



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE



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CONTENTS

1. ...from the Commission

- The Bologna Process

2. ... from the Presidency

- Comenius week

3. ... Sport

- Value of big football clubs on the rise

4. ... *Research*

- Children like science if their teachers do

5. ... online Consultation

- European Heritage Label



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

... from the Commission

The Bologna Process – reforming universities in the next decade

On 28 and 29 April, Ministers responsible for higher education from 46 European countries will meet in Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, to take stock of the achievements of the Bologna Process, set a new agenda, and agree on priorities for the European Higher Education Area for the next decade up to 2020. Reflecting the huge interest from countries outside Europe in the reforms taking place in the European Higher Education Area, for the first time a 'Bologna Policy Forum' will take place between the 46 countries participating in the Process and 20 countries from outside Europe.

The Bologna process has grown from 29 countries in 1999 to 46 today. The latest **Bologna Stocktaking Report**, which is to be presented to Ministers in Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve concludes that good, albeit somewhat uneven, progress has been made in implementing the Bologna reforms. The Commission's latest report in support of the process confirms this positive conclusion and indicates that substantial progress has been made, including on structural reforms. The focus should now be on modernising national policies and on achieving concrete implementation of the reforms of Europe's higher education institutions.

The main Bologna reforms concentrate on:

- the **three-cycle degree structure** (bachelor, master, doctorate),
- **quality assurance** in higher education, and
- **recognition** of qualifications and periods of study.

Together, these reform efforts have created new opportunities for universities and students. The launch last year of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education is helping to raise the visibility of European higher education and boost confidence in institutions and programmes within Europe and worldwide.

Commenting on the forthcoming meeting, the European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, Ján Figel', said that the Bologna Process has led to greater compatibility and comparability of systems of higher education and that among other things, it has made Europe a more attractive destination for students from other continents. Particularly in the current

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Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

economic crisis, he believes that higher education has a key role to play in supporting sustainable economic recovery and in stimulating innovation. "The universities must modernise, and the widespread recognition of this need by governments not only in Europe, but also around the world, gives the Bologna Process the vital support it needs for success," the Commissioner said.

A recent **Eurobarometer Survey** among students in higher education shows that students want wider access to higher education and that universities should open up cooperation with the world of work and to lifelong learning. For example, an overwhelming **97% of students believed that it was important to provide students with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in the labour market.**

A large majority (87%) also agreed that it was important for higher education institutions to foster innovation and an **entrepreneurial mindset among students and staff**, and that there should be a possibility to undertake **work placements in private enterprises as part of a study programme**. More students want to study abroad and a majority want more information about the quality of higher education institutions in order to make informed study choices.

The European Commission is working with Member States and the higher education sector to help implement the modernisation agenda for universities in the framework of the **Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs**. Support is provided through the Lifelong Learning Programme (Erasmus actions), the 7th EU Framework Programme for Research and the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme, as well as the Structural Funds and loans from the European Investment Bank (EIB).

The Commission also supports higher education reforms in the wider world, in concrete terms, through its external policies and programmes; support for the EU's neighbouring countries is available, for example, through the Tempus programme. Relations with other partner countries are supported through a series of bilateral or multilateral cooperation programmes: EU-USA/Canada, EDULINK, ALFA for Latin America and the new Nyerere Programme for Africa.

Finally, there is also the **Erasmus Mundus** programme, which provides scholarships for students from across the world to study on integrated master-level programmes in different European countries. The new phase of the programme also includes doctoral studies. Cooperation with non-European institutions is also provided for in the Commission's support to research activities



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

of higher education institutions through the 7th EU Framework Programme for Research. The Marie Curie Actions offer opportunities to individual researchers to participate in a research team in another country.

[Website of the Bologna Process](#)



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

... from the Presidency



Partner schools open doors in Europe-wide Comenius Week from 20 April

Between 20 April and 8 May, schools across Europe will open their doors to show how partnerships with schools in other EU countries can bring creative and innovative learning into the classroom. During Comenius Week 2009 many of the around 10,000 schools that take part in the EU's Comenius programme will present their activities to visitors through open days, competitions and conferences.

The Comenius programme, the part of the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme dedicated to school education, encourages and supports cross-border partnerships between schools in Europe. Participating schools work on common projects, visit their partner schools and set up video conferences or online chats. School students work together on art works, videos and publications - learning about each other's countries and the variety of Europe's cultures.

More about the Comenius programme:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc84_en.htm



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

... Sport

Value of big football clubs on the rise

According to the 2009 annual listing by US magazine Forbes, the average value of each of Europe's 25 richest football clubs has risen by 8% to \$597 million. This figure was reached on the basis of accounts from season 2007-2008 which ended in June and which saw an overall increase of 25% in operational results, but do not take account of the financial crisis. The crisis is not, however, expected to affect the figures, with lucrative long-term TV contracts and sponsorship deals shielding teams from the effects of the recession. Forbes again notes that the trend is to value clubs at 2.4 times their turnover (Real Madrid and Bayern Munich). In closer detail, Manchester United heads the list with a value of \$1.87 billion, ahead of Real Madrid (\$1.35 billion) and Arsenal (\$1.2 billion).
(Source – Agence Europe)

... Research

European study shows that when teachers like science, students do too

Did you ever blame your teacher for hating science? If you answered yes, you're not alone. New research shows that the shrinking number of students in Europe who choose to study science is influenced by how schools and teachers shape their attitudes. The research findings were applied in the EU-supported POLLEN ('Pollen seed cities for science, a community approach for a sustainable growth of science education in Europe') project, funded under the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) to the tune of EUR 1.75 million.

Led by Professor Tina Jarvis of the School of Education at the University of Leicester in the UK, the study examined how the ideas of science and technology develop in the minds of young children.

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Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

This Specific Support Action targeted the development of a model for the renewal of science education in primary schools, based on an experimental inquiry approach already implemented in 12 European countries, specifically Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Spain, France, Italy, Hungary, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden and the UK. Three other countries have since joined the programme: Luxembourg, Romania and Slovakia.

This approach fuelled autonomy in children, as well as critical thinking and language skills, but most of all, the eagerness to learn more about science and technology. The study also confirmed that teachers no longer consider science a difficult subject to teach. Their motivation for the subject was stimulated by the extra support and resources afforded to them including a methodological guide outlining basic principles behind the inquiry-based approach and an iterative process.

For her part, Professor Jarvis said: 'There is a concern that there have been declining numbers of pupils choosing to study science in Europe. There is evidence that the decline in attitudes to science starts in the primary school and is particularly noticeable for girls.'

According to the researcher, it is important for the EU Member States to 'educate the potential scientists of the future, as well as the citizens, to engage with socio-scientific issues'. Another important factor that should be examined is the schools' and teachers' attitudes to science, particularly because they play a huge role in the career choice a student makes, as well as in how they succeed in achieving their objective.

Professor Jarvis presented the research at the lecture, 'Changing European primary pupils' and their teachers' attitudes to science' in mid March. Based on the findings, students start off their education by having a narrow or inaccurate view of science and technology. Their development is impacted by two factors: the school and how teachers are trained.

For the two-year study, Professor Jarvis and her team identified four teacher types, focusing on who required different types of 'science in-service', a programme to help change attitudes about science. A link was demonstrated between the types of teacher and the rate of development of pupils' understanding of science as well as their attitudes.



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

It should be noted that further research conducted by the National Space Centre in the UK confirmed the importance of the teachers' attitudes to science. Established more than a decade ago and opened to the public in 2001, the Leicester-based Centre combines education, information and research on one site. Around 50 000 students visit the Centre each year.



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

CONSULTATION on EU plans for a European Heritage Label

The European Heritage Label was launched as an intergovernmental initiative by several European states in 2007. It aims to strengthen the support of European citizens for a shared European identity and to foster a sense of belonging to a common cultural space.

See EYC Update – 27.03.2009 for more details

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