

Bologna Process

The main goal of the Bologna Process is to create a **European Higher Education Area (EHEA)** based on international cooperation and academic exchange that is attractive to European students and academic staff as well as to students and academic staff from other parts of the world.

The envisaged European Higher Education Area will

- facilitate **mobility** of students, graduates and higher education staff;
- prepare students for their **future careers** and for life as active citizens in democratic societies, and support their personal development;
- offer broad access to **high-quality higher education**, based on democratic principles and academic freedom.

Bologna process started in 1999 with a joint declaration signed in Bologna by Ministers in charge for higher education from 29 European Countries. Today, the Process unites 47 countries all party to the European Cultural Convention and committed to the goals of the European Higher Education Area. An important characteristic of the Bologna Process - and key to its success - is that it also involves European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO-CEPES, as well as representatives of higher education institutions, stakeholder associations, students, staff, employers and quality assurance agencies.

The Declaration is reviewed every two years. Thus, the Ministers have already met in Prague (2001), Berlin (2003), Bergen (2005), London (2007) and Leuven/Louvain-La-Neuve, Belgium (April 2009).

In order to create a **European Certification Framework**: degrees, easily readable and comparable, are organised in a three-cycle structure (defined by a number of **ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System)**):

- **Bachelor**: represents from 180 to 240 ECTS
- **Master**: represents from 90 to 120 ECTS with at least 60 credits for a second cycle level.
- **Doctorate**: ECTS awarding isn't defined

In other words, one year is equal to two semesters with 30 ECTS each.

Countries are currently setting up national qualifications frameworks that are compatible with the overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area and define learning outcomes for each of the three cycles.

These reforms have two other objectives:

- Create a fair recognition of foreign degrees and other higher education qualifications in accordance with the Council of Europe/UNESCO Recognition Convention.
- Obtain a Quality assurance in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

This process is closely connected with EU policies and programmes even if some countries involved are out of the European Union. For the EU, the Bologna Process is part of a broader effort in the drive for a Europe of knowledge which includes:

- Lifelong learning and development,
- Strategic framework for the Open Method of Coordination in Education and Training, ET2020
- The Copenhagen Process for enhanced European co-operation in Vocational Education and Training, and
- Initiatives under the European Research Area.

It is important to notice that the Bologna Process is not compulsory. The reason why all these countries are involved in this process is because it is for them a real advantage in term of exchanges between countries.

Please find below the list of participating countries and organisations:

Participating countries

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

Additional member



European Commission

Consultative members



Council of Europe



UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education



European University Association



European Association of Institutions in Higher Education



European Students' Union



European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education



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