European Commission



The EU in support of the Bologna Process

Education and Training



bologna process

EUROPEAN
Higher Education Area

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The Bologna Process – ways forward

Exactly 20 years after the signature of the Sorbonne Declaration, the degree of change achieved by the 48 countries now members of the European Higher Education Area is remarkable. This year's Ministerial Conference in Paris will be a crucial moment for us to take stock of the achievements we made, to examine the challenges we are still facing and decide on how to best address them, and to agree on our future common goals.

The Bologna Process has achieved a lot: the 3-cycle Bachelor-Master-Doctorate system is a given for the European higher education landscape and beyond; the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System is used in most of the countries; and common standards for quality assurance are known and used in most of Bologna countries.

Nonetheless, the implementation of agreed Bologna goals and key commitments varies substantially throughout member countries. This is where we need to step up our efforts. Together, we need to move forward to reach our common goals, based on mutual learning.

The European Commission is ready, through the Erasmus+ programme and its successor in the period after 2020, to support and facilitate a new peer support process that would help all Bologna countries in implementing their commitments. The willingness to work together and support each other will translate into further progress across the entire region. This will allow us to reach even more ambitious goals.

Today, education is at the top of the EU's agenda. In the Rome Declaration, in March 2017, EU leaders committed to work for *'a Union where young people receive the best education and training and can study and find jobs across the continent'*. In November 2017, in Gothenburg, EU leaders underlined the need to step up support to substantially increase mobility and exchanges, which are the cornerstones of a more united and integrated Europe.

This is why I am convinced that the right direction for the EU is to work together towards a European Education Area by 2025, where people have a strong sense of their identity as Europeans: a place where no borders hamper learning, studying and doing research; where spending time to study and work in another country is standard for the majority of students and teachers; and where young Europeans can speak two languages in addition to their own. Six months after EU Leaders called for more ambition in Gothenburg, I have already delivered two sets of initiatives to start building the European Education Area.

This Area covers all sectors and levels of education and training and will build on the achievements of the European Higher Education Area. It will enable EU Member States to do more and move faster to make their education systems better, more competitive and inclusive, while providing inspiration to non-EU countries and the European Higher Education Area as a whole.

The four priority work strands of the European Education Area initiative are related to the objectives of the European Higher Education Area. While focusing primarily on the EU, they will put in place practices that will benefit students, staff and institutions not only in the EU, but beyond:

- First, stepping up learning mobility through a substantially strengthened, more inclusive and enhanced Erasmus programme and the creation of a 'European Student Card';
- Second, supporting the emergence of 'European Universities', where high quality in education, research and innovation meet;
- Third, boosting language learning;
- Fourth, promoting the automatic recognition of higher education and upper-secondary education qualifications, as well as the outcomes of learning periods abroad.

These initiatives get a head start thanks to the solid achievements of the European Higher Education Area. And both will draw strength from each other.

I am confident that the new EU-led initiatives will provide a new impetus for the Bologna Process. Education is back, and now is the moment to use its full potential to build cohesive, resilient societies for the future.



Tibor Navracsics
Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

EMPOWERING
EHEA Paris 2018
EUROPE'S YOUTH
Conférence ministérielle européenne pour l'enseignement supérieur

The Bologna Process in context

EU programmes for higher education and the Bologna Process are closely interconnected and mutually reinforcing. With the launch of Erasmus some 30 years ago, the European Commission, together with national authorities, higher education institutions, students and other stakeholders, triggered more intense and better structured cooperation among European higher education institutions: universities started to work together and gave their students the opportunity to spend a period abroad as part of their studies. As the demand for student mobility grew rapidly, it became clear how difficult it was for single institutions to recognise periods of study across different national higher education systems, with divergent degree structures and different academic traditions.

The Bologna Process – starting with the Sorbonne and Bologna Declarations[1] – was the response of national governments to the problems arising from the EU-driven mobility of European students and graduates: many higher education ministers agreed to pursue the convergence of their systems in order to facilitate institutional student exchanges and the mutual recognition of degrees and periods of study in Europe. Countries chose an intergovernmental route to tackle these issues, which is also emphasised by the governing structure: two countries co-chair the process, with a rotation every 6 months, while a third country volunteers to host the Ministerial Conference and provides the secretariat. Today, the Bologna Process is being implemented in 48 countries, which together make up the European Higher Education Area.

20 years later, the European Commission continues to be a leading player in supporting countries to drive the Bologna policy process, together with stakeholders. The Erasmus+ programme not only contributes to enhancing student and staff mobility – as well as cooperation between higher education institutions – it also supports the Secretariat and the Ministerial Conferences. In addition, it provides support to cooperation projects in both EU Member States and programme and partner countries of the Erasmus+ programme, as well as teams of experts who help non-EU countries carry out Bologna inspired reforms. The Commission is a full member of the Bologna Follow-up Group and its Board which supports the implementation of the decisions of the Bologna Ministerial Conferences.

The 2018 Ministerial Conference brings delegates back to the city where it all began, when preparations for the Bologna Process were set in motion 20 years ago by the Sorbonne Declaration in Paris on 25 May 1998[2].

Areas of activity

Work in the Bologna Process can be divided into two main areas.

Encouraging higher education policy reforms and overcoming obstacles to create a European Higher Education Area:

The Bologna policy reforms are the key to building the necessary trust for successful learning mobility, cross-border academic cooperation and mutual recognition of study periods and qualifications earned abroad. Beyond these structural reforms, enhancing the quality and relevance of learning and teaching is also a core mission of the Bologna Process. Implementation of these reforms is, however, still uneven across the 48 countries.

Providing a forum for engagement with neighbouring countries:

The Eastern Partnership, the Western Balkans (except Kosovo), Turkey, Russia and Kazakhstan have gradually joined the Bologna Process over the years. Participation in dialogue on higher education reforms and questions related to shared academic principles (e.g. autonomy of universities, academic freedom, student and civil society participation) is an important space for soft diplomacy and the Bologna Process therefore plays an important role in ensuring a wider positive impact of higher education policy reforms.



EU support

The EU's extensive work to support higher education reforms, mobility activities, Erasmus+ cooperation projects and common tools helps countries to deliver on many of the key commitments of the Bologna Process in Europe and beyond.

In 2017 the Commission published a **renewed EU Agenda for Higher Education**[3]. The agenda contains a number of priorities for action to provide fresh impetus for higher education in the EU, including:

- addressing skills mismatches and promoting skills development;
- building inclusive and connected higher education systems;
- ensuring higher education institutions contribute to innovation and regional engagement; and
- supporting further development of effective and efficient higher education systems.

The agenda calls for 20 concrete actions to address these priorities through policy cooperation activities and stronger support through Erasmus+ for triggering reforms. The agenda particularly encourages the fostering of international cooperation, exchanges and mobility to enhance quality.

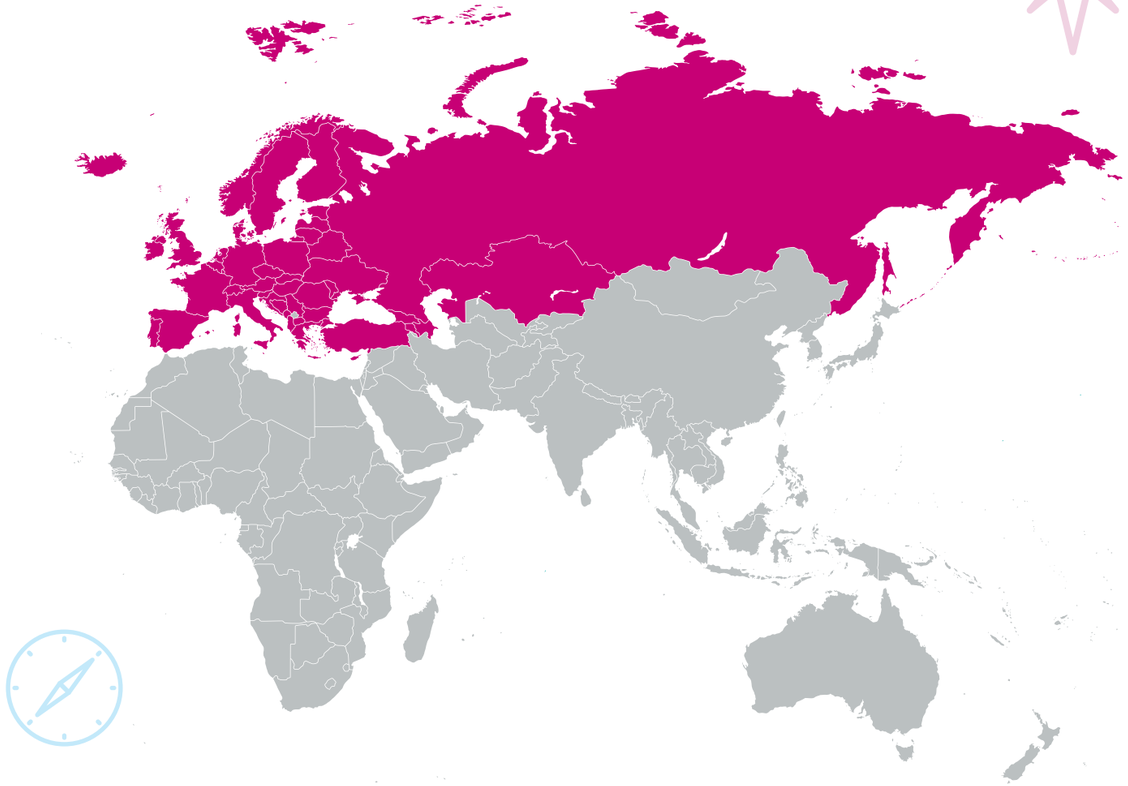
Building on the political momentum created by the debate among the EU's political leaders in Gothenburg, the Commission proposed that EU Member States further strengthen the education dimension within the Union. The Commission's proposal to work towards a **European Education Area by 2025**[4] calls for:

- the establishment of 'European Universities';
- increased mobility through Erasmus+;
- promotion of automatic mutual recognition of academic qualifications and learning periods abroad;
- the introduction of an European student card; and
- improvements in the teaching and learning of languages.

Closely linked together, each of these initiatives has the potential to give a new impetus to the Bologna process, by driving student mobility and academic cooperation to a next level of ambition, both within and beyond the EU.



European Higher Education Area (EHEA) members: 48 countries and the European Commission



Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

Boosting mobility in Europe

Removing obstacles to student mobility is key to the European Higher Education Area. Harmonising European higher education systems helps students make the most of the life-changing opportunities that studying or training abroad offer. Mobility can also help higher education institutions from different countries learn from each other and share best practices, thus raising the overall quality of higher education.

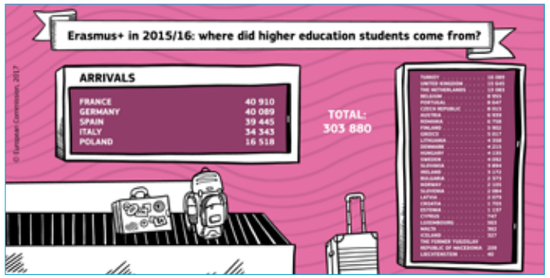
Various opportunities exist for students to spend time abroad to further their learning and improve their employment prospects. Teachers and other higher education professionals can also go abroad for a short period to work or teach in foreign institutions in order to improve their skills and enhance their careers. Since 1987, the EU Erasmus+ programme and its predecessors have given nine million people the chance to study, train, volunteer or gain professional experience abroad.

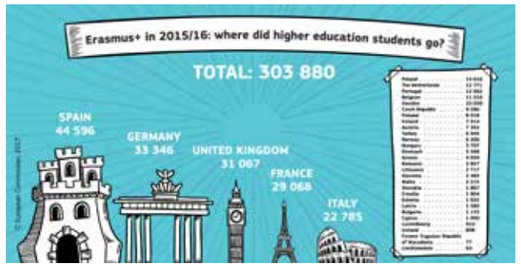
The introduction of **Erasmus+**[5] in 2014 has seen student and staff mobility rise even further, offering also opportunities for academic exchanges with Bologna countries from outside the EU and a broad range of international partner countries worldwide. Participant numbers in higher education hit the one million mark in the programme's first three years. These numbers include 235 000 students who have taken part in traineeships and 25 000 recent graduates who went abroad to train after completing their degrees. Around 170 000 higher education staff have benefitted from Erasmus+ mobility exchanges, with 60 % going abroad to teach and 40 % for professional development.

Erasmus+ is proving to be more inclusive than its predecessors, providing more opportunities for people from disadvantaged backgrounds. So far, more than 56 000 disadvantaged participants have taken part in the programme, of which around 1 700 have special needs. Improvements in this area are in line with the Bologna Process, which also promotes greater social inclusion in mobility activities.

Positive feedback

Erasmus+ is proving its value to those taking part in it. 95 % of students and 99 % of staff say they are satisfied or very satisfied with their experience. Furthermore, 90 % of students feel more confident and ready to take on new challenges thanks to Erasmus+. The experience does not only equip people with new skills and learning specific to their area of study. Nine out of ten Erasmus+ participants improve their foreign language skills during their time abroad while also becoming more tolerant, open-minded and resilient.







Celebrating 30 years of Erasmus+

The **Erasmus+ 30th Anniversary Campaign**[6] was held in 2017, helping to raise the programme's profile even further.

- More than 750 000 people took part in 1 900 events in 44 countries.
- More than 65 000 articles about the programme were published and shared over two million times on social media, reaching about 90 million people.

Three major European-level events were held to mark the anniversary. After a successful kick-off in January 2017, the European Parliament in Strasbourg played host in June to debates about the future of the programme. In addition, the **9 Millionth Erasmus+ Participant Award**[7] was handed over to 33 representatives of the Erasmus+ generation – one from each programme country. Events to mark the closing of the campaign, held in Brussels in November, included sealing a time capsule containing artefacts from the campaign, shared memories of the Erasmus+ programme and written hopes and ideas for the future programme from the audience. The **Erasmus+ Generation Declaration**[8] was also presented and debated during a high-level panel at the European Parliament. Around 16 000 people registered on the Erasmus+ Online Meeting Point where the discussions on the future direction of the programme beyond 2020 took place. The declaration contains 30 concrete recommendations on how to move Erasmus+ forward.



Mobility... worldwide

The 33 Erasmus+ programme countries are the 28 EU Member States plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey. However, Erasmus+ does not only provide opportunities to people from these countries. From Asia to Latin America and Africa to the Pacific, participants in the programme come from across the world. Organisations and individuals from partner countries can take advantage of varied opportunities offered by Erasmus+. This international mobility is often facilitated by Bologna-type mechanisms being used or replicated outside Europe, too, such as the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

By 2020, these international activities will have resulted in:

- 30 000 scholarships for students worldwide to follow Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees;
- 300 new Erasmus Mundus joint master programmes;
- 180 000 staff and student exchanges to and from Europe;
- 20 000 international university agreements.



The ECTS Users' Guide

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) was developed under the Erasmus programme. It was first developed as a way of transferring credits that students earn while abroad so that they count towards their studies when they return to their home institution. The system provides a standardised approach to study assessments and credit transfer, making it easier for education institutions to recognise and transfer each other's learning options. Now it is also used to help design student-centred curricula based on clear learning outcomes, and to assess their quality.

The **ECTS Users' Guide**[9] offers advice on how to implement the rules for credit transfer and accumulation and provides links to supporting documents. The latest revision helps institutions to do more to link study credits with learning outcomes and student workload. It contains advice on how to include the attainment of learning outcomes in assessment procedures. More broadly, the guide helps the higher education community to move in the direction of change advocated by the Bologna Process.



Mobility goes mobile with a new App

Erasmus+ now has its own mobile App. It guides participants through every step of the programme, ensuring all the relevant information is at their fingertips. Since its launch in 2017, the Erasmus+ Mobile App has been downloaded more than 30 000 times. As a next step, Erasmus+ is working on the development of a European Student Card by 2021. The card will enable students to easily and safely identify and register themselves electronically at any European higher education institution when moving to study abroad. It will also allow for the secure electronic exchange of student data and academic records, thereby reducing burden and costs for students and higher education institutions by streamlining administrative processes before, during and after a mobility period, while at the same time being a visible symbol of the European student identity.
Find out more at: **https://erasmusapp.eu/** and **https://ec.europa.eu/education/european-student-card-initiative_en**

Making study abroad count

Students need to know that their time abroad will be properly recognised and count towards their final qualifications. Removing obstacles to recognising qualifications and study periods in another country is therefore a key goal of the European Higher Education Area. The Bologna Process has helped member countries make significant progress in this area.

In general, Bologna countries are in compliance with the **Lisbon Recognition Convention**[10] of the Council of Europe and UNESCO, which covers the recognition of higher education and school-leaving qualifications that give access to higher education. Nevertheless, some problems with recognition, such as inconsistency and a lack of transparency, have been reported, and these can act as barriers to learning mobility. Further work also needs to be undertaken to develop procedures that ensure the qualifications of refugees and displaced people are properly recognised.



Automatic recognition

New recognition initiatives are in the pipeline to help students make the most of their international mobility options. The European Commission has recently tabled a draft Council Recommendation to promote the **automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods abroad.**

The proposal invites Member States to commit that:

- A higher education qualification gained in one Member State would be automatically recognised in other Member States, for the purpose of granting access to further studies, in other Member States;
- An upper secondary qualification that provides access to higher education – including those in vocational education and training – in one Member State would be automatically recognised in other Member States, for the purpose of granting access to higher education;
- The outcomes from a learning period abroad in secondary and higher education would be recognised and allow enrolment into the next year of school or study, provided that the learning outcomes are appropriately documented.

Mutual recognition of qualifications and learning periods abroad will be a key element in the work towards a European Education Area by 2025.

Support networks

Navigating the rules, regulations and customs of different higher education systems and qualification structures can be daunting for students, teachers, parents and education managers. Two complementary networks provide advice and help people find the information they need.

The **Network of National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARICs)** has been supported by the European Commission since 1984. These centres aim to improve the academic recognition of formal qualifications and periods of study abroad in EU Member States, the European Economic Area and Turkey. National centres help promote the mobility of students, teachers and researchers by providing expert advice and information. The service has proved a valuable resource not only for students and teachers, but also for higher education institutions and employers.

The **European Network of Information Centres (ENICs)** was established by UNESCO and the Council of Europe. Its goal is to develop policy and practice for the recognition of qualifications. There are currently over 50 centres based in Europe and other parts of the world, including North America, Australasia and Central Asia.

Each national centre provides information on:

- the recognition of foreign diplomas, degrees and other qualifications;
- the education systems of other countries;
- options for studying abroad, including details about loans, scholarships and mobility schemes.

Both networks have come together to develop an information portal which can be accessed at **www.enic-naric.net**

Joining forces

Some countries already automatically recognise each other's qualifications.

- Arrangements have been in place for many years in the Nordic countries that allow for the automatic recognition of all higher education qualifications and include the automatic recognition of upper secondary qualifications that allow access to higher education.
- The Benelux Decision on automatic recognition came into force in January 2018 and includes all higher education qualifications – from short-cycle courses to doctorates.
- A similar agreement is expected to be signed by the Baltic States in 2018.
- Some Member States, such as Austria and Italy, automatically recognise the outcomes of learning periods spent in another country during secondary education and training.

Building trust and enhancing quality

Common quality assurance standards and guidelines, along with a common degree structure and credit system, are the foundations of the European Higher Education Area[11]. Measures in these areas aim to engender mutual trust in higher education systems, facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications and encourage international mobility of students and graduates – as well as cooperation between universities.

Over the past twenty years, the members of the Bologna Process have launched a number of initiatives to improve quality assurance in higher education. While the **Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)[12]** are based on the principle that the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself, quality assurance is usually covered within national legislation. The revised Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, adopted in 2015, set a common framework for quality assurance systems at European, national and institutional level to ensure accountability. They have inspired discussions and action on topics such as student-centred learning, learning and teaching, learning outcomes and the use of indicators and data in quality assurance. Despite these significant achievements, some remaining areas require further action. In particular, some countries need to do more to involve students in quality assurance processes. Furthermore, institutions in a number of countries are still restricted to using only national quality assurance agencies for their external evaluations. This means they cannot freely choose the most suitable quality assurance agency from the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education **(EQAR)[13]**. The new Bologna peer support process could be instrumental in tackling these shortcomings.



Quality Assurance for Joint Programmes

The 2015 Bologna Ministerial Conference adopted the **European Approach for the Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.** The objective is to encourage the development of more joint programmes by bringing about smoother quality assurance procedures for programmes offered jointly by higher education institutions located in different countries.

The 'European Approach' applies exclusively the guidelines laid down by the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and does not include any national evaluation criteria. The evaluation can be carried out by an agency registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education. The assessment encompasses the joint programme as a whole rather than its separate national parts.

Since its adoption, the 'European Approach' has been applied in very few cases. To remedy this situation and to encourage wider uptake, national legislation needs to be adapted in a number of countries. Institutions also need to be more widely informed on the 'European Approach' and the significant benefits it offers.





Quality assurance projects

The European Union supports several projects to bolster quality assurance. The following two projects should be highlighted in particular, as they have the potential to reach out to a substantial number of stakeholders:

EQUIP

Enhancing Quality through Innovative Policy and Practice in European Higher Education

The project aims to nurture innovation in internal and external quality assurance systems to enhance their further development. EURASHE, the organisation representing universities of applied sciences and university colleges is leading a consortium of stakeholders, including the European University Association, to provide capacity-building support to implement the 2015 Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. The project has delivered recommendations relating to quality assurance policy and practice. The project works with relevant stakeholders and policymakers to propose, share and discuss new quality assurance solutions. It has highlighted changes that need to be made in quality assurance at various levels.

The project has:

- produced an analytical report focusing on innovative aspects of the 2015 Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, and
- promoted the document to the entire higher education community by running peer-learning groups, training events and webinars.

The project's Europe-level policy recommendations have been incorporated into the discussions leading up to the 2018 Bologna Ministerial Conference.

For more information, go to:
http://www.equip-project.eu/about/

DEQAR

Database of External Quality Assurance Results

In order to build trust in the European Higher Education Area, it is vital that external quality assurance mechanisms are transparent. The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education has cooperated with a number of quality assurance agencies, European stakeholders, a recognition centre and the University of Ghent to develop a new tool. The Database of Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR) is supported by Erasmus+. The database will provide easy access to reports and decisions relating to externally reviewed higher education institutions and their programmes.

It should prove to be a valuable resource for a broad range of users, including:

- recognition information centres (ENIC-NARIC),
- recognition officers working in higher education institutions,
- quality assurance agencies,
- ministries and other national authorities, and
- students.

The database provides the information needed to support a variety of decisions relating to the recognition of degrees, student mobility issues, and the portability of grants and loans.

A public preview version of the database was made available in May 2018.

To find out more: **http://www.deqar.eu**

Transparency tools for better policy-making

The European Commission supports a number of projects that provide data on the performance of higher education institutions and the possibilities they offer. The information can be used by students to make informed choices about where to study, as well as by policymakers and education administrators who need solid data to guide their work and policy reforms, in line with the Bologna key commitments.

Comparing universities with U-Multirank

U-Multirank is a freely accessible resource that can be used for the international ranking of higher education institutions. It compares the performance of universities in five areas: teaching and learning, research, knowledge transfer, international orientation and regional engagement.

U-Multirank's web tool allows comparison of universities as a whole and in specific fields of study. Harnessing empirical data, U-Multirank allows users to contrast comparable institutions and to develop their own personalised rankings by selecting their preferred indicators. The web tool has been designed with a user-friendly interface. There is also a mobile version, aimed mainly at students.

In 2018 U-Multirank included more than 1500 universities from across the world, offering information on around 3500 faculties and 12500 study programmes. It currently covers 21 subject areas including science, engineering, health, social sciences, arts and humanities.

The vast amount of information carried by U-Multirank makes it a valuable resource for a broad range of users. Students can use it to compare institutions when they are looking for a place to study. U-Multirank's analysis of data across the dimensions of teaching and learning, research, knowledge transfer, international orientation and regional engagement can be used by higher education institutions to assess their institutional performance for strategy setting, compare themselves with others and find cooperation partners. It also supports national authorities for the assessment and effectiveness of their higher education systems.

U-Multirank is supported by the European Commission, the Bertelsmann Foundation and Banco Santander.

For more information, see:
www.umultirank.org

The European Tertiary Education Register (ETER)

ETER is a database that provides information on nearly 3000 higher education institutions in 36 European countries. It contains data on legal status, geographical information, student and graduate numbers, staff, expenditure and research activities. It also includes pre-defined indicators in areas such as subject specialisation, international mobility and gender balance.

ETER is a rich resource for policymakers and higher education institutions. Its data can be used to compare institutions in different countries and to assess their efficiency and impact on the local region.

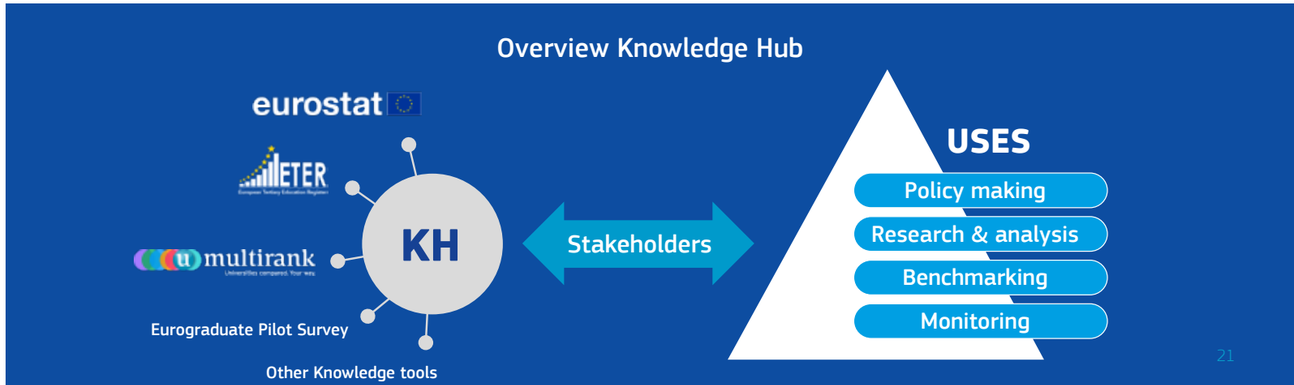
ETER data currently covers the years 2011-2014; data for 2015 will be available mid-2018. The database can be accessed free of charge by anyone. The project is funded by the European Commission and managed by the Joint Research Centre.

For more information, see: **https://www.eter-project.com/**

Bringing data sets together

While projects like U-Multirank and ETER tend to be developed independently, the information they produce is often complementary. This means that there is room to harmonise and combine the data. The information from these and other similar initiatives is now being brought together through the **Knowledge Hub for Higher Education**, a project developed by the European Commission and the Joint Research Centre.

This project explores ways to combine data sets to produce research and analyses that can support policy reform and help modernise higher education in Europe. The results will be of great value for benchmarking and monitoring activities. Along with U-Multirank and ETER, the Hub harnesses information from Eurostat – the EU's statistical information service – and the Eurograduate Pilot Survey, an initiative which examines the skills and mobility of graduates in the labour market.



Support actions to make the Bologna Process reach its full potential

The Erasmus+ Programme provides support to the Bologna Process through targeted calls for project proposals. The goal is to support the implementation of national reforms in higher education in line with Communiqués following Bologna Ministerial Conferences.

Activities covered by national projects include peer learning initiatives, sharing of good practices and conferences on issues such as quality assurance, academic recognition, qualification frameworks, international mobility, joint programmes, and the introduction of student-centred learning.

Project outcomes feed into the Bologna Process, encouraging further progress. Currently, 23 projects are up and running[14]. The next call for applications will be published after the Paris Ministerial Conference.



PROJECTS IN FOCUS

Boosting the social dimension of mobility

Through the *Pro.Mo.Austria+ project*, the Austrian government supports the development and implementation of national strategies relating to the social dimension of higher education mobility. A network of academics is providing training and support to peers on Bologna-driven reforms while encouraging higher education institutions to instigate changes. Efforts are also being made through the project to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Other targets include undertaking a national analysis on the efficiency of the



Diploma Supplement. As the project develops, student support services and diversity management teams will be invited to participate.

Strengthening reforms in Italy

The CHEERII project in Italy, which stands for *Consolidating Higher Education Experience of Reform*, aims at creating stronger synergies among national stakeholders concerned with Bologna reforms and international mobility. CHEERII instigates in-depth discussions with academics, students and administrators in order to make progress.

The project has organised national seminars covering a range of topics, including student-centred learning; recognition of qualifications and periods of study; quality assurance and accreditation; graduate employability; and the development of joint programmes. In addition, key documents produced for the Bologna Process such as the ECTS Users' Guide have been translated into Italian to promote their wider use by higher education institutions.

Placing learning outcomes in the spotlight

The Czech Republic seeks to formally embed learning outcomes in its qualifications framework. However, this goal remains theoretical because study programmes do not provide scope for practical implementation. The *Learning Outcomes project* aims to address this issue as a way of enhancing quality assurance throughout the Czech higher education system. Students will benefit most as changes will improve the quality and transparency of study programmes and courses.

The project has produced a qualifications framework manual. Widely used by Czech higher education institutions, the manual has also informed the revision and implementation of the National Qualifications Framework.

The project also explores learning outcomes relating to international student mobility, raising awareness about the issue with stakeholders and encouraging the government to launch a new programme that simplifies and speeds up visa processes for students from non-Schengen countries.

Enhancing quality and inclusivity in Hungary

This project aims at bringing the country up to speed on a number of requirements of the European Higher Education Area.

Activities seek to:

- Enhance the quality and relevance of learning and teaching. This is being achieved by developing courses that focus on student-centred learning, rethinking approaches to the European Credits Transfer and Accumulation System, and by measuring student achievements and learning outcomes.

- Make the higher education system more inclusive. Work here includes providing classes to explain mobility options to secondary school pupils. Peer-review activities focus on the social dimension as well as systems for tracking the progress of graduates.

- Fostering the employability of graduates throughout their working lives. Actions include hosting an international conference to explore relations between higher education institutions and the communities they serve, as well asndeveloping fora to nurture cooperation between universities and businesses.

- Further implementation of structural reforms, including capacity-building initiatives to bolster cooperation and better use of the tools provided through the Bologna Process. The aim is to improve the participation of Central European higher education institutions in Erasmus+, including its international initiatives such as the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees.

Making best use of Bologna tools

While the main elements of the Bologna Process have been successfully implemented in the Netherlands, there is still room for improvement, especially in the area of transparency. The project *'Facilitating the use of Bologna tools for higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies'*, addresses the availability of information about educational programmes as well as the need to define, assess and demonstrate the achievements of learning outcomes and best use of the Diploma Supplement.

The project also looks at ways of improving cooperation between Dutch higher education institutions and their counterparts in other countries in order to develop joint programmes. Activities here include the provision of a training seminar for higher education institutions and an international peer learning meeting on the European Approach for the quality assurance of joint programmes. In addition, the project continues the work of a previous project by fostering dialogue between different educational sectors, notably between higher education institutions and providers of vocational education and training.



International cooperation through Bologna

Since 2009 the Bologna Policy Forum has been the main arena for countries outside the European Higher Education Area to get information about the Bologna Process. The Forum has helped regions such as South East Asia, Africa, the Southern Mediterranean and Latin America take steps towards the development of regional associations or instruments that strengthen intraregional recognition and mobility. The 2018 Paris Ministerial Conference provides an opportunity to showcase the Forum as a platform for the 48 countries of the European Higher Education Area to listen to and learn from the world of higher education and engage on topics of common concern, including inclusiveness in higher education and the social responsibility of universities.

There is a strong international dimension to the funding opportunities provided by Erasmus+, particularly in the area of higher education. Strengthening internationalisation is at the heart of cooperation and mobility projects which include Bologna members from outside the EU. All parties face very similar issues to those already addressed under the Bologna Process, including common approaches for recognition, accreditation and quality assurance.

Building capacity

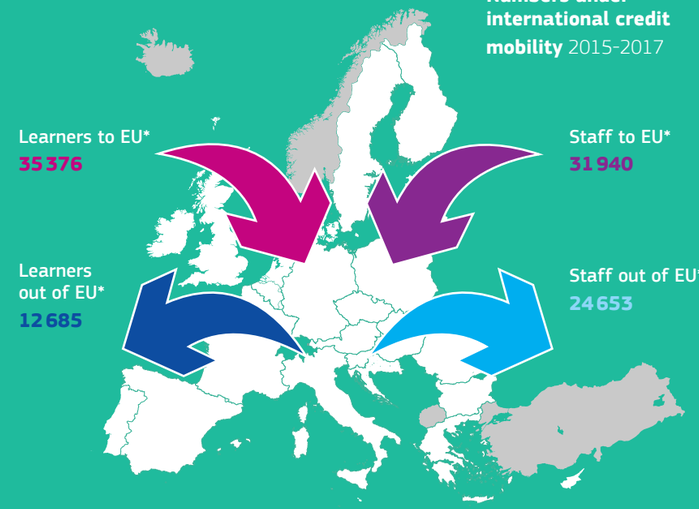
Capacity-building projects for higher education bring together higher education institutions from Europe and from across the world. 86% are joint projects aimed at modernising and reforming higher education institutions, developing new curricula, improving governance, and building relationships between higher education institutions and businesses. 14% are structural projects, which focus specifically on the modernisation process, working on policy issues and preparing the ground for higher education reform in cooperation with national authorities. Bologna is often a role model for these reforms. Many of these capacity building initiatives support countries from outside the EU, helping to make the main aspects of the Bologna Process a reality in these countries too.

International credit mobility

Since 2015, international credit mobility has extended the classic Erasmus student and staff exchanges to enable higher education institutions from Erasmus+ Programme Countries in Europe to work with partners throughout the world. Projects selected so far plan mobility for some 56000 staff and 48000 students. Around two-thirds of these come to Europe. The institutions involved have to agree on credits, learning outcomes, equivalence and more. Bologna reforms provide ready-made answers in many areas – for example in the area of credits. New partnerships often begin with the mobility of administrative staff to iron out managerial issues.

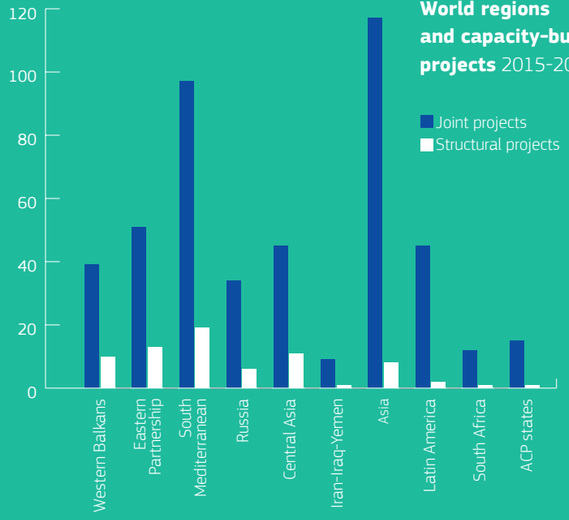


Numbers under international credit mobility 2015-2017



* The 33 Erasmus+ programme countries are the 28 EU Member States plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

World regions and capacity-building projects 2015-2017





Regional focus

A number of regions throughout the world are also looking at the European experience under Bologna to boost international higher education mobility and cooperation within their region. For example, an EU-funded project[15] combines the Association of South East Asian Nations' (ASEAN) ambition to build a regional higher education space with mobility opportunities. The project works on improving qualification frameworks, quality assurance and developing an ASEAN-wide credit transfer system. It tests and pushes progress through a scholarship scheme between higher education institutions in the region.

http://www.share-asean.eu/#main

Tuning is an established European methodology that supports greater internationalisation in higher education in Europe, Latin America, Russia, China and Africa. Through peer-learning it helps participating institutions develop curricula profiles in response to determined or expected outcomes and competences for the selected subject areas, with special attention on credit loads, learning outcomes and quality. Tuning Africa continues to play a major role in the higher education focus of the EU-Africa Partnership.

http://tuningafrica.org/en/
http://www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/

Joint programmes

Bologna reforms have enabled higher education institutions within Europe to work more effectively on joint teaching and joint programmes. **Erasmus Mundus**[16] is the EU's flagship scholarship programme supporting top-level joint masters programmes, which include closely-integrated teaching delivered by consortia of different higher education institutions in Europe and the rest of the world. Erasmus Mundus was in the minds of European Ministers as they signed the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes as part of the Yerevan Communiqué in 2015.

Higher Education Reform Experts

Higher education reform within countries neighbouring the EU has been supported since the launch of the Tempus programme in 1990. Today, Erasmus+ funds nearly 250 **Higher Education Reform Experts**[17] to pursue policy development and reforms in 27 countries. They also contribute to the training of local stakeholders in the Western Balkans, Southern Mediterranean, Eastern Partnership countries, Central Asia and the Russian Federation. Their activities include organising and participating in seminars, writing articles and reports, and providing advice to individual institutions and policymakers.

Find out more:

European Union policies and initiatives in education and training
https://ec.europa.eu/education/node_en

EU activities in the field of higher education
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/higher-education_en

The EU's international cooperation in the field of higher education
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/international-cooperation_en

The Erasmus+ programme
http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node_en

- Erasmus+ participant portal http://ec.europa.eu/education/participants/portal/desktop/en/home.html
- Erasmus+ Key Action 3 Compendium: Support to the implementation of EHEA reforms (2016-2018)
  https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/ehea_reforms_2016_compendium.pdf

The EHEA and the Bologna Process
http://www.ehea.info/

- The Bologna Process in the EU: Who, what and why?
  https://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/higher-education/bologna-process_en
- The Paris Ministerial Conference 2018
  http://www.ehea.info/cid101765/ministerial-conference-paris-2018.html
- The Yerevan Conference 2015 Communiqué
  http://bologna-yerevan2015.ehea.info/files/YerevanCommuniqueFinal.pdf

Footnotes:

1 http://www.ehea.info/cid100210/ministerial-conference-bologna-1999.html
2 Joint Declaration on harmonisation of the architecture of the European higher education system was signed by France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. It prefigured the Bologna Process.
3 https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/he-com-2017-247_en.pdf
4 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/towards-european-education-area-2025-2017-nov-14_en
5 https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node_en
6 https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/anniversary_en
7 https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/anniversary/erasmusplus-9-million_en
8 https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus2/files/erasmus-generation-declaration_en.pdf
9 http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/tools/docs/ects-guide_en.pdf
10 https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/recognition/lrc_EN.asp
11 Yerevan Communiqué, EHEA Ministerial Conference, 14-15 May 2015
12 https://eqar.eu/topics/esg.html
13 European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education https://eqar.eu/about/introduction.html
14 https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/ehea_reforms_2016_compendium.pdf
15 European Union Support to Higher Education in ASEAN Region (SHARE)
16 https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities/individuals/students/erasmus-mundus-joint-master-degrees_en
17 https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/key-action-3-support-for-policy-reform/higher-education-reform-experts-heres_en

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