# EMUNI University ENPI Project (2010 – 2011)

# EMUNI Policy – Master's Programmes

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# 2. FROM THE BARCELONA PROCESS TO THE UNION FOR MEDITERRANEAN

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## 2.1 Introduction

The European Union and its Mediterranean Partners have long been linked by history, geography and culture.

Today, in an increasingly globalised world, the European Union remains the main partner of Mediterranean countries both in trade of goods and services.

More than 50% of the region's trade is with the EU, and for some countries, the EU represents the destination of more than 70% of their exports. Europe is the largest direct foreign investor (36% of total foreign direct investment) and the EU is the region's largest provider of financial assistance and funding, with almost €3 billion per year in loans and grants.

The Barcelona Declaration of November 1995 launched an innovative relationship between the then 15 countries of the EU and 12 countries on the southern and eastern coasts of the Mediterranean, a relationship that works on the basis of partnership, dialogue and joint ownership to advance common objectives.

In some ways, the evolution of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership can be compared to the construction of the European Union, but with a lot of difficulties. Nevertheless, it has continued to make solid and sustainable advances. It is, as its title implies, a process.

The agreements of the Barcelona Declaration have formed the basis of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership which has expanded and evolved into the Union for the Mediterranean, which is an innovative alliance based on the principles of joint ownership, dialogue and co-operation, seeking to create a Mediterranean region of peace, security and shared prosperity. The partnership was organised into three main dimensions, which remain today as the broad working areas of the partnership:

- Political and Security Dialogue, *aimed at creating a common area of peace and stability underpinned by sustainable development, rule of law, democracy and human rights.*
- Economic and Financial Partnership, *including the gradual establishment of a free-trade area aimed at promoting shared economic opportunity through sustainable and balanced socio-economic development.*
- Social, Cultural and Human Partnership, *aimed at promoting understanding and intercultural dialogue between cultures, religions and people, and facilitating exchanges between civil society and ordinary citizens, particularly women and young people.*

Under the umbrella of each sector, Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial meetings have been held in order to establish the political commitments which drive cooperation and activity across

sectors. These meetings are punctuated by periodic meetings of Euro-Mediterranean Ministers of Foreign Affairs which take stock of the partnership, its priorities and the progress made on different initiatives.

While substantial progress has been made towards these ends, much still remains to be done. The Barcelona Process has established a comprehensive set of co-operation activities in areas ranging from trade liberalisation, economic reform and infrastructure networks to culture, education and the movement of people[1].

Some developments have affected the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership during the last three years (2008, 2009, 2010): the global economic and financial crisis which burst out in the second half of 2008 and the persistence of several conflicts in the region[2].

With the introduction of the *European Neighbourhood Policy* (ENP) in 2004, the Barcelona Process essentially became the multilateral forum of dialogue and cooperation between the EU and its Mediterranean partners while complementary bilateral relations are managed mainly under the ENP and through Association Agreements signed with each partner country.

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[1] The MEDA programme, the second largest external assistance programme of the European Union after the Phare Programme for the candidate countries, has been the principal financial instrument of the EU for the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Its objectives and main areas of intervention are derived from the Barcelona Declaration.

Over time it has come to focus even more on measures to accompany the reform of political, economic and social structures in the Partner countries. The bulk of resources are channelled bilaterally to Partners but there are also several regional activities aiming to promote confidence, networking and co-operation between Partners.

For the period 1995-99 MEDA accounted for € 3.435 million of budgetary resources allocated for financial cooperation between the EU and its Mediterranean Partners.

The figure for 2000-2006 was € 5.350 million.

The other important source of funding is the European Investment Bank: the EIB has lent €12.2 billion for development activities since 1995. In all, almost €3 billion in aid is made available to the Mediterranean countries every year through these two instruments.

[2] Several armed conflicts had a major impact on Euro-Mediterranean relationships:

a) the Israel-Hezbollah confrontation in Lebanon, in August 2006, resulted in 1,109 civilians being killed in Lebanon, 43 on the Israeli side whereas damages have been estimated at several billion dollars;

b) after the Israeli campaign against the Hamas in the Gaza Strip in December 2008-January 2009, it has been estimated that 1,314 Palestinian were killed, most of them civilians, as well as 13 Israelis (most of the Gaza Strip key infrastructures were also destroyed);

c) the evolution of the situation in Iraq also profoundly affected the whole region during this period.

## 2.2 A very complex framework in evolution

In this context, the European Union external action and its strategy towards the countries of its neighbourhood are becoming increasingly complex and differentiated with a proliferation of several EU Proximity Strategies.

*Today at least eight different frameworks are structuring the relations between the EU-27 on the one hand and the Mediterranean Partner Countries included in the Union for the Mediterranean on the other[3]:*

1. *The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (1995) as amended by the Union for the Mediterranean (2008);*
2. *The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP);*
3. *The 2004 Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East (SPMME);*
4. *The Pre-Accession Strategy (PAS) (Turkey, Croatia);*
5. *The Stabilisation and Association Process in the Balkans (SAP) (Bosnia, Croatia, and Montenegro);*
6. *The Black Sea Synergy Initiative (Turkey);*
7. *The Cotonou Agreement (Mauritania);*
8. *The Advanced Status granted to Morocco in October 2008.*

*Table 2.1: Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements*

| Country | Start of Negotiations | Agreement Concluded | Agreement Signed | Entry into force |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tunisia | December 1994 | June 1995 | July 1995 | December 1997 |
| Israel | December 1993 | September 1995 | November 1995 | June 2000 |
| Morocco | December 1993 | November 1995 | February 1996 | March 2000 |
| Palestine | May 1996 | December 1996 | February 1997 | July 1997* |
| Jordan | July 1995 | April 1997 | November 1997 | May 2002 |
| Egypt | March 1995 | June 1999 | June 2001 | June 2004 |
| Algeria | June 1997 | December 2001 | April 2002 | September 2005 |
| Lebanon | November 1995 | January 2002 | June 2002 | April 2006 |
| Syria | March 1998 | October 2004/December 2008 | | |
| * Interim Agreement signed by the EU and the PLO (to the benefit of the Palestine Authority). | | | | |

To enter into force, each Association Agreement must be ratified by the European Parliament, the Parliament of the Partner Country and the Parliaments of the 27 Member States of the EU. Note: Until its accession to the EU, Turkey shall be governed by the Customs Union Agreement, which entered into force in January 1996 and is based on the first-generation

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[3] Lannon Erwan - Martín Iván, *Report on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Status & Progress*, IEMed, November 2009, p. 15.

Agreement of 1963. In 2008 the Association Agreement with Syria was revised. It was planned to be ratified on 26 October 2009. However, Syria indefinitely postponed signing the Association Agreement with the European Union.

*Table 2.2: Stabilisation and Association Agreements with Western Balkan Countries*

| Country | Start of Negotiations | Agreement Signed | Entry into force (Interim Agreement) | Entry into force |
|---------|----------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Albania | January 2003 | June 2006 | December 2006 | April 2009 |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | November 2005 | June 2008 | July 2008 | |
| Croatia | November 2000 | October 2001 | March 2002 | February 2005 |
| Macedonia | March 2000 | April 2001 | June 2001 | April 2004 |
| Serbia | October 2005 | April 2008 | - | |
| Montenegro | October 2005 / July 2006* | October 2007 | January 2008 | |

*On 21 May 2006, a referendum was held, the results of which led to Montenegro's independence from the Federation it had formed with Serbia

EU relations with the Western Balkan Countries are regulated by the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP).

The SAP serves as a framework for the deployment of various instruments and helps each country to carry out the political and economic transition preparing them for a new contractual relationship with the EU: the Stabilisation and Association Agreements (SAAs), under which they aim to progress towards closer association with the EU.

The Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Albania entered into force on 1 April 2009. This agreement replaces the Interim Agreement.

On 28 April, Albania presented its formal application for European Union membership. Negotiations with Serbia were interrupted in May 2006 due to lack of progress in cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). In 2007, the new administration in Belgrade launched a plan and constituted a National Council for Cooperation with the ICTY, a measure which allowed negotiations to resume on 13 June 2007.

In April 2008, the SAA between the EU and Serbia was signed. The Interim Agreement, however, will not take effect until the EU Council considers that Serbia is fully cooperating with the ICTY. After its declaration and the EU's acknowledgement of Montenegro as a sovereign and independent State, the EU has maintained relations with independent Montenegro. After the approval, in July 2006, of the negotiation directives in view of an SAA

with Montenegro, negotiations concluded in April and the Agreement was signed on 15 October 2007. The entrance of the Interim Agreement into effect in January 2008 represents progress towards the national ratification process and closer relations with the EU.

Three years after the start of negotiations between the EU and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2005, the SAA was signed and the Interim Agreement took effect. Despite real progress in collaboration with the ICTY, the Commission still notes numerous dysfunctions in the institutional and judiciary spheres.

*Table 2.3: European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plans*

| Country | Israel | Jordan | Tunisia | Palestinian | Territories | Morocco | Egypt | Lebanon | Algeria | Libya |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Adoption by the Country** | April 2005 | | June 2005 | July 2005 | May 2005 | July 2005 | March 2007 | January 2007 | | |

The ENP Action Plans allow the European Union to maintain a progressive, differentiated policy towards its neighbouring countries thanks to the different degrees of cooperation they establish.

An Action Plan, developed after the signature of an Association Agreement, establishes priorities and a timetable for political and economic reform.

Action Plans are the operative tools of the legal frame work represented by the Association Agreements. Every year, evaluation reports analyze the progress made. Depending on the degree of progress established, strengthened cooperation and greater access to the European Market are decided.

## 2.3   The Union for the Mediterranean

At the European Council of 13 March 2008 the 27 Member States, adopted a statement entitled: "Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean" according to which: "*The European Council approved the principle of a Union for the Mediterranean which will include the Member States of the EU and the non-EU Mediterranean coastal states.*"

The European Commission then published, on 20 May 2008, a Communication entitled "*Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean*", putting forward more concrete proposals to be discussed at the Paris Summit of July 2008.

The French EU Presidency then organised the Euro-Mediterranean Summit of the Heads of States or Government of 13 July 2008 where a "*Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean*" was adopted by the participants with a view to enhancing multilateral relations, increasing co-ownership of the *Barcelona Process*, setting governance on the basis of equal footing and translating it into concrete projects, more visible to citizens.

The *Union for the Mediterranean* brought together in Paris 43 European and Mediterranean States, the EU institutions and a number of regional organisations[4].

The Heads of State and Government considered that it was crucial to translate the objectives established by the Barcelona Declaration of 1995 and by the Work Programme of 2005 into concrete regional projects. The first six priority projects were:

- **De-pollution of the Mediterranean** (including coastal and protected maritime areas, focusing on the "water and waste sector").
- **Maritime and Land Highways** (including connection of ports, creation of coastal motorways and the modernisation of the 'trans-Maghreb" train).
- **Civil Protection** (a joint Programme on prevention, preparation, and response to disasters).
- **Alternative Energies:** Feasibility, development, and creation of a Mediterranean Solar Plan.
- **Higher Education and Research:** A Euro-Mediterranean University based in Slovenia, with the mission to develop post-graduate and research programmes.
- **Mediterranean Business Development Initiative** (aimed at assisting entities in MPCs that already support small and medium-sized enterprises).

The Union for the Mediterranean projects have not been implemented yet due to the political stalemate and the lack of concrete financial commitments in the Paris summit and the Ministerial Meeting in Marseilles, even if preparatory meetings have already been held for each project. All the projects are currently in a pre-feasibility study stage (analysis of barriers to their implementation and the necessary regulations) that will be followed by the identification of pilot projects.

Only the Civil Protection project (that continue the MEDA regional Programme for civil protection 2004-2008, focusing on technical assistance and capacity building) and the project for the de-pollution of the Mediterranean (continuing the Horizon 2010 initiative agreed by the Euro-Mediterranean ministers for environment during the Cairo meeting of 2006) have made progress towards an operational stage. The Arab-Israeli conflict has blocked the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership for most of the last three years (Euro-Med Committee meetings, the meetings of senior officials and ministerial meetings were either cancelled or postponed).

In order to give an overview of the situation we show a comparative table 2.4 prepared by Iván Martín, that presents in following pages the respective priorities of the different cooperation schemes and their fields of cooperation between the EU and the Mediterranean countries.

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[4] Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Monaco and Montenegro, which have accepted the *acquis of the Barcelona Process*, were welcomed as new partners on this occasion.

*Table 2.4: Different cooperation schemes in UfM (2009)*

| EMP PRIORITIES FIVE-YEAR WORK PROGRAMME BARCELONA CONFERENCE 2005[*] | ENP PRIORITIES EC COMMUNICATION OF 2006 ON "STRENGTHENING THE ENP"[**] | UfM PRIORITIES MARSEILLES DECLARATION NOVEMBER 2008[***] |
|---|---|---|
| **Political and Security Partnership** | **Strengthening Political Cooperation** | **Political and Security Dialogue** |
| Extend political pluralism and participation by citizens | The EU needs to play a more active role in multilateral conflict-resolution including, if necessary, participating in civil and military peace missions. | Middle East Peace Process (regular review of the political situation in the Middle East) |
| Enable citizens to participate in decision-making at local level | Possibility of alignment with CFSP Declarations - Common European Security and Defence Policy offered to all EMP partners | Terrorism (implementing a Code of Conduct to counter terrorism) |
| Increase the participation of women in decision-making | Intensified parliamentary cooperation | Deepening of the dialogue on the Common European Security and Defence Policy (CESDP) and crisis Management |
| Ensure freedom of expression and association | Strengthening of EU diplomatic presence in all EMP partners | Strengthen democracy and political pluralism through expansion of participation in political life and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms |
| Foster the role of civil society | **Enhancing Regional Cooperation** | Deepening of regional dialogue on joint cooperation, best practices and exchange of experience in the area of elections |
| Enable the development and implementation of UN and Regional Charters and Conventions | Strengthened cooperation with "the neighbours of our neighbours" For example, on energy, transport, fight against illegal | Lay the foundations for a long-term Programme, the Euro-Med Programme for the Prevention Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters PPRD (2008-2011) |
| **Sustainable Economic Development and Reform** | **Enhancing the Economic and Trade Component** | **Economic and Financial Partnership** |
| Create more job opportunities for more young people in the region | Envisage the FTA(Free Trade Area) within a deep and comprehensive approach | Energy |
| Improve the business climate, in particular for SMEs | Reinforced support for reforms and efforts aimed at improving the economic and trade regulatory environment and the investment climate | Transport |
| Reducing regional poverty rates | Strengthened economic integration and cooperation in key sectors | Agriculture |
| Closing the prosperity gap and raising the GNP growth rates | | Urban Development |
| Increasing North-South and South-South regional cooperation | **Strengthening Financial Cooperation** | Water |
| | Maximizing the impact and leverage of scarce resources | Environment |
| | Governance Facility | Information society |
| | Neighbourhood Investment Fund | Tourism |
| | Improved coordination between | Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade |

| EMP Priorities | ENP Priorities | UfM Priorities |
|---|---|---|
| | Member States and EC assistance | Area |
| | | Economic dialogue |
| | **Building a Thematic Dimension to the ENP** | Industrial Cooperation |
| | Considering additional multilateral agreements in energy and tran sport | Ongoing work on statistics cooperation |
| | Work for the extension of the EU transport and energy networks to neighbouring countries, as well as Interoperability | **Maritime Safety** |
| | Participation of neighbours in relevant Community agencies and programmes | |
| **Educational and Socio-cultural Exchanges** | **Promoting People-to-People Exchanges** | **Social, Human, and Cultural Cooperation** |
| Halve the number of illiterate female and male adults and children | Educational, cultural, youth and research exchanges | Developing a genuine social dimension |
| Promote equality of access to quality education | Enhanced civil society participation in ENP | Health |
| Reduce disparities in educational achievement between Mediterranean states | Exchanges between regional and local authorities | Human Development |
| Enhance graduate employment through high quality higher education | Training the regulators of tomorrow | *Towards a Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education and Research Area* |
| Increase awareness and understanding of the different cultures and civilizations | Business-to-business contacts | Promoting dialogue between cultures, cultural diversity |
| | Visibility and information activities | Strengthening the role of women in society |
| | | EuroMed Youth |
| **Migration, Social Integration Justice and Security** | **Facilitating Mobility and Managing Migration** | Cooperation with civil society and local actors |
| Promote legal migration opportunities | Visa facilitation, removing obstacles to legitimate travel | Enhancing the visibility of the Partnership |
| Facilitate the flow of remittance transfers | Addressing readmission and effective and efficient border management | Justiee and Law |
| Address "brain drain" | | Migration |
| Reduce significantly the level of illegal migration and trafficking of human beings | | |
| Promote modernisation and efficiency of the administration of justice | | |
| Reinforce judicial cooperation | | |
| Promote the ratification/ mplementation of UN Conventions on organised crime | | |
| **EMP Priorities** | **ENP Priorities** | **UfM Priorities** |

* Euro-Mediterranean Summit of Barcelona, November 2005. Five-year work programme,

** COM (2006) 726 final, Communication from the Commission on Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy.

*** Final Declaration, Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean, Marseilles, 3-4 November 2008

Source: Martín Iván, *Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation: Taking Stock of the Situation*, in EUROMED Background Note n° 2009/1, pp. 4-5.

## 2.4   The role of the EIB in the Mediterranean area

The European Investment Bank[5] is the Mediterranean region's main financial partner, with more than EUR 10 billion invested since 2002.

The Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP) is its major financial instrument in the region.

In October 2008, the EIB was asked by the Euro-Mediterranean finance ministers at a meeting in Luxembourg to support three priority initiatives of the UfM, namely:
- cleaning up the Mediterranean Sea,
- the Mediterranean Solar Plan and
- land and sea motorways.

Through the FEMIP Trust Fund, the EIB[6] also provides support for the Mediterranean Business Development Initiative. FEMIP's participation in the UfM's projects quickly became one of the EIB's pillars of action in the Mediterranean Partner Countries.

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[5] For more information see the document *Union for the Mediterranean. Role and Vision of the EIB*, EIB, 2010, p. 8.
In fact an ambitious programme of technical assistance to encourage the use of public-private partnerships (PPP) in the Mediterranean is being launched by the FEMIP, dedicated to the socio-economic development of nine Mediterranean countries. The first stage of the programme was kicked off in Paris, on 10-11 February 2011, with a seminar on *The prospects for PPP in the Mediterranean region*, finalised to a study on *The legal and financial framework for PPP in the FEMIP countries* on financing of the FEMIP trust fund. The EIB notes that with more than 300 billion to be invested in public infrastructures South and East of the Mediterranean by 2030 (particularly for water management, urban services and energy), the Mediterranean partner countries will have to speed up development of their capacity to involve the private sector and their attractiveness as a destination for foreign direct investment.
The FEMIP's multi-stage PPP programme will run from 2011 to 2013. The study, published in French will be translated in English late May, will review the legal, administrative and financial factors that hinder the use of such arrangements in each of the FEMIP countries. The study also makes recommendations for the development of public policies in this area.
[6] The projects funded by FEMIP include a sanitation project in Lebanon (EUR 70 million), the construction of a wind farm in Gabal El-Zeit in Egypt (EUR 50 million), the widening of the Rabat-Casablanca motorway in Morocco (EUR 225 million) and the first venture capital fund for Palestinian private enterprises (EUR 5 million).
The initiative to clean up the Mediterranean Sea has made considerable progress, with the identification of 78 priority projects and the implementation of a facility to help promoters develop projects that are financially and technically viable and therefore "bankable".
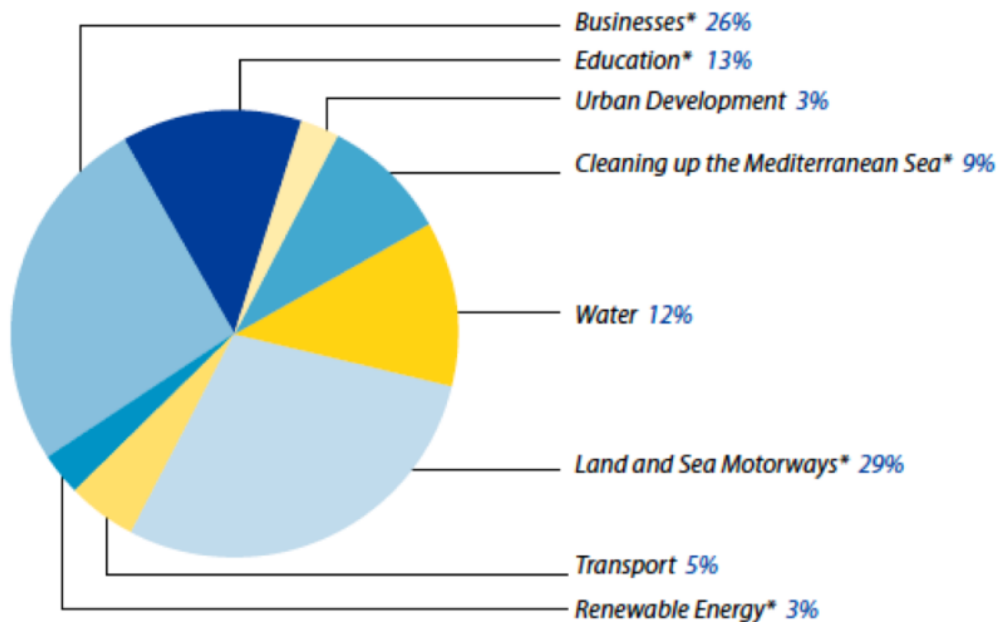Using a similar methodology for the Solar Plan, FEMIP has identified a number of renewable energy projects in the region and is currently defining a financial package for a large-scale pilot project in Morocco.
A similar debate and identification of priority projects have been instigated with the other partners in relation to the land and sea motorways initiative.
FEMIP has also conducted a study to establish the specifications of the business development initiative. The EIB has set up a think tank of lenders in the urban development sector, aimed at identifying assessment criteria for sustainable urban projects.

*Figure 2.1: Breakdown of FEMIP founding in 2009 by sector according to UfM priorities*

**Breakdown of FEMIP funding in 2009 by sector according to UfM priorities**

- Businesses* 26%
- Education* 13%
- Urban Development 3%
- Cleaning up the Mediterranean Sea* 9%
- Water 12%
- Land and Sea Motorways* 29%
- Transport 5%
- Renewable Energy* 3%

*Project categories marked by an asterisk are those that correspond to the UfM's priorities*

Source: *Union for the Mediterranean. Role and vision of the EIB*, EIB, 2010, p. 3.

In order to achieve its objectives, FEMIP has a wide range of financial and non-financial instruments at its disposal: loans, equity and quasi-equity investment, technical assistance and sector-based studies during the project preparation stage.

FEMIP can also count on its solid partnership with the European Commission and other international financing institutions and on the relationship of trust developed with the Member States and partner countries. In its role as a think tank, it finances debate in new fields that could help to tailor FEMIP's services more closely to the UfM's objectives.

In accordance with the targets of its operational plan, FEMIP will continue to finance the UfM's priority projects during the period 2011-2013 and strengthen its commitment on a political level through close collaboration with the UfM's Secretariat in Barcelona.

The EIB's main remit will be to evaluate the "bankability" of the UfM's projects and ensure coordination among multilateral and bilateral institutions active in the region.

## 2.5 The "Euro-Mediterranean Area of Higher Education and Research": Myth or Reality?

Even if the European university landscape is primarily organised at the national and regional levels and is characterised by a very high degree of heterogeneity that is reflected in its organisation, governance and operating conditions; the EU member countries[7] and the MPCs try to take into account the construction of the future *Euro-Mediterranean Area of Higher Education and Research*.

Since 1995, they are convinced that higher education is a major driver for social and economic development in the Mediterranean region and for innovation in an increasingly knowledge-driven world.

The few policy initiatives taken are in general not perceived as being very effective.

Here the approaches to be followed are as important as the policies themselves.

This implies public-private partnerships and a coherent strategic framework, which could involve four distinct types of contribution:
- innovative projects that prepare for the future by helping to create new forms of specialisation and comparative advantages;
- projects that consolidate regional integration;
- projects that increase the quality of traditional lines of higher education and improve their access to the global market;
- projects that create externalities that underpin the external business environment.

Here the concept of a new *Euro-Mediterranean Area of Higher Education and Research* could have an important role to play, not only through the Academic resources that it would be able to mobilise but through its expertise in identifying and selecting projects.

In this context the two major initiatives taken to affirm and to develop this process in terms of legal framework, are the Catania Declaration (2006) and the Cairo Declaration (2007), which might be considered the appropriate response.

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[7] Higher Education and Research are considered as key factors of a common Mediterranean future. Establishing an excellent educational culture within the region is fundamental to address challenges in other sectors and to formulate a professional and accommodating way of thinking in the minds of youth in the Euromed area. The young Mediterranean generation in fact represents half of nowadays reality and all of its future.

To support the existing Euro-Med University networks will contribute to the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education, Science and Research Area. Full use of possibilities offered by existing higher education cooperation programmemes such as Tempus and Erasmus Mundus and the development of comparable programmemes for the whole UfM region is required, while giving particular attention to enhancing quality and to ensuring the relevance of vocational training to labour market.

**Catania Declaration: "Euro-Mediterranean Area of Higher Education and Research"**

The Barcelona Declaration in 1995 established a directive to turn the Euro-Mediterranean area into a common space of peace, stability and prosperity through the reinforcement of political dialogue, understanding between cultures and the promotion of a social, cultural and human partnership meant to *develop human resources and encourage exchange between civil societies*. The crucial role of education for the region's stability and for its effective economical, political and social development was recognised in the Five-year action Plan which entails actions aimed at realizing this objective. Conferences held in Catania in November 2003 and January 2005 set forth a proposal to create a "*Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education Area*"**,** laying the basis for a political strategy aimed at coordinating education and training policies of countries in the Mediterranean basin, so as to offer to the whole area further opportunities of access to knowledge, specifically at higher education level, and more possibilities to study and work in a stimulating multicultural environment.

*"Euro-Mediterranean Area of Higher Education and Research"* would be developed:
- Taking into consideration the intense bilateral collaboration relationships already existing between Governments, university institutions and research centres of the Euro-Mediterranean region and with the aim of promoting their further development;
- Acknowledging the necessity to structure the collaboration between High Quality Training Institutions and Centres of Excellence in order to uphold the development of a Euro-Mediterranean research area;
- Bearing in mind the opportunities provided by new information and communication technologies that allow to bolster a distance learning and permanent training System in the Mediterranean Area;
- Desiring to strengthen the bond with the industrial and productive sectors through cooperation in the scientific and technological fields, also with the intent to facilitate the mobility and employability of students and researchers and to support the economic development of the region;
- Taking into consideration the key role human capital has to play and the importance of promoting vocational education and training (VET), also as a tool for occupational policies and for a factual management of migratory fluxes;
- Persuaded that the achievement of a Euro-Mediterranean area requires steady support, supervision and adjustment to changing needs.

In a unique partnership between public authorities, higher education institutions, students and staff, together with employers, quality assurance agencies, international organisations and European institutions, the Ministers have engaged in a series of reforms to build a European Higher Education Area based on trust, cooperation and respect for the diversity of cultures, languages, and higher education systems.

In March 2000 the European Union committed itself in Lisbon to the ambitious objective of becoming '*the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based economy in the world, capable*

*of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.*' European policymakers' intentions took on a more concrete form in 2003 when the goal of raising EU-countries' investments in R&D to 3% of GDP was outlined in Barcelona. However, several years of lagging progress forced policymakers to essentially restart the process by refocusing on broader economic growth and innovation.

It should also be emphasised that the Bologna Declaration and Lisbon Agenda have not been the only influences changing European higher education institutions. In many (West European) countries a series of reforms already were underway in the 1980s and many current reform initiatives have their origin in this time period. The changing role of the state vis-à-vis higher education institutions (i.e. in the form of enhancing institutional autonomy and stressing quality assurance and accountability) are well-known themes of the last two decades.

In this respect, a growing influence of the European Commission on national higher education policy is observed: national policies over higher education and research are increasingly influenced and framed by a European dimension. The European Commission is seen as an emerging policy actor domestically, not only on the National level, but increasingly also by academics and university leaders. Although European competence in higher education policy making is formally limited, this apparently is of less importance than its more informal influence at the supra-national level. A possible explanation is that higher education policy is currently becoming more intertwined with, and partly dependent on, developments in other policy areas where the European Commission plays a more formal role. The role the European Commission plays in the area of research and innovation means that it is also a significant contributor to the emergent European dimension in higher education.

## Cairo Declaration: Towards a Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education & Research Area

Almost twelve years have elapsed since the launching of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (Barcelona Process), which constitutes with its main pillars (Political / Economic/ Socio Cultural as well as Migration, Social Integration, Justice and Security) a unique framework for dialogue and co-operation between the two shores of the Mediterranean, based on co ownership and common interest. This partnership aims at achieving a common area of peace, stability and prosperity, as well as ensuring a better knowledge and promoting mutual understanding among peoples across the Mediterranean. To date, the issue of education and RTDI did not receive the sufficient attention it merits in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. At the Barcelona Summit, Euromed Partners have recognised for the first time in the Five-Year Work Programme the crucial role of education for political, social and economic development, as well as the major importance of the research, innovation and Human Resources Development as a key to modernisation.

The Monitoring Committee for Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation (MOCO) in RTD was initiated and meets regularly since 1996 providing valuable input to bi-regional S&T Cooperation, *inter alia* to the Framework Programmes.

In this vein, the 8th Euromed Ministers of Foreign Affairs agreed in Tampere (27-28 November 2006) upon the importance of convening the First Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Higher Education and Scientific Research, which represents a landmark step in this regard:

- Building on the objectives and actions stipulated in the Five-Year Work Programme of the Barcelona Summit and on the goals of the Catania Declaration 2006;
- Recognising the importance of literacy, primary, secondary, higher education and technical and vocational education and training for the development of the human capital of the region;
- Underlining the necessity of reducing disparities in educational achievement between Euro-Mediterranean countries under internationally recognised education standards, as well as facilitating the mobility and employability of students and researchers and supporting the economic development of the region;
- Emphasising also the urgent need to support a labour market based reform of Education, including Technical, Vocational Education and Training as well as convergence to frameworks of qualifications;
- Investing the opportunities provided by new information and communication technologies that allow bolstering distance learning and permanent training systems in the Euromed area;
- Acknowledging the necessity to structure the collaboration between high quality training institutions and Centres of Excellence in order to uphold the development of a Euro-Mediterranean research area;
- Stressing the need to link the industrial and productive sectors through cooperation in the scientific and technological fields, based on the conclusions of the Sixth Euromed Conference of Ministers for Industry, and in particular those related to the promotion of innovation and competitiveness;
- Underlining the importance of Euromed cooperation in supporting the development and modernisation processes in higher education, especially through the TEMPUS programme, as well as fostering the RTDI in cooperation with Mediterranean Partner Countries, in particular through the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7);
- Welcoming the Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window and the prospects offered by the Euromed scholarship scheme for university students and higher education staff from Partner countries endorsed by the Euro-Mediterranean Summit in 2005, which will add to the existing funding opportunities both by European Union Member States and Mediterranean partners.

With the aim of upholding the EU's commitment at the Barcelona Summit to increase significantly funding devoted to education in the Mediterranean region through EU assistance and Mediterranean partners' national plans and raise education as a priority sector within the ENPI.

In this regard the Slovenian initiative for the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean University constitutes an important step forward through a cooperation network of existing universities. The Euromed Ministers in Cairo Declaration (Supplement 2.2) reaffirmed the commitment to implement the relevant objectives of the Five-Year Work Programme of the Barcelona Summit

and of the Association Agreement, as well as the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plans. They agreed that Higher Education, Research and Innovation should be defined as a priority sector within the Euromed Partnership.

*Figure 2.2 : Map of the Union for Mediterranean*



The members of the Union of the Mediterranean are the following:
- the 27 European Union member states (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom)
- the European Commission ,
- the Mediterranean Partner countries (Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey)
- Libya as an observer *status*
- the League of Arab States

**Notice**
- ■ Members of the European Union;
- ▨ Other members;
- ▫ Observateurs

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## 2.7 Supplements

**Supplement 2.1: Catania Declaration**

The Higher Education Ministers of the Republic of Algeria, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Republic of France, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Republic of Greece, the Republic of Italy, the Republic of Malta, the Kingdom of Morocco, the Republic of Portugal, the Republic of Slovenia, the Kingdom of Spain, the Republic of Tunisia, the Republic of Turkey; agree to:

- Reaffirm the role of education as a key factor for development, social cohesion and prosperity and to establish a basic framework for a partnership in the fields of mutual interest, so as to step up the achievement of the objectives set forth by the Barcelona Conference to "develop human resources and promote better understanding between cultures";
- Activate a structured cooperation in order to promote the comparability and readability of higher education systems in the Euro-Mediterranean Area, though preserving each country's individuality;
- Establish common education and training paths based on a system of transferable credits and on easily readable qualifications and exploitable as well by the labour market, by sharing criteria, evaluation methods and quality assurance schemes in order to facilitate the mobility of students, researchers and professors; these paths will be implemented also through the use of new technologies and of e-learning method;
- Promote PhD research programmes with a view to encouraging scientific and technical collaboration and to promote competitiveness in the region;
- Establish Networks of interlinked Universities and well known Centres for high quality Education and Research;
- Strengthen a distance learning system, by expanding the results attained through the "Med Net'U" project, in order to encourage the widest possible access to education and training in a perspective of lifelong learning;
- Set off initiatives in the field of vocational education and training (VET) with the aim of developing vocational expertises and diplomas in higher education.

The Ministers commend the will of the European Commission to improve and strengthen EU instruments of cooperation in this field. The Ministers commit themselves to support, in the fields of their responsibility, the development and implementation of the process leading to the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education Area. The Ministers agree to meet regularly to assess progress and to promote further collaboration through the establishment of a Follow-up Group, in which each participant Country will be represented, and who will report to the next ministerial meeting to be held in 2008.

**Supplement 2.2: Cairo Declaration In Higher Education:**

**Creating a Euromed Higher Education Area:**

1. Approximating the Euromed Higher Education Systems;
2. Promotion of a Permanent Euromed University Forum;
3. Promoting Educational Innovation and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT);
4. Promoting mobility through exchanges of higher education students, teachers, researchers and administrators;
5. Enhancing participation in the Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window.

**In Research and Innovation:**

**Towards the creation of a Euromed Research Area:**

1. Modernizing Science and Technology, R&D policies in the Mediterranean Partner Countries;
2. Supporting Institutional Capacity Building, including human and research infrastructure development;
3. Enhancing the participation of the Mediterranean Partner Countries in the Framework Programmes while taking into account their particular needs, as well as areas of mutual interest and benefit between EU and Mediterranean Partner Countries;
4. Promoting innovation in the Mediterranean Partner Countries and enhancing exploitation of the RTD outputs by society and industry;
5. Favouring mobility of researchers;
6. Enhancing participation of the Mediterranean Partner Countries in the "People" Specific Programme of FP

With a view to contributing to the above-mentioned objectives, Ministers commit to undertake appropriate measures to realise the following actions:

**1. Approximation of the Euromed Higher Education systems with relevance to the Bologna process and ECTS system.** This could be achieved through the following actions:
a. Structured cooperation to promote the comparability and readability of Higher Education systems in the Euromed area, notably through the further development of the current MERIC network, aiming to facilitate the recognition of merits;
b. Cooperation, including technical assistance through existing schemes to establish Education and Training paths based on systems of comparable transferable credits;
c. Support Mediterranean Partner Countries in the establishment of comparable Quality Control and Accreditation schemes; d. Develop - parallel to higher education reform - initiatives to support market-based reform in the field of Technical, Vocational Education & Training (TVET);
d. Institutional Capacity Building and Human Resource Development by support in joint teaching and training programmes for academic, technical and administrative staff;
**e.** Cooperation, including through existing schemes to increase the relevance of the awarded degrees to the Mediterranean Partner Countries labour market needs.

**2. Support the implementation of the Euromed University Forum objectives**, notably:
a. Promotion of knowledge and information society;
b. Improvement of quality of education and research;
c. Encourage collaboration and dialogue among higher education institutions;
d. Increase the efficiency of higher education institutions; e. Increase the involvement of civil society in education.

**3. Exploit the use of innovative methodologies and ICT to enhance Higher Education.** This could be achieved through the following actions:
a. Cooperation between Euromed Distance universities;
b. Cooperation aiming at the creation of a Mediterranean Digital Library and portal including translation between Euromed languages.

**4. Enhancing participation to a Euromed Scholarship Scheme in the framework of** the Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window, including by providing a more flexible framework and by studying the possibilities of joint funding to allow increate participation.

**5. Support Euromed Higher Education Programmes**. This could be achieved through the following actions:
a. Sustain the TEMPUS Programme with a more strategic orientation through university networks and participation of Higher Education ministries;
b. Strengthen the participation of the Mediterranean Partner Countries' universities in the Erasmus Mundus Actions.

**6. Integration of the Mediterranean Partner Countries in the European Research Area.** This could be achieved through the following actions:
a. Promotion of links between centres of excellence in the Euromed region;
b. Promotion of joint networks of Excellence in fields of mutual interest, e.g. renewable energy, biotechnology, environment, etc.;
c. Promotion of regional initiatives in RTDI;
d. Promotion of contact points in Mediterranean Partner Countries' Universities and research Institutes to disseminate information and promote participation in FP7;
e. Promotion of National funds in Mediterranean Partner Countries for Scientific Research and Development;
f. Explore the possibility of co-finance by Mediterranean Partner Countries in FP7 for coordinated activities;
g. Enhance the participation of Mediterranean Partner Countries in FP7;
h. Cooperation in capacity building in; i. Formulating research projects; ii. Particular areas of mutual interest.

**7. Promote innovation, knowledge-sharing and its return on the Industry and economy in Mediterranean Partner Countries.** This could be achieved through the following actions:
a. Promotion of the creation of national and regional innovation funds within the Mediterranean Partner Countries to support innovation and exploitation of research outputs by industry;
b. Implementation of the 'Euromed Innovation & Technology Programme', which aims at developing innovativeness in Business firms (esp. SMEs);
c. Promote the participation of Mediterranean Partner Countries in activities related to innovation, including under the EU Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP);
d. Develop Capacity building in R&D and innovation management.

**8. Enhance Effective Mobility in the Euromed region**. This could be achieved through the following actions:

a.   Establishing Mobility Centres and Portals as well as promoting mobility contact points in the Mediterranean Partner countries;

b.   Establishing national programmes of mobility and open access to incoming mobility from EU Member States to Mediterranean Partner Countries. In this framework, Ministers make a call to facilitate exit and entry procedures, including visa procedures for students, researchers and teachers among Euromed countries.

**9. Attain Brain Circulation and Knowledge Dissemination.** This could be achieved through the following actions:

a.   Support to expatriate researchers through networking opportunities and allowing periodic research sabbaticals to countries of origin;

b.   Promotion of a regional network of Institutes for Advanced Studies & Research, through which European Academic Institutions cooperate with selected Mediterranean Partner Countries' Universities to form the best human capital;

c.   Address the issues linked to brain circulation, notably through strengthening the return phase in the different mobility programmes.

**Implementation & Follow-up:** The existing Monitoring Committee for Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in RTD will be complemented, as appropriate, with the creation of an expert group so as to cover Higher Education, with a view to implementing the conference objectives, deliverables and actions. They will meet periodically, or as required, to review the achieved progress and report to the Euromed Committee, not later than the second semester of 2008. The second Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Higher Education and Scientific Research, wasn't held in 2009 to assess the achievements made in this regard, as well as promoting further co-operation.

# 3. THE BOLOGNA PROCESS: GENERAL OVERVIEW AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Cosimo Notarstefano

## 3.1 Introduction

With one exception, the European Higher Education Conventions[8] date from the 1950s or early 1960s. The UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the States belonging to the Europe Region dates from 1979. Higher education in Europe has changed since then, and the conventions have not been adjusted accordingly.

On the national level, the predominant change has been the diversification of higher education. Whereas national higher education systems in the 1950s were made up of traditional universities run explicitly by State authorities or, as in the case of Catholic universities, implicitly approved by them, systems are now much more diverse.

A large percentage of students in higher education attended non-university institutions which provide shorter and more vocationally oriented courses, such as the German Fachhochschulen or the Norwegian statlige høgskoler or follow, in universities, non-traditional programmes of shorter duration with a stronger emphasis on professional education, such as the French Instituts Universitaires de Technologie (I.U.T.).

Conscious of the fact that the right to education is a human right, and that higher education, which is instrumental in the pursuit and advancement of knowledge, constitutes an exceptionally rich cultural and scientific asset for both individuals and society, the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region was adopted by the Council of Europe and Unesco at a Diplomatic Conference in Lisbon on 8-11 April 1997.

The fundamental orientations of the Bologna process were established in the Sorbonne Joint Declaration on Harmonisation of the Architecture of the European Higher Education System, signed on 25 May 1998 by the education ministers of France, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom.

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[8] European Convention on the Equivalence of Diplomas leading to Admission to Universities (1953, CETS No. 15), and its Protocol (1964, CETS No. 49); European Convention on the Equivalence of Periods of University Study (1956, CETS No. 21); European Convention on the Academic Recognition of University Qualifications (1959, CETS No. 32); European Convention on the General Equivalence of Periods of University Study (1990, CETS No. 138).

The Sorbonne Declaration was focused on the following principles in order to:
- improve the international transparency of programmes and the recognition of qualifications by means of *gradual convergence towards a common framework of qualifications and cycles of study*;
- facilitate the *mobility of students and teachers* in the European area and their integration into the European labour market;
- design *a common degree level system* for undergraduates (bachelor degree) and graduates (Master's and doctoral degrees).

## 3.2 The Bologna process

One year later, in June 1999, was signed by ministers responsible for higher education in 29[9] European countries, the *Bologna Declaration on the European Higher Education Area* (inspired by the previous *Sorbonne Declaration*), in order to establish the general framework for the modernisation and reform of European higher education.

This process of reform came to be called the *Bologna process[10]* and, the Bologna Declaration, indicates the objective of increasing the international competitiveness of the European system of higher education facing to the global evolution from around the world.

The *Bologna process* promoted a series of meetings of Ministers responsible for higher education at which policy decisions have been taken with the goal to establish a *European Higher Education Area* by 2010.

In the Bologna Declaration, ministers affirmed their intention to:
- Adopt a system of easily readable and comparable degrees;
- Implement a system based essentially on two main cycles;
- Establish a system of credits (such as ECTS);
- Support the mobility of students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff;
- Promote European cooperation in quality assurance;
- Develop the European dimensions in higher education (in terms of curricular development and international institutional cooperation).

In May 2001, a meeting was held in Prague[11] to establish the main priorities that should drive the Bologna process in the years ahead.

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[9] In 1999, the signatory countries included the then 15 EU Member States (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom), plus three EFTA countries (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland) and 11 EU candidate countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia).
International institutions such as the European Commission, the Council of Europe and several networks, associations of universities, rectors and European students also participated in drafting the Declaration.

[10] We must consider that to set up the *Bologna process*, six ministerial conferences have been held from 1998 to 2009 in different European cities, namely Paris (at the Sorbonne University), Bologna, Prague, Berlin, Bergen, London and Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve.

The higher education ministers also decided to create a *Bologna Followup Group* (BFUG)[12] responsible for the continuing development of the process, and composed of representatives of all signatory countries, the European Commission and chaired by the rotating EU Presidency.

The *Prague Communiqué* focused three fundamental elements of the Bologna process:
- Developing **lifelong learning**;
- Involving **higher education institutions and students**;
- Promoting of the **attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area**.

In September 2003, during the Berlin Conference[13], ministers charged the BFUG with preparing detailed reports on the progress and implementation of the intermediate priorities and organising a stocktaking process before the following ministerial conference in 2005.

In fact, with the *Berlin Communiqué*, the Bologna process gained added value by setting specific priorities for the next two years:
- Development of quality assurance at institutional, national and European levels;
- Implementation of the two-cycle system;
- Recognition of degrees and periods of studies, including the provision of the Diploma

Supplement automatically and free of charge for all graduates as of 2005;
- Elaboration of a framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area;
- Inclusion of the doctoral level as the third cycle in the process;
- Promotion of closer links between the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area.

The ministers responsible for higher education met in Bergen[14] (2005) to discuss the mid-term achievements of the Bologna process, adopted the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA).

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[11] In 2001, 33 countries participated, with Croatia, Cyprus and Turkey accepted as new members. Liechtenstein was also included, having committed to the process between the Bologna and Prague conferences, and the European Commission also became a member.

[12] The Council of Europe, the European University Association (EUA), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), the National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB), later renamed the European Students Union (ESU), take part as consultative members in the work of the BFUG.

[13] The *Berlin Communiqué* was an important stage in the follow up to the Bologna process with the inclusion of seven new signatory countries (Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Holy See, Montenegro, Russia and Serbia), 40 countries were then involved.

[14] By May 2005, the Bologna process extended to 45 signatory countries with the inclusion of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

In the Bergen Communiqué, ministers enlarged their priorities for 2007, which also included:

- **Reinforcing the social dimension** and removing obstacles to mobility;
- Implementing **standards and guidelines for quality assurance** as proposed in the ENQA report;
- Developing **national frameworks of qualifications in compatibility with the adopted Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area**;
- Creating opportunities for **flexible learning paths in higher education**, including procedures for recognition of prior learning.

During The London Ministerial meeting[15], held on 17 and 18 May 2007, provided a landmark in establishing the first legal body to be created through the Bologna process – the *European Quality Assurance Register* (EQAR). This is to become a register of quality assurance agencies that comply substantially with the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) on the basis of external evaluation.

In the *London Communiqué* ministers agreed to develop a double approach in two main areas (the social dimension with national strategy and action plans and the global dimension, with a strategy acting on European higher education) and :

- Welcomed the creation of the **European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)**;
- Committed to completing **national frameworks of qualifications** in compatibility with the adopted Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area by 2010;
- Promised to report **on national action to remove obstacles to the mobility** of students and staff;
- Pledged to implement and report on **national strategies for the social dimension**, including action plans and measures to evaluate their effectiveness;
- Adopted a strategy for the European Higher Education Area in global setting.

## 3.3 The priorities for the European Higher Education Area for the next decade

The Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Ministerial meeting, held on 28 and 29 April 2009, took stock of the achievements of the Bologna process and laid out the priorities for the European Higher Education Area for the next decade.

Looking back to ten years of European higher education reform, Ministers emphasised the achievements of the Bologna process, highlighting in particular the increased compatibility and comparabilità of European education systems through the implementation of structural changes and the use of ECTS and the Diploma Supplement.

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[15] The country membership expanded to 46 with the recognition of the Republic of Montenegro as an independent State in the European Higher Education Area.

Acknowledging that the European Higher Education Area is not yet a reality, the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué also established the priorities for the decade until 2020.

The organisational structures of the Bologna process were endorsed as being fit for purpose, and ministers decided that in the future the Bologna process would be co-chaired by the country holding the EU presidency and a non-EU country.

In the ***Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué***, ministers agreed that:

- Each country should set **measurable targets for widening overall participation and increasing the participation of under-represented social groups** in higher education by the end of the next decade;
- **By 2020 at least 20 % of those graduating in the EHEA should have had a study or training period abroad**;
- **Lifelong learning and employability** are important missions of higher education;
- **Student-centred learning** should be the goal of ongoing curriculum reform.

In the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, the Ministers[16] responsible for higher education in the countries participating in the Bologna Process identified the following **higher education priorities for the coming decade**:

- social dimension,
- equitable access and completion,
- lifelong learning, employability,
- student-centred learning and the teaching mission of higher education,
- education, research and innovation;
- international openness,
- mobility,
- data collection,
- multidimensional transparency tools,
- funding.

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[16] For the short term, the Ministers therefore entrusted the BFUG *"to prepare a work plan up to 2012 to take forward the priorities identified in this Communiqué and the recommendations of the reports submitted to this Ministerial conference, allowing the future integration of the outcome of the independent assessment of the Bologna Process. In particular the BFUG is asked to:*
*• define the indicators used for measuring and monitoring mobility and the social dimension in collection*
*• consider how balanced mobility could be achieved within the EHEA;*
*• monitor the development of the transparency mechanisms and to report back to the 2012 ministerial conference;*
*• set up a network, making optimal use of existing structures, for better information on and promotion of the Bologna Process outside the EHEA;*
*• follow-up on the recommendations of analysis of the national action plans on recognition"* *(Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, par. 26).*

To implement the Bologna reforms and to make progress in all priority areas, strong efforts will be required especially at national and institutional level (even if these efforts can be supported by joint European action).

The recent ***Budapest-Vienna Declaration on the European Higher Education* Area** adopted on March 12, 2010, by the Ministers responsible for higher education in the countries participating in the Bologna Process, to launch the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), as envisioned in the Bologna Declaration of 1999.

In a unique partnership between public authorities, higher education institutions, students and staff, together with employers, quality assurance agencies, international organisations and European institutions, the Ministers have engaged in a series of reforms to build a European Higher Education Area based on trust, cooperation and respect for the diversity of cultures, languages, and higher education systems.

In fact, the Ministers:
- recommit to academic freedom as well as autonomy and accountability of higher education institutions as principles of the European Higher Education Area,
- underline the role the higher education institutions play in fostering peaceful democratic societies and strengthening social cohesion and the key role of the academic community - institutional leaders, teachers, researchers, administrative staff and students - in making the European Higher Education Area a reality, providing the learners with the opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills and competences furthering their careers and lives as democratic citizens as well as their personal development;
- reaffirm that higher education is a public responsibility and commit, notwithstanding these difficult economic times, to ensuring that higher education institutions have the necessary resources within a frame work established and overseen by public authorities;
- ask the Bologna Follow-up Group to propose measures to facilitate the proper and full implementation of the agreed Bologna principles and action lines across the European Higher Education Area, especially at the national and institutional levels, among others by developing additional working methods, such as peer learning, study visits and other information sharing activities.

By continuously developing, enhancing and strengthening the European Higher Education Area and taking further the synergy with the European Research Area, Europe will be able to successfully face the challenges of the next decade.

The next Ministerial Meeting to take stock of progress and to drive the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve agenda forward, will be hosted by Romania in Bucharest on 26-27 April 2012.

## 3.4   The Bologna three-cycle-structure

Central to the Bologna process is the commitment of countries to establish a three-cycle degree structure in higher education.

Contrary to persisting misconceptions, neither the Bologna Declaration nor subsequent ministerial communiqués rigidly prescribe the length of these cycles.

They merely state that first cycle qualifications should last a 'minimum of three years', while Master's degrees should range between 60-120 ECTS credits.

The Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA), adopted by the Ministers in Bergen in May 2005, reflects this focus on the three-cycle structure. Typically, first cycle qualifications comprise 180-240 ECTS credits while second cycle qualifications comprise 60-120 ECTS credits.

These typical models are referred to in this report as the 'typical Bologna structure'.

The three-cycle structure has been overwhelmingly introduced in most institutions and programmes in Bologna countries. However, most of them report that they still have long programmes in specific disciplines that are not in line with the typical Bologna cycle structures.

This applies most often to medicine and related fields, and sometimes to other regulated professions, theology, music and fine arts. Nevertheless, as far as medicine is concerned, Belgium (both Flemish and French Communities), the Netherlands and Switzerland have introduced the three-cycle structure.
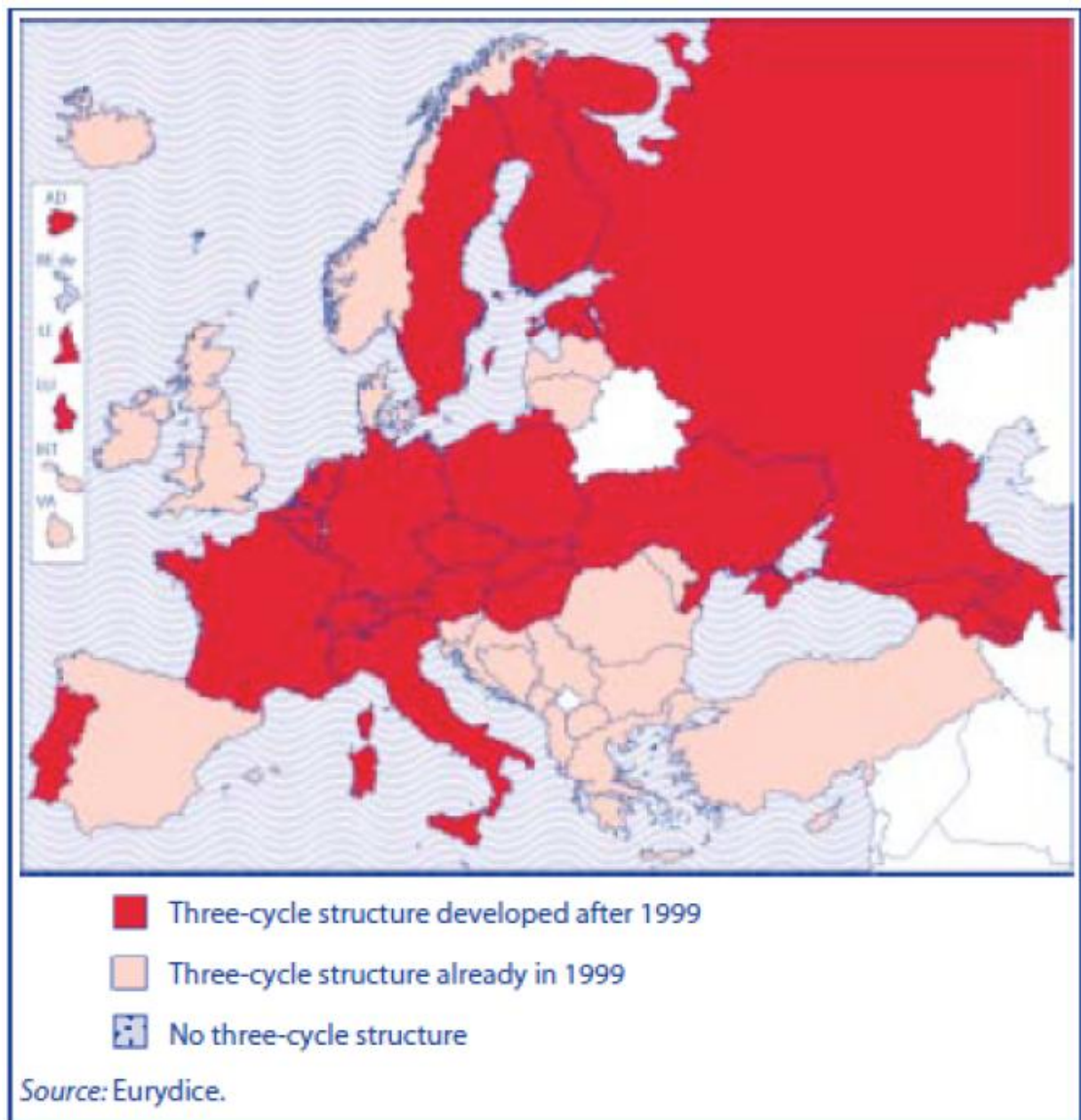
*Figure 3.1: The tree-cycle structure 1999-2009*



Three-cycle structure developed after 1999

Three-cycle structure already in 1999

No three-cycle structure

Source: Eurydice.

*Figure 3.2: Timeline of the Bologna process*

**Timeline of the Bologna process**

| Mobility of students and teachers | Mobility of students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff | Social dimension of mobility | Portability of loans and grants Improvement of mobility data | Attention to visa and work permits | Challenges of visa and work permits, pension systems and recognition | Benchmark of 20 % by 2020 for student mobility |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A common two-cycle degree system | Easily readable and comparable degrees | Fair recognition Development of recognised Joint degrees | Inclusion of doctoral level as third cycle Recognition of degrees and periods of studies Joint degrees | FQ-EHEA adopted National Qualifications Frameworks launched | National Qualifications Frameworks by 2010 | National Qualifications Frameworks by 2012 |
| | | Social dimension | Equal access | Reinforcement of the social dimension | Commitment to produce national action plans with effective monitoring | National targets for the social dimension to be measured by 2020 |
| | | Lifelong learning (LLL) | Alignment of national LLL policies Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) | Flexible learning paths in higher education | Work towards a common understanding of the role of higher education in LLL Partnerships to improve employability | LLL as a public responsibility requiring strong partnerships Call to work on employability |
| Use of credits | A system of credits (ECTS) | ECTS and Diploma Supplement (DS) | ECTS for credit accumulation | | Need for coherent use of tools and recognition practices | Continuing implementation of Bologna tools |
| | European cooperation in quality assurance | Cooperation between quality assurance and recognition professionals | Quality assurance at institutional, national and European level | European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance adopted | Creation of the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) | Quality as an overarching focus for EHEA |
| Europe of Knowledge | European dimensions in higher education | Attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area | Links between higher education and research areas | International cooperation on the basis of values and sustainable development | Strategy to improve the global dimension of the Bologna process adopted | Enhance global policy dialogue through Bologna Policy Fora |
| 1998 | 1999 | 2001 | 2003 | 2005 | 2007 | 2009 |
| Sorbonne Declaration | Bologna Declaration | Prague Communiqué | Berlin Communiqué | Bergen Communiqué | London Communiqué | Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué |

Source: EACEA, *Focus on Higher Education in Europe 2010: The Impact of the Bologna Process*, Brussels: Eurydice, 2010, 158 p.

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