

Plenary 1 (2nd part)

“Governance and Quality Education”

Speech by

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The involvement of stakeholders is a major feature of higher education in the countries of the EHEA, a situation that has evolved together with the Bologna Process, which is now in a stage of implementation on the institutional level.

**While in school education the prime stakeholders are the pupils/students, teachers and parents (‘the education community’), the mission of higher education requires an involvement of ‘wider society’ than it is the case with school education.**

Higher education is preparing future citizens on a social, professional and personal level, who, as young graduates, have to find their place in society next to reaching their full **personal development**. It is, therefore, logical and even desirable to also involve those actors in society who have an impact on the graduates’ professional development and careers. Higher education institutions offering professionally oriented programs of study, place high value on **responsiveness to needs of students going into the workplace** and **on employability** that businesses and local communities seek from the graduates.

Participation is, in the opinion of Ministers, who adopted on 24 November 2011 the programme of activities for 2012-2013, *“a major dimension of governance of (higher) education, and a key element that will contribute to developing quality through shared concerns and the shared responsibilities of stakeholders”*.

A system of governance fitting for ‘quality education’ should, therefore, include **preparation for the labour market**, in varying ways, depending on the specific mission of the different higher education sectors and institutions, and should be based on the three fundamental pillars of higher education, which are **teaching, research** and **service to the community**.

**In the case of higher education, we need an active involvement of stakeholders, i.e. prospective employers from both public and private sectors, that will help ensure that the objective of employability is reached.**

Such engagements, while fully respecting the autonomy of higher education institutions, guarantee a bottom-up approach, which has been a hallmark of the Bologna higher education reform since its inception.