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The Social Dimension in the Bologna Process

Today the Bologna Process has been in course of action for more than a decade. The overarching aim is to create a “European Higher Education Area” (EHEA) in which the degrees offered by the higher education institutions are transnational comparable and compatible. The core in this transparency process was the development of The European Qualifications Framework (for Lifelong Learning) (EQF). In fact one of the major goals (if not *the* goal) of the Bologna Process, is to maintain and, in some cases, improve the quality of higher education. The primary tool for EQF is a highly developed taxonomy of descriptors of knowledge, skills, competences and qualifications. Another issue – but not very emphasized in the reception of the Bologna Process – is the so-called social dimension (SD). The SD is in the official papers accentuated as one of the policy areas, but without a systematic approach and clear definitions of its means and goals. The most explicit remarks is given (London Communiqué, 2007) as “The student body entering, participating in and completing higher education...should reflect the diversity of population”. So far the indicators for SD in education is “flexibility” in admission, study paths.

After a rather exhaustive introduction to the Bologna Process, with particular reference to EQF and SD, the workshop will be a room for analyze and reflection, as well as for the individual participants as well as for the collective, whether it is at all possible – or under what underlying assumptions normative values and objectives expressed in “accommodation”, “social dimension”, “education for all” etc. can be realized under maintaining high quality.