

# The Bologna Process seen from the outside

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# What is known about the BP and how is it perceived beyond Europe?

Based on discussions in the latest  
Bologna seminar

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# Inside & outside views on the BP

External view always important –

Bologna‘ an inside-outside‘ process

Of huge interest but relatively

superficial knowledge beyond major  
lines of structural reform

Highly positive assessment outside

Critics only found in Europe

# 1. Unique features need to be highlighted –political level

- voluntary process at state level
- pragmatic & in progress
- multi-stakeholder – bottom-up/top-down agenda settings
- strong and active student involvement
- loose infrastructure to sustain forward movement
- a central instrument (EU) to facilitate progress

# Unique features need to be highlighted – academic level

More than new academic structure of cycles

Pedagogical/cognitive impact on learning and new focus on learning outcomes

ECTS unlike other credit systems – counting overall learning effort; not only contact hours

“BP is a ‘package deal’ with internal integrity and interconnected actions”

## 2. What makes the BP a unique model of reform; to what extent is it applicable only in Europe

- Unique as a regional, multilateral reform process
- Many pre-Bologna structures/instruments already in place
- Bottom-up & voluntary process
- Different perspectives: HEIs, countries, stakeholders, students

### 3. BP could be viewed as a 'brand or a 'trademark': special features

- Quality-focused
- Democratic principles in governance
- Pluralism and diversity
- Staff & student mobility, & internationalisation@home
- teaching and research opportunities combined
- Social dimension and student needs, including employability
- HE as a public good and public responsibility with social consequences that flow from this

# Bologna as a 'brand'

- Reform/change process based on multi-stakeholder dialogue
- Process that promotes cooperation and partnerships to balance competition
- Process that builds a strong HE for economic competitiveness but does not neglect the social cohesion agenda, nor global solidarity concerns
- Opportunity to promote a European view on internationalisation



## 4. The BP, a phase in the growth of a global higher education space?

- The Bologna Process and/or/vs globalization
- BP a coordinated, structured approach – a collaborative response to globalization
- Past accomplishments in Europe provide opportunity and justification to set the agenda on the global scene
- A key step taken: European Quality Assurance Register – for Europe but open to non-Europeans
- EQAR has potential to set ‘standards’ worldwide
- Is the world interested in such views?

## 5. Benefits, challenges and risks of the BP to higher education worldwide?

- As Europeans see it: re-energized HE, increased attention paid to HE, it repositioned Europe, made huge progress in European integration – many academic benefits for European HE and well beyond
- Of course, not perfect, not finished and not without challenges and risks
- Link with the Lisbon process: good for Europe, but for the world?

# What Benefits, Challenges and Risks?

- Linguistic homogenization: loss of linguistic & cultural/institutional diversity (English, binary system of HE)
- Challenge to improve student services
- BP: a recruitment campaign with impact on fees and braindrain?

# What Benefits, Challenges and Risks?

- Maintaining the social agenda
- Keeping the State in check – safeguard institutional autonomy
- Keep and strengthen the engagement of all stakeholder groups in Europe and in regions where the BP is being considered

# Conclusion: Unlocking Europe's Potential by contributing to a Better World

How?

By safeguarding what is most valuable and universal in higher education, the core values, such as academic freedom, institutional autonomy, equitable access to knowledge and learning of quality alongside with the responsibility to respond to the needs of society and to promote justice, freedom, respect for human rights, and solidarity.

In partnership within and beyond the large Europe of the Bologna Process

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