

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

After Hans' Introduction may I also warmly welcome you all to Stuttgart - the Capital of the Federal State of Baden-Württemberg. This building you are in is the "Haus der Wirtschaft" – a congress centre of the Ministry of Economics.

Before I begin with my contribution to this workshop, may I say that I would much rather have had someone else standing here instead of me – for example someone from the Ministry of Higher Education of **this** state of Baden Württemberg or of the **Federal** Government of Germany.

Hans, Stefan and I tried our best to find a government representative who would give a statement on the position of Germany in regard to LLL" - but in vain!! We would have loved to hear their opinion - all the more, because the topic of our workshop does not seem a major issue among state HE institutions.

I must make a slight change in the **title** of my talk. The title is not

"Transfer from short professional higher education to bachelor programs in formal education - a comparison between Germany and UK."

But

"Transfer from short professional education to bachelor programs in formal education - a comparison between Germany and UK."

What is meant by this title? And what does it have to do with LLL?

Let me first explain what I understand by LLL. We all know that due to the drastic changes in the job world the "expiry dates" of learning are moving closer together. If you don't carry on learning all your life you can expect hard career problems. This means that any person who feels an own responsibility for his career should at all stages in his life be allowed to add learning to what he has learnt before. He should be allowed to learn what he likes and wherever he likes. Whatever additional learning he pleases to do, should build up on what he actually knows – no matter where he gained his knowledge from. I will give you an example for what I mean:

A former student of ours who studied "Business Administration" in a three year programme set up her own company as business consultant. She was very prosperous and gained a lot of knowledge in her job. She became a specialist in "**tax consulting**" – something very important, but not particularly academic – if I may say that. She realised during several contact with tax consultants that her knowledge was as good, if not even better than theirs. So she applied to take part in a tax consultants course in order to take the exam before the Chamber of German Tax Consultants. The only trouble was that they wouldn't allow her to take the course!!

Why? Because the programme "Business Administration" she took at our school is not on a HE level – and her diploma therefore not a university degree. Entrance requirement was a university degree.

Although she had her

- Abitur – which is an entrance requirement to our programmes,
- She had gone through a tough 3-year business programme
- She was 29 years of age when she applied for the tax course and
- She had had five years of professional experience...

...she didn't even get the chance to prove her knowledge.

Now do you think that is fair? – I don't!! The reason for rejecting the lady was **not** her knowledge but **where** she acquired it. I call this discrimination

Our school – as all the German schools of the organisation I preside – the ESA “European Schools of Higher Education in Administration and Management” experience similar encounters.

The incident I just related was in connection with a **professional chamber**. But it doesn't differ from experiences we make with **state IHE**. It shows that there are blockages on the pathway of LLL – between two educational areas: the HE area and the non HE area.

Pause!!

Member schools of ESA offer two year ESA programmes in Business Administration, Business Management, Office Management, among others. Entrance requirement to these programmes is Abitur or FH-Reife or the equivalent. This means that the students are in post-secondary or tertiary education – depending on how you define this!!

The programmes are designed to develop professional qualifications – just as the new bachelor programmes are supposed to do!!

When I read the description how Bachelor programmes in Germany should be I find much conformity with our programmes.

“In conceiving ...process”.

This is taken from the: “National Report for Germany on the Bologna Process 2005 to 2007...” of the KMK and BMBF in cooperation with other important HE stakeholders.

Pause

After graduation our students usually enter into the labour market. However, the “usually” is decreasing!! Due to the spreading of Bachelor programmes also in Germany the number of students wanting to study on to a bachelor degree is increasing. The problem however is that their learning achievements, their learning **credits** are – in 90% of all cases - not credited. There are a few positive examples – but not many!!

In a resolution called

“Crediting Knowledge and Skills Obtained Outside the HE Sector to Higher Educational Studies”,

agreed upon by the “Standing Conference of Ministers of Education of the Federal States” it says:

*“...it is possible to **credit** educational achievements from the tertiary and post-secondary educational sectors, obtained outside the universities. The benchmark for crediting is always the equivalence of contents and level of the programmes to be matched. Knowledge and skills acquired outside HE can only replace HE studies with a maximum of 50% of the credits. The decision on the number of credits to be given is made independently by the individual institution of HE...”*

So basically crediting learning achievements of non HEI to HEI is possible. That is all very well. However many institutions of HE are not aware of this or, if they are - just don't take the bother to evaluate them.

This can lead to such absurd decision as at the University of Konstanz, which would not credit learning achievements in **Chinese** from our school for a Programme in Asian Business Studies, because they didn't come from a IHE . That is not a joke!!

This lack of credit transferability does not only apply to programmes in Business Administration, but also to programmes of other subject areas.

Education in medicinal therapies such as Physiotherapy, Logo- or Occupational therapy is confronted with the same problems. The schools for these therapies are not in a HE area, and so none of their learning achievements are credited when pursuing further education as to a “Bachelors in Health Management” for example.

Due to this situation in Germany many ESA and other schools have built up co-operations with British universities, knowing that the British have a much more flexible system. The dividing line between HE and non HE is not as impenetrable as here.

In fact, the English Government encourages people who do not traditionally strive for higher education to do just that.

Two year “foundation degree programmes” whose structure is particularly directed towards people already in work, enable students to move on in their career and acquire a degree that is credited as two years within a Bachelor Degree. So, somebody, who through this pathway gets a second chance to receive academic knowledge can move on to a Bachelor, then to Master and then to a PhD.

...if that isn't a possibility of LLL?

Knowing of this flexibility, ESA schools - as I already mentioned – have built up co-operations with British universities to allow their students after two years of professional education to continue learning in programmes of HE.

In this instance, it is not only 50% of learning achievement that are credited, but 100%. Satisfactorily, the large majority of students prove that they successfully pass their exams and rightfully receive their Bachelor award - issued by the British University according to the HE laws of the country!! I emphasise “**according to the HE laws of the country!!**”

I emphasise this because in the “Bologna Declaration” it says that the European member countries mutually recognise academic awards if they are issued by institutions of HE that are recognised as such by the **laws of their country**”. The declaration, if I am right, was also signed by Germany.

Now, what is remarkable about this is, that when the student comes back to Germany

- he may use the degree in his title,
- he can apply for a job and successfully get one

but, if he wants to follow the path of LLL a step further he may not gain access to a Master programme in Business.

You will ask why? Because the University or Fachhochschule he is applying at, will say

*“The programme that lead to the Bachelor award that you have was not delivered exclusively at an Institution of HE. Higher educational teaching was only one year. So what you have is not a real Bachelor.”*

That is Bologna in Germany!! It is not the learning outcomes - which have been documented by examinations and an academic thesis - **that count, it is the institution.**

Now you may argue and say:

“There is a point to that. An academic award can only be gained through formally recognised academic institutions”!

But

Are the first two years at a traditional university or a “university of applied science” really so academic?

I think this is exactly what the Ministers at the Berlin Conference in 2003 thought when they ... I am citing

*“invited the Follow-up Group to explore whether and how **shorter higher** education may **be linked to the first cycle** of a qualifications framework for the European Higher Education Area.”*

Shorter Higher Education, also called Short Cycle Higher Education is a 120 ECTS credit programme that ends with a sub degree and would be an ideal link between non-HE and HE or post-secondary and tertiary education.

The English have installed it in their system and call it “Foundation Degree”.

The Dutch as I know are trying it out at the moment and call it “Associate Degree”.

Of other countries I do not know. Maybe contributions later in the day will add to the list.

The Germans I know definitely do not want it. That I know for certain from direct answers I received from HE government bodies. But I wouldn't have expected otherwise.

The idea of an “intermediate degree program” - to use a neutral term – should in my opinion be to create a link between the two separate systems of HE and non-HE. QA criteria would then of course have to be adapted to the particular characteristics of this “intermediate degree”. So the question is: how would they be defined?

Pause

It is sometimes difficult to clearly define the difference between HE and non-HE, or vocational education. Obviously the higher one climbs in HE, the clearer the distinction gets. But on this “borderline level” between post-secondary and tertiary education it becomes difficult.

I will quickly list the Bachelor descriptors again that I read out before from the “National Report for Germany on the Bologna Process 2005 to 2007...”

- professional qualification
- scientific fundamentals
- methodological competences
- professionally-related qualifications
- competences and learning objectives are defined with a view to the requirements on the job market
- acquisition of key qualifications
- emphasis on the conveyance of social skills
- presentation abilities
- foreign languages

From 9 points I listed only two clearly belong to typical HE:

- scientific fundamentals
- methodological competences.

So, is it so much more theoretical knowledge that distinguish an academic from an non-academic? Is it research methodology that he or she learns? Is it the ability to analyse and draw conclusions? Or what is it?

Is the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester student in medicine more academic than a nurse who has gone through a nurse school and has several years' experience?

I would say no. Yet, in Germany a nurse for example will have to begin her medical degree right from the start. None of her credits will be transferred to shorten her studies. At this transitional phase between post-secondary and tertiary education it is really to be questioned whether a borderline between HE and non-HE should be so strict.

I think here short cycle programmes would offer a wonderful pathway to an "intermediate degree" that could be part of the first cycle.

I have mentioned England and The Netherlands that have implemented it. A two year programme of ESA that in Germany is on post secondary level is in The Netherlands on tertiary level. Students of our member school "Schoevers" end with an "Associate Degree" that is credited with 120 ECTS credits to a Bachelor programme. In Germany it is, except for a few exceptions credited with zero. That is the situation in Germany.

Ladies and gentlemen,

talking about LLL, I hope I have been able to show you where in Germany a LL Learner is confronted with some drastic blockages on his career path. I could give you other examples, but that would take time.

I particularly do not want to exclude that there can also be some positive examples in other federal states in Germany. But in the somewhat intransparent educational system here it is sometimes difficult to find them.

Yet, the general conclusion is that the borderline between HE and non-HE in Germany is very rigid. And this makes it very difficult for a LL Learner to enter HE at a later stage in his career.

I had hoped that for this workshop we could have welcomed a state representative of the HE area to this workshop so that they could argue for their case, but as I already said, this does not seem to be an issue in Germany.

I can only hope that the findings of this workshop which will be summarized by EURASHE and put forward to the Conference of the Ministers of Education in London will have a positive effect on LLL.

I thank you for your attention.

Christoph Veigel  
President of ESA