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# The Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area

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Ensuring Worldwide Competitiveness of  
Master's and PhD Programmes at  
European Universities of Technology

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## Structure of the Presentation

- I. Universities facing competition
- II. Universities implementing Bologna
- III. The future policy agenda
  - The Glasgow Declaration
  - The Bergen Communiqué
- IV. Responding to competition - linking the higher education and research agendas
- V. Challenges for European Higher Education

## I. Universities facing competition

Europe's universities are facing increasingly competitive pressures on a national, regional and global basis

- Rethinking study structures & reforming curricula to attract students
- Reconsidering research training and careers to keep the best researchers
- Developing and diversifying financing strategies to meet new demands & be able to compete
- Promoting strategic cooperation among universities to remain competitive (achieving critical mass in key fields, common research strategies, exchange of good practices)

## II - TRENDS IV - Universities Implementing Bologna

- General acceptance of the need for reform – an opportunity to address long standing problems
- Change accepted but not always supported – questions of institutional autonomy, human & financial resources... and of leadership
- Much done to implement 2/3 cycles but curricular restructuring process still has a long way to go
- Bologna about more than harmonising structures – a complex social & cultural transformation process
- First cycle qualifications & employability – do they meet the needs of the labour market, are they accepted by society?

## II. TRENDS IV - Conclusions & open questions

- Universities are adopting the reforms & accepting ownership but improvements often on hold > lack of resources
- Very different national contexts & level of incentives - if this continues, will this have a long term impact for Europe?
- Does Bologna blur traditional differences between types of institutions?
- How to fund multiple reforms? What does this mean for access and progression issues? Does the focus on restructuring curricula means less time for research?

### III. The policy agenda - the Glasgow Declaration

- Ensuring that universities take the lead in the implementation phase of the Bologna reforms
- Advocating for more functional autonomy for universities across Europe
- Launching the funding debate at European level – developing the arguments for an increase in funding for European universities
- **Emphasising the links between the Lisbon and the Bologna goals and processes**
- Promoting the European dimension
- Considering the contours of the EHEA in 2010

### III. - The policy agenda (2) - the Bergen Communiqué -

- “achieving the goals” - emphasis on implementation & sharing of expertise
- “Stocktaking” continuing to monitor progress: degree system – QA – recognition – new challenges for all partners
- Agreeing additional priorities for action until 2007:
  - ✓ Higher education & research
  - ✓ Social dimension
  - ✓ Mobility
  - ✓ External dimension
- Defining the contours of the EHEA 2010





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## IV. Responding to competition - linking the higher education and research agendas

- President Barroso in Glasgow: “Universities are one of Europe’s top priorities”
- New demands on research training and for an open & competitive labour market for researchers
- ‘Graduate education’ – at masters and doctoral level at the centre of the debate
- The special role of the doctorate – as the third cycle in the Bologna Process and the bridge to a researcher career





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## IV. Master level

- Huge variety exists – in type, duration, funding possibilities
- Research masters and professional programmes
- Tendency to create too many - institutional strategy needed
- Often designed with narrow focus on preceding BA – vertical mobility perceived as a threat rather than an opportunity
- But more & more institutions introducing interdisciplinary masters
- Research exposure most often begins at Master level

## IV. Doctoral programmes & researcher careers

- Training young researchers by research a core function of European universities
- Universities are aware of the challenges & are beginning
  - ✓ To adapt to a more competitive & diversified global labour market
  - ✓ To introduce more structured programmes & training in a wide range of transferable skills
- Important element of attractiveness & competitiveness for universities

## V. Challenges for European higher education

- Reforming higher education and optimising research performance at the same time
  - ✓ Means managing multiple institutional missions
  - ✓ Makes institutional differentiation & profiling essential
  - ✓ Requires rethinking governance, ensuring leadership & effective management...
- Managing major reform processes & strengthening the European dimension in an increasingly global environment
  - ✓ Avoiding 'Eurocentrism'
  - ✓ Ensuring that 'Bologna' is open to the world
  - ✓ But Bologna also has an impact on the rest of the world