sound financial management of 17 May 2006, strengthening the financial envelope provided for the programmes in the field of education and notably for Erasmus grants could be considered, subject to the results of monitoring and evaluation of the programme;
19. Points out that new means of financing student mobility, such as interest-free loans and/or transferable loans, should be introduced and promoted;

20. Invites European universities to cooperate with the private sector (e.g. economic or business organisations such as chambers of commerce) in order to find new effective mechanisms of co-financing student mobility at each cycle (bachelor-masters-doctorate), thereby improving the quality of educational systems;
21. Suggests a fruitful dialogue and a two-way exchange between companies and universities in order to come up with innovative partnerships and to explore new ways of cooperation;

Quality and full recognition of diplomas

22. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to proceed with the implementation of the European reference frameworks (Bologna Qualifications Framework, European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance, and the Lisbon Recognition Convention) in order to establish the European High Education Area;
23. Stresses, therefore, the urgency of implementing the comprehensive, unified and effective credit transfer system ECTS: students and scholars qualifications should be easily transferable throughout Europe thanks to a single common framework;
24. Emphasises that the three-cycle degree system (Bachelor degree, Masters Degree and Doctorate) could become more flexible especially by using a "4+1" instead of "3+2" system for the first and second cycles; for some studies this could be more appropriate in order to enable greater mobility and employability of graduates;
25. Internships and other informal and non-formal mobility experience approved by universities should be granted ECTS credits and recognised as an integral part of study curricula;

Bologna Process implementation in all countries concerned

26. Calls on the Member States' competent authorities and European universities to encourage and foster the exchange of best practices and awareness rising initiatives;
27. Urges Member States to facilitate visa procedures and to reduce their cost for mobile students, especially as far as Eastern European Member and Candidate States are concerned, in line with the EU Directives on visas;

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28. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. Background

The Bologna Process, which was launched in 1999, is an intergovernmental initiative which aims to create a European Higher Education Area by 2010. The basic idea is to make it easier for students to choose from a wide range of high-quality courses and for the courses they choose to be widely-recognised. To these ends, the Bologna process envisages three priority areas for action: the introduction of the "three-cycle system" (bachelor/master/doctorate), quality assurance, and recognition of qualifications and periods of study. Progress towards achieving its goals was discussed in the public hearing on the Bologna process held by the CULT Committee on 4th October 2007. Moreover, on 6th March 2008 the EPP-ED organised another hearing on this topic, entitled *Higher education: from the Bologna process to educational governance in the EU?* and chaired by Mrs Doris Pack MEP. On this occasion, many interesting insights were brought regarding the impact of the Bologna Process in student mobility. Different key issues were also raised, such as the crucial role of efficient university governance, the paramount importance of quality teaching and innovative curricula or the many common internal and external challenges which European higher education must still face in order to remain competitive and performing in the 21-century globalising world.

The Bologna Process is taken forward through a work programme that receives orientations from biannual ministerial conferences: Prague 2001, Berlin 2003, Bergen 2005, London 2007 and Leuven/Louvaine-la-Neuve 2009. These conferences are prepared by a Bologna Follow-up Group¹, which is chaired by the country that currently holds the Presidency of the European Union, and supported by a Bologna Secretariat, organised by the host country/countries of the next Ministerial meeting.

The key to success of the Bologna cooperation is the underlying partnership approach, in both policy-making and implementation. Today, the Process unites 46 countries, all party to the European Cultural Convention, that cooperate in a flexible way, involving also international organisations and European associations representing higher education institutions, students, staff and employers. Bologna process is a fine example of European cooperation, both within and outside the EU framework.

We all know that higher education is a basic piece in the development of individuals. It enhances social, cultural and economic growth, active citizenship and ethical values. However, as far as the European Union is concerned, higher education is not one of the responsibilities of the Commission of the European Communities: it is still a very much national matter, and the competence for the content and the organisation of studies remains at national level.

Nevertheless, according to Art. 149 of the Treaty of Nice, the Union *the Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States*, through a wide range of actions, such as promoting the mobility of citizens, designing joint study programmes, establishing networks, exchanging information or teaching

¹ The European Commission participates as a full member in the Bologna Follow-up Group, as well as in the Bologna Board.

languages of the European Union.

2. Rapporteur approach

The Rapporteur is particularly concerned about student mobility within the European Union and about eventual interferences of the Bologna process on it: is the new European Area of Higher Education contributing to increase European students' mobility or is it rather discouraging and hindering it? It should not be forgotten that mobility is one of the six main objectives specified on the Bologna Declaration, whose signatories intend to promote it *by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of the free movement*, with particular attention not only to students, but also to teachers, researchers and administrative staff. Mobility is therefore a cornerstone regarding the establishment of the European Area of Higher Education, as well as one of the priority issues on the 2007-2009 agenda.

The Rapporteur approves the progressive approach adopted by the European Commission and also supports its ongoing work. Member States should be supported in their efforts to modernise and innovatively reform their respective higher education systems, which is absolutely needed in order to face the challenges of globalisation.

Nevertheless, the Rapporteur is concerned about past and future implementation of the Bologna Process, as a number current developments taking place in some Member States are not in the intended or desired direction. Almost a decade after its launch, the Rapporteur thinks that it is time for reflexion and debate as far as the Bologna process, its achievements and its failures are concerned. We should try to determine how education systems have changed as a result of Bologna throughout the European Union, and also how these developments and changes have affected the quality of European higher education.

First of all, the Rapporteur would like to underline that access to high quality education must be an option for every European citizen, regardless of their citizenship, country or area of birth.

Mobility has many positive effects not only on the mobile individual, but also on higher education institutions and on the society as a whole. Moreover, its social dimension should not be forgotten: mobility provides an experience of invaluable richness in terms of academic, cultural and social diversity. Finally, it eases networking and cooperation between higher education institutions, which is absolutely necessary for a qualitative development of the European higher education and research establishment.

The Rapporteur wants to stress and to draw special attention to:

1. Student mobility: Quality and Efficiency
2. Higher education reform and modernisation of universities: quality, innovation and flexibility
3. Funding and investment in student mobility and social dimension
4. Quality and full recognition of diplomas
5. Bologna Process implementation in all countries concerned

Although the Rapporteur acknowledges the paramount importance of such intergovernmental initiative, insist on the fact that its implementation is very fragmented at national level. Therefore, for the time being it is rather difficult to recognise the European "facade" of the

Bologna Process, and that is why a **legal framework** should be created, having always in mind that students must be at the heart of all questions and initiatives as far as education is concerned.

7.5.2008

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETS

for the Committee on Culture and Education

on the Bologna Process and student mobility
(2008/2070(INI))

Draftswoman: Monica Maria Iacob-Ridzi

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Budgets calls on the Committee on Culture and Education, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas Parliament has constantly made the mobility of students its budgetary priority and endeavoured to ensure an appropriate level of funding for the EU programmes in the field of education; whereas its firm position on that issue led, despite cuts operated by the Council on the Commission's proposal, to an increase of appropriations for the Lifelong Learning and Erasmus Mundus programmes negotiated under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2007-2013 and in recent budgetary procedures,
1. Notes that, considering the limited room for manoeuvre due to the narrow margins left in Heading 1a, efforts of Member States undertaken in the framework of intergovernmental cooperation in order to enhance the quality and competitiveness of education in the EU by, in particular, the promotion of mobility, ensuring recognition of qualifications and quality assurance, are particularly welcomed;
 2. Stresses that, considering the limited resources available in the EU budget, the impact of the Lifelong Learning and Erasmus Mundus programmes as concerns mobility should be closely monitored in relation to the amounts of individual grants and number of persons to whom they are made available, in order to ensure an appropriate balance between maximising the number of beneficiaries and providing an appropriate level of individual funding;
 3. Notes that, in the context of the mid-term review of the Multiannual Financial Framework foreseen by the Declaration attached to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 on budgetary discipline and sound financial management, a strengthening of the financial envelope foreseen for the programmes in the field of education could be considered,

subject to the results of monitoring and evaluation of the programme;

4. Reiterates its position, as expressed in paragraph 15 of its resolution of 13 December 2007 on the draft general budget for 2008¹, that implementation of the Lifelong Learning and Erasmus Mundus programmes by an executive agency must not lead to an increased share of administrative costs in the total envelope.

¹ Texts Adopted, P6_TA(2007)0616

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	6.5.2008
Result of final vote	+: 23 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Laima Liucija Andrikienė, Reimer Böge, Paulo Casaca, Daniel Dăianu, Valdis Dombrovskis, Brigitte Douay, Hynek Fajmon, Salvador Garriga Polledo, Ingeborg Gräßle, Louis Grech, Nathalie Griesbeck, Catherine Guy-Quint, Jutta Haug, Anne E. Jensen, Wiesław Stefan Kuc, Janusz Lewandowski, Vladimír Maňka, Mario Mauro, Francesco Musotto, Theodor Dumitru Stolojan, László Surján, Kyösti Virrankoski, Ralf Walter

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	24.6.2008
Result of final vote	+: 28 -: 1 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Maria Badia i Cutchet, Katerina Batzeli, Ivo Belet, Giovanni Berlinguer, Nicodim Bulzesc, Marie-Hélène Descamps, Milan Gaľa, Claire Gibault, Vasco Graça Moura, Luis Herrero-Tejedor, Ruth Hieronymi, Mikel Irujo Amezaga, Ramona Nicole Mănescu, Manolis Mavrommatis, Dumitru Oprea, Doris Pack, Zdzisław Zbigniew Podkański, Mihaela Popa, Christa Prets, Pál Schmitt, Hannu Takkula, Helga Trüpel, Thomas Wise, Tomáš Zatloukal
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Victor Boștinaru, Mary Honeyball, Ewa Tomaszewska, Cornelis Visser, Jaroslav Zvěřina