

CONGRES MONDIAL D' EDUCATION COMPAREE

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### **AUSPICIADO POR:**

CONCILIO MUNDIAL DE SOCIEDADES DE EDUCACIÓN COMPARADA (WCCES). ASOCIACIÓN DE PEDAGOGOS DE CUBA (APC) LE CONSEIL MONDIAL DES ASSOCIATIONS D' ÉDUCATION COMPARÉE (WCCES) L' ASSOCIATION DES PÉDAGOGUES DE CUBA (ACP) WORLD COUNCIL OF COMPARATIVE EDUCATIONS SOCIETIES (WCCES) ASSOCIATION OF CUBAN EDUCATORS (APC)

# 27/10/04 de 14:00-15-45 en la Sala 9

## NUEVOS RETOS PARA LAS UNIVERSIDADES (ERSITIES' NEW CHALLENGES

- Institutional Change, Institutional Culture and Gender in South African Higher Education. eitumetse Obakeng Mabokela, South Africa
- Higher Education, Social Justice and Development: The Case of the Palestinians in Israel. Majid Al-Haj, Israel
- Les Formations Universitiares Développent-Elles Les Pays Africains. Frederick Moens, Belgium
- Beyond Apartheid: Globalization's Silencing of Democratizing Policies at Universities in South Africa.
  Sal Muthayan, **South Africa**

# 27/10/04 de 16:00-17:45 en la Sala 9

### PROCESO DE REFORMAS DE BOLOGÑA E BOLOGNA REFORM PROCESS

- 30 European Higher Education Area (Ehea): The Greek Case. Georgios Stamelos, Greece
- -31 Humboldt's Heir. Braindrain and German Higher Education Reform. Luise P. McCarthy & Debra Hinderliter, **USA**
- -32 L' Impact Du Processus De Bologne Sur Les Politiques De L'Enseignement Universitaire Roumain.

  Adriana Manona Gorga, Rumania
- All Roads Lead to Bologna?: Sweden and the Standardization of University Education.

  Mina Marie Odowd, **Sweden**
- 2-34 The Importance of Being Elitist. Kimberly Ochs, **United Kingdom**

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European Higher Education Area (EHEA): The Greek case

# As.Prof. Georgios Stamelos, Phd. Youli Papadiamadaki, Phd.Andreas Vassilopoulos, M.Ed. Marianna Martzakli

### University of Patras, Greece

### 1. Introduction

This paper focuses on the issue of the construction of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), currently underway in Europe, and its implementation in Greece.

It is obvious that the construction of EHEA is not an isolated process: it is linked to the construction of the European Research Area (ERA), the European Lifelong Learning Area (ELLA), and the institution of a single social area in the domain of education. It is related to the wider debate concerning the response of a unified Europe to the challenges posed by globalization and internationalization pressures and accommodates the political desire for the promotion of European cooperation. However, we shall not comment further on these issues. Our objectives in this short presentation will be to:

Report on the current objectives of the Bologna process

Describe briefly the Greek Higher Education System (GHES) and

investigate its level of compatibility with the objectives of Bologna

Point to implementation problems and explain the reactions and the different collective strategic responses adopted by the two sectors of the GHES (universities and technological institutes) regarding Bologna. In our effort we employ concepts derived from neo- institutional theory.

# 2. The current objectives of the Bologna process

It seems like an oxymoron, but the Bologna process begun in Sorbonne. In 1998, four of the most influential European countries, France, Germany, the UK and Italy, embarked on an attempt to create a common frame of reference to promote convergence of their higher education systems. The reasons for undertaking such an initiative and its objectives were incorporated in what is now known as the Sorbonne Declaration. It is quite intriguing, to note that the initiative of the "four" to sign the Sorbonne Declaration met with the opposition of other EU member-states who received it as an attempt to introduce a directorate.

In 1999, in a response to the Sorbonne Declaration, 29 European Ministers of Education met in Bologna to discuss potential cooperation to promote **compatibility and comparability** of Higher Education systems. Their meeting resulted in the Bologna Declaration.

Since then, two more Communiqués have been issued, following respective meetings of the European Ministers of Education, in Prague (2001) d Berlin (2003). Meanwhile, the Bologna process has received even wider

support, since participating countries increased from 29 in Bologna, to 33 in Prague and 40 in Berlin. The active participation of the European University Association (EUA) and the National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB) in the Bologna process has further legitimized this process. Since Prague, the EU fully participates in this process, as an independent member.

It appears that both initiatives – Sorbonne and Bologna - appear connected to the "hyper-activity" of the Commission regarding the European integration in the field of education in the after Maastricht period – a field that European nation-states are very sensitive to. Besides, the issue of confrontation between the European Council and the European Commission is an ongoing one.

The Bologna process, which is a European countries' initiative with the full support of the EU has acquired further momentum after the meeting of the European Ministers of Education in Berlin (2003). The current objectives of the Bologna process, conducive to changes in the mode of organisation of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) can be summarized as follows:

Adoption of a system based on two cycles,

 Development of mutually shared criteria and methodologies for quality assurance,

 Establishment of ECTS<sup>1</sup>, to provide a generalized basis for the national transfer and accumulation system and adoption of the Diploma Supplement,

Promotion of lifelong learning at the Higher Education level,

Recognition of prior learning.

# 3-The implementation of the Bologna process objectives in the GHES

# 3.1. Brief Description of the Greek Higher Education System

The GHES traditionally comprised a university and a technological education (TEI) sector.

Until recently TEIs had a status lower to the status of universities, operated with different statutes and offered a three-year first cycle of studies. Until 2001 the teaching staff of TEI were not required to possess a Doctoral Degree in order to be appointed and generally the academic qualifications of the presently appointed staff are lower to the qualifications of academics.

As a result of harmonization of Greek to EU legislation, directive 89/48 and the Bologna Declaration, TEIs were granted by Law 2916/ 2001 university status, i.e the right to conduct research, participate in postgraduate study programs as partners of (Greek or EU) universities and confer master level postgraduate degrees<sup>2</sup>. They have been given time until 2008 to reorganize and submit new statutes.

TEIs still do not offer third cycle programs and do not confer Doctoral degrees.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The issues of promotion of mobility and of the European Dimension in Higher Education, which constitute additional objectives incorporated in the Berlin Communiqué, are approached through the establishment of the ECTS, since the latter facilitates the former.

Most important, an intermediate government body (ITE), still in operation, offers TEIs counseling on curriculum structure and content and on the development of policies to face the challenges posed by europeanisation. In this respect TEIs are very different from universities, which, within the framework of the law, set their own policies, on the basis of institutional autonomy.

Therefore, in the case of Greece, it is important to distinguish between HEIs belonging in the two sectors of the higher education since despite the recent reform of the technological education system, as the differences in the historic traditions, status and mode of organisation of these institutions have led them to adopt different collective strategies to face the challenges of the Bologna Process.

Despite their differences, HEIs share a common legally set and sanctioned mode of organisation, which sets a definite and detailed framework for their function and leads to similarities in their social structure. In this instance the law is exerting regulative (i.e. coercive) and occasionally normative<sup>3</sup> pressures. It is the academics who try to make decisions on the basis of the regulative framework, with due respect to academic freedom.

In order to understand how power and authority is spread across levels in universities, one should note that decision-making is based on collective bodies of academics (with participation of low administrative personnel and students):

- The Senate, consisting of representatives of the entire academic community, is the highest administrative collective body of the University, setting the overall policies. The Senate is the competent authority to decide how state funding will be distributed across departments and to endorse and suggest to the Ministry of Education the institution of new departments. The Rector convenes the Senate, chairs its meetings and sets the agenda. The Rector's Council is the highest executive body. The central administration of the university also includes the Research Committee, the International or European Relations Committee and the Career's Office. Under the supervision of academics appointed as Heads of Committees, the central authorities of universities fulfil daily administrative tasks.
- Top managerial and administrative functions are performed only by high rank, tenured academics elected to the positions of President of the Department, Director of Postgraduate Studies Program, Dean of School, Rector or Vice-Rector. Practically, to be elected in such positions an academic needs the support of colleagues. Such a legislative framework facilitates the development of a "culture of equality" and of relationships based on a balance of power between academics and across departments. Even the Rector, the highest university authority, can be considered as "a first among equals" and is usually taking seriously into consideration the views of colleagues on critical issues.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> For a detailed discussion on how the law can be alternative interpreted as a coercive framework restraining action or as broad framework "for collective sense-making" see Suchman and Edelman, 1997; North,1990; Pratt and Zeckhauser 1985.

- The General Assembly of the academics (G.A.) is the administrative authority of a department, deciding on issues related to the teaching activities of the department. The Administrative Council of the Department is the relevant executive body. Secretariats provide the academics with secretarial and low administrative support. The G.A. is the main locus of decision-making on issues related to reform/update of the curriculum, Within the framework of the collective decision-making by academics regarding curriculum, each academic pursues teaching on the basis of academic freedom regarding content.
- The G.A. decides on the composition of an electoral body of academics, which through an open process evaluates candidates for election, promotion through the academic ranks or in order to obtain tenure. On such occasions an academic's involvement in (international) research activities as well as its teaching activities are evaluated. This form of peer group evaluation is presently the only institutionalized evaluation process in Greek universities, although some universities/departments have recently introduced processes of evaluation of courses by the students.

Universities' **research activities** are highly decentralized, not restricted by top-down policies and depend on the initiatives of the academic. The University's Research Committee, from own funds, supports a small number of research projects and influences only to a limited extent, the research options/choices of academics. Therefore academics support their research activities by international/state funds<sup>4</sup>.

### 3.2 GHES and the Bologna objectives

The GHES is under pressure to implement the policies proposed in Bologna. Currently the field of higher education is under normative pressure, emanating from both the national (i.e. the state/Ministry of Education) and the European level, conducive to structural changes. These normative pressures have not crystallized into regulative pressures<sup>5</sup> in the sense that relative legislation has not been passed (as yet) and the debate is still open. As normative pressures expressed at the national level can be seen:

- (a) the attempt to pass legislation concerning evaluation and quality assurance and
- (b) the adoption of EU policies concerning ECTS/Diploma Supplement

To assess the compatibility of GHES to the objectives of the Bologna process we have constructed the following table.

For a complete theoretical framework concerning the way institutions influence organisations and the way organisations respond to regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive pressures exerted by the see Scott, 2001

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> For an overview of the Greek higher education system and a more detailed discussion of national policies and responses to internationalization see also G.Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides, G.Stamelos and Y.Papadiamantaki (2004: 193-221)

Bologna Process current objectives	GHES	Comments
Adoption of a system based on two cycles	YES	A system based on two cycles already exists. Some difficulties are posed
Development of mutually shared criteria and methodologies on quality assurance	NO	No system of evaluation. Voluntary evaluation projects by international organizations. Intense opposition
Establishment of ECTS and Adoption of Diploma Supplement	YES	Higher Education Institutions have committed themselves to implement ECTS. The process of implementation is underway. The degree of implementation varies
Promotion of lifelong learning at higher education level	YES	HEIs may operate Centres of Professional Training (KEK). The academic staff of HEIs may develop training programs co-funded by the State, the European Social Fund and/or the market
Recognition of prior learning	NO	No general system of recognition. However, there is a provision for recognition of prior knowledge in specific areas

We may conclude that the GHES has reached a high level of compatibility to the objectives of Bologna regarding the construction of EHEA, as modified in the Berlin Communiqué.

### 3.2.1. The issue of the two cycles:

Greek universities operate on a system of two cycles. The first cycle contains programs of 4, 5 or 6 years of studies (5 year studies in engineering or agriculture, 6 year studies in medicine).

Since 1992 postgraduate studies (leading to the equivalent of a Masters degree) were introduced in universities. Presently the second cycle is divided into (a) master level postgraduate studies (1 or 2 years depending on the program) and (b) doctoral studies (at least 3 years). The first cycle degree is a precondition for access to the second cycle. A postgraduate degree is not a prerequisite for undertaking doctoral studies, but is desirable and an asset of the candidate. Therefore, HEIs currently follow a system of two cycles seen as compatible to the Bologna requirements. However, universities (especially disciplines currently offering longer programs of study) could face some problems in the future, if a three year first cycle is generalized.

### 3.2.2. Quality assurance:

Greece does not have a national system of quality assurance for higher education. This does not mean that academics oppose the idea of evaluation. Many universities and TEIs have already participated, since 1994/1995, in

quality assurance projects held by international organizations ( $EU^6$ ,  $OECD^7$ ,  $EUA^8$ ) and/or national programs financed by the EU and the state<sup>9</sup>.

However, a law-framework, proposed in 2002-2003 that would establish a national system of quality assurance, has provoked a heated debate among academics. The institution of an evaluation mechanism for quality assurance met with the strong opposition of universities and has not been passed by the Parliament due to a change in government in elections (March 2004).

In any case, Greece should establish a national system of quality assurance until 2005 or the integration of Greek HEIs in the EHEA is in risk of becoming problematic. The reaction of academics to the proposed evaluation process is a point that requires some explanation and on this we shall focus on the fourth section of this paper.

### 3.2.3. ECTS and Diploma Supplement

Greek HEIs have already signed the Erasmus Charter. In this "institutional contract", they have committed themselves to implement new ECTS. The process of implementation in each Department is currently underway but its progress is varied. We have to underline the fact that the institutional contracts are signed between Institutions and the EU, which means that the national governments are marginalized. However, there is actually a discussion about the necessity or not of a specific legislation act. It could be understood as another incident of the antagonism between national and European (union) agencies. The discussion about the adoption of Diploma Supplement is the same as the one about the establishment of new ECTS. So, the actual situation is exactly the same.

### 3.2.4 Lifelong learning at Higher Education Level

The government and the academics have taken action regarding the issue of promotion of lifelong learning at higher education level long before the initiation of the Bologna process. In this vein, the GHES is fully compatible to the provisions related to the construction of EHEA.

Since 1992, following EU regulation 815/84 EEC, the government has provided the legal framework for the introduction of Centers of Professional Training (KEK) in GHES. Currently 13 Universities operate KEKs, which develop study programs addressing the unemployed. Since 1995, the government based on funding deriving from the European Structural Funds, has funded Institutions of Higher Education to develop training programs. Accordingly, market forces may provide these institutions with further funding in order to develop in-service training programs. The passing through the Parliament of a Legislation Act that would establish the Lifelong Learning

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> 1 University Department and 1 TEI Department.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> 1 University and 1 TEI.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> 8 Universities.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> 4 Universities and 5 TEI plus 42 University Departments and 31 TEI Departments.

Institutes within universities has been delayed due to the change in government.

### 3.2.5. Recognition of Prior Learning

An organized national system does not exist. However, there exists a provision for recognition of prior knowledge applying in certain cases, as the recognition of a foreign language or the knowledge of TIC.

### 4. Strategic Responses to Bologna.

As it can be seen from the above, the Bologna objectives have been generally accepted in Greece and reforms are currently underway. The main point of friction, which requires some explanation, is the objection of academics to an institutionalized evaluation process.

It is important to note that the two higher education sectors (universities and TEI) have adopted different strategic responses towards evaluation and quality assurance. To explain the different reactions, one must posit that although HEIs composing the GHES are organisations that are affected, even penetrated by their environments, they are also constituted as active players, not passive pawns. They are capable of responding creatively and strategically to influence attempts. By acting in concert with other institutions facing similar pressures, they can sometimes counter, curb, circumvent or redefine the demands made upon them<sup>10</sup>.

According to information provided by the President of ITE (whom we interviewed), despite an initial heated debate and strikes organized by the professional association of the TEI's teaching staff, TEIs have accepted:

- The full implementation of ECTS as a credit system, setting the workload to 1500 credits and are ready to grand as of the academic year 2004-2005 the Diploma Supplement. The competent collective decision making bodies of TEIs have passed relevant decisions.
- Despite initial minor reservations staff members have accepted the evaluation/quality assurance processes proposed and have agreed to upgrade their qualifications
- Currently wide structural reorganization is underway across the whole sector (curriculum restructuring, inclusion of new courses)
- Promotion of joint Master's programs. Greek universities and TEI's have instituted nine joint programs, currently in operation. A large number of proposals, currently pending approval, have been submitted by TEIs for joint degrees with UK universities.

The developments within the University sector are more complicated: The law-framework for evaluation met with the stern opposition of the academics. POSDEP, the professional association of academic staff, which traditionally rallied only a small percentage of academics due to its extremely left wing political stance, acquired significance. POSDEP adopted a militant stance and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> On the formation of collective strategies by organisations within a given organizational field (in this instance higher education) and the factors influencing such formations see Scott, 2001.

in a highly emotional declaration requested the "absolute isolation of the Greek higher education from the Bologna process". Through their collective action academics were successful in delaying legislation on a National Quality Assurance framework and to avoid, for the time being, regulative pressures to conform to this point of Bologna.

From a neo-institutional theory perspective, the different strategic responses of HEIs can be seen as related to:

- The institutions immediate interests and the different values and norms<sup>12</sup> of academics, which diverge substantially from the interests of the Ministry of Education, attempting to impose a new regulative process on them.
- The variable legitimacy<sup>13</sup> these organisations enjoy in the Greek society
- A traditional lack of confidence in institutions controlled by the state, which
  is accentuated by the small size of the country and the academic
  community, which explains why half the universities have accepted
  evaluation by foreign internationally accepted evaluation agents, such as
  EUA (ex-CRE)

In this case the interests and intentions of the Ministry of Education, in alignment with the EU, were to promote the harmonization of a European higher education, whereas the allegiance of the academics can be seen as lying primarily with their institutions. Academics appear to oppose an evaluation process that is seen as diverging from the widely accepted values of academic freedom and institutional autonomy<sup>14</sup> and limiting their power to control what constitutes an academic program of studies and who is qualified as an academic.

The rationale for academics' objection to a quantified evaluation system is well summarized by one Associate Professor we interviewed and who stated: "It seems reasonable to argue that a university or department should be evaluated on the basis of quality and enhanced research activity ...and that funds should be distributed according ...In my experience, academics in Britain, to ensure the survival of the department stopped doing research and concentrated their effort on the amelioration of indices, ... academics are smart people, they understand how formulas work...So as a first stage, one prefers writing articles over a book, as a good number of articles give the department more points than one good quality book, which takes more effort and longer time to produce...And it is then that the worse begins to happen ...self-censorship and the degradation of your work in your own eyes...You may avoid writing on subjects that interest you but for which "there is no market"... ... and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> For a discussion on the working conditions of Greek academics and the degradation of their working environment and professional status see Stamelos and Papadiamantaki, 2003.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> In neo-institutional theory organizational action is related to the four building blocks of an organisation: social structure, technology, participants and goals. The relation between goals and interests and the way these may influence participants' action is extensively discussed by Scott, 2001

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> For a discussion of social legitimacy as a factor affecting the development of defiant behavior in organisations, see: Scott, 2001

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> For a discussion of values and goals as factors influencing action in organisations see March and Olsen, 1989:20-23

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I remember a colleague in Glasgow University rejoicing over acceptance of one of his articles in a renowned journal... when I asked about the topic he replied: "oh, crap...but who cares, the important thing is that they accepted it"... You see maximizing quality indicators and pursuing quality are two altogether different stories...although this is not obvious at first glance... I object to any system that would evaluate me using a formula on an excel spreadsheet."

To conclude: the strategic response of the TEI sector to the normative pressures exerted by the state and the international environment can be seen as one of *acquiescence or conformity*. Such a response can be seen as motivated by hopes of additional resources (state funding) but mainly by anticipation of enhanced legitimacy, to be achieved through *structural isomorphism* with universities "to be achieved through a regulative mechanism (legal reform) that makes organisations more similar without necessarily making them more efficient<sup>15</sup>.

Universities on the other hand, collectively opted for a strategy of defiance, i.e. they not only resisted institutional pressures to conform to an evaluation process but have done in a highly public manner. Such an organizational response can be explained on the basis of the already enhanced legitimacy enjoyed by the universities and its academics which allows them to act as "professionals, exercising their control over the state via cultural-cognitive and normative processes, constructing cognitive frameworks that define arenas within which they claim jurisdiction and seek to exercise control" 16.

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16 Scott, 2001:129

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> The concept of structural isomorphism was introduced in institutional theory by DiMaggio and Powell (1983).

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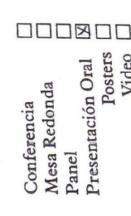
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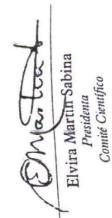
# El Comité Científico

Certifica que: MARIANNA BARTZAKLI

Educación Comparada, celebrado en el Palacio de Convenciones de La Habana, Cuba ha participado en las actividades científicas del XII Congreso Mundial de del 25 al 29 de octubre de 2004

PONENCIA: EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA (FHEA): THE GREEK CASE







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