

PRESS RELEASE : 21ST MAY 2007

**London Bologna Ministerial meeting:
Universities underline need for 'new Bologna' post 2010**

Europe has made great progress towards the realisation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), due to come to force in 2010 under the Bologna process reforms, but new collaborative efforts will be needed after this date to respond to the challenges of Europe's rapidly evolving knowledge society. This was just one of the conclusions adopted at the end of the biennial Bologna Ministerial summit held in London last week (17-18 May). One major decision taken and a first fruit of collaborative effort was the agreement to establish a European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies managed by the key stakeholders (higher education institutions, students and quality agencies): EUA together with ENQA, EURASHE and ESU. This will be an important tool for building trust in quality assurance not only within Europe but also globally, thus playing an important role in building recognition of the "EHEA in a Global Setting" another decision taken by ministers last week. EUA welcomes the agreement of the London Communiqué which underlines the need for strong autonomous universities and makes improving graduate employability and improving the social dimension two of the key priorities before the next Bologna meeting in 2009.

EUA President Professor Georg Winckler and EUA Vice President Sir Roderick Floud both addressed Ministers from the 46 Bologna signatory countries at the London Ministerial summit. "We are nearing the 2010 deadline set for the establishment of the EHEA," explained Professor Winckler. "And we are well on our way to reaching the goals set but we also need to think about the future post 2010, how the EHEA should develop, building on the success of the Bologna process and the unique partnership model between governments, institutions, teachers and students."

Underlining that the Bologna process would be "too valuable" to stop, Professor Floud explained that a 'new Bologna' would be vital for helping Europe respond to a series of challenges such as an ageing population and

economic competition. He stressed the need to increase universities' financial resources and highlighted the massive funding gap between Europe's top universities and those in the US as an example of the progress that needed to be made. "Unless we can ensure that Europe's universities and colleges are properly funded to do the job which you tell us that you want us to do, everything else will be wasted. Again, we need a collective approach to what is a collective, and European-wide, problem," he told the audience

The need for continued collaboration beyond 2010 is stressed in the London communiqué: "We are determined to seize 2010, which will mark the passage from the Bologna process to the EHEA as an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to higher education as a key element in making our societies sustainable at

The European University Association, as the representative organisation of both the European universities and the national rectors' conferences, is the main voice of the higher education community in Europe. EUA's mission is to promote the development of a coherent system of European higher education and research.

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national as well as at European level. We will take 2010 as an opportunity to reformulate the vision that motivated us in setting the Bologna process in motion in 1999.”

Professor Winckler told the meeting that the European dimension of higher education and research had gained and would continue to gain more and more importance. “Europe needs more common reference points in higher education and research, it needs more mobility of students and research. To this end, he welcomed the agreement to set up a European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies This would be an important addition to the ‘Bologna trademark’, he said, providing a basis for trust and transparency between all stakeholders in the crucial area of quality assurance.

Other key issues that were outlined in the Communiqué as priorities for 2009 were: increasing the global impact of the Bologna process for European higher education; improving the employability of graduates at all degree levels and through lifelong learning;

Background :

At the London Ministerial Summit, EUA President Prof. Georg Winckler presented the Association’s statement on the Bologna Process. It outlines the concerns of EUA’s members and priorities for the future based on the work of the Association since the Bergen Summit (2005), the discussions of over 800 participants at its recent Convention of European higher education institutions in Lisbon and the findings of the Trends V report. EUA’s report Trends V, the latest in the influential Trends reports series produced for each of the Ministerial meetings, formed part of the Bologna stocktaking process. The report, which sets out the challenges faced by European higher education institutions in implementing the Bologna reforms, provides a snapshot of the current state of play in Europe’s universities by analysing the implementation of degree structures, recognition and quality issues, as well as the link between teaching and research. Please visit www.eua.be for a complete overview

and stepping up efforts to improve the social dimension of reforms. Stakeholders also agreed to take action to improve data collection so that progress on the mobility of students and access to education could be measured more effectively. The Communiqué also urges universities to “further develop partnerships and cooperation with employers” so they were better informed about curriculum changes and the learning outcomes that result from the Bologna reforms.

A full copy of Professor Winckler’s speech is available on demand:

A full copy of the London communiqué can be accessed here :

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna/uploads/documents/LC18May07.pdf>

A full copy of the EUA declaration presented to Ministers in London can be accessed here:

<http://www.eua.be/index.php?id=128#c3984>