



FÉDÉRATION
WALLONIE-BRUXELLES
ENSEIGNEMENT
ET RECHERCHE
SCIENTIFIQUE

The European Higher Education Area, Myth or reality?

**TAIEX Mission on recognition
Jerusalem, 14-17 October 2013**

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●●● Objectives

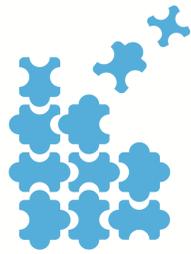
- General introduction to the Bologna Process:
 - Understand the key driver(s) for higher education (HE) reforms in Europe
 - Understand the links between European, national and institutional reforms
 - Understand the importance of the recognition issue within the Bologna Process
 - Understand the importance of the global dimension of the Bologna Process
 - Understand the links between the Bologna Process and the EU action in education and training
 - Understand the current and future challenges



●●● Content

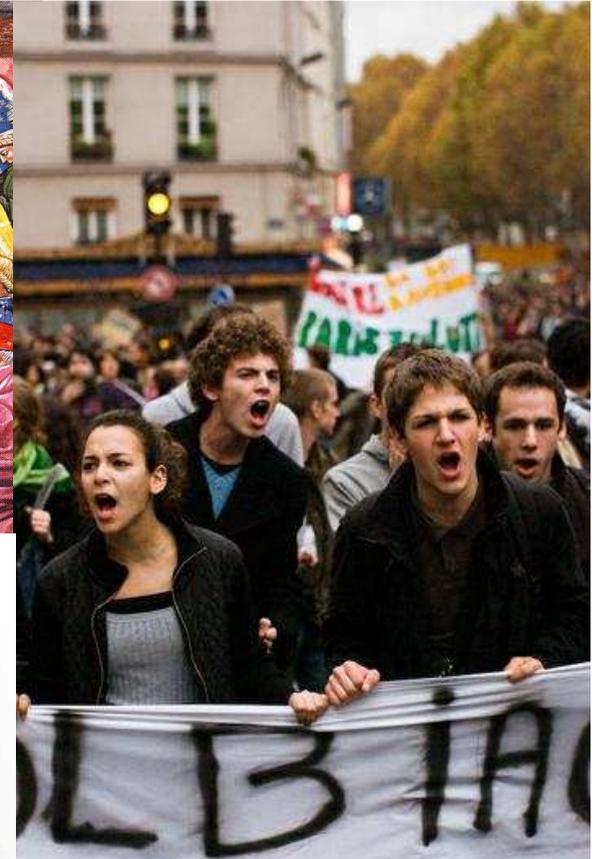
- Basics on the Bologna Process/European Higher Education Area (EHEA)
- Historical background of the Bologna Process
- How does the Bologna Process work?
- Bucharest Communiqué 2012 and the current work plan 2012-2015
- Thematic focus: recognition, global dimension and implementation of the EHEA
- The EU agenda on HE
- Concluding remarks





**EUROPEAN
Higher Education Area**

- Belgium ~ 24-25th August 2010



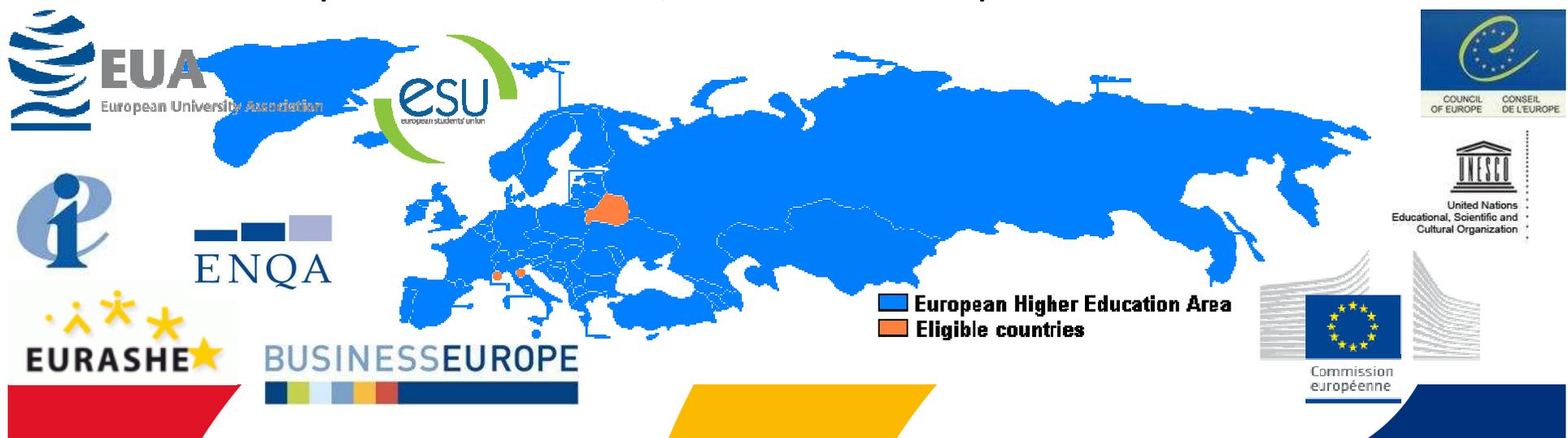
**EHEA Ministerial Conference
and Third Bologna Policy Forum**

26-27 April 2012,
Palace of the Parliament
Bucharest



••• From the Bologna Process to the EHEA (1)

- Bologna Process is:
 - Voluntary intergovernmental process, not binding!
 - Larger than EU, including 47 European countries
 - Integrating the main HE stakeholders, i.e. universities, university colleges, students, teachers and employers
 - Coherence with other EU and international policy-makers, i.e. European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO



●●● From the Bologna Process to the EHEA (2)

- Beyond the process, a **common area** is being built:
 - Development of a structured and (relatively) harmonised area
 - Sharing a common “language”
 - Powerful driver for (national and institutional) reforms
 - Creating new opportunities but also challenges
 - Re-positioning in a fast-changing globalised world
- Since 1999 and the inception of the Bologna Process, this cooperation process has become essential (for Europe?) and unique (in the world?)



●●● My short history of the Bologna Process (1)

- Until 1960-70, European traditional academic model based on *Universitas magistrorum et scholarium*
- **BUT** new ideas emerged:
 - Democratisation
 - Diversification
 - Knowledge-based society
 - Internationalisation
 - Massification



●●● My short history of the Bologna Process (2)

- Early 90s, radical changes at European and international level:
 - Fall of Berlin Wall
 - Creation of the European Union (Maastricht Treaty)
- Challenges faced by the “old” Europe:
 - Lack of competitiveness
 - Lack of attractiveness/visibility
 - Lack of mobility IN and OUT
 - Because of the great diversity of national HE systems
 - Because of some “protectionist” attitudes



●●● My short history of the Bologna Process (3)

- **1988-1998, the pre-Bologna phase:**
 - 1988: *Magna Charta Universitatum* led by HE institutions
 - 1998: Sorbonne Declaration led by 4 Ministers (DE, FR, IT, UK)
- **1999, the conception phase and inception of the Bologna Process**
 - 1999: Bologna Declaration
 - 29 countries take part in the construction of the EHEA
 - Structural harmonisation through common instruments (cycles, credits, diploma supplement, quality assurance)

→ **Developing a vision for the future EHEA**



●●● My short history of the Bologna Process (4)

- **2000-2005, the structural and policy phase**
 - Prague Communiqué (2001), Berlin Communiqué (2003) and Bergen Communiqué (2005)
 - “Formalisation” of the process
 - Inclusion of stakeholders
 - Focus on structural elements of cooperation
- **Drafting the framework of the EHEA**



●●● My short history of the Bologna Process (5)

■ 2006-2010, the implementation phase

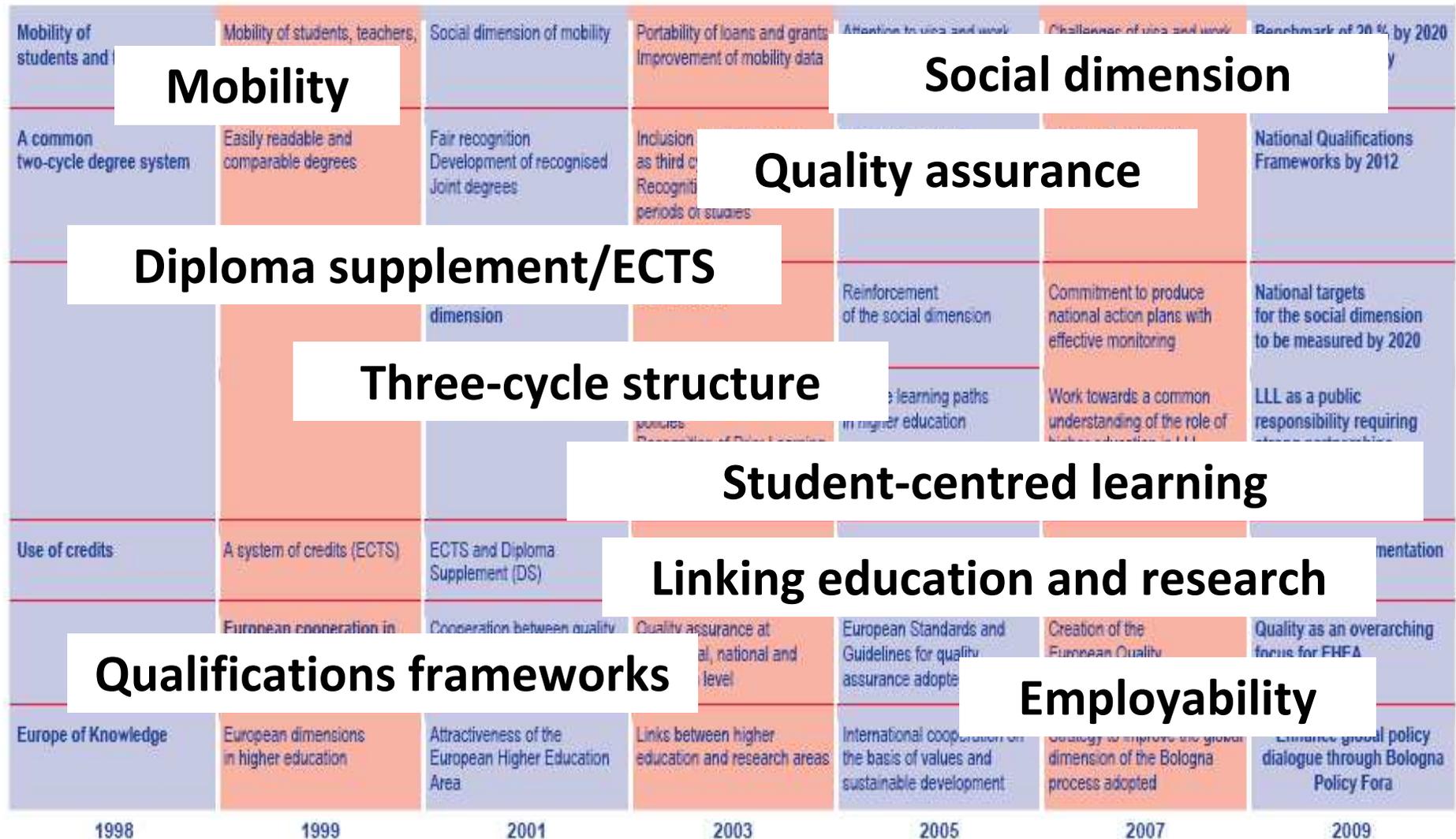
- London Communiqué (2007), Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué (2009) and Vienna/Budapest Declaration (2010)
 - More focus on “structuring” elements, i.e. policy areas
 - “Monitoring” the implementation at national/institutional level
- **Formal establishment of the EHEA in 2010**

■ 2010 onwards, the consolidation phase

- Bucharest Communiqué (2012)
- Finalising the pre-2010 agenda
- Adopting more concrete objectives, i.e. student mobility



●●● From the “structural” to the “structuring”



Sorbonne Declaration (1998) | Bologna Declaration (1999) | Prague Communiqué (2001) | Berlin Communiqué (2003) | Bergen Communiqué (2005) | London Communiqué (2007) | Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué (2009)

●●● How does it work? (1)

- The “**soft formalisation**” of the Bologna Process is one of the key ingredient for its success
- **1st political and decisional level – HE Ministers**
 - Biennial Ministerial Conference
 - Political and strategic orientations for 2 years via the adoption of a Communiqué
 - Decision on new applications



●●● How does it work? (2)

- **2nd executive/follow-up level – Bologna Follow-Up Group**
 - National ministry representatives
 - Plus representative of consultative organisations
 - Co-chairing: EU plus non-EU country from July 2010
 - Adoption of a 2-year work programme
 - Follow-up of the activities of the various WGs, networks, seminars/conference
 - At least, two BFUG meeting per semester
 - BFUG Board to prepare BFUG meetings and work

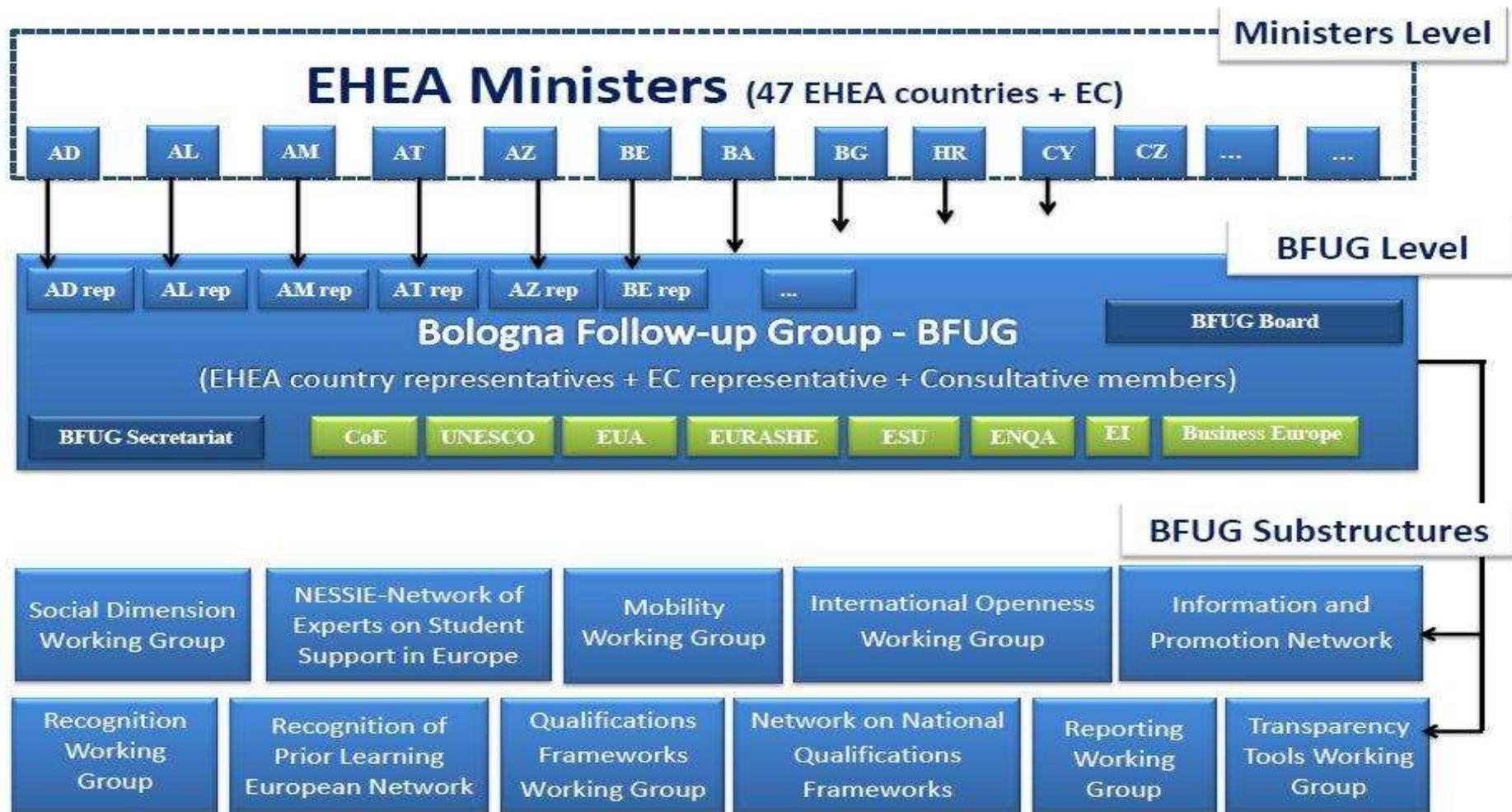


●●● How does it work? (3)

- **2nd executive/follow-up level – BFUG working groups**
 - Voluntary participations of full and consultative members
 - Central piece within the Bologna Process
 - Proposals, recommendations, share of good practices, peer-learning/peer-reviewing
- **3rd support level – Bologna Secretariat**
 - Provided by the host country(ies)
 - Logistical support
 - Website management
 - Currently: Armenia



••• How does it work? (4)



Source: Deca, L., 2012

●●● The Bucharest Communiqué 2012 (1)

- Main messages/general context:
 - Decisive contribution of higher to overcoming the crisis
 - **Thus** higher education = a priority public investment
 - Two-speed process: implementation of the pre-2010 agenda **and** adopting new action lines
- Three main European political objectives:
 - provide **quality** higher education **for all**
 - enhance graduates' **employability**
 - strengthen **mobility** as a means for better learning



●●● The Bucharest Communiqué 2012 (2)

1. Provide quality higher education for all

- Social dimension introduced in 2001:
 - Increasing the diversity of the student body
 - Reducing inequalities
 - Providing student support
 - Defining national strategy and monitoring

- Quality of higher education = one pillar of the EHEA
 - Revising the European Standards and Guidelines
 - Promoting student-centred learning



●●● The Bucharest Communiqué 2012 (3)

2. Enhance graduates' employability

- Use of the “Bologna” tools:
 - Learning outcomes as the central elements of those tools
→ **LOs = ECTS + DS + QF + QA**
 - **BUT** crucial to implement at institutional level!
 - Revising the *ECTS Users' guide*
- Links between education and research
 - Two processes coexist but not real synergies: EHEA vs. ERA
 - **BUT** what about the 3rd mission?



●●● The Bucharest Communiqué 2012 (4)

3. Strengthening mobility for better learning

- Mobility as a tool **and** objective of the EHEA
 - Next to the quantitative target, adoption of a qualitative target for mobility
 - specific measures at European, national and institutional level

- Recognition is still an obstacle, so what?
 - Working towards automatic recognition
 - Working on the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention



●●● The Bucharest Communiqué 2012 (5)

4. Support priorities

- Developing a system of voluntary peer learning and reviewing in countries that request it
 - **BUT** which funding, which peers, which impacts?
- Improving data collection with the support of Eurostat, Eurydice and Eurostudent
- Developing common EHEA transparency guidelines
 - **BUT** which impacts?

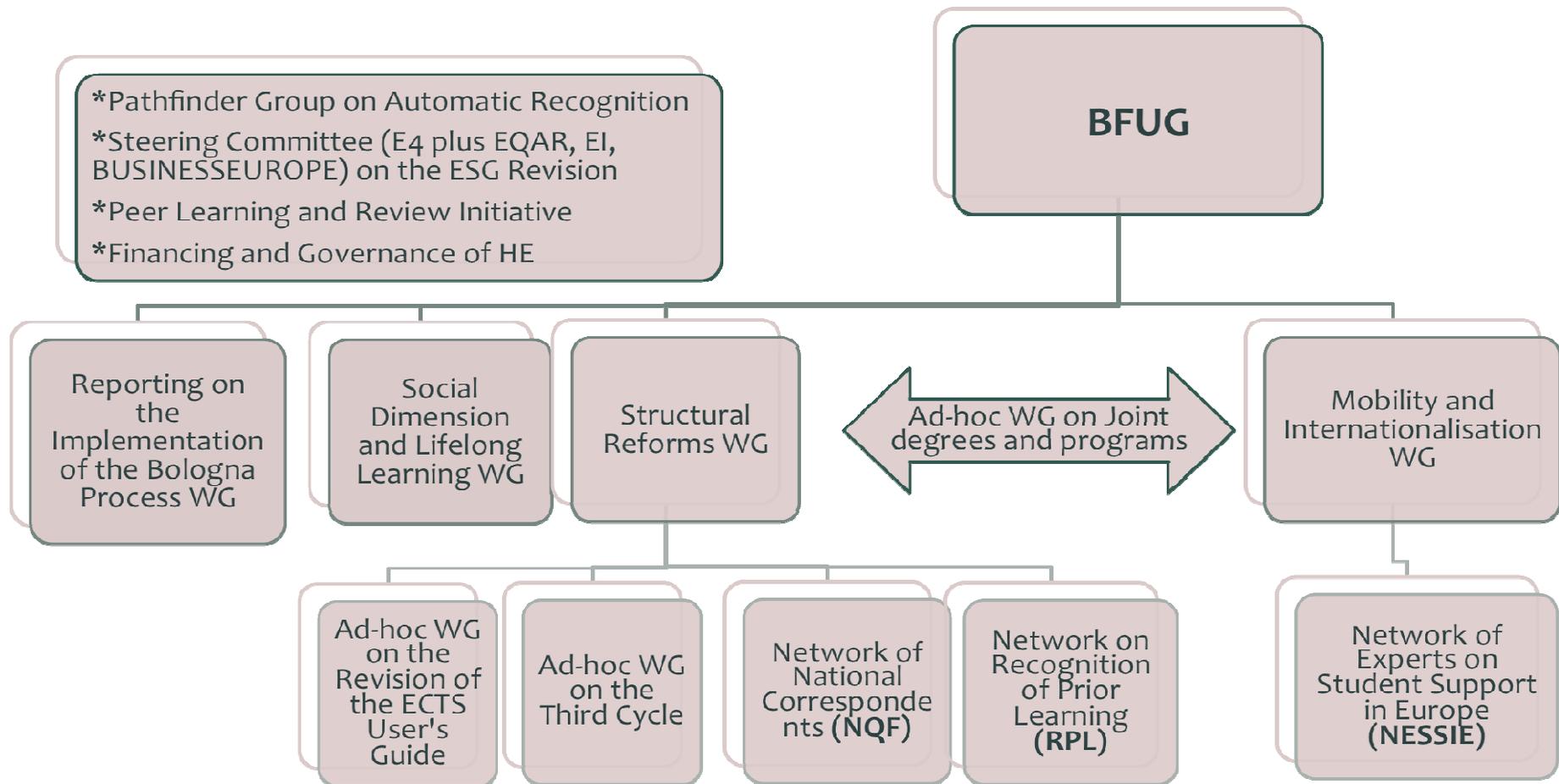


●●● The work plan 2012-2015 (1)

- Main considerations:
 - Increase efficiency and impacts of BFUG
 - Streamlined structured
 - Policy and implementation-oriented
- **Four WGs**
 - Reporting
 - Structural reforms
 - Social dimension and lifelong learning
 - Mobility and internationalisation
- Plus **ad-hoc WGs** (depending on one specific WG)
- Plus **experts networks** (depending on one specific WG)



••• The work plan 2012-2015 (2)



Source: Harutyunyan, G., 2013

●●● Recognition within the EHEA (1)

- Recognition has been at the heart of the Bologna Process since its inception
 - Strategic objective of 'full' mobility
 - Diversification of HE systems, institutions and programmes
 - Focus on mobility
 - EU integration and internal market
 - Lifelong learning perspective

- **Thus**, recognition as main outcome of the structural reforms and main instrument for an 'open' EHEA

- **Thus**, need to re-think recognition at systemic level, not individual level (no more equivalence, nostrification, etc.)



●●● Recognition within the EHEA (2)

- Unfortunately, recognition is still at the heart of the Bologna Process
 - Main obstacle for student mobility
 - Common agreement but different interpretation on the main principles
 - Diversity in recognition approaches/practices
 - ‘Protectionist’ attitudes
 - Recognition is seen as technical issue, not policy-related
- **Thus**, (automatic?) recognition should remain a main objective of the Bologna Process



●●● Recognition within the EHEA (3)

- At the last Ministerial Conference in Bucharest (April 2012), strong political commitment:
[...] to work together towards the automatic recognition of comparable academic degrees, building on the tools of the Bologna framework, as a long-term goal of the EHEA
- Based on both ‘hard’ instruments (reviewing national legislation in line with LRC) and ‘soft’ instruments (use of the EAR Manual as compendium of good practices)
- BUT what, how, why, when?



●●● Global dimension of the EHEA (1)

- The Bologna Process/EHEA is *per se* **internationally open**
 - **Initial objectives:** international openness, attractiveness and competitiveness
 - **External developments:** globalisation, mobility challenges and political interests in other regions
 - **‘Bologna-like’ reforms** in North-Africa, South-America, South-East Asia
- **Thus,** momentum for the global dimension of the EHEA
 - 2007: “European Higher Education in a Global Setting - A Strategy for the External Dimension of the Bologna Process”



●●● Global dimension of the EHEA (2)

- **Five key areas** for the global dimension:
 - Information
 - Promotion
 - Policy dialogue
 - Cooperation based on partnership
 - Recognition of qualifications
 - **Also definition of guiding principles!**
- **But** many challenges:
 - Cooperation vs. competition?
 - Institutional, national and regional expectations?
 - Funding opportunities?
 - Involvement of partners?



●●● Global dimension of the EHEA (3)

- Main achievement: **Bologna Policy Forum**
 - Initiated in 2009
 - Policy dialogue with officials from all regions
 - Adoption of joint declaration
 - Information on the EHEA **and** from other regions
- **But** many challenges:
 - Follow-up mechanisms?
 - Euro/EHEA-centrism?
 - Regional priorities?
 - Policy priorities?



●●● Implementation of the EHEA (1)

- Since the Bologna Process is voluntary, need to develop some kind of **peer pressure**

→ Stocktaking exercise, initiated in 2005

- Based on data collection by European (independent bodies)
- Based on national reports drafted by national ministries
- Based on the analysis of a specific BFUG WG



- **But** many challenges:
 - Objectivity of the national reports?
 - Independence of the BFUG WG and “data collectors”?
 - Impacts on national and institutional implementation?



●●● Implementation of the EHEA (2)

Figure 2.5: Scorecard indicator n°2: Access to the next cycle, 2010/11*

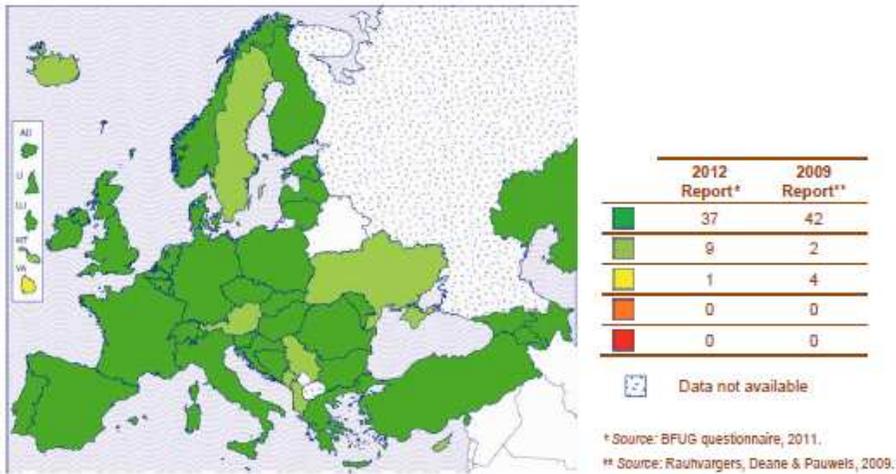


Figure 2.1: Scorecard indicator n°1: Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle, 2010/11

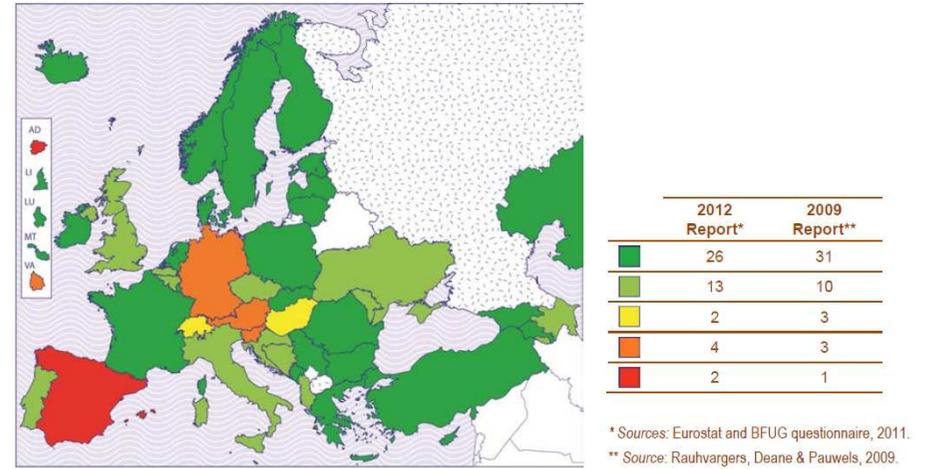


Figure 2.13: Scorecard indicator n°3: Implementation of national qualifications frameworks, 2010/11*

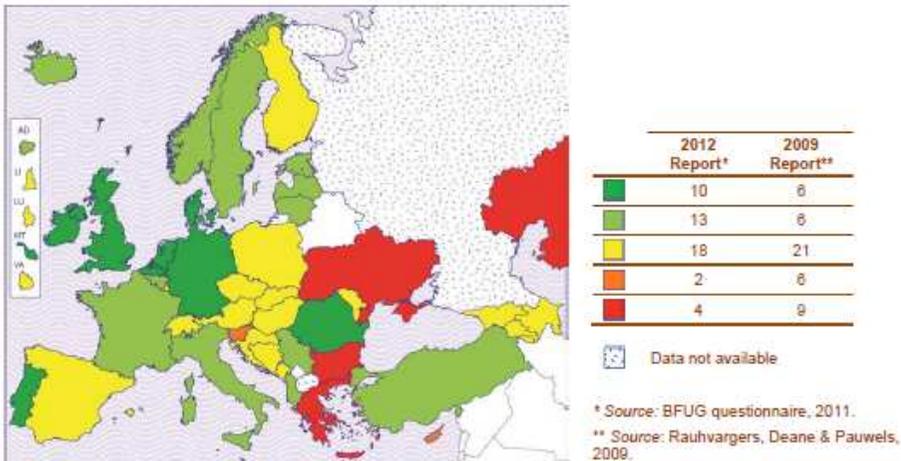
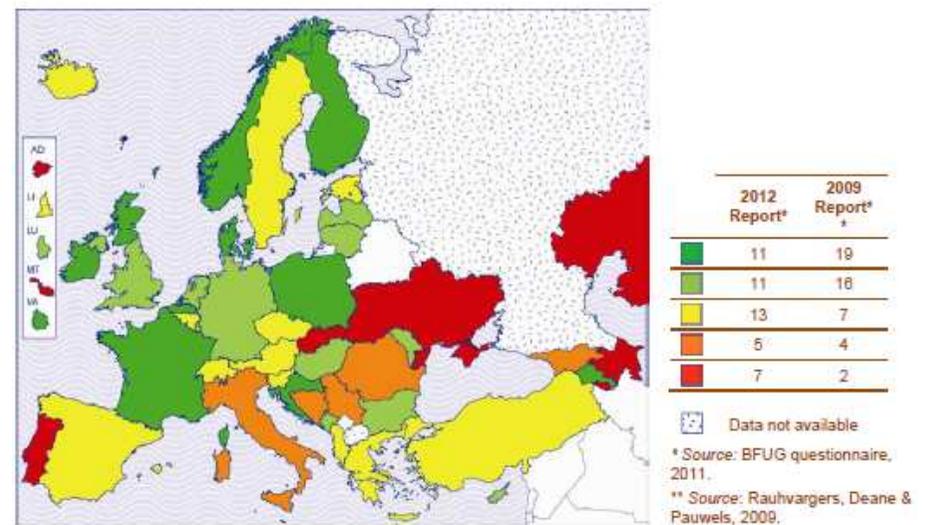


Figure 3.4: Scorecard indicator n°5: Level of student participation in quality assurance, 2010/11*



●●● Implementation of the EHEA (3)

- **Degrees, qualifications and quality assurance**
 - The three-degree structure is implemented **but some diversity** in terms of length, number of credits, access to the next cycle
 - Formal use of the Bologna tools (DS, ECTS and LO) **but no monitoring**
 - **Great diversity** in the development and implementation of QFs
 - **More harmonised structures** for recognition
 - External and independent QA system but various approach (accreditation vs. evaluation, institutional vs. programme, etc.)



●●● Implementation of the EHEA (4)

■ Mobility

- Still lot of work to be done to achieve 20% of mobile graduate in 2020
 - Credit mobility (within the EHEA): less than 5%
 - Degree mobility (within the EHEA): less than 2%
- Different patterns of mobility balances/imbbalances
 - “Limited” systems (high outward and more outward than incoming)
 - “Closed” systems (low outward and more outward than incoming)
 - “Open” systems (high outward and more incoming than outward)
 - “Attractive” systems (low outward and more incoming than outward)



●●● Implementation of the EHEA (5)

■ Social dimension and lifelong learning

- Still lot of work to be done to achieve social dimension of the EHEA
 - Identification of under-represented student groups, monitoring of social dimension policies
- Instruments do exist, i.e. alternative routes to higher education, loans/grants system, student services, etc. **but great diversity**
- Funding system has impacts on the social dimension **but difficult to have a clear picture**
- Higher education is more and more integrated in a lifelong learning perspective



●●● The EU agenda for higher education (1)

- Preliminary remark: **EU has no competence** in education, including higher education
 - subsidiarity principle
- **BUT** within the “Europe 2020” strategy, **higher education is central**
 - To contribute to a knowledge-based EU
 - To contribute to economic growth and employment
- Limited/“utilitarian” view on higher education?



●●● The EU agenda for higher education (2)

- Strategic framework: **“Agenda for the modernisation of higher education”**
 - to increase the number of higher education graduates
 - to improve the quality and relevance of higher education and research
 - to contribute to high quality higher education through mobility and cooperation
 - to strengthen the “knowledge triangle”, linking education, research and innovation (or business?)
 - to create effective governance and funding mechanisms



●●● The EU agenda for higher education (3)

- One policy cooperation instrument: **“Open Method of Coordination”**
= joint objectives + national policies + peer learning/reviewing + benchmarking
- **“Soft” law** mainly recommendations and conclusions
= EU policy orientation in specific fields
- **Contribution** to the Bologna Process/EHEA



●●● The EU agenda for higher education (4)

- **EU funding programmes in HE:**
 - Mobility programme for students/staff (Erasmus)
 - Joint study programmes (Erasmus Mundus)
 - Cooperation with third countries (Tempus, Edulink, Alpha)
 - New programme “Erasmus+” with strong accent on external dimension
- **Thus, is the EU an actor for HE?**
 - No supranational competence
 - LLL integrated approach
 - Evidence-based “policies”
 - Funding opportunities for governments **and** institutions



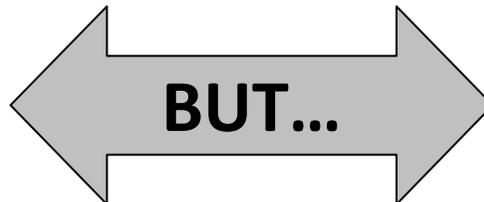
●●● The EU vs. the EHEA?

- Quite similar **strategic objectives** with different “colours”:
 - EU: higher education contributes to economic growth and employment
 - EHEA: consolidating a common area for higher education excellence
- Different but **complementary tools**:
 - EU: funding for supporting national policy development
 - EHEA: policy commitment and peer pressure to engage the adopted orientations
- **Different geographical areas**:
 - EU: 28 Member States
 - EHEA: 47 participating countries



●●● “Bologna Process”, magic formula?

- **Voluntary cooperation process** between governments and stakeholders
- **NO supranational regulatory** framework
- **Flexibility** in the national and institutional implementation
- **Light** organisational structure
- Mix of **bottom-up** and **top-down approaches**
- Promotion of the **diversity** of the EHEA
- EHEA **open to other region of the world**



- How to make those **commitments respected**?
- **Great variety in the implementation** from one country/institution to another
- Which **implication** of educational actors?
- **Which information** to the citizens/beneficiaries?
- What kind of **future/long-term goals** for the Bologna Process?
- How to guarantee a more **“coopetition” approach**?
- Which **systemic impacts** in a longer-term perspective?



●●● Some websites of interest

- www.ehea.info
- www.ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/higher_en.htm
- www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/138EN.pdf
- www.eua.be
- www.eurashe.eu
- www.esu-online.org
- www.enqa.eu
- www.enic-naric.net

