

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a white lab coat and clear safety goggles. She is looking directly at the camera with a focused expression. The background is dark and filled with vibrant, out-of-focus light streaks in shades of blue, green, and yellow, suggesting a high-tech or scientific environment. Overlaid on the center of the image is the title text in a bold, red, sans-serif font.

Bologna Process transparency tools in action



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Historical Insight



Context Before Bologna

- European countries had diverse higher education systems, with differing degree structures, credit systems, and academic standards.
- After the Cold War, the diversity in higher education systems increased as former socialist countries introduced free market principles, often more extensively than in Western Europe.
- This created a unique challenge, as countries with different traditions, both from former socialist states and older Western European democracies, needed to harmonize their systems for mutual recognition and mobility.
- In response to globalization and the knowledge economy, there was a growing need to align European education systems to enhance competitiveness and promote a cohesive European identity in education.

Lisbon Recognition Convention (1997)

Initiated By

- The Convention was initiated by the Council of Europe and UNESCO to address the growing need for a framework to recognize academic qualifications across borders.

Objectives

- Simplify the recognition of qualifications to facilitate academic and professional mobility.
- Promote a fair, transparent, and reliable method for assessing foreign academic credentials in different countries.

Key Provisions

- The right for individuals to have their qualifications assessed for recognition in another country.
- Establishment of national information centers (ENIC-NARIC networks) to provide guidance on recognition procedures and academic equivalence.



Impact of the Lisbon Convention

Foundation for Bologna

- The Convention laid the groundwork for the Bologna Process by establishing principles of mutual recognition of qualifications.

Enhancement of Mobility

- It made it easier for students and professionals to move between countries for education and employment.

Strengthening Cooperation

- Encouraged European countries to work together to harmonize their education systems and improve mutual recognition of degrees, setting the stage for future collaborations.



Impact of the Lisbon Convention

- It has been signed and ratified by 55 countries.
- While most countries that are signatories of the Lisbon Recognition Convention are also part of the Bologna Process, a few are not part of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), which is the group of countries participating in the Bologna Process. These non-EHEA signatories include:
 - **Canada** (specifically, the provinces of Quebec and Alberta)
 - **United States of America**
 - **Israel**
 - **Australia**
 - **New Zealand**
 - **Kyrgyzstan**



Sorbonne Declaration (1998)

Signatory Countries

- France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

Universities were born in Europe, some three-quarters of a millenium ago. Our four countries boast some of the oldest, who are celebrating important anniversaries around now, as the University of Paris is doing today. **In those times, students and academics would freely circulate and rapidly disseminate knowledge throughout the continent.** Nowadays, too many of our students still graduate without having had the benefit of a study period outside of national boundaries.



Sorbonne Declaration (1998)

Main Goals

- The Declaration called for harmonization of higher education structures in Europe, focusing on creating a common frame of reference.
- The Sorbonne Declaration called for the creation of a common framework of degrees in Europe, structured around a two-cycle system: undergraduate and graduate studies. This was an early step toward what became the three-cycle system (Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral degrees) under the Bologna Process.

Significance

- This marked the first coordinated effort to converge European higher education systems, paving the way for the Bologna Declaration.
- It emphasized the need for open and flexible systems that would allow students and staff to move more freely across institutions and countries.



Impact of the Sorbonne Declaration

- Catalyst for the Bologna Process: The Sorbonne Declaration acted as the catalyst for the creation of the Bologna Process a year later in 1999, when 29 countries signed the Bologna Declaration. The goals outlined in Sorbonne were expanded and formalized through the Bologna Process.
- Structural Reform: It inspired the transformation of European higher education systems towards more transparency and compatibility, with most European countries adopting the three-cycle degree structure and tools like the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).



Bologna Declaration (1999)

- 29 European Ministers of Education signed the Bologna Declaration, committing to create the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010.

Aim

- To establish a coherent and cohesive European Higher Education Area that would promote mobility, employability, and competitiveness on a global scale.

Core Objectives

- Comparable degree systems: Ensure that degrees are easily understandable across countries.
- Two-cycle system: Introduce Bachelor's and Master's degree cycles, later adding a third cycle (Doctorate).



Bologna Declaration (1999)

Core Objectives

- ECTS credit system: Adopt the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System to facilitate the transfer of credits between institutions.
- Mobility: Promote student and staff mobility between institutions and countries.
- Quality assurance: Enhance cooperation in quality assurance and accreditation schemes.
- European dimension in higher education: Promote a European identity and values in higher education curricula.

Bologna Communiqués and Memoranda

Key Meetings

- **Prague (2001):** Highlighted the importance of lifelong learning.
- **Berlin (2003):** Introduced the third cycle (Doctorate) into the Bologna Process.
- **Bergen (2005):** Adopted standards for quality assurance in higher education.
- **London (2007):** Focused on the global dimension of European higher education.
- **Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve (2009):** Set long-term goals for 2020, including greater social inclusion and employability

Budapest-Vienna Declaration (2010)

Officially launched the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), marking the culmination of the Bologna Process's initial goals.

Focus Areas

- Social dimension: Ensuring that higher education is accessible to all, regardless of background.
- Employability: Aligning education with the needs of the labor market to improve career prospects for graduates.
- Internationalization: Strengthening cooperation with non-European countries for a more global outlook.



Bucharest Communiqué (2012)

- **Quality and Employability:** Emphasized the need for continuous improvement in quality assurance and greater alignment between higher education and the labor market to enhance the employability of graduates.
- **Social Dimension:** Reaffirmed the commitment to widening access to higher education, improving participation from underrepresented groups, and tackling dropout rates.
- **Mobility for Better Learning:** Promoted student and staff mobility, setting a target that at least 20% of graduates in the EHEA should have experienced a period of study or training abroad by 2020.
- **Lifelong Learning:** Reinforced the importance of lifelong learning and recognition of prior learning to ensure flexible learning paths

Yerevan Communiqué (2015)



- Recognition of Qualifications: Called for further improvements in the recognition of qualifications and periods of study to ensure seamless mobility within the EHEA.
- Qualifications Frameworks: Urged countries to complete the development of their national qualifications frameworks aligned with the overarching EHEA framework.
- Teaching and Learning: Focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning, encouraging innovation in pedagogical practices.
- Inclusiveness: A stronger commitment to social inclusion and equity in access to higher education, alongside efforts to reduce inequalities and promote the inclusion of refugees and migrants.
- Global Cooperation: Emphasized the importance of international cooperation beyond Europe, building partnerships with regions outside the EHEA.

Paris Communiqué (2018)

- **Strengthening Trust:** Focused on enhancing trust and cooperation across the EHEA through transparent systems of quality assurance and recognition.
- **Student-Centered Learning:** Placed strong emphasis on student-centered learning approaches, making education more flexible and responsive to individual needs and labor market demands.
- **Digitalization:** Highlighted the role of digital technologies in education and stressed the importance of integrating digital skills into higher education programs.
- **Academic Freedom:** Reaffirmed the commitment to academic freedom and the autonomy of higher education institutions as fundamental values.
- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** Linked the goals of the Bologna Process to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in the areas of quality education and reducing inequalities.



Rome Communiqué (2020)

- **Resilience and Innovation:** Highlighted the need for the EHEA to be more resilient and adaptable in the face of challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing the role of online learning and digital tools.
- **Social Dimension:** Reaffirmed the commitment to improving access to higher education for all, emphasizing equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- **Green and Digital Transitions:** Supported the green transition by promoting education and research that contribute to environmental sustainability and the digital transition by integrating digital competences across curricula.
- **Global Cooperation:** Called for increased cooperation beyond Europe, with a focus on building a globally connected higher education community.
- **Recognition and Mobility:** Reinforced commitments to the automatic recognition of qualifications and making mobility opportunities accessible to all students.
- **Academic Freedom:** Reaffirmed the commitment to academic freedom and the autonomy of higher education institutions as fundamental values.

Tirana Communiqué (2024)

- **Digital Transformation:** Emphasized the further integration of digital tools in higher education, making digital literacy a central competency for graduates.
- **Sustainability and Green Skills:** Focused on education's role in fostering sustainable development and providing students with green skills needed for emerging sectors in the labor market.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** Expanded efforts to make higher education more inclusive, with a particular focus on removing financial and social barriers for disadvantaged and marginalized groups.
- **Global Partnerships:** Strengthened partnerships with higher education institutions in regions outside Europe, fostering global academic collaboration.



TIRANA EHEA MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

29 - 30 MAY 2024

Tirana Communiqué



The Bologna Process 2024



- In 2024, the European Higher Education Area consists of 49 members (48 countries and the European Commission) along with 8 main higher education stakeholders. However, there is no representation from art education associations among these stakeholders. For example, ELIA (the European League of Institutes of the Arts) is not included, despite the fact that participation in the Bologna Process requires membership in the European Cultural Convention (1954).
- In 2022, it was decided by the BFUG members to suspend the rights of representation of the Russian Federation and Belarus in the EHEA.
- European Higher Education Area is even larger than EU and Council of Europe
- For example - EU – 27 countries and Council of Europe – 47 countries

Bologna Process Objectives and the Need for Transparency Tools



Bologna Process Objectives and the Need for Transparency Tools

Bologna Process Objectives:

Harmonization of Degree Structures:

- The Bologna Process introduced a **two-cycle degree system** (Bachelor's and Master's), later expanding to a **three-cycle system** to include Doctorates.
- To make these degree systems comparable across borders, countries needed a standardized way to describe the learning outcomes, levels, and qualifications.
- **Transparency Tools:** The **European Qualifications Framework (EQF)** was introduced to align national qualifications frameworks, ensuring that degrees from different countries were understood in relation to one another.

Bologna Process Objectives and the Need for Transparency Tools

Bologna Process Objectives:

Promotion of Mobility (Students and Staff):

- A key Bologna objective is to increase **student and staff mobility**, allowing individuals to study, teach, or work in different European countries without facing recognition barriers.
- However, mobility requires qualifications and learning experiences to be clearly understood and recognized by institutions and employers across borders.
- **Transparency Tools:** The **Diploma Supplement** was introduced to provide standardized, detailed information about an individual's degree, the institution that awarded it, and the national education system, making qualifications more transparent and comparable.

Bologna Process Objectives and the Need for Transparency Tools

Bologna Process Objectives:

- **Quality Assurance:**

- The Bologna Process emphasized **cooperation on quality assurance** to ensure that institutions maintain high educational standards while promoting mutual trust between countries' systems.
- This required clear, transparent mechanisms to assess and demonstrate the quality of education provided by institutions across Europe.
- **Transparency Tools:** The development of **European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)** for quality assurance provided a common framework for evaluating and reporting on the quality of programs and institutions, ensuring that qualifications are backed by high and consistent educational standards.

Bologna Process Objectives and the Need for Transparency Tools

Bologna Process Objectives:

Recognition of Qualifications:

- To facilitate mobility and employability, the Bologna Process sought to improve the **recognition of qualifications** across borders.
- However, recognizing qualifications required a common understanding of degrees and their equivalences, which necessitated clear documentation and frameworks.
- **Transparency Tools:** The establishment of the **ENIC-NARIC networks**, which provide information and advice on the recognition of foreign qualifications, has been crucial in making degrees more understandable and comparable, thus aiding recognition.

Bologna Process Objectives and the Need for Transparency Tools

Bologna Process Objectives:

Fostering Employability:

- One of the Bologna Process's overarching goals is to improve the **employability** of graduates by ensuring that their qualifications are recognized and respected across Europe.
- For employers, clear and transparent information about an individual's educational achievements is crucial for hiring decisions.
- **Transparency Tools: Europass** was introduced to provide a standardized portfolio of documents (including the **Europass CV, Language Passport, and Diploma Supplement**) that allow individuals to clearly communicate their qualifications, skills, and work experience to employers across Europe.

Bologna Process Objectives and the Need for Transparency Tools

Bologna Process Objectives:

European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS):

- The Bologna Process promoted the adoption of **ECTS**, a system for measuring and comparing student workload and learning outcomes across institutions.
- ECTS provided a consistent way to quantify and transfer academic credits, making it easier for students to move between universities and countries.
- **Transparency Tools:** ECTS itself is a transparency tool, allowing students, employers, and institutions to understand and compare the value of coursework completed in different countries.

Bologna Process Objectives and the Need for Transparency Tools

Why Transparency Tools Are Essential:

- **Clarity and Comparability**
- **Trust and Recognition**
- **Mobility and Accessibility**



Latvia and the Bologna Process



Latvia and the Bologna Process

- **Latvia's Participation:** Joined the Bologna Process in 1999.
- **National Reforms:** Aligned its higher education system with Bologna objectives.
- **Initial Focus:** ECTS, NQF, and improving quality assurance systems.



Latvia before the Bologna Process

- **Autonomy of higher education institutions (1991)**
- **Division into academic and professional higher education (1991)**
- **Introduction of bachelor and master levels in academic higher education (1991)**
- **Shift from a fully state-funded higher education to a mixed funding (1991)**
- **Opening possibilities to establish private HEIs (1991)**



Latvia before the Bologna Process

Quality assurance and accreditation (1995)

- The starting point in the establishing of higher education quality assurance system in Latvia is the international seminar on higher education quality assurance, organized by the Council of Europe in Riga October 24-25, 1994.
- In 1995 a two-stage system quality assurance was created in Latvia.
- License gave the right to start the programme.
- The rights to issue State recognized documents were only given to the accredited HEI, i.e. both programme accreditation and institutional accreditation was required.



The role of the Council of Higher Education in the Bologna Process

- „**Development conception of Latvian higher education and HEIs for the period until 2010**” (2001) was elaborated by the Council of Higher Education which directed Latvia’s towards the principles of Bologna declaration and action lines for creation of European Higher Education Area.
- Cabinet of Ministers supported this conception in 2001 but decided that its principles have to be merged into overall conceptual documents for the education sector.



ECTS in Latvia

- **Credit point system.** At the time of signature of Bologna declaration in 1999, credit point system in Latvia was already implemented.
- It was based upon the definition of credit point as workload of one week of full-time studies, thus leading to 40 credits per year.
- This system was compatible with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) - one Latvian credit was worth 1.5 ECTS credits.
- In the beginning credit system was not described in the legislation, therefore different HEIs interpreted it slightly differently



ECTS in Latvia

- Latvia transferred from the national Credit point system to ECTS compatible system in 2022
- Now it is fully compatible with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) - one Latvian credit point is worth 1 ECTS credits.
- **Implementation:** Fully implemented in Latvia for all higher education cycles.
- **Example:** All Latvian universities use ECTS for course credits and degree programs.



Diploma Supplement in Latvia

- Several higher education institutions began issuing diploma supplements as early as 1999.
- Since 2004, the diploma supplement has been mandatory for all higher education diplomas. The content of this supplement is regulated **by Annex 7** of the Cabinet of Ministers' Regulation No. 202 of April 16, 2013, "**Procedure for Issuing State-Recognized Documents Certifying Higher Education.**"
- The diploma supplement conforms to the template established by the European Commission, the Council of Europe, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO/CEPES). It is designed to provide objective information and ensure the academic and professional recognition of education documents.
- The diploma supplement includes details about the nature, level, context, content, and status of the studies successfully completed by the person named in the diploma.



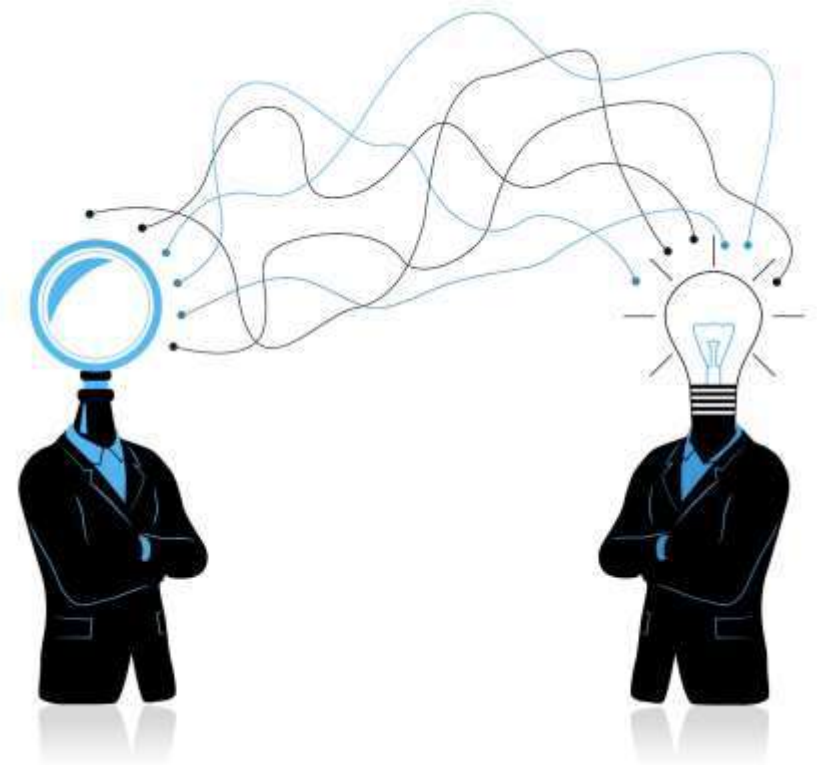
NQF Latvia

- Two Phases: Latvia implemented its NQF in two main phases
- The first phase (2009-2011) focused on establishing the framework and referencing formal qualifications to the EQF.
- The second phase (2013-2019) involved refining the LKI, strengthening its legal basis, and referencing professional qualifications.
- Ongoing Process: The development of the LKI is an ongoing process.
- Latvia continues to refine the framework and explore ways to incorporate the validation of non-formal and informal learning fully.



The Future of the Bologna Process in Latvia

- **Current Focus:** Digital transformation, strengthening QA, and increasing mobility.
- **Challenges:** Expanding access to higher education and improving employability.
- **Latvia's Goals:** Continue aligning with Bologna objectives to enhance the competitiveness of its higher education system.

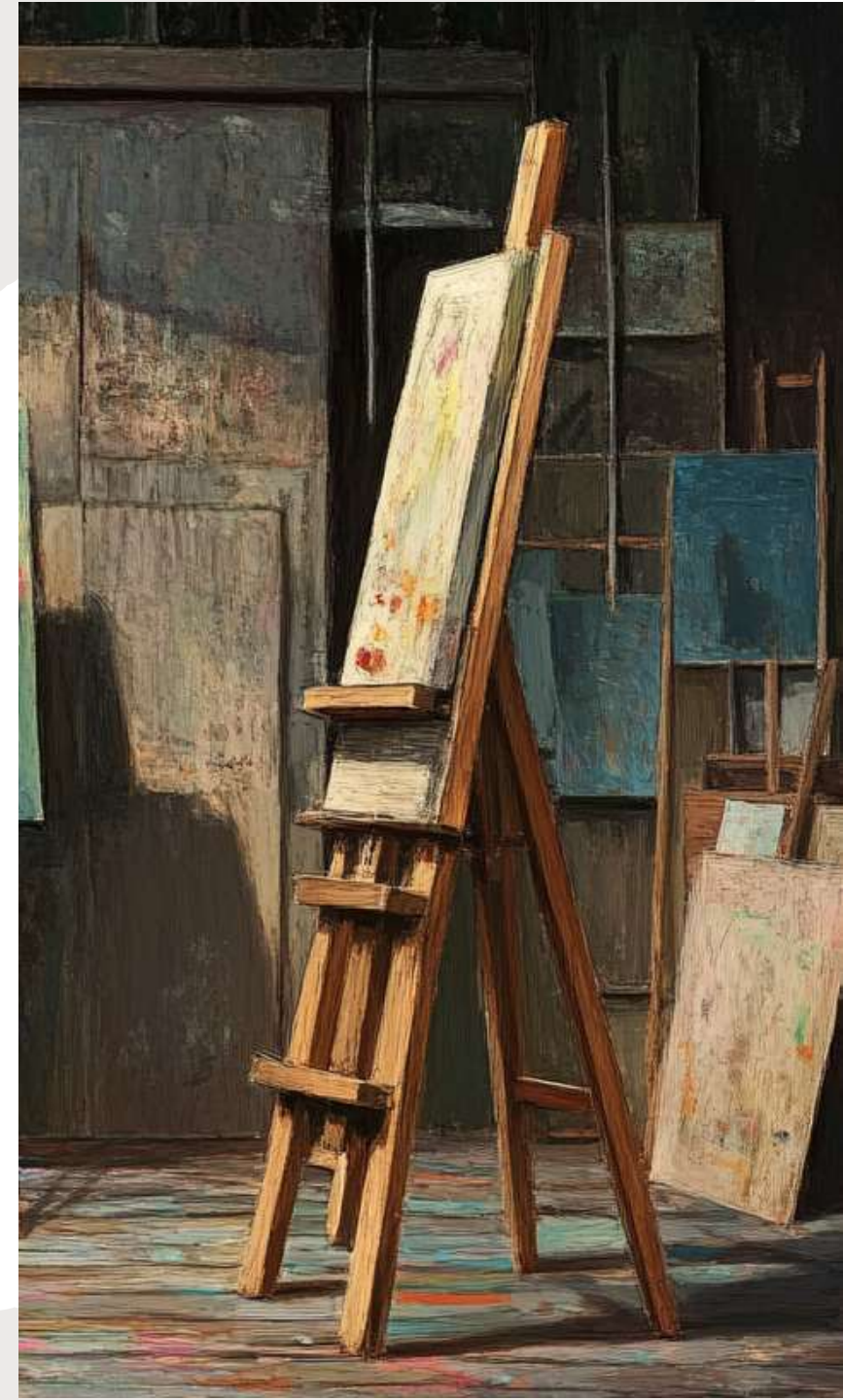




The challenges of higher art education in the context of the Bologna Process

Compatibility with the Three-Cycle Degree Structure

- Higher art education in the Bologna Process faces significant challenges, especially in terms of **standardization, credit allocation, and the recognition of artistic qualifications.**
- The issue is further complicated by the fact that **not all countries recognize higher education in the arts at the third cycle (Doctoral level)**
- This lack of recognition can hinder mobility and career progression for artists.
- However, with **flexible educational structures, practice-based PhDs, and improved recognition mechanisms**, art institutions can adapt to the Bologna framework while preserving the core values of artistic practice.
- Solutions should focus on promoting flexibility, equity, and international collaboration in higher art education.



Compatibility with the Three-Cycle Degree Structure

- Latvian legislation allowed realization of the third cycle of the higher art education only in 2018
- In 2020 first Joint professional doctoral study program was established by three arts and culture universities - Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music, Art Academy of Latvia and Latvian Academy of Culture
- **198 ECTS credits, awarding a Professional Doctor's Degree in Arts – Art.D (artium doctor)**
- **Three subprograms:**
 - Music and Performing Arts – implemented by JVLMA
 - Visual Arts and Design – implemented by LMA
 - Audio–Visual Arts, Theatre and Contemporary Dance – implemented by LKA



EU4ART – European University Alliance for Common Fine Arts Curriculum project (2019 – 2022)

EU4ART was established by

- Hungarian University Of Fine Arts
- Dresden Academy of Fine Arts
- Art Academy of Latvia
- Academy of Fine Arts of Rome

Our alliance was the only short-lived one, although there were several problems beyond our scope.

For example, there were difficulties in delivering the intended joint Generic Fine Art Educational Frameworks for module delivery across undergraduate (BA), master's (MA), and PhD degrees (common curriculum).

Because, for example, there is no third higher education cycle in the arts in Germany and Italy.



Quality Assurance standards in the art education

- European Standards and Guidelines (ESG, 2015)
missed higher art education
- Problems with a place of art and artistic practise inside the higher education
- ESG 2015 are dealing only with studies and research in the higher education
- To cope with a absence of art in ESG Latvian QA Agentur (AIKA) developing QA manual addressed artistic practise as organic part of higher education
- EQ-Arts was from 2021 till 2023 the member of EQAR
- Further development of internal QA management policies and strategies



Art Education in the next Bologna Agenda?

- Academic Freedom and Artistic Freedom
- Social Dimension of Art, Artistic Research and Art Education
- Student-centred learning as historic tradition of the Art Education and future vision
- To foster continuous enhancement of art teaching
- To strengthen higher art education institutions' capacity to enhance not only learning and teaching but also research and innovation culture by innovating the research and innovation culture itself





The Future of the Bologna Process

Future Perspectives

Ongoing Reforms

- There is increasing emphasis on digitalization, sustainability, and lifelong learning as the next stages of the Bologna Process.

Potential Developments

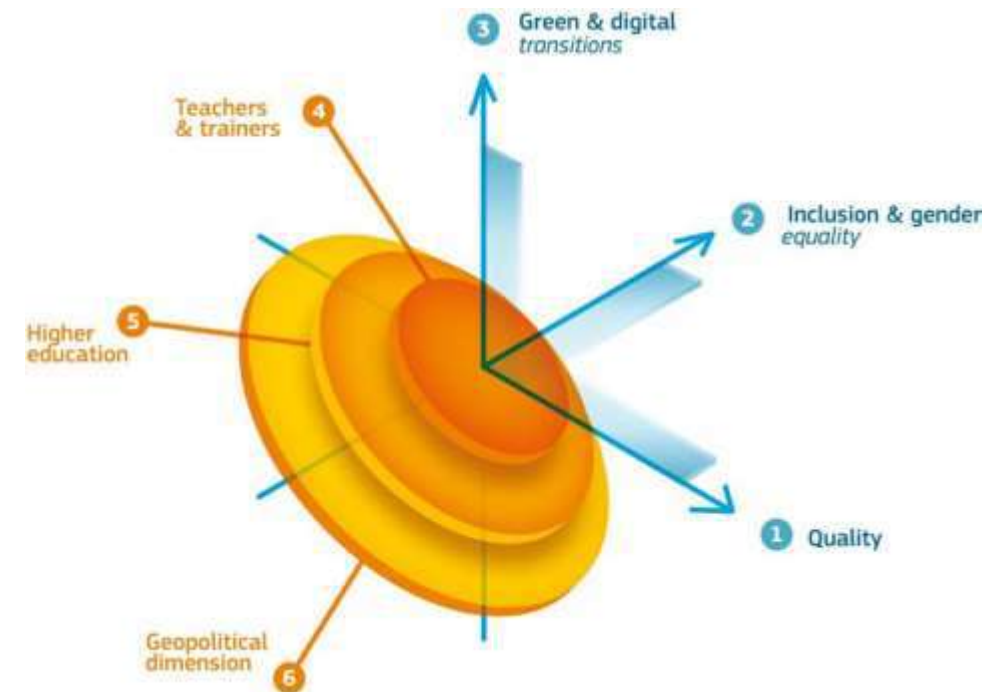
- Greater inclusion and equity in education, with a focus on supporting disadvantaged and underrepresented groups.

Global Influence

- The Bologna Process serves as a model for other regions, such as Latin America and Asia, in harmonizing education systems and fostering collaboration between institutions.

EC on achieving the European Education Area by 2025

- Closer and **deeper cooperation between higher education institutions.**
- A policy framework across borders that allows for seamless **transnational cooperation.**
- Higher education institutions as central actors of the “**knowledge square**”: education, research, innovation and service to society.
- **Automatic recognition of qualifications** and study periods abroad for the purpose of further learning, **quality assurance of joint transnational activities** and the recognition and portability of short courses leading to micro-credentials.
- A stronger focus on specialized education programs in advanced digital skills.





Four Models of AI Integration in Higher Education Institutions

- AI-Skeptic HEI: The Traditional University
- AI-Complementary HEI: The AI-Assisted College
- AI-Enhanced HEI: The Hybrid University
- Fully AI-Operated HEI: The AI University

AI-Skeptic HEI: The Traditional University

- **Human-Driven Learning:** Professors are fully responsible for course design, grading, and student engagement. There is little to no reliance on AI in the classroom.
- **Focus on Personal Mentorship:** The institution emphasizes the value of face-to-face mentorship and small, discussion-based classes over data-driven approaches.
- **Skepticism of AI:** The leadership prioritizes human judgment over AI, often viewing technology as a tool that can detract from the richness of human-led education.



AI-Complementary HEI: The AI-Assisted College

- HEI uses AI primarily as a supplementary tool to enhance the quality and efficiency of human-led teaching and administration, but without making AI a central or transformative part of the learning experience.
- **Human-Centered Teaching:** Human educators are at the forefront of the educational experience, with AI tools serving to augment teaching and administrative tasks without taking full control.
- **AI for Research:** Faculty and students can use AI to assist with research tasks, such as data analysis, predictive modeling, or automating routine research procedures.



AI-Enhanced HEI: The Hybrid University

- HEI blends AI technology with traditional human teaching and administrative roles, allowing for a balanced approach that leverages the strengths of both.
- **Blended Teaching Models:** Human professors deliver core content, but AI tutors are available for supplementary support, offering students a personalized learning assistant at any time.
- **Human Oversight with AI Support:** While AI handles administrative functions like enrollment, financial aid distribution, and performance tracking, humans intervene when complex issues arise.



Fully AI-Operated HEI: The AI University

- HEI is entirely driven by AI technologies, with minimal human involvement in administration, teaching, and assessment. AI handles everything from personalized learning experiences to institutional management.
- **AI Tutors and Professors:** All teaching and tutoring are conducted by AI systems capable of delivering lectures, grading assignments, and providing feedback.
- **Adaptive and Personalized Learning:** AI customizes courses for each student, constantly updating material and pacing based on individual needs.





New transparency tools

The rapid integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into higher education presents both opportunities and challenges, creating a need for new transparency tools that acknowledge and accommodate this emerging reality.

Micro-credentials and micro-qualifications: A New Pathway for Learning

- **AI and micro-credentials and micro-qualifications:** AI-powered learning platforms allow for **personalized and modular learning** through micro-credentials, adapting content to individual needs and receiving micro-qualifications.
- **Recognition within the Bologna Process: Need for New Tools:** micro-credentials and micro-qualifications require a framework for **recognition** and **standardization** across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).
- **Portability:** Blockchain technology can be used for the secure and transparent verification of micro-credentials and micro-qualifications, ensuring they are **recognized across borders**.

Lifelong Learning in the Bologna Process

- **AI-Enhanced Lifelong Learning: Continuous Learning:** AI enables learners to pursue ongoing education tailored to their evolving career needs, including flexible learning paths and self-paced courses.
- **Skills for the Future:** AI-driven learning focuses on helping individuals update their skills regularly, preparing for rapid changes in the job market.
- **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):** AI can assess and validate prior learning experiences (formal or informal) and integrate them into formal education pathways.

References

- **Key Sources**

- Bologna Declaration documents
- European Commission reports
- Council of Europe publications

- **Further Reading**

- Links to official websites and educational resources, such as the European Higher Education Area portal, the Erasmus+ program, and the ENIC-NARIC networks.

- **Eiropas Augstākās izglītības telpas BIBLIOTĒKA (EHEA Library)**, created and maintained by **professor Andrejs Rauhvargers**, provides in-depth insights into the evolution of the Bologna Process and the development of transparency tools in European higher education systems.



Thank you for your attention!

Questions and
Discussion