



BP4LnT EHEA Event Report

Learning and Teaching Seminar
Cyprus, 11 March 2026



Bologna Process for
Learning and Teaching



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The first BP4LnT EHEA event was held on 11 March 2026 as the Learning and Teaching Seminar "Bridging policy and practice", organised within the Bologna Process for Learning and Teaching (BP4LnT) project. The BP4LnT project was created in response to a perceived need to speak more directly about learning and teaching, support for teachers, support for students and support for institutions within the current Bologna cycle. While initially planned as an event in Cyprus, the seminar was moved online due to force majeure, but it retained its intended role as the first discussion space in a broader series of EHEA events linked to the Bologna Follow-Up Group process and the 2024–2027 cycle. The seminar brought together stakeholder organisations, ministries, higher education institutions and students to discuss how European policy commitments on learning and teaching are being translated into national reform and institutional practice, with a particular focus on student-centred learning and lifelong learning.

The event was designed as a policy-to-practice exchange. It aimed to connect institutional realities with policy-making perspectives, support peer learning between system-level policy makers and higher education institutions and generate practice-based insights for ongoing Bologna Process work.

The programme combined three formats. First, a framing session positioned learning and teaching within the historical development of the Bologna Process and introduced the purpose of the BP4LnT seminar series. Second, a set of thematic presentations explored future scenarios, national approaches and institutional reform through contributions from Cedefop, France, Flanders and NHL Stenden. Third, an interactive World Café invited participants to reflect on strengths, gaps and examples of practice through collaborative online whiteboards, followed by reporting to the plenary and a brief forward-looking discussion.

Learning and teaching in the Bologna Process

Learning and teaching has evolved from an implicit consequence of structural Bologna reforms into an explicit and now cross-cutting dimension of the EHEA agenda. The historical overview presented during the seminar linked this evolution to successive ministerial communiqués: lifelong learning was introduced as a strategic priority in Prague, learning outcomes gained prominence in Berlin and Bergen, student-centred learning was clearly foregrounded in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve, and later communiqués connected learning and teaching to research, digitalisation, innovative pedagogies and system-level support.



The Rome Communiqué was presented as a turning point because it included dedicated recommendations to national authorities for the enhancement of higher education learning and teaching, thereby consolidating learning and teaching as a policy field requiring system-level action as well as institutional commitment. The Tirana Communiqué then embedded learning and teaching across a wider set of contemporary themes, including flexible learning paths, micro-credentials, recognition, research-based learning, digital transformation and AI, which reinforced the argument that learning and teaching now operates as a transversal policy frame rather than a narrow thematic strand.

Speakers also highlighted that this growing visibility is accompanied by ambiguity. Learning and teaching now sit at the intersection of quality assurance, social dimension, staff development, recognition, curriculum design and digital change, which makes informed dialogue between ministries, institutions, stakeholders and students more necessary. The seminar was therefore explicitly positioned as a contribution to this dialogue and as a means of validating emerging project findings against stakeholder experience.

Perspectives presented during the seminar

The seminar drew on evidence presented from European-level perspective and stakeholder monitoring. One important observation was that higher education institutions across Europe increasingly report stronger external pressures on learning and teaching, including expectations from employers, growing diversity in the student body and stronger expectations from students themselves regarding the quality and relevance of their learning experience. At the same time, institutions are reported to be responding strategically with widespread development of learning and teaching strategies, learning and teaching centres, and staff training in didactics and pedagogy, while also noting that teaching performance still plays only a limited role in academic career progression in many cases.

Cedefop presentation on future scenarios for lifelong learning systems used flexibility and permeability as the two main analytical axes and suggested that future systems may differ not only in how many flexible options they offer, but also in whether learners can combine, transfer and build on those options across sectors and learning contexts.

This distinction resonated strongly with the seminar's broader concerns because it suggested that flexible provision on its own is not enough if it is



not supported by compatible credit systems, quality assurance, recognition approaches and validation mechanisms.

The discussion following the Cedefop presentation further underlined the conceptual importance of learning outcomes. Participants questioned how flexibility is interpreted differently across sectors and whether underlying instruments such as ECTS and ECVET are genuinely coherent in practice. It was acknowledged that conceptual differences in the way learning outcomes and credit systems are understood remain part of the challenge, reinforcing the seminar's concern that lifelong learning depends on better-connected systems rather than only on isolated innovations.

The national and institutional examples helped ground the policy discussion in practical experience. The Flemish presentation described a "full-flex" higher education system in which ECTS functions as the principal steering instrument: students enrol for a chosen number of credits rather than strictly full-time or part-time study, and funding, fees, grants and progression are all linked to credits. The relatively strong permeability of the Flemish system was also stressed together with its close links to labour market actors through programme design, consultation and quality assurance, while noting that participation in lifelong learning still remains lower than desired despite extensive policy measures.

This Flemish reflection was important because it showed that even relatively flexible systems still struggle with a basic policy question: what exactly counts as lifelong learning in higher education when flexibility is already embedded in the system. That observation shifts the debate from simply creating more opportunities toward examining how lifelong learning is defined, recognised, incentivised and strategically developed within higher education institutions and national systems.

The French intervention added an important national perspective by showing how learning and teaching reforms are shaped by a historically centralised higher education system that has gradually moved towards greater institutional autonomy and a more student-centred approach. The presentation highlighted low-tuition access, increasing flexibility in study pathways, stronger attention to student success, teacher training, feedback and co-design, as well as the use of the diploma supplement, informal learning recognition, micro-credentials and recognition of prior learning as tools that support more personalised and holistic learner pathways. It also underlined the growing capacity of universities to adapt programmes more quickly to societal and labour-



market needs, while linking lifelong learning to broader efforts to connect academic and professional pathways.

The institutional perspective from the NHL Stenden contributed another layer to the discussion by illustrating reform as an organisational process rather than only a policy commitment. It was suggested that institutional adaptation requires changes in programme structure, learning pathways, delivery formats and responsiveness to diverse learner needs, especially in a context shaped by digital transformation, AI and changing student profiles.

The student contribution was one of the clearest reminders that policy frameworks matter only insofar as they shape the actual learning experience. During the discussion, the ESU perspective stressed that students need transparent learning outcomes, clarity about what they are expected to learn, and fair, diverse and understandable assessment methods rather than narrow reliance on memorisation or high-stakes exams. Student-centred learning was described as a learning environment in which students actively engage with material, collaborate, think critically and receive constructive support.

Equally important was the argument that students should be treated as partners in the improvement of learning and teaching. The discussion highlighted course feedback, participation in programme design and involvement in quality assurance as mechanisms through which students can contribute meaningfully to improvement processes. This intervention helped connect the seminar's multi-level policy debate to the concrete issue of implementation at classroom and programme level.

Main themes emerging from discussion

Several themes recurred through the presentations and the discussion.

- The seminar showed that flexibility can refer to modular learning, different enrolment intensities, alternative delivery formats, micro-credentials, work-based learning, recognition of prior learning and more personalised pathways, but these options only become meaningful lifelong learning pathways when they are quality assured, understandable and connected to recognition and progression mechanisms.
- Technological change features as both a driver and a challenge. Higher education is shaped by digital transformation and AI and these developments are changing expectations, assessment practices and the profile of learners in higher



education. New technologies, including AI, are an area where stronger policy and institutional attention is still required.

European level policies and tools are largely seen as successful in providing common reference points, principles and shared vocabulary.

National frameworks are increasingly engaging with the teaching profession and with curriculum-related instruments, though not always consistently across systems.

Some existing institutional initiatives are seen as positive, but good practice remains uneven and often dependent on individual institutional capacity.

Across European, national and institutional levels, higher education systems are still often organised around a traditional student profile that does not adequately reflect adult learners, part-time participation, upskilling or more flexible progression routes. There is a need to adapt strategies to a "new idea of student and programme", which can be read as a call to rethink assumptions about who learners are, how they participate, and what kinds of study formats and support they need.

There is a need for better balance between regulation and teacher autonomy, more explicit strategies and funding for lifelong learning, stronger trust in institutions to build flexible offers, improved reflection of learning outcomes in diploma supplements, more peer learning at institutional level, and stronger teacher competence frameworks.

The seminar clarified that there is now a strong shared language around learning outcomes, student-centred learning, lifelong learning, quality assurance and flexibility, but also that the meaning of these concepts is still negotiated in practice and differs across systems and institutional settings.

It pointed toward a future in which higher education systems will be required to remain open, navigable and supportive across more diverse learner journeys.

Participants clearly recognised the need for national and European frameworks, but they also stressed the need to trust institutions to develop flexible offers and to support peer learning rather than overregulate every aspect of implementation. This suggests that discussions on lifelong learning and flexibility may need to strike a balance between common principles, accountability and room for institutional adaptation.



Outlook for future discussions

As an outlook, the seminar suggests that lifelong learning and flexibility should be discussed in the EHEA as a genuinely multi-level agenda rather than as a single policy instrument. At system level, future discussions should continue clarifying the shared European understanding of flexible learning paths, recognition, micro-credentials, quality assurance and permeability between sectors and forms of learning.

At national level, attention should focus on regulation, funding, incentives and steering mechanisms that make flexible provision both possible and sustainable, while avoiding fragmentation or excessive rigidity.

At institutional level, the discussion points to the need for curriculum redesign, staff development, stronger support for teachers, better student guidance and more inclusive conceptions of who the learner is. Across all three levels, the next stage of discussion should move beyond endorsing lifelong learning in principle and concentrate on how it can become visible in everyday study structures, recognition practices and teaching environments.

The Cyprus seminar therefore provided a strong starting point for subsequent BP4LnT exchanges by showing that the future of lifelong learning in the EHEA depends on connecting flexibility with coherence, and policy ambition with practical implementation.