Consolidation of the EHEA through better implementation of the agreed commitments

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- Consolidation of the EHEA: what and why
- Yerevan communiqué and implementation
- Reflections on implementation
- WG2 On implementation
- Paris Communiqué and implementation
- Reversed peer review, peer learning, peer groups, thematic networks
- Flemish Erasmus + project on curriculum design

Consolidation

- Consolidation of the EHEA: establishment of mature EHEA characterized by a significant degree of internal coherence and integration, a minimum level of harmonisation of the academic architecture, shift from structures to content, shift from instrumental trust to cognitive trust, high level of cross-border cooperation, the establisment of a European higher education system, internal dynamic, capable to address jointly new challenges, communicative actions towards common understanding, area for debating common higher education issues, …

- Consolidation of the EHEA is a prerequisite for the realisation its vision

- Only a consolidated EHEA can realize its full potential

- Enhanced feeling of ownership by the practitioners/academics of the Bologna Process/EHEA

EHEA Vision in Yerevan Communiqué

- *By 2020 we are determined to achieve an EHEA where our common goals are implemented in all member countries to ensure trust in each other's higher education systems; where automatic recognition of qualifications has become a reality so that students and graduates can move easily throughout it; where higher education is contributing effectively to build inclusive societies, founded on democratic values and human rights; and where educational opportunities provide the competences and skills required for European citizenship, innovation and employment*

Consolidation (2)

Policy adoption	Policy enactment
Structural reforms	Problem solving, policy preferences, challenges
Policy convergence	Convergence in the design of the instruments and the degree of implementation
Top-down/vertical implementation/development	Bottom-up/horizontal implementation/development
Le pays politique	Le pays réel
Outputs	Outcomes
Summative objectives	Formative objectives
Harmonization of structures	Convergence in policy goals
Single loop learning	Double loop learning (including a reflection on the in 1999 agreed goals)
Legislative implementation	Academic implementation
Structures	Content
Network of officials	Network of practitioners
Process	Activities/outputs
Rational/instrumental perspective on trust	Cognitive/normative perspective on trust

Consolidation (3)

- Principes and values of the EHEA (Bologna or EHEA esperanto?)
  - Harmonisation of the academic architecture
  - Mobility of students, teachers, researchers and graduates throughout the EHEA
  - Automatic recognition of credits, study periods and diplomas across the EHEA;
  - Cooperation in all areas: joint study programmes, joint innovative actions, joint research projects, ..
  - Openness both globally and locally (community engagement)
  - Transparency in the diversity
  - Participation of the stakeholders: co-creation and partnerships
  - Social dimension and equal opportunities
  - Quality impetus
  - Flexibility and lifelong learning

Yerevan Communiqué

- Implementation is one of the four major priorities for 2015-2018: implementing agreed structural reforms is a prerequisite for the consolidation of the EHEA and for its success; non-implementation undermines the functioning and the credibility of the EHEA;
- Some guidelines/advice from the ministers:
  - Coherent and full implementation requires shared ownership and commitment by policy makers and academic communities
  - Correct implementation, not in bureaucratic or superficial way
  - Collective responsibility: mutual support through policy dialogue and exchange of good practices
  - More precise measurement of performance/degree of implementation

Implementation

- Nature of the Bologna process:
  - a process of vertical higher education policy convergence and implementation;
  - a process of transnational communication about policy dissemination and coordination;
  - a transnational platform for defining common responses to the challenges and problems higher education systems are facing and which higher education systems have to cope with.
- Different types of commitments:
  - Agreed structural reforms;
  - Agreed policy challenges, policy themes, preferences and priorities.

Implementation (2)

- Two perspectives on policy implementation:
  - Policy adoption mostly through legislative measures
  - Policy enactment in the meaning of realizing policy through practices.
- Three indicators of policy implementation:
  - The policy adoption
  - The instrumental design of the policy adopted
  - The degree of implementation

Two levels

- From the document the Bologna process revisited: It is wise to consider the two main levels of implementation (the national and the institutional one) separately, handle them with different approaches and evaluate them in different ways.

- Distinction between Le pays politique et le pays réel (Guy Neave):

Four combinations	Pays *reel* +	Pays *reel* _
Pays politique +	+ + Implementation	+ -- Implementation problem
Pays politique _	- + Implementation problem	_ _ Non-implementation

Working group 2 'On implementation'

- ToR:

- *'The working group on implementation is responsible to provide support to member states for the implementation of agreed goals on a national and institutional level. It is mandated to coordinate a programme of actions (such as peer learning, voluntary peer review, conference, seminar, workshop etc.) based on policy dialogue and exchange of good practice; actions proposed and organised by countries, institutions and/or organisations. The Working Group will develop policy proposals based among others on conclusions from events aiming at providing support to countries in achieving the implementation of agreed key commitments within the European Higher Education Area.*

WG 2 On implementation (2)

- The initial approved way of working was perceived by the WG as being not fully satisfactory

  - The disperse character of the initiatives; the list of events was characterized by a diversity in terms of purposes and goals, topics, context and orientation.
  - Coherence among the different events was missing and there was no ex ante concertation;
  - The lack of follow-up of the outcomes of the events;
  - The lack of sufficient international orientation of most of the initiatives;
  - Conclusions often of a very general nature (not really oriented towards fostering implementation at EHEA level

WG On Implementation (3)

- We developed an alternative concept/tool: reversed peer review:
  - From a more vertical orientation to a more horizontal approach and going beyond a categorizing/division of countries (a more inclusive approach)
  - The concept was welcome by all actors as an innovative approach to bring together countries to discuss issues related to the implementation of the agreed structural reforms at national and institutional level;
  - The RPR offers the countries to tell their own stories and to explain their context of implementation
  - An in depth policy dialogue took place
  - Bridging the gap between le pays politique et le pays réel
- Strong points
  - The active involvement of the different stakeholders in the different initiatives in particular in the reversed peer reviews;
  - The willingness of the countries to enter in a policy dialogue fostering the mutual understanding of the implementation issues;

New approach to implementation

- We have moved from reversed peer review to policy dialogue and peer review to peer groups

- Implementation is a collective endeavor/responsibility involving all EHEA members at a voluntary basis but not free of commitments

- Follows the Bologna spirit and philosophy of mutual cooperation and capacity building in order to move forward all together

- Achieving implementation by peer dialogue and mutual learning among equal partners (RPR too much the perception of two different categories)

- It is important to better communicate the benefits from being a EHEA member: causal chain: Full implementation of the key commitments ➔ increased cooperation, mobility and exchange ➔enhanced quality, attractiveness and contribution of higher education to European and global society.

New approach to implementation (2)

- Peer groups:
  - 3 peer groups: QF, QA and recognition
- Composition:
  - 4à6 countries in different stage of implementation
  - Involving all stakeholders (if possible higher education researchers)
  - Two co-chairs responsible for the functioning of the peer group
- Actions and way of working:
  - Background paper on the key commitment concerned based on the implementation report, the report of Structural Reforms Working Group and research papers
  - Platform for policy dialogue, mutual learning and mutual understanding
  - Platform for sharing knowledge, ideas and practices
  - Platform for taking a critical look at how structural reforms have been implemented
  - Platform for discussing factors affecting implementation
  - Peer support and peer counselling
  - Targeted seminars
  - 2à3 meetings and regular follow-up

New approach to implementation (3)

- **Researchers conference 2017:** Peer learning does not currently work. Higher education institutions and policy-makers, countries involved in the Bologna Process themselves tend to act separately instead of exchanging ideas and cooperating for a common good. Collegiate mutual learning happens only randomly. Everyone thinks that their context is unique despite having common referential commitments within the Bologna Process framework. This practice should be substituted with one framed by peer learning. New communities of practice and social networks of knowledge sharing should be built within the Bologna Process framework;
- WG recommendations on SD:
  - We recommend establishing a European thematic network of higher education practitioners to foster inclusive higher education.
- WG recommendations RPL:
  - That governments and/or public authorities involve practitioners and the relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the reformed legislation and routines.
  - That peer learning activities for practitioners are organized in order to exchange knowledge and to build trust in RPL, nationally and cross-border.

New approach to implementation (4)

- What is important: focus on mutual learning and mutual understanding, peer to peer dialogue, equal partners, input of higher education researchers can be useful, room for a critical look at and questioning esatblished reforms, an open mind and an academic attitude;

- Expectations: each peer group develop its own dynamics but we expect visible progress with regard the implementation of the key commitments across the EHEA and in particular rising awareness and changing minds;

- May 2020: evaluation of the new approach by the ministers and it is up to ministers to decide what in case a country showed no willingness to be engaged/involved

Paris Communiqué and implementation

- In order to ensure the implementation of Bologna key commitments, the ministers have adopted a structured peer support approach based on solidarity, cooperation and mutual learning. In 2018-2020, thematic peer groups will focus on three key commitments crucial to reinforcing and supporting quality and cooperation inside the EHEA:
  - a three-cycle system compatible with the overarching framework of qualifications of the EHEA and first and second cycle degrees scaled by ECTS
  - compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention,
  - and quality assurance in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.
- The ministers mandated the BFUG to implement, coordinate and monitor the adopted peer support approach, and to do so with the aid of the Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG) established to that end.

Flemish Erasmus + project: Curriculum Design

- Project was developed by the ministry; the Flemish Council of Education has implemented it impeccablely; I am indebted to Isabelle De Ridder, Cis Van Den Bogaert and Patrick Van den Bosch for their input;

- Background of the project: pressures on the curriculum: internationalisaton, innovation, enterpreneurship, student-centred learning, employability, democratic citizenship, sustainable development, social commitment, social dimension, interdisciplinarity

- AND there is only one curriculum

Flemish Erasmus + project: Curriculum Design

- This project has a threefold intention: 1. raising awareness of the critical role curriculum design and delivery plays in the changing higher education landscape; 2. obtaining modernised curricula designed and delivered in such a way that all graduates, upon completion, have acquired the abilities and capabilities for work and life in a complex and rapidly changing world; 3. developing more collaborative partnerships and exchanges of knowledge, experience and innovative practices at the national and international level with regard to curriculum design and delivery.

Flemish Erasmus + project: Curriculum Design

- Consultation of experts: Higher education academy
- Workshop in Brussels, PLA and closing seminar with experts: Ben Brabon, Liz Thomas, Bruce MacFarlane, Michaele Horvathova, Tine Proitz, Jacob Ravn, Filip Dochy, Paul Ashwin and Paul Blackmore
- Peer learning activity in Brussels involving the following countries: Croatia, England, Flanders, France, Sweden, The Netherlands, Iceland, Slovenia
- Peer learning activity in Rome involving the following countries: Flanders, Italy and Spain
- Dissemination conference targeted at the Flemish HEIs including poster session showing the good practices in the Flemish HEIs
- Dissemination through participation in the other PLA' s and through the meeting in the framework of HE thematic group in Brussels

Flemish Erasmus + project: Curriculum Design

- The discussion paper leads to a non-exhaustive list of 10 questions to foster discussion in the workshop/PLA's:

  1. How can a curriculum respond to today's societal needs?

  2. How can a curriculum stimulate student involvement?

  3. How can a curriculum do the above in an integrated way?

  4. Is the curriculum the only instrument for this?

  5. What is the relationship between the learning outcomes and the curriculum, and is it sufficiently clear?

  6. How do we know if the curriculum is doing what is intended?

  7. How powerful is the curriculum?

  8. Does an institution have sufficient space to devise the curriculum of a particular programme?

  9. How can teachers and staff be professionalised?

  10. What is the role of the stakeholders in curriculum (re)design? Who owns the curriculum?

Flemish Erasmus + project: Curriculum Design

- Core ideas from the presentations:
  - What is the curriculum for?
  - Principles of inclusive design
  - Using independent learning to develop 21st century skills
  - Freedom to learn counterbalancing academic freedom
  - The use of learning outcomes:
  - High impact learning that lasts: 7 building blocks of HILL
  - International projects as a new driving force in curriculum development
  - Co-creation, student partnership and inclusivity; recognize student engagement as an important aspect of QA
  - Connection with the wider community; importance of flexibility enhancing study success

Flemish Erasmus + project: Curriculum Design(2)

- Core ideas from the presentations:
  - Learning outcomes: making the implicit visible (21th century skills)
  - An interdisciplinary curriculum is contextual; the context of the domain facilitates the interdisciplinary curriculum design; interdisciplinarity is an essential aspect in innovative programs
  - Strong link between new curriculum, teaching methods and assessment; it can enhance efficiency. Constructive alignment
  - Curriculum embedded in a clear strategy of the institution
  - Teacher training; a culture of delegation of power
  - Scientific evidence for active learning; Assessment as learning;
  - The art of curriculum design: curriculum content and processes should be appropriate for the purposes of HE and the beneficiaries; a journey into the unknown;
  - A student and knowledge focused curriculum (triangle Knowledge, Student and World) and the transformative power of curricula

Flemish Erasmus + project: Curriculum Design

- Conclusions:
  - Curriculum design is part of the core business of HEIs: a more strategic approach is desired;
  - The design and delivery of the curriculum reflects/should reflect the mission and strategic policy objectives of a HEI regarding teaching and learning
  - Be aware of the tensions in 'the curriculum challenged': curriculum as about engaging with knowledge and curriculum as about responding to societal needs
  - All students are confronted in one or another way with the curriculum
  - There are many good practices within the HEIs across the EHEA;
  - There is a need to establish transnational EHEA-wide peer groups for reflecting and mutual learning and understanding about the challenges and pressures on the curriculum

Flemish Erasmus + project: Curriculum Design

All documents are available:

- https://media.ehea.info/file/2018_Paris/72/6/MEN_conf-EHEA_WG2_03_950726.pdf
- https://www.vlor.be/activiteiten/verslagen/workshop-curriculum-design-2ond-may-2017
- https://www.vlor.be/activiteiten/verslagen/peer-learning-activity-curriculumdesign-16-17-nov-2017
- https://www.vlor.be/activiteiten/verslagen/peer-learning-activity-curriculum-higher-education-challenged-8-9-mar-2018
- https://www.vlor.be/activiteiten/verslagen/het-curriculum-hoger-onderwijs-uitgedaagd

The END

Thanks!
Questions?

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