

A photograph of a man and a woman looking at a book together. The man is on the left, wearing a dark blue shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a green top. They are both smiling and looking at the book. The background is blurred, showing other people in a public space.

# A TEMPUS STUDY

## State of Play of the Bologna process in the Tempus Countries (2009 - 2010)





## **State of Play of the Bologna Process in the Tempus Countries (2009/2010)**

This study has been produced within the framework of the European Union's Tempus programme, which is funded by the EuropeAid Co-operation Office and the Directorate-General for Enlargement.

The data for this report has been provided by the National Tempus Offices, in agreement with the national authorities and the EU Delegations of the countries concerned. The preparation of the report would not have been possible without the close collaboration and support provided by Eurydice, the network on education systems and policies in Europe and the Bologna Follow-Up Group.

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## Preface

Since the beginning of the 2000s, the Bologna Process has expanded from the European Union towards the neighbouring countries and the Bologna Declaration has by now been signed by 47 countries. In addition, an increasing number of countries have shown their interest in the process by implementing most of its recommendations and tools on a voluntary basis and by making it a major policy goal at national level, without officially joining the intergovernmental process.

The present report is a first attempt to describe the implementation of the Bologna Process in the countries participating in the Tempus programme, including signatory and non-signatory countries of the Bologna Declaration. The results show the attractiveness of the concepts and tools promoted by the Bologna Process and the indisputable efforts made by countries not involved in the process to come closer to the European Higher Education Area.

The report has been produced by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), which is responsible for the management of certain strands of the EU programmes in the field of education, under the powers delegated by the European Commission. It is also responsible for gathering and analysing information needed to guide the implementation of these programmes.

This study was put together by the unit in charge of the management of the Tempus programme, in close cooperation with the unit coordinating Eurydice, the well-known network on education systems and policies in Europe. The data was provided by the National Tempus Offices, in agreement with the national authorities and the EU Delegations of the countries concerned.

The report is primarily targeted at all stakeholders of the Tempus programme, including current and future beneficiaries of Tempus projects. I am convinced that the analysis of the unique data collected in this report will help them to refine their strategies and to optimise the impact of the programme and individual projects on higher education in the Tempus countries. Hopefully this can also lead to the development of ambitious regional and cross regional strategies.

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## Contents

Introduction

Executive Summary

Part 1 - The Bologna Three cycle structure

Part 2 – The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

Part 3 – The Bologna Diploma Supplement

Part 4 – Stage towards establishing a National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

Part 5 – National bodies for Quality Assurance

Part 6 – The Lisbon Convention – the recognition of foreign qualifications

Glossary of countries

Brief overview of the Tempus programme

Overview of the Bologna Process

References

Authors

TEMPUS offices in the partner countries



## Introduction

The objective of this study is to describe and map the current state of play of the Bologna Process in the 28 countries participating in the Tempus programme<sup>1</sup>. For the last twenty years, the Tempus programme has supported the modernisation of higher education systems in countries neighbouring the EU by financing cooperation projects in all fields of education.

The purpose of this report is to provide all stakeholders with comparable information on the main components of the Bologna Process and data on how they are being implemented in the Tempus countries. This comprehensive mapping should help policy makers to analyse their strategies and approaches from different points of view and to identify directions for future initiatives. It could also be a useful tool for current or future Tempus beneficiaries, providing them with an overview of the situation in the partner countries and helping them to develop relevant projects.

From a Tempus programme perspective, this report is also intended to provide background information for the further development of Tempus, which includes the voluntary convergence towards the European Higher Education Area as one of its objectives. It should help to identify and assess future action lines and possible opportunities, in particular to enhance collaboration at regional or interregional level.

Since it was launched ten years ago, the Bologna Process has expanded beyond Europe and 47 countries have signed the Bologna Declaration and are implementing this intergovernmental agreement. Progressively, other countries which have launched reflections and reforms of their higher education systems have used the Bologna Process and the EU Higher Education Modernisation Agenda as a source of inspiration and reference.

The Tempus partner countries belong to both categories (Map 1) and this report covers therefore a variety of situations. 13 Tempus countries are Bologna signatory countries (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine) and, among the remaining non signatory countries, there are 5 (Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia) which participated in the last Bologna Forum in March 2010. This forum gathered countries interested in discussing how worldwide cooperation in higher education could be enhanced through the Bologna Process.

The study was carried out on the basis of methodologies and tools developed by Eurydice, the network on education systems and policies in Europe. Data was collected in accordance with two main approaches:

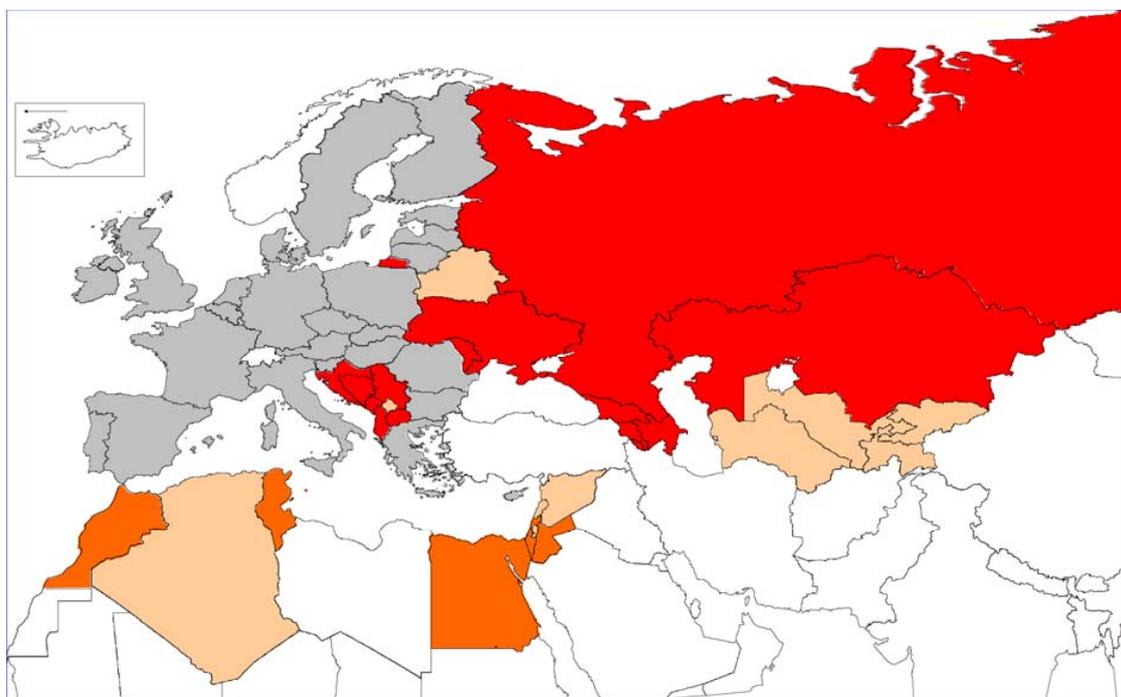
- for the Bologna signatory countries, data was collected by Eurydice, in collaboration with the Bologna Follow up Group<sup>2</sup>, for the preparation of the publication "Focus on Higher Education in Europe 2010: the impact of the Bologna Process".

<sup>1</sup> See glossary of countries p. 55. Libya is expected to join the programme in 2010.

<sup>2</sup> The Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) consists of ministerial representatives of all Bologna signatory countries and the European Commission as full members. The role of BFUG is to follow up on the implementation of the Bologna Process. It includes also consultative members such as the Council of Europe, the European University Association (EUA), the European Students' Union (ESU), the European Association of Quality Assurance in Higher education (ENQA), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), the UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education (UNESCO-CEPES), Business Europe and Education International.

- for the remaining countries, data was collected with the support of the National Tempus Offices, in close cooperation with the national authorities and the EU Delegations concerned.

**Map1: Tempus partner countries and the Bologna Process**



- Tempus Bologna signatory countries
- Tempus partner countries having participated in the 2010 Bologna Forum
- Other Tempus partner countries<sup>3</sup>
- European Union Member States

The analysis is mainly based on criteria and categories defined in previous Eurydice studies<sup>4</sup> and it tries to cover the main components of the Bologna Process, in particular the extent to which the following tools and approaches have been implemented or adopted:

- the Bologna three cycle structure;
- the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS);
- the Bologna Diploma Supplement;
- National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF);
- independent Quality Assurance Agencies;
- the signature of the Lisbon Convention on the recognition of foreign qualifications.

<sup>3</sup> Including Kosovo under UNSCR 1244 and the Occupied Palestinian Territory

<sup>4</sup> Eurydice (2010) - Focus on Higher Education in Europe 2010: the impact of the Bologna Process  
Eurydice (2009) - Higher Education in Europe 2009 - Developments in the Bologna Process  
Eurydice (2007) - Focus on the Structure of Higher Education in Europe 2006/2007 - National trends in the Bologna Process

For each of these items, precise criteria have been defined which reflect different stages in the implementation of these tools and provide a comprehensive description of the current state of play of the Bologna Process.

The data was collected during the winter 2009 - 2010 and it describes the situation in the academic year 2009 – 2010.

When comparing the different countries, it should be kept in mind that the adoption of the Bologna principles and approaches is a voluntary process in which the countries started to get involved at different dates, and that the pace of reform may vary a lot depending on the local and historical context.



## Executive summary

The aim of this report is to map, for the first time, the state of play of the Bologna Process in the 28 countries participating in the Tempus programme. While being at different levels of implementation, it can be concluded that all of the countries are involved in the process and have adopted at least some of its main elements. Even if less than half of the Tempus countries have signed the Bologna Declaration, also the non signatory countries are clearly influenced by Bologna developments and are on their way to adopt tools and approaches promoted through this process.

The report shows that certain geographical areas with common backgrounds tend to apply the Bologna Process in a similar way. This is particularly the case in the Maghreb countries, where the higher education systems are relatively similar and have been influenced by their long lasting connections with Europe. Another area with a relatively homogeneous level of Bologna implementation is the region of the Western Balkans characterised by its common aspiration to accede to the EU.

Two categories of "Bologna tools" can be identified, depending on the degree to which they have been implemented in the different countries. The first category consists of the three cycle degree structure and ECTS. These are widely used in the Tempus countries and they are clearly the most well known elements of the Bologna Process. The second category contains the introduction of the Diploma Supplement, the development of a National Qualifications Framework and the setting-up of an independent body for quality assurance in higher education. In this respect, Tempus countries are still at very different stages of development and none of them have fully adopted these tools. Interestingly, the same phenomenon can be noted in the EU countries (Eurydice Focus 2010).

On the basis of this report, Tempus countries can be divided into three main groups. The first one contains those most advanced in the Bologna Process, which are the countries of the Western Balkans. It should be noted in this context that all countries of the Western Balkans, except Kosovo<sup>5</sup>, are signatories of the Bologna Declaration. Countries of the second group – Maghreb countries, Eastern Europe and the Central Asian countries – have adopted certain elements of the Bologna Process, but are still far from full implementation. The third group, covering the countries of the Middle East, shows similar levels of implementation and is the group which is currently least in line with the Bologna principles. These countries are not Bologna signatories and their education systems have been traditionally mostly influenced by the Anglo-American models.

### ***The Bologna Three Cycle Structure***

One of the main components of the Bologna Process is the division of higher education programmes into three sequential levels namely first, second and third cycles, leading to three main kinds of qualifications and degrees: Bachelor, Master and Doctorate.

A common model has been developed for the Bachelor and Master programmes whereas the third cycle has, to a large extent, been left in the hands of universities with no attempt to introduce further regulation within the Bologna Process.

In the majority of Tempus countries, the Bologna cycle structure for the Bachelor and Master levels is fully or extensively implemented in most institutions and programmes. This is the case for all the Tempus countries having signed the Bologna Declaration and, interestingly, also in non-signatory countries such as the Maghreb countries, Lebanon,

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<sup>5</sup> Under UNSCR 1244

Israel, three of the five Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) and Kosovo<sup>6</sup>.

At Bachelor level, two main models have been adopted in the Tempus countries: programmes designed on the basis of 180 ECTS credits (lasting 3 academic years) and programmes of 240 ECTS credits (4 years). The choices made in the different countries seem to reflect their geo-political context and the historical closeness between countries in certain areas. For example, the 240 credit model dominates in countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, in which the higher education systems have a common historical background. On the other hand, countries such as Lebanon and the Maghreb countries have opted for the 180 credit model, which reflects their close connections with education systems of certain EU countries. It can also be noted that several countries of the Middle East apply a three cycle structure, which is however not fully in line with Bologna since Bachelor programmes in many of these countries are longer than those following the Bologna model.

At Master level, the 120 ECTS credit model (2 years) is used in the large majority of Tempus countries, while both 60 and 120 ECTS credit models coexist e.g. in countries of the Western Balkans.

When looking at the combination of Bachelor and Master reference models, two groups of countries can be identified: 1) Croatia, Lebanon, the Maghreb countries, and Montenegro, where the 180+120 credit model (3+2 years) dominates and 2) Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan where the 240+120 credit model (4+2 years) is most commonly used. No model seems to dominate in most of the countries of the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo<sup>6</sup> and Serbia) and in certain Eastern European countries (Belarus and Moldova).

At Doctoral level, as in Europe, many developments are at an early stage and common patterns are difficult to identify.

### ***European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)***

ECTS is a tool which enables students to collect credits for learning achieved through higher education. It aims to increase transparency of learning outcomes and learning processes and facilitates the recognition of studies. In practice, 60 ECTS credits are attached to the workload of a full-time year of formal learning (academic year) and the associated learning outcomes.

Almost all Tempus countries have adopted a credit system and the majority of them are currently implementing ECTS at least to a certain extent. However, harmonised implementation is still far from being reality and only four countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo<sup>6</sup>, Moldova and Serbia) have reached the level of full implementation. This level consists of ECTS being applied in more than 75% of programmes offered by more than 75% of higher education institutions for purposes of both credit transfer and accumulation, and credit points being based on both learning outcomes and student workload.

Most Tempus countries are nevertheless committed to implement ECTS and 16 of them have introduced legislation governing the implementation of the credit system. Two countries have opted to introduce ECTS without legislation. The remaining countries have either their own national credit systems (Belarus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Uzbekistan) or no credit system at all (Morocco, Syria, and Turkmenistan).

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<sup>6</sup> Under UNSCR 1244

In those countries where ECTS is used, the level of implementation varies, depending on the percentage of institutions using the system and the way credits are allocated. As in the EU countries, there is room for improvement regarding the use of student workload and learning outcomes as the basis for defining credits.

### ***Bologna Diploma Supplement (DS)***

The Bologna Diploma Supplement is a document attached to a higher education diploma that aims to improve international transparency and facilitate academic and professional recognition of qualifications. It consists of eight sections describing in particular the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were successfully completed. It also includes a description of the higher education system in the country.

Currently more than half of the Tempus countries are committed to use the Bologna Diploma Supplement (DS). A Bologna DS is issued in the vast majority of study programmes in Georgia, Moldova, the Western Balkans (except Kosovo<sup>7</sup>), and Tunisia, whereas in Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo<sup>7</sup>, Russia and Ukraine, it is still being gradually introduced. Other countries are either using a national diploma supplement (Belarus, Egypt, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) or no diploma supplement at all (Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Syria).

According to Bologna principles, the Diploma Supplement should be issued automatically and free of charge to graduates at the end of their studies. This principle is currently applied in 12 Tempus countries, which shows a considerable improvement over the recent years. Regarding the language in which the Bologna DS is issued, the majority of Tempus countries issue it in the language of instruction and/or English.

### ***National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF)***

A National Qualifications Framework is an instrument for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved, which aims to improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society. It describes the different qualifications and other learning achievements that can be obtained in a given country and relates them coherently to each other.

On a scale consisting of five steps towards establishing a National Qualifications Network, none of the Tempus countries have reached the highest steps of full implementation. However, three countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Tunisia) have reached the level where a National Qualifications Network for higher education has been formally adopted and the implementation process has started. Another 15 countries are underway in the process – the purpose of the NQF has been agreed and various committees have been established. The rest of the countries have either not started the process or are only at the very beginning of it.

### ***National Quality Assurance systems (NQA)***

In the context of this report, quality assurance refers to the process of evaluating, monitoring, guaranteeing, maintaining and improving the quality of higher education systems, institutions and programmes. At the national level, this type of external evaluation should ideally be carried out by an independent body, which has autonomous responsibility for its operations and methods.

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<sup>7</sup> Under UNSCR 1244

Whereas the principle of independent quality assurance is becoming a world-wide trend, apparently it has not yet been widely adopted in the Tempus countries. In most of the Tempus countries (20 in total), quality assurance falls under the responsibility of either a government-dependent body or a Ministry. One or more independent national agencies for quality assurance exists in 8 Tempus countries, namely Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Jordan, Kazakhstan and Kosovo<sup>8</sup>. The main outcomes of evaluations by these independent agencies are decisions granting the reviewed institution/programme permission to operate or teach at certain levels (as in Jordan), advice on how the reviewed institution/programme can improve quality in specified areas (Croatia, Kazakhstan), or both (Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia and Kosovo<sup>8</sup>).

### ***Lisbon Recognition Convention***

The Lisbon Recognition Convention is an international convention, which allows qualifications granted in one country to be recognised in another country on the basis of defined standards. The convention has been elaborated jointly by the Council of Europe and UNESCO and it has already been signed by more than 50 countries in Europe and beyond. It is addressed in priority to Members of the Council of Europe and the UNESCO Europe and North America region.

The Lisbon Convention has been widely ratified by the Tempus countries, in particular by those which are Bologna signatory countries and also members of the Council of Europe. In total, 16 Tempus countries have signed the convention. The principle of recognition of foreign qualifications is nevertheless applied in most of the other Tempus countries as well.

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<sup>8</sup> Under UNSCR 1244

## Part 1 – The Bologna three cycle structure

The three cycle degree structure is one of the main components of the Bologna Process which the signatory countries are committed to implement in view of the creation of the European Higher Education Area.

The three cycle system is seen as a major tool to address the fragmentation of programmes and degrees among the participating countries and to make them more understandable, visible and attractive within Europe and beyond at worldwide level. Easily readable programmes and degrees are indeed a major step towards increasing mobility of students and graduates, more structured and integrated university cooperation leading to joint, double and multiple degrees and enhanced university – business cooperation in an international context. These are probably the main reasons to explain the success of the initiative initially launched in 1998 by four countries (Sorbonne Declaration) and its progressive extension beyond the borders of the EU and even beyond the Bologna signatory countries.

In the countries in which these concepts were rather unknown, the implementation of the three cycle structure had far reaching consequences, going beyond the simple reorganisation of the degree structure. The two main challenges associated with the design and the implementation of the Bologna structure were (i) the organisation of studies and programmes according to the three main levels, with identified learning outcomes and degrees giving access to the labour market and (ii) the appropriate duration of each of these cycles to acquire the associated competences and skills. This was particularly true in continental Europe where traditional academic university programmes had a restricted flexibility to respond to learners' needs. Moreover, they lasted four to five years, with limited possibilities to access the labour market at intermediate level or to move between institutions in order to complete a degree.

The Bologna Process provides a flexible framework to implement such changes and is in no way a prescriptive instrument. The Bologna Declaration (1999) states only that first cycle studies should last a 'minimum of three years' while subsequent Bologna discussions on the second cycle have concluded that a Master programme may range between 60-120 ECTS (in practice, one to two years<sup>9</sup>). The development of the third cycle has, to a large extent, been left in the hands of universities with no attempt to introduce further regulation within the Bologna Process.

In practice, the first cycle qualifications typically comprise 180-240 ECTS credits (three to four years) and the second cycle qualifications 90-120 ECTS credits with a minimum of 60 credits. As stated above, the initial idea was indeed to break the traditional long study programmes lasting four to five, even six years and to replace them with the Bologna Bachelor and Master levels. Therefore, these long programmes should not be qualified as Bologna compliant.

At this stage of the process and despite the variety of situations, it is possible to identify the level of Bologna implementation and convergence in the different Tempus countries, notably in terms of workload/duration of studies at Bachelor and Master levels. At Doctoral level, as in Europe, many developments are at an early stage and common patterns are difficult to identify.

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<sup>9</sup> An academic year typically comprises 60 ECTS credits (see part 2).

### **The three cycle structures developing towards Bologna**

In 2009/2010, the Bologna dynamic has widely reached the neighbouring countries of the EU and the Central Asian countries (Map 2). The Bologna cycle structure is now fully or extensively implemented in most institutions and programmes in all the Tempus Bologna signatory countries, and interestingly also in Israel, Lebanon, the Maghreb countries and three of the five Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) and in Kosovo<sup>10</sup>.

Apart from Israel and Lebanon, countries in the Middle East have already an existing three cycle structure. However, this structure cannot be considered in line with Bologna, since Bachelor programmes in many cases are longer than the current Bologna practice, lasting usually 4 to 5 years, as was the case in most European countries a decade ago. For instance, 5 year-long Bachelor degrees exist in certain disciplines in Egypt, Jordan and Syria. In these countries, a minimum duration of four years at Bachelor level is the norm, whereas under Bologna it is rather the upper limit. The three cycle structure in Middle East has mainly been influenced by the Anglo-American system. However, in these countries like in Europe, Master programmes last one to two years but they are usually an integral part of the process towards a doctorate.

Uzbekistan belongs also to the category of countries where the system is based on a national three cycle structure. Bachelor degrees usually last 4 years, and Master degrees not less than 2 years. The third cycle - postgraduate education includes the candidate qualification (*Fanlar Nomzodi*) and the doctorate (*Fanlar Doktori*).

Turkmenistan is the only Tempus country which does not have a three cycle structure. Following the Presidential Decree of February 2007, the basic university studies consist of 5-year programmes except for medicine and some programmes in arts which last 6 years. After 3 years of additional studies, graduates can obtain a degree of "Candidate of Sciences", followed by "Doctor of Sciences".

### **Various Bachelor structures revealing the geo-political context**

In many countries the implementation of the three-cycle structure is generating lively debates on the extent to which it is necessary to take into account the national specificities of the labour market and specific types of institutions, programmes, disciplines and qualifications. Nevertheless, the arguments used to oppose the changes are often the expression of a certain inertia or conservatism. As in the EU, medical studies and related fields, as well as architecture and engineering are examples of study fields where long study programmes are often still proposed.

As regards the modalities of implementation of the Bologna cycle structure, the analysis below focuses on the structures which have been most commonly implemented in the Tempus countries. Official rules at national level may authorise some flexibility in order to take into account the needs of particular institutions, programmes or disciplines to fulfil their mission and role. Nevertheless, in the majority of countries, there is clearly a reference model (if not a single compulsory model) that applies to the majority of institutions and programmes.

With regard to the Bachelor programmes (Map 3), two main structural models have been adopted, as in the EU: Bachelor programmes usually designed on the basis of 180 ECTS credits (3 years) and programmes lasting 240 ECTS credits (4 years).

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<sup>10</sup> Under UNSCR 1244

Nevertheless, unlike in the EU, the 240 ECTS credit model seems to dominate in the Tempus countries. This is due to the eight Eastern Tempus countries, namely Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Russia, Ukraine and the countries of the Caucasus. Lebanon and the Maghreb countries on the contrary have adopted the 180 ECTS credit system influenced by their long lasting relations with certain EU member states. In the Western Balkans the situation is intermediary and more diversified, various combinations existing in most countries. The same applies to Belarus, Israel and Moldova.

As a result and not surprisingly, the Bachelor structure which is the backbone of any higher education system appears to be largely embedded in the geo-political context and the Map 3 can be read as a history book differentiating four main groups of countries: the Eastern group, the Maghreb, the Western Balkans and the Middle East.

### **The 120 ECTS credit (2 academic years) model commonly adopted for Master programmes**

For Master programmes (Map 4), the 120 ECTS credit (2 year) model is used in the large majority of Tempus countries, as it is the case in the EU. This model is the most commonly used reference to design programmes in the Maghreb, the Caucasus and the Central Asian countries having adopted the Bologna structure. It is also the case for Croatia, Israel, Lebanon, Moldova, Montenegro and Russia. In Montenegro, after one year of postgraduate studies (60 ECTS), students get a diploma of Specialist and, after an additional year (60 ECTS), they obtain a Master's degree. Serbia and Ukraine are the only Tempus countries in which the 60 ECTS model (one year) for Master studies is the most frequently used, but where many institutions also implement 120 ECTS Master programmes. Both models also coexist in Belarus and in the other Western Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo<sup>11</sup>).

### **Two main models to characterise the overall Bachelor-Master structure**

Finally, the combination of the Bachelor and Master reference models makes it possible to identify two main models to describe the overarching higher education cycle structure in the Tempus countries (Map 5):

- The 180+120 credit (3+2 academic years) model which dominates in the EU countries characterises 6 countries, namely Croatia, Lebanon, the Maghreb countries and Montenegro.
- The 240+120 credit (4+2 academic years) model which is commonly used in 7 countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan.

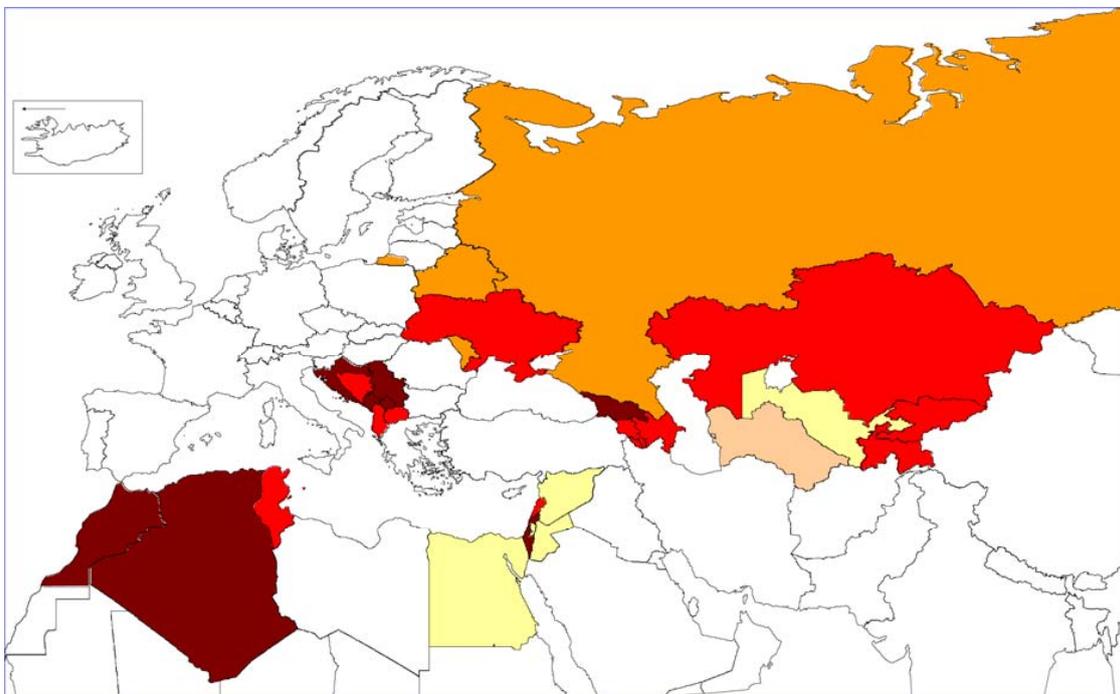
It is worth noting that in Ukraine, the 240+60 credit (4+1 academic years) is the most commonly used model. However, it does not appear as a common practice in the other Tempus countries. This does not mean that it does not exist in those countries, but it is not a reference model. This is the case for instance in Serbia.

In most of the countries belonging to Western Balkans and Eastern Europe, namely Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo<sup>11</sup>, Moldova and Serbia, no model seems to dominate. The programme structures depend largely on the institutions and study fields concerned and combine the various possibilities offered. In Serbia, Higher education institutions independently decide on the model that they consider as the most suitable. Therefore, both models, 180+120 ECTS and 240+60 ECTS, may be implemented for the same kind of study programmes.

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<sup>11</sup> Under UNSCR 1244

**Map 2: Level of implementation of a three-cycle structure compliant with the Bologna Process, 2009/2010**

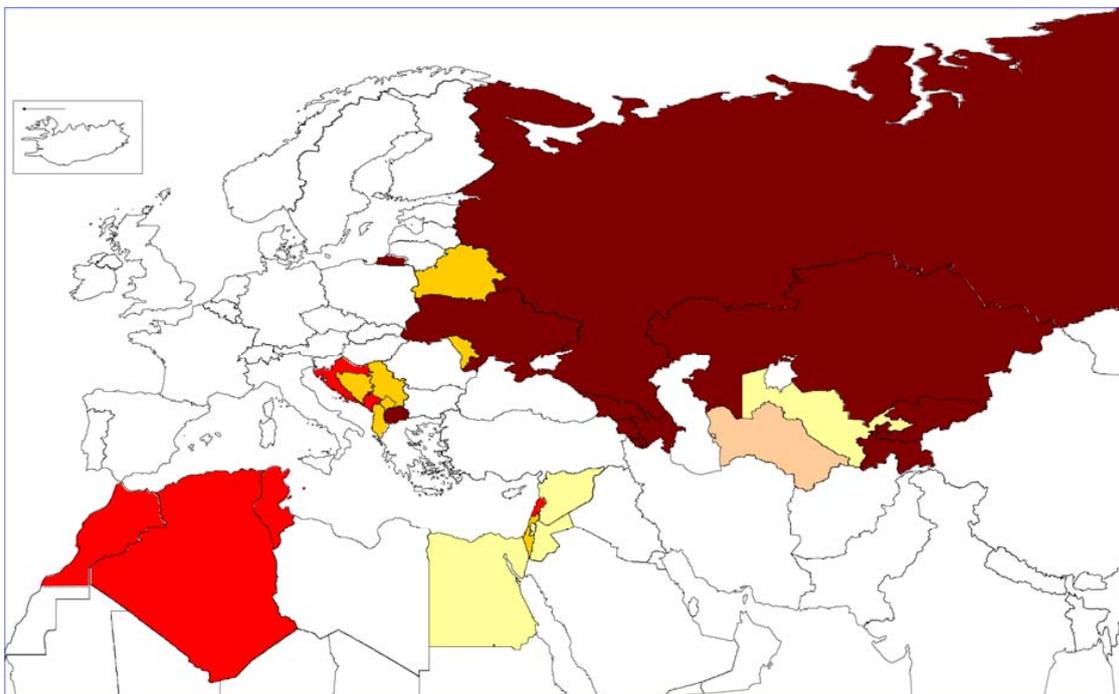


- Bologna structure fully implemented in all or most study fields
- Extensive but gradual introduction of Bologna structure/ongoing adaptations or extensions
- Partial/limited introduction of Bologna structure
- Other existing three cycle structure
- No three cycle structure

**Explanatory note**

Countries have adapted the Bologna principles to their own situation and may have implemented them in a flexible way to take into account specificities of the labour market, of institutions and study fields or disciplines. Therefore, a unique model has not necessarily been designed and applied in each country, and institutions may have been given space to adapt. Nevertheless, in most countries a common approach or "reference model" stands out in practice. This figure tries to capture this situation.

**Map 3: Students workload/duration for the most common Bachelor programmes, 2009/2010**

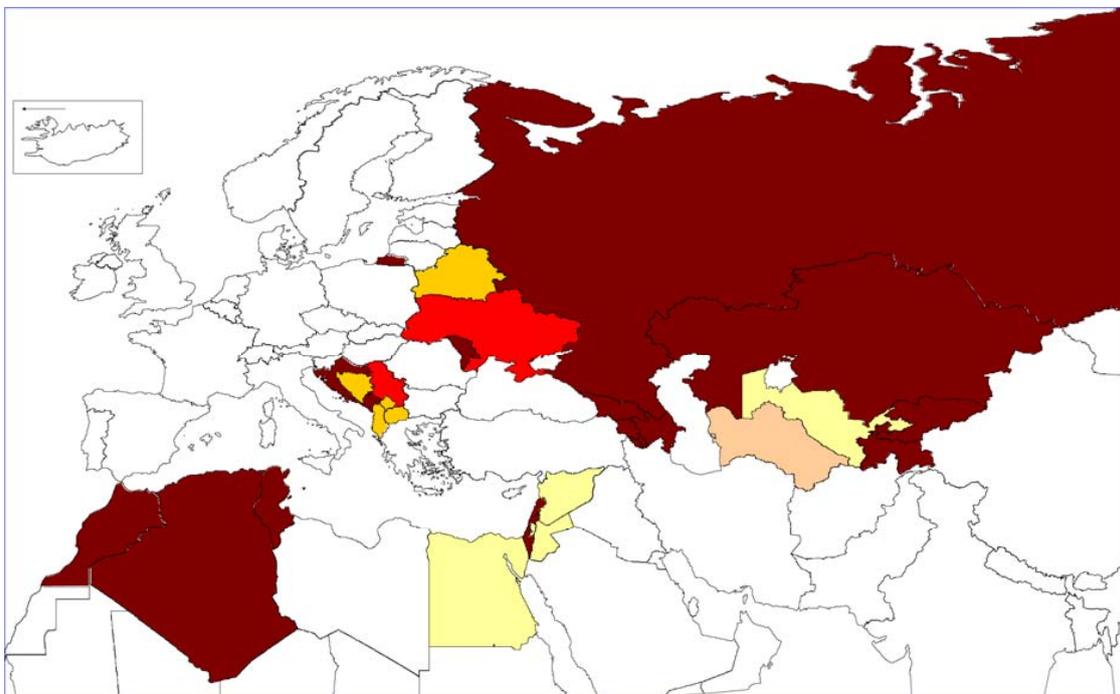


- 240 ECTS (4 academic years)
- 180 ECTS (3 academic years)
- Various combinations
- Existing three cycle structure but not compliant with Bologna
- No three cycle structure

**Explanatory note**

Countries have adapted the Bologna principles to their own situation and may have implemented them in a flexible way to take into account specificities of the labour market, of institutions and study fields or disciplines. Therefore, a unique model has not necessarily been designed and applied in each country, and institutions may have been given space to adapt. Nevertheless, in most countries a common approach or "reference model" stands out in practice. This figure tries to capture this situation.

**Map 4: Student workload/duration for the most common Master programmes, 2009/2010**

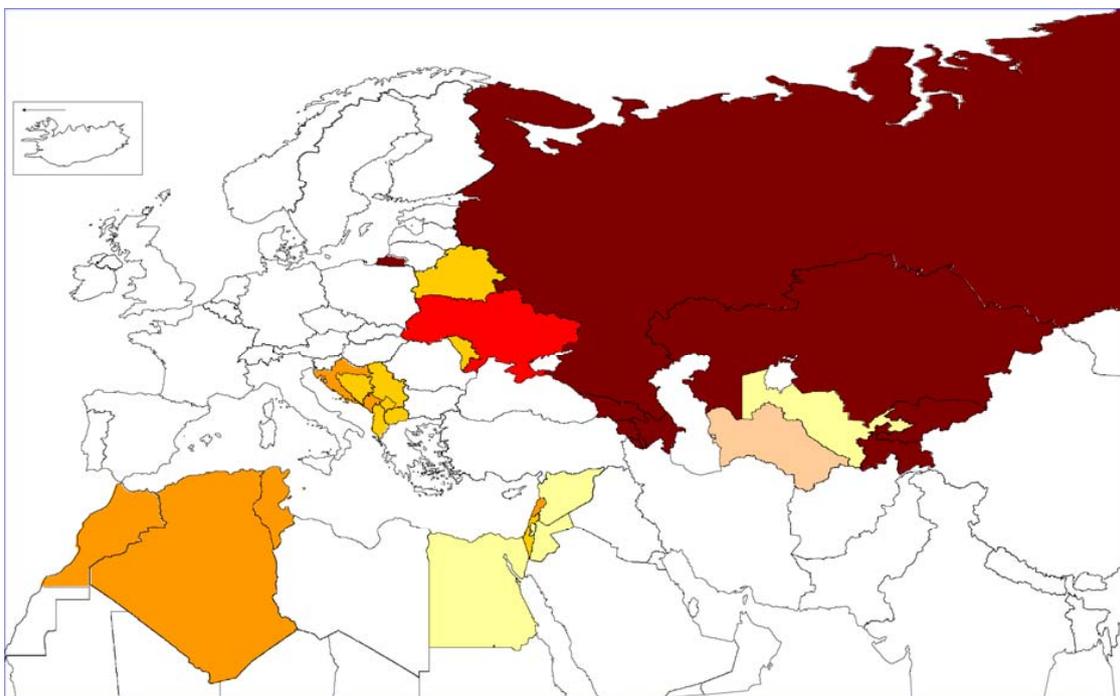


- 120 ECTS (2 academic years)
- 60 ECTS (1 academic year)
- Various combinations
- Existing three cycle structure but not compliant with Bologna
- No three cycle structure

**Explanatory note**

Countries have adapted the Bologna principles to their own situation and may have implemented them in a flexible way to take into account specificities of the labour market, of institutions and study fields or disciplines. Therefore, a unique model has not necessarily been designed and applied in each country, and institutions may have been given space to adapt. Nevertheless, in most countries a common approach or "reference model" stands out in practice. This figure tries to capture this situation.

**Map 5: Bachelor-Master models most commonly implemented, 2009/2010**



- 240+120 ECTS (4+2 academic years)
- 240+60 ECTS (4+1 academic years)
- 180+120 ECTS (3+2 academic years)
- Various combinations
- Existing three cycle structure but not compliant with Bologna
- No three cycle structure

**Explanatory note**

Countries have adapted the Bologna principles to their own situation and may have implemented them in a flexible way to take into account specificities of the labour market, of institutions and study fields or disciplines. Therefore, a unique model has not necessarily been designed and applied in each country, and institutions may have been given space to adapt. Nevertheless, in most countries a common approach or "reference model" stands out in practice. This figure tries to capture this situation.



## Part 2 – The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

The ECTS system was initially developed at the end of the 1980s, at the time when the Erasmus Programme was launched. Initially used for credit transfer to facilitate student mobility it also became a credit accumulation system, encouraged by the Berlin Communiqué in September 2003.

ECTS is a tool which enables students to collect credits for learning achieved through higher education. It is a learner-centred system which aims to increase transparency of learning outcomes and learning processes. It aims to facilitate planning, delivery, evaluation, recognition and validation of qualifications and units of learning. As a result, ECTS makes teaching and learning more transparent and facilitates the recognition of studies, whether formal, non-formal or informal. It also serves curriculum design and quality assurance, by facilitating the comparison of programmes and structures.

ECTS credits are based on the workload<sup>12</sup> needed in order to achieve expected learning outcomes<sup>13</sup>. In practice, 60 ECTS credits are attached to the workload of a full-time year of formal learning (academic year) and the associated learning outcomes. In most cases, one credit corresponds to 25 to 30 hours of work<sup>14</sup>.

ECTS is one of the cornerstones of the Bologna Process and it is increasingly used by institutions in other continents. It thus plays a role in the growing global dimension of the Bologna Process, as illustrated by the situation in the Tempus countries.

The analysis below tries to capture to which extent ECTS is used and describes also the main national understandings of the system. Experience shows that there is considerable diversity in the interpretation of ECTS at national and also institutional level.

### Most countries committed to implement ECTS

Among the Tempus countries, the concept of credits seems to be widely adopted since only three countries out of the 28 do not use any credit system (Map 6). This is the case for Morocco, Syria and Turkmenistan. Morocco has recently adopted and implemented the modular approach to design the study programmes and is considering the possibility of introducing the credit concept.

All the other countries have adopted a credit system and the majority of them are currently implementing ECTS as defined within the Bologna Process.

In 16 countries, namely the countries of Western Balkans, and Caucasus, Algeria, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tunisia and Ukraine, ECTS is underpinned by legislation (Map 7). In many countries, the introduction of ECTS often started with a pilot phase and the system was then extended and phased in gradually during the second half of the 2000s. For instance in Ukraine, ECTS has been introduced without legislation since 2004 and the relevant legislation was adopted in 2009. In Tajikistan, ECTS has been implemented on a pilot basis between 2006 and 2008 and the state programme on Education development 2010-2015 foresees the adoption of ECTS at the country level. In Tunisia, ECTS is fully implemented at Bachelor and Master levels but not yet at Doctoral level.

<sup>12</sup> Workload indicates the time students typically need to complete all learning activities required to achieve the expected learning outcomes.

<sup>13</sup> Learning outcomes describe what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do after the successful completion of a learning process.

<sup>14</sup> European Commission (2009) – ECTS Users' Guide, DG Education and Culture

In a limited number of other countries (Lebanon and Russia), ECTS is being introduced without legislation favouring a non regulatory approach. In Russia, the ECTS-based national credit system has been implemented on a voluntary basis since 2002 and guidelines have been developed and distributed by the Ministry to all Russian higher education institutions.

The remaining countries have their own national systems, as it is the case in Belarus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Uzbekistan. In some cases, recent developments tend to bring the systems in line with ECTS and ECTS may also be used as a source of information for transfer purposes. In Kazakhstan, for instance, the national credit system is parallel to ECTS and efforts are being made to make it compatible with ECTS. For the moment, equivalence tables are used for student mobility overseas. In Egypt, most programmes have adopted the Credit Hours System based on the British/American system and using the contact hour concept. As in Kazakhstan, equivalence tables are being used and tested in Egypt within the Higher Education Enhancement Programme<sup>15</sup> (HEEP) and through some Tempus projects.

### **A long process to reach full implementation**

The analysis of the level of implementation of ECTS (Map 6) reveals a large variety of practices and confirms that harmonised implementation is far from being the current reality. The introduction of ECTS is a long process and full implementation will still take some time for most of the countries engaged in the process.

In this report, ECTS is regarded as implemented when more than 75 % of institutions and programmes are using ECTS for both transfer and accumulation purposes and when it satisfies the requirements of credit points based on learning outcomes and student workload.

Only a limited number of Tempus countries have reached that level. This is the case for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo<sup>16</sup>, Moldova and Serbia.

In a second group of countries (Georgia, Russia, Ukraine) more than 75% of institutions and programmes are using ECTS for both transfer and accumulation purposes. Contact hours (hours spent by students on activities guided by teaching staff) are no longer the reference to define the credits and they have been replaced by student workload. Nevertheless, in contrast to the previous group, learning outcomes have not yet become the usual reference for the system.

In a third category of countries (Algeria, Albania, Azerbaijan, Croatia, Montenegro and Tunisia) contact hours or a combination of contact hours and student workload are still used as a reference to define the credits. Nevertheless, as in the previous category, more than 75% of institutions and programmes are using ECTS for both transfer and accumulation purposes.

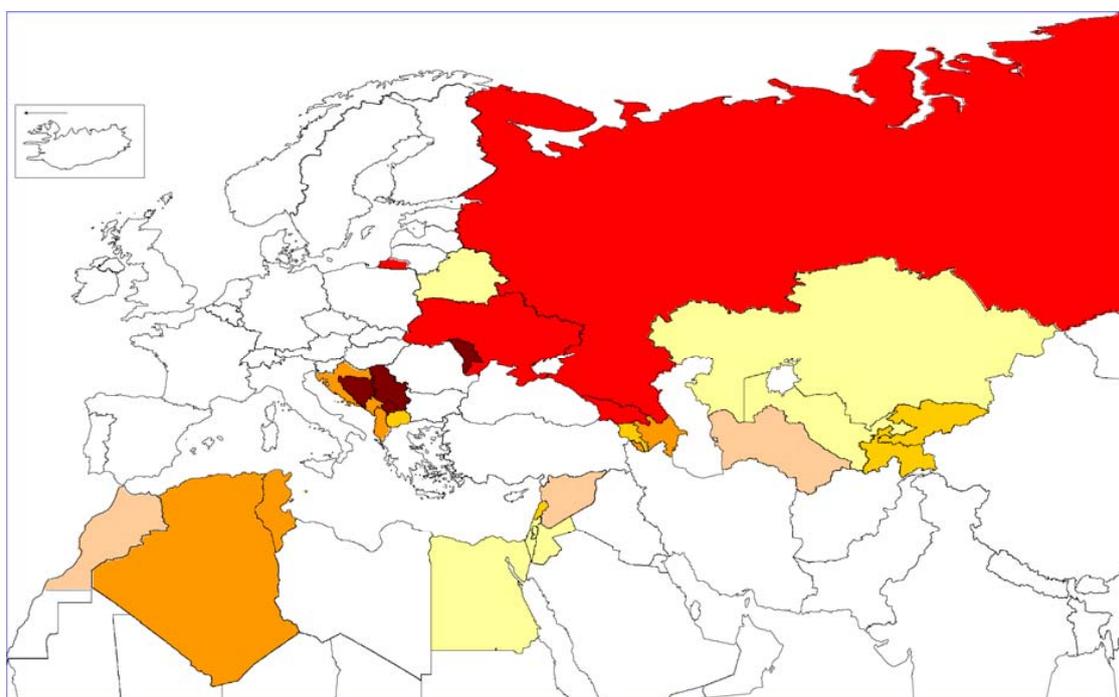
The remaining Tempus countries committed to the implementation of ECTS have room for improvement. They use various references to define the credits (mainly contact hours and student workload) and the priority challenge is still to spread the ECTS practice among institutions and programmes. Five countries belong to this category: Armenia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon and Tajikistan.

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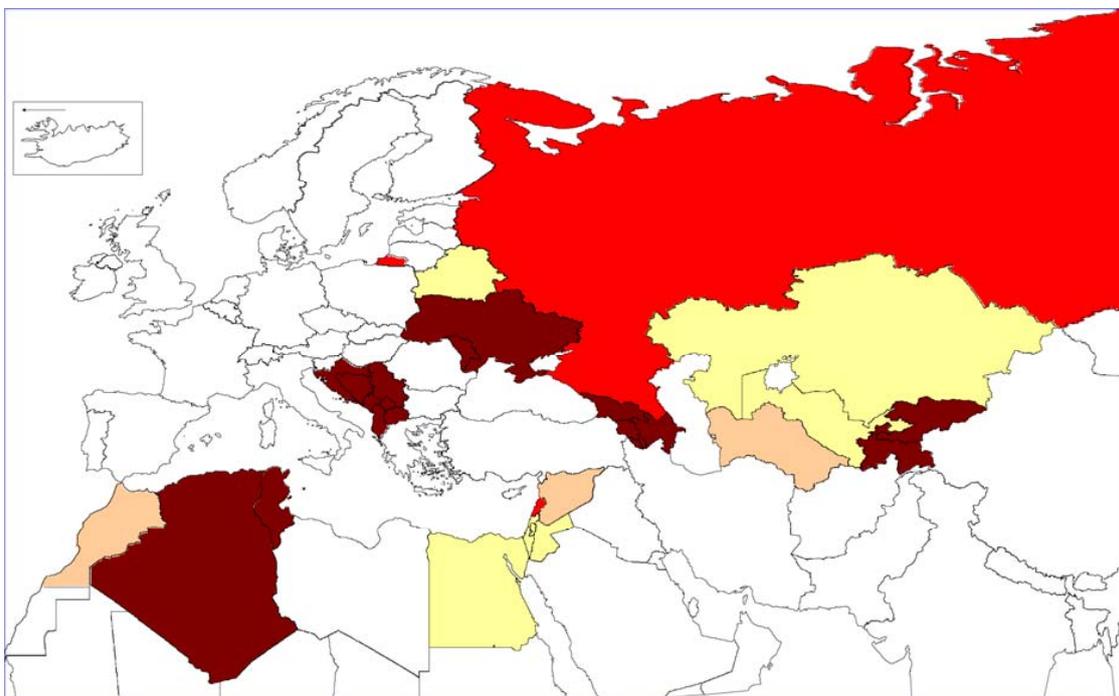
<sup>15</sup> The Higher Education Enhancement Programme is a project funded through a loan from the World Bank in 2002, which aims to improve the quality of the higher education system in Egypt, through legislative reform, institutional restructuring and the establishment of quality assurance mechanisms and monitoring systems.

<sup>16</sup> Under UNSCR 1244

**Map 6: Level of implementation of ECTS, 2009/2010**



- More than 75 % of institutions and programmes are using ECTS for both transfer and accumulation purposes. Allocation of ECTS is based on learning outcomes and student workload.
- More than 75 % of institutions and programmes are using ECTS for both transfer and accumulation purposes. Allocation of ECTS is based on student workload.
- More than 75 % of institutions and programmes are using ECTS for both transfer and accumulation purposes. Allocation of ECTS is based on contact hours, or a combination of contact hours and student workload.
- 75 % or less institutions and/or 75 % or less programmes are using ECTS for both transfer and accumulation purposes. Various references are used to define the credits.
- Other credit system
- No credit system

**Map 7: Legislation concerning ECTS, 2009/2010**

- Legislation governing the arrangements for implementing ECTS has been introduced
- ECTS being introduced without legislation
- Other credit system
- No credit system

### **Part 3 – The Bologna Diploma Supplement**

The Bologna Diploma Supplement (DS) is an instrument developed jointly by the European Union, the Council of Europe and UNESCO. It has become one of the major Bologna tools to describe qualifications in an easily understandable way and relate them to the higher education system within which they were issued.

The importance and relevance of the Bologna Diploma Supplement was reinforced in the Berlin Communiqué (2003) where Ministers of Education from the countries involved in the Bologna Process stated that, starting from 2005, all graduating students should receive this document automatically, free of charge and in a widely used European language.

The purpose of the Bologna DS is to improve understanding of knowledge, skills and competences acquired by an individual to facilitate academic mobility or to provide employers with relevant information. It is a standard document attached to a higher education diploma and it consists of eight sections describing in particular the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were successfully completed. It also includes a description of the higher education system in the country.

#### **A partial introduction of the Bologna Diploma Supplement**

Apart from Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Syria, which do not use any type of Diploma Supplement, all the other Tempus countries have either adopted the Bologna DS or another national version.

The last category includes countries such as Belarus, Egypt, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The national Diploma Supplement used in Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan is an official document presenting the academic subjects studied, the degree awarded and the type of final thesis. It is issued on request (or automatically as in Belarus), free of charge and in the language of instruction or possibly in other languages depending on the country.

In Egypt, students can benefit from a national DS consisting of a degree certificate per subject studied and a description of these subjects in terms of curricula and learning outcomes. It is issued on request and in return for payment in Arabic or in English. In Israel, the DS is also issued on request and in return for payment in the language of instruction or in other languages. Nevertheless, there are plans to start implementing the Bologna DS.

Kyrgyzstan and Israel are planning to implement the Bologna DS. In Kyrgyzstan, the issuing of Bologna type diploma supplements is currently tested in some pilot projects.

All the remaining Tempus countries have committed to use the Bologna DS. A Bologna type DS is issued in the vast majority of study programmes in Georgia, Moldova, Tunisia, and the Western Balkans (except Kosovo<sup>17</sup>), whereas in Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo<sup>17</sup>, Russia and Ukraine, it is still being gradually introduced. In Algeria, a Bologna type DS was already used but it has just been standardised at national level to be fully in line with the Bologna one. Its implementation will be compulsory as of the end of the academic year 2009/2010. In Kazakhstan, a governmental decree was recently adopted to bring the current DS closer to the Bologna type.

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<sup>17</sup> Under UNSCR 1244

Many countries benefit from national incentives and support mechanisms for implementing the Bologna DS. This covers various activities such as training, information campaigns, handbooks, activities carried out by Bologna experts or Tempus Higher Education Reforms Expert and EU funded projects.

### **The Bologna Diploma Supplement mostly issued automatically and free of charge**

In line with the commitment made by the Education Ministers in the Berlin Communiqué (2003), the Bologna DS should be issued automatically and free of charge to graduates at the end of their studies. However, in practice, it is still not the case in all countries and considerable variations in implementation are reported.

In 12 Tempus countries, namely Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Tunisia, the Bologna DS is issued automatically and free of charge. For the Bologna signatory countries the situation has considerably improved since 2006 (Eurydice Focus 2007). In Algeria, whereas the former DS was issued on request, the new one will be automatically issued and free of charge.

In Azerbaijan, the DS is issued on request and free of charge. Various possibilities exist in Kosovo<sup>18</sup>, Russia and Ukraine.

### **The Bologna Diploma Supplement mostly issued in the language of instruction and/or English**

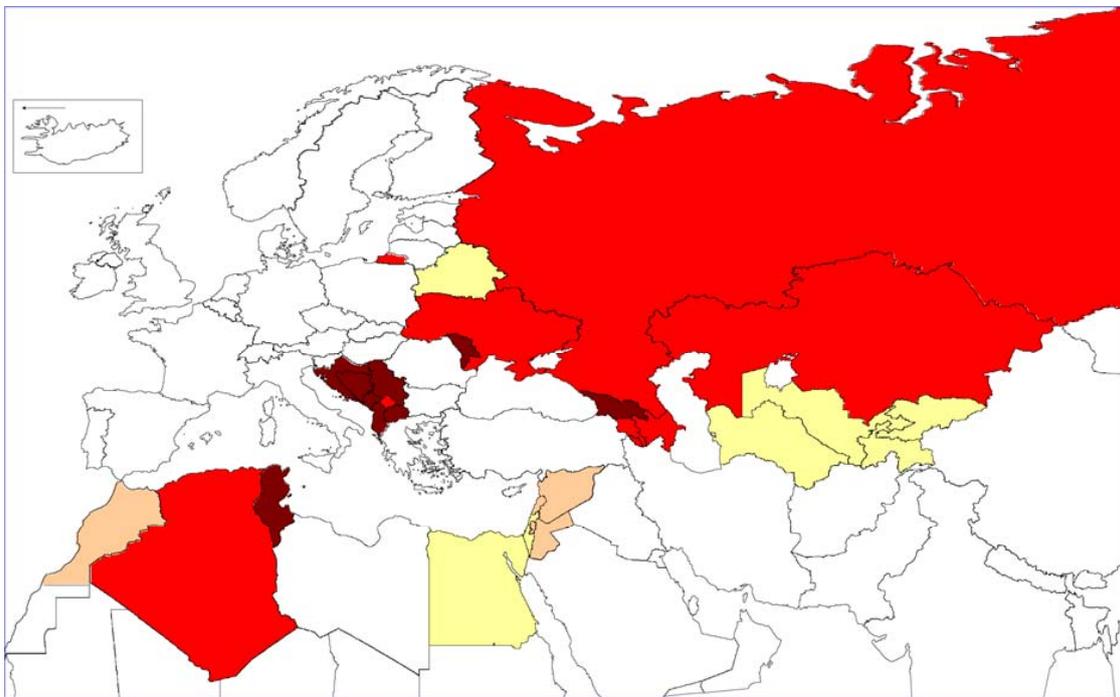
Regarding the language in which the Bologna DS is issued, the majority of Tempus countries issue it in the language of instruction and/or English (this is the case in Moldova, Ukraine, Russia and the Caucasus countries). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, the DS is issued in the national language and in English, as well as in the language of instruction in cases where a different language is used (e.g. minority languages).

In Albania, Algeria, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo<sup>18</sup> and Tunisia, the DS is issued in the language of instruction and/or more official languages. For instance, in Algeria, the DS is issued in Arabic or in French. In Tunisia, the DS is only issued in French for the moment, but it will soon be also delivered in Arabic and English.

Finally, it is worth noting that no Tempus country issues the Bologna DS solely in English as is the case in some countries in the EU, for instance the Scandinavian countries and Cyprus.

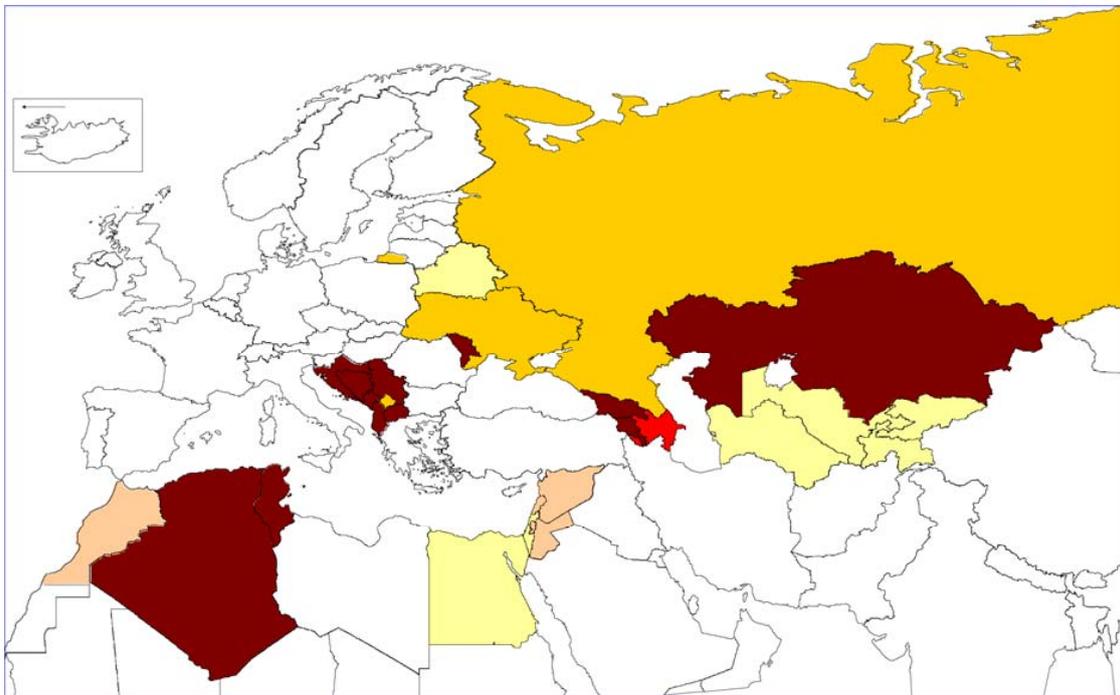
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<sup>18</sup> Under UNSCR 1244

**Map 8: Level of implementation of the Bologna Diploma Supplement, 2009/2010**

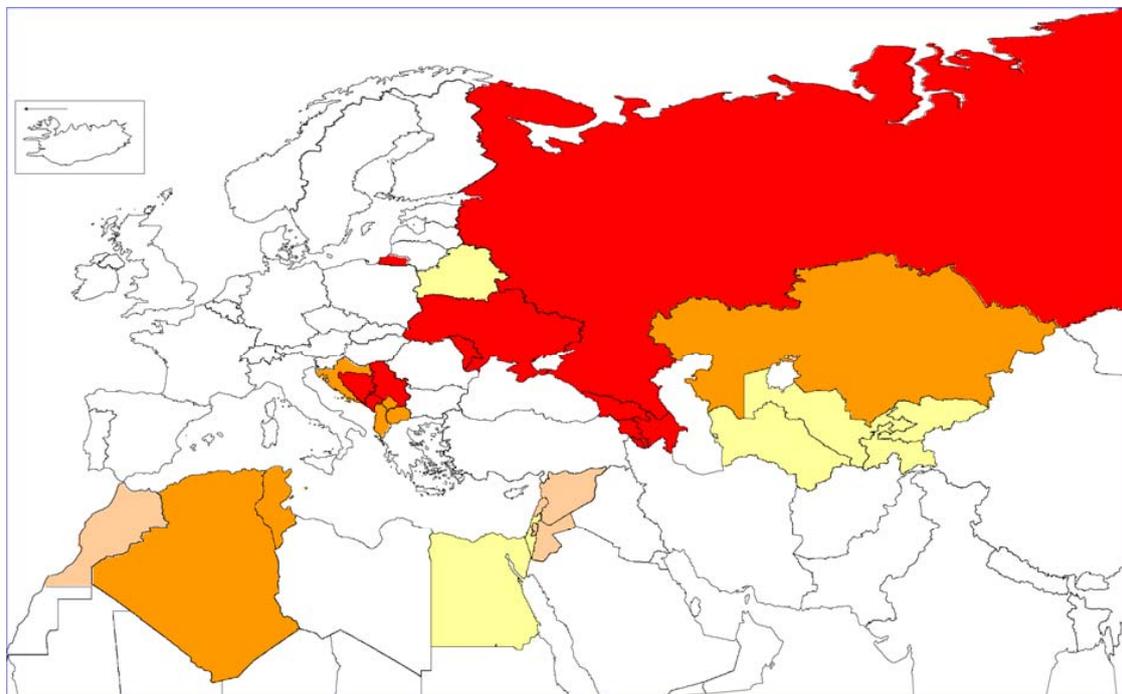
- Bologna DS issued in the vast majority of study programmes
- Partial and gradual introduction of the Bologna DS
- Other type of Diploma Supplement
- No Diploma Supplement

**Map 9: Compliance with the conditions that the Bologna Diploma Supplement be issued automatically and free of charge, 2009/2010**



- Bologna DS issued automatically and free of charge
- Bologna DS issued on request and free of charge
- Bologna DS issued on request and in return for payment
- Various combinations
  
- Other type of Diploma Supplement
- No Diploma Supplement

**Map 10: Languages in which the Bologna Diploma Supplement is issued, 2009/2010**



- Bologna DS issued solely in English
- Bologna DS issued in the language of instruction and/or English
- Bologna DS issued in the language of instruction and/or more official languages
- Other type of Diploma Supplement
- No Diploma Supplement



## **Part 4 - Stage towards establishing a National Qualifications Framework (NQF)**

A National Qualifications Framework is an instrument for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved, which aims to improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society. It describes the different qualifications and other learning achievements that can be obtained in a given country and relates them coherently to each other. It shows what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on the basis of a given qualification and how learners can move between qualifications.

Qualifications frameworks play an important role in developing degree systems and study programmes at higher education institutions. They are also important instruments in achieving comparability and transparency between different national systems and facilitating the movement of learners. These instruments should reflect the shift from traditional input-based approaches of categorising qualifications towards a focus on learning outcomes, credits and the profile of qualifications.

At European level, the development of National Qualifications Frameworks has been encouraged in recent years by a range of initiatives and processes. In the context of the Bologna Process, European Ministers of Education in Bergen (May 2005) adopted the overarching Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (FQ – EHEA) and also agreed that National Qualifications Frameworks should be set up by 2007 and implemented by 2010 in all Bologna signatory countries. These National Qualifications Frameworks for higher education would include reference to the Bologna three-cycle study structure and the use of generic descriptors based on learning outcomes, competences and credits for the first and second cycles.

In parallel to the above mentioned process, a European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for lifelong learning has been developed in the context of the Lisbon strategy and adopted by the European Council and Parliament in 2008. The main purpose of the EQF is to act as a "translation device" and neutral reference point for comparing qualifications across different education and training systems.

### **The process of adopting a National Qualifications Framework is underway in more than half of the Tempus countries**

In order to qualify the different situations of Tempus countries in their process of NQF development and in particular to clearly differentiate between the formal adoption of the framework and its implementation, Map 11 classifies the countries according to five main steps towards establishing a National Qualifications Framework. These steps have been defined by the Eurydice network<sup>19</sup> on the basis of the recommended ten steps scale proposed by the Bologna Follow-up Group's (BFUG) working group on Qualifications Frameworks led by the Council of Europe.

For the moment, none of the Tempus countries have reached steps 4 or 5 on the scale, but three Tempus countries are already in step 3, which means that they have formally adopted a National Qualifications Framework for higher education and started implementing it (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Tunisia). In Serbia, the general framework for the National Qualifications Framework has been formally adopted, but the actual implementation will start upon the adoption of guidelines that are now discussed with the stakeholders.

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<sup>19</sup> Eurydice (2009) – Higher Education in Europe 2009 – Developments in the Bologna Process

In addition, in 15 other countries the process is underway, the purpose of the NQF having been agreed and various committees having been established. These countries are: Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Croatia, Egypt, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Kosovo<sup>20</sup>, Lebanon, Moldova, Montenegro, Syria, Russia and Ukraine. A draft NQF has been developed in Russia, while in Ukraine, a working group operates to design a NQF for higher education under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Sciences and a law on the NQF system is being drawn up under the initiative of the Confederation of employers and the Committee on Social Policy and Labour. In Albania, the legislation on the NQF has been submitted to the Parliament for approval and its implementation is about to start. In Lebanon, the decision to develop a NQF has been taken at the Ministry level and a NQF Coordination Committee has been established. The Committee is now developing the NQF to be implemented by mid-2012.

Considering that most of these countries (all except Algeria, Egypt and Syria) belong to the Bologna signatories, it can be noted that the goal of National Qualifications Frameworks being implemented by 2010 in all Bologna signatory countries has not been reached.

The countries not yet having formally started the process or being just at the beginning of it are all non-signatory countries of the Bologna Declaration except Kazakhstan which joined the Bologna signatory countries only very recently. Five Tempus countries (Israel, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Turkmenistan) have not formally decided on the introduction of a National Qualifications Framework and five (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) are only at the very beginning of the process.

It can be concluded that, whereas many of the components of the Bologna Process are well under way in the Tempus countries, it appears that the concept of National Qualifications Frameworks has not yet fully drawn the attention of the national authorities in most of the Tempus non Bologna signatory countries.

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<sup>20</sup> Under UNCSR 1244





## Part 5 - National Bodies for Quality Assurance

In higher education, quality assurance can be defined as policies, procedures and practices that are designed to achieve, maintain or enhance quality as it is understood in a specific context. It consists of both internal and external processes.

Mutual recognition in the field of quality assurance in higher education calls for the development of clearly defined and commonly accepted evaluation and accreditation criteria and methodologies. To achieve this objective, national quality evaluation systems should not only include the bodies responsible for this task but also specify their composition and fundamental goals.

In order to ensure the objectivity of quality assurance, it is now commonly accepted that the body responsible for this task should be independent and have autonomous responsibility for its operations and methods. Indeed, its reports and findings should not be influenced by third parties. The independency of the body should be guaranteed in official documentation (e.g. legislative acts or instruments of governance) and independence is also one of the criteria for acceptance as full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area produced by ENQA are a widely used reference when setting up such bodies.

A national body without independent status is usually formed as a council, commission or agency directly answerable to the top-level public authorities.

### **Most of the Tempus countries have a government-dependent body responsible for quality assurance**

In twenty countries (Albania, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Russia, Serbia, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan) either a government-dependent body or the Ministry is responsible for quality assurance activities in relation to both public and private institutions (Map 12). In most countries, internal services of the relevant Ministry deal directly with quality assurance. In Israel, for the moment, a government-dependent body, the Quality Assessment Unit in the Council for Higher Education, is mainly responsible for evaluating and accrediting study programmes. However, it is foreseen that this body will soon deal with the evaluation of institutions as well. In Russia, quality assurance is also managed by independent agencies in addition to the Ministry, which shows the ongoing transition towards an independent quality assurance system.

Albania, Moldova, Montenegro and Tunisia are planning to establish independent agencies for quality assurance. In Tunisia, the Law on higher education (2008) foresees the creation of an independent agency by 2012. In the meantime, the National Evaluation Committee, a government-dependent body assisted by experts, is still in charge of quality assurance. In some countries, e.g. Armenia, the body dealing with quality assurance was first established within the Ministry of Education. The creation of an independent agency was subject to debate and the agency was finally created in 2008.

In 2009/2010, one single independent national agency for quality assurance exists in six Tempus countries, namely Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Jordan and Kazakhstan. Although there is an independent agency in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is not yet fully operational and the Ministry is still in charge of quality assurance. In

Kazakhstan, in addition to an independent agency, a government-dependent body for quality assurance is also operating under the Ministry of Education and Science.

In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, two independent agencies (Board for accreditation and Higher Education Evaluation Agency) are responsible for evaluating and accrediting institutions and programmes. The new Law on Higher Education (2008) creates a legal basis to merge the two entities into one single quality assurance body in a near future. In Kosovo<sup>21</sup>, the accreditation mechanism is organised under the Law on Higher Education which has established the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) in 2008 and the Law on Education in Municipalities.

The national independent agencies are usually responsible for institutions and programmes from the public and private sectors. They perform both evaluation and accreditation.

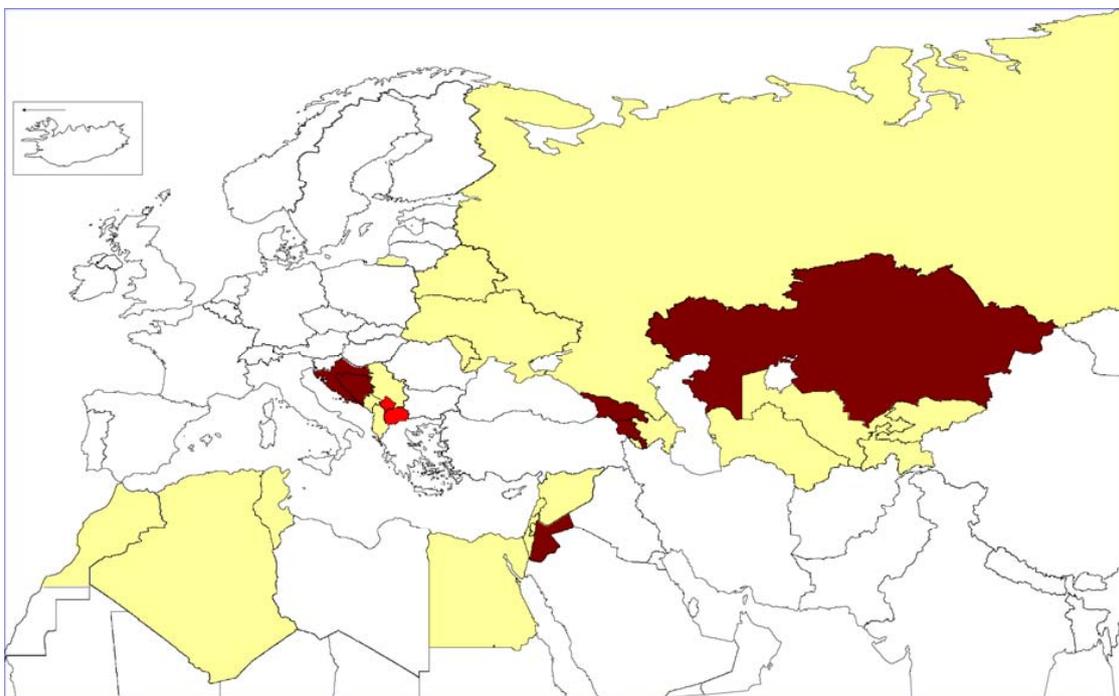
**The main outcomes of evaluations by National independent agencies are decisions and advice**

In Croatia and in Kazakhstan, the independent agencies dealing with quality assurance give advice to improve quality in specified areas, whereas in Jordan the agency gives decisions granting permission to operate and/or teach (Map 13).

In the five remaining countries (i.e. Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Kosovo<sup>21</sup>), the outcomes of evaluations are both decisions and advice.

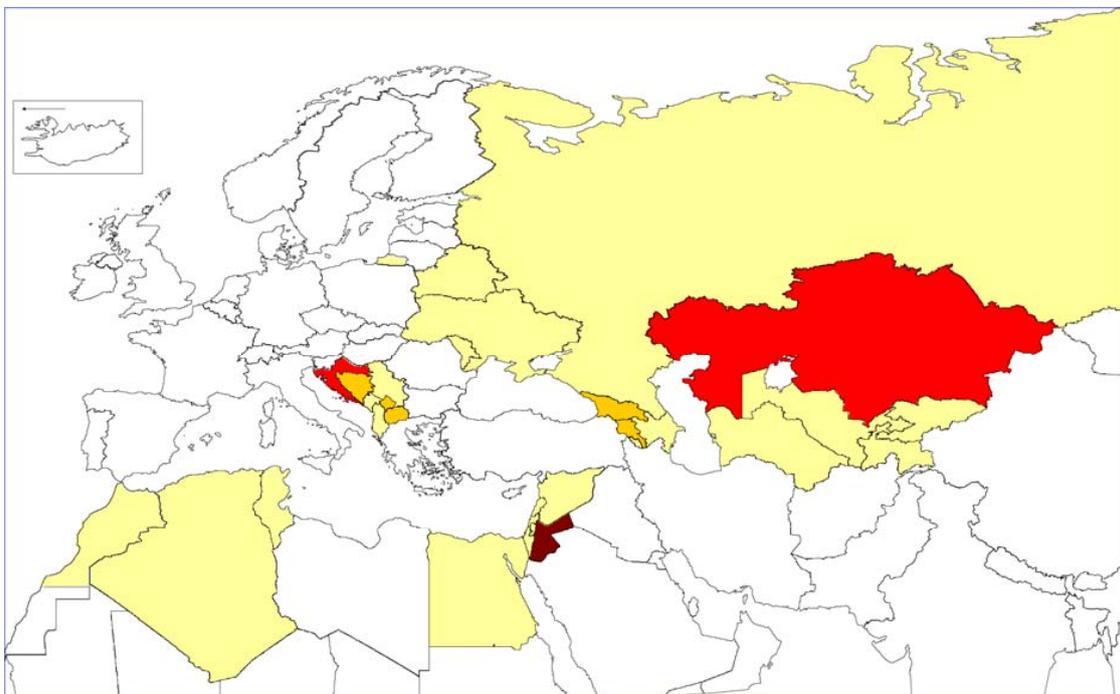
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<sup>21</sup> Under UNCSR 1244

**Map 12: National Quality Assurance bodies (NQA), 2009/2010**

- A single independent national body for quality assurance
- Several independent bodies for quality assurance
- No independent quality assurance body - government-dependent body or Ministry responsible for quality assurance

**Map 13: National Quality Assurance agencies – main outcomes of evaluations, 2009/2010**



**Independent quality assurance agencies providing:**

- A decision granting the reviewed institution/programme permission to operate/teach at certain levels, undertake research etc.
- Advice on how the reviewed institution/programme can improve quality in specified areas
- Both decision and advice
- No independent quality assurance body - government-dependent body or Ministry responsible for quality assurance

## Part 6 – The Lisbon Convention: the recognition of foreign qualifications

The Lisbon Recognition Convention is an international convention elaborated jointly by the Council of Europe and UNESCO<sup>22</sup>. It concerns in priority the Members of the Council of Europe and the UNESCO Europe and North America region. Since 1997, the Convention has been signed by more than 50 countries in Europe and beyond (e.g. Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the USA).

Depending on the signatory countries, the text has entered into force since 1999 once ratified. It allows qualifications granted in one country to be recognised in another country on the basis of defined standards<sup>23</sup>. Regarding the Bologna Process, the Convention has become one of its key instruments to achieve the European Higher Education Area.

The Convention stipulates that degrees and periods of studies must be assessed and recognised in another country unless substantial differences are proved. Students and graduates are guaranteed fair procedures under the Convention. The possibility for students to study abroad has been recognised as an essential element of European integration since the foundation of the Council of Europe in 1949.

Two bodies have been established by the Convention to oversee, promote and facilitate its implementation. They are the Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications and the European Network of Information Centres on Academic Mobility and Recognition (ENIC Network). This network was complemented in 1984 by an initiative of the European Commission: the National Academic Recognition Information Centres network (NARIC Network). The two networks are intertwined and cooperate on all recognition issues.

The Committee of the Convention is responsible for promoting the application of the Convention and overseeing its implementation whereas the ENIC Network supports the national authorities in enforcing it.

### A Convention widely ratified by Tempus countries

Tempus Bologna signatory countries which are also members of the Council of Europe have ratified the Lisbon Convention (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine) and adopted relevant regulations/laws required to implement it (Map 14). In Armenia, the adaptation of national regulations and laws is under way.

The Convention has also been signed by Belarus, Israel, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, which are not member States of the Council of Europe but members of the UNESCO Europe and North America region.

Tajikistan, which is also a member of the UNESCO Europe and North America region, has not signed the Convention but has ratified the text. The remaining Central Asian Tempus countries (Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan which do not belong to the Europe and North

<sup>22</sup> The Council of Europe and UNESCO have agreed on the need to coordinate the Council of Europe's activities in academic recognition and mobility with those of the UNESCO Europe Region.

<sup>23</sup> Such as: the applicant's right to fair assessment of his/her qualification; recognition of qualification provided that no substantial differences can be proven; in case of non recognition, demonstration of substantial difference by the competent authority; introduction of Diploma Supplement, etc.

America UNESCO region) are not parties to the Lisbon Recognition Convention. In order for them to join the Lisbon Convention, they should follow a special procedure (stated in the text of the Convention) and request the accession to the Convention.

The remaining Tempus countries (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria and Tunisia) are not part of the Lisbon Convention. Nevertheless, the MERIC network (Mediterranean Recognition Information Centres Network) can play a useful role. Built on a Tempus pilot project, the MERIC network was launched by the Intergovernmental Committee for the Mediterranean Recognition Convention in June 2005. It aims to promote information exchange in the Mediterranean Region and create synergies with the ENIC/NARIC networks and those being developed in the Arab countries.

### **Ministries of Education are usually in charge of recognising foreign qualifications**

In practice, Ministries of Education or dependent bodies are usually responsible for recognising foreign qualifications. Whereas an assessment of foreign qualifications often used to entail a detailed comparison of curricula and lists of material studied, the emphasis has now shifted to a broader comparison of the qualifications earned in signatory countries.

Although not signatory countries, Kosovo<sup>24</sup> and Tajikistan have implemented relevant regulation in the spirit of the Convention. The recognition of qualifications is therefore granted in line with the Lisbon Convention principles.

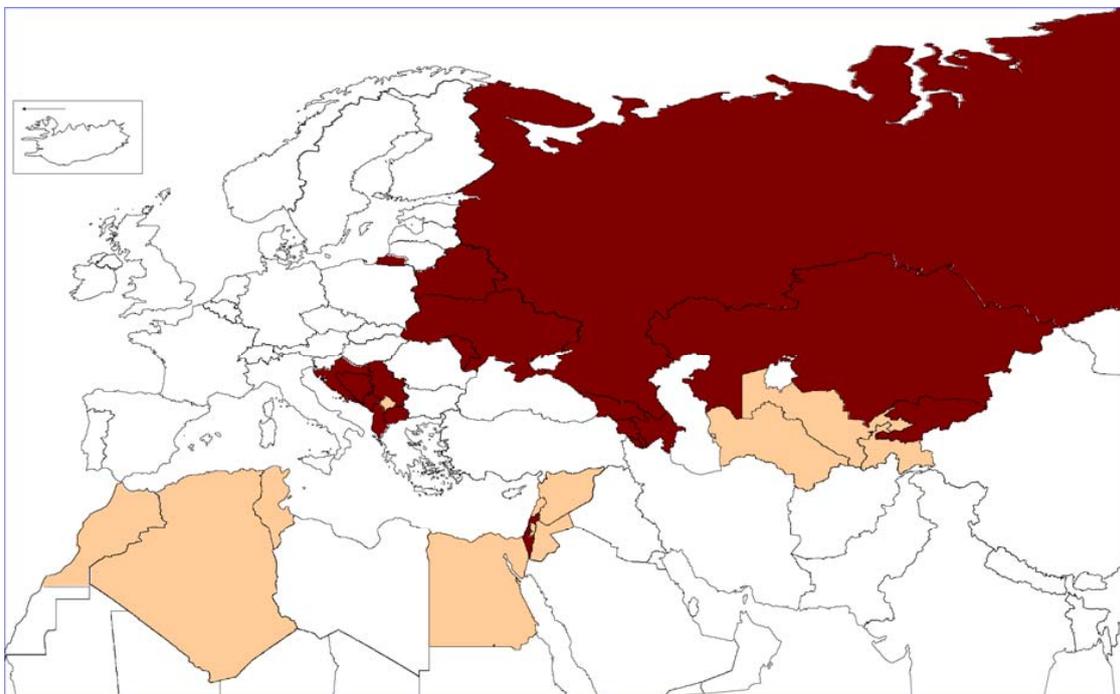
In Egypt, Supreme Councils of higher education institutions are responsible for recognising foreign qualifications. In Israel, accredited higher education institutions enjoy academic autonomy to admit students according to their own criteria.

It is worth noting that the principle of recognition of qualifications granted in another country is nevertheless also applied in other Tempus countries.

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<sup>24</sup> Under UNSRC 1244

**Map 14: Recognition of qualifications – Signature of the Lisbon Convention by Tempus partner countries, 2009/2010**



- Lisbon Convention signatory Tempus countries
- Other Tempus countries



## Brief overview of the Tempus programme

Tempus is the EU's external cooperation programme that supports since 20 years the modernisation of higher education systems in the European Union's neighbouring countries. The partner countries have changed throughout the years; currently the programme covers countries of the Western Balkans, Central Asia, Eastern Europe, Northern Africa and the Middle East<sup>25</sup>. Since the beginning, Tempus contributes to the promotion of cooperation between higher education institutions of the European Union and the partner countries, in particular via various capacity building activities. It also promotes the voluntary convergence of higher education systems in these countries with EU developments in higher education, including the Bologna Process. Indeed, the Bologna Process has become a reference point for most of Tempus partner countries by setting in motion a series of reforms to modernise higher education systems and make them more compatible and comparable.

### **Background**

Initially covering Central and Eastern European Countries, the first phase of the programme was launched in 1990 and lasted until 1993. In those years, Tempus sought to contribute to socio-economic reform through cooperation in higher education. At the beginning, the focus was put on higher education systems in countries that later joined the European Union.

The second phase of the programme, Tempus II, covered the period of 1994-2000. During that time, the programme was extended to new eligible countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. National priorities defined by national authorities were introduced.

The third phase of Tempus was implemented from 2000 to 2006. The concept of regional cooperation was introduced during that programme period. In the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, Tempus III was extended to North Africa and the Middle East, with a view to contributing to their socio-economic development. Besides, the programme aimed at promoting inter-cultural understanding as a means to secure sustainable growth, peace and stability in the region and reinforce the intercultural and civil society dimension of the programme.

Since 2007, Tempus has entered in its fourth phase, which will be running until 2013. It puts emphasis on regional and cross-regional cooperation and on the reinforcement of links between higher education and society. The programme currently covers 28 partner countries and territories. The programme is integrated into the European Union's 'Neighbourhood', 'Enlargement' and 'Development' policies, which aim to promote prosperity, stability and security in the targeted regions. Tempus is funded by four specific EU financial instruments: the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI).

### **Main characteristics of Tempus**

Tempus was primarily designed to contribute to the reform and upgrading of partner countries' higher education institutions and systems. Through cooperation at higher

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<sup>25</sup> Tempus partner countries (2010): Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo under UNSCR 1244, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Russia, Serbia, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

education level, the programme also aims at reinforcing civil society, promoting democracy, as well as enhancing mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue between the EU and its partners. It combines a "bottom-up" approach - putting the initiative on higher education institutions - and a "top-bottom" approach in so far as national and regional priorities are established by national authorities for each partner country with a view to maximise the impact of the programme on higher education reform processes.

To achieve its objectives, Tempus IV supports three types of projects.

- *Joint Projects* are specifically designed for individual higher education institutions and fund multilateral partnerships between EU and partner country institutions. They notably aim at developing, modernising and disseminating new curricula, teaching methods and teaching materials, enhancing quality assurance mechanisms in institutions, modernising the governance and management of higher education institutions, strengthening their role in society and their contribution to the development of lifelong learning and reinforcing the 'knowledge triangle' of 'education-research-innovation'.

- *Structural Measures* directly contribute to the development and reform of higher education systems in partner countries, to enhance their quality and relevance to the world of work and society at large, and promote further convergence with EU developments in the area of higher education. They can focus on issues linked to the reform of governance in higher education institutions (qualification systems, quality assurance mechanisms, autonomy of institutions...), or foster links between higher education, the world of work and other sectors of education. They can include studies and research, the organisation of national, regional and thematic conferences and seminars, the provision of training, policy advice and the dissemination of information.

Both Joint Projects and Structural Measures are funded through calls for proposals. Yearly, approximately 70 projects are funded. The financial support varies from 0.5 to 1.5 million EUR.

- *Accompanying Measures* are funded through Calls for Tender or Framework Contracts. They comprise of dissemination and information activities such as thematic conferences, studies and activities which aim to identify and highlight good practice or consultation of stakeholders, for example. They are also used to fund the National Tempus Offices and the activities of the group of 'Higher Education Reform Experts' in the Tempus partner countries.

### **Management of Tempus**

The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) is responsible for both the management and the implementation of Tempus, under powers delegated by the European Commission. EuropeAid Co-Operation Office and Directorate-General for Enlargement allocate funds directly to the Executive Agency to manage the programme and thus have the formal responsibility for supervising its activities. In line with their mandate, Directorate-General for External Relations contributes to the strategic orientations of the programme and Directorate-General for Education and Culture brings in its sectoral expertise and facilitates linkages with the European Union's internal higher education reform policies.

## Overview of the Bologna Process

### **History of the Bologna Process<sup>26</sup>**

The Bologna Process is the product of 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. The process also includes the European Commission as a full member. The Council of Europe and UNESCO – CEPES, along with a range of stakeholder organisations are also involved as consultative members. There is thus full and active partnership with higher education institutions, represented by the European University Association (EUA) and the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), students, represented by the European Students' Union (ESU), academics represented by Education International (EI) as well as the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and Business Europe representing employer organisations.

Since 1998, eight ministerial conferences devoted to mapping out the Bologna Process have been held in different European cities, namely Paris (at the Sorbonne University), Bologna, Prague, Berlin, Bergen, London, Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve and Budapest/Vienna.

### **Sorbonne Declaration (1998)**

The basic precepts of the Bologna Process date back to 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 four countries: France, Germany, Italy and United Kingdom.

The Sorbonne Declaration focused on:

- Improving 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**;
- Facilitating the **mobility of students and teachers** in the European area and their integration into the European labour market;
- Designing **a common degree level system** for undergraduates (bachelor degree) and graduates (master and doctoral degrees).

### **Bologna Declaration (1999)**

The Bologna Declaration on the European Higher Education Area, largely inspired by the Sorbonne Declaration, was signed in June 1999 by Ministers responsible for higher education in 29 European countries. This Declaration became the primary document used by the signatory countries to establish the general framework for the modernisation and reform of European higher education. The process of reform came to be called the Bologna Process.

<sup>26</sup> Eurydice (2010) – Focus on Higher Education in Europe 2010 – The impact of the Bologna Process

In 1999, the signatory countries included the then 15 EU Member States, 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 associations of universities, rectors and European students also participated in drafting the Declaration.

The Bologna Declaration also formulates the objective of increasing the international competitiveness of the European system of higher education and stresses the need to ensure that this system attracts significant attention from around the world.

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**;
- Promote the **European dimensions in higher education** (in terms of curricular development and inter-institutional cooperation).

### **Prague Communiqué (2001)**

In May 2001, the meeting in Prague was convened to assess the progress accomplished to date (particularly as indicated in the respective national reports) and identify the main priorities that should drive the Bologna Process in the years ahead. 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.

The education Ministers also decided to establish a Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) responsible for the continuing development of the Process. The BFUG is composed of representatives of all signatory countries and the European Commission and is chaired by the rotating EU Presidency. The Council of Europe, the European University Association (EUA), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) and 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.

The Prague Communiqué emphasised three elements of the Bologna Process:

- Development of **lifelong learning**;
- Involvement of **higher education institutions and students**;
- Promotion of the **attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area**.

### Berlin Communiqué (2003)

Held in September 2003, the Berlin Conference 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, Holy See, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro), 40 countries were then involved.

In the Berlin Communiqué, 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. The Unesco European Centre for Higher Education (Unesco-CEPES) joined the work of the BFUG as a consultative member.

With the Berlin Communiqué, the Bologna Process gained additional momentum by setting certain 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 an overarching **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.**

### Bergen Communiqué (2005)

By May 2005, the Bologna Process extended to 45 signatory countries with the inclusion of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The Ministers responsible for higher education met in Bergen to discuss the mid-term achievements of the Bologna Process. The commissioned Stocktaking Report was submitted by the BFUG for the occasion. The Bergen Conference also marked the adoption of 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).

The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the Education International Pan-European Structure and the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE, later to become Business Europe) joined the BFUG as consultative members.

In the Bergen Communiqué, Ministers enlarged their priorities for 2007, which now also include:

- **Reinforcing the social dimension** and removing obstacles to mobility;
- Implementing the **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.

### London Communiqué (2007)

The London ministerial meeting, 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 on the basis of external evaluation.

London also saw developments in two key areas – the social dimension, where Ministers agreed to develop national strategy and action plans, and the global dimension, where Ministers agreed on a strategy to develop the global dimension of European higher education.

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

In the London Communiqué, Ministers:

- 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.

### Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué (2009)

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 comparability of European education systems through the implementation of structural changes and the use of ECTS and the Diploma Supplement. 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

### **Budapest/Vienna Communiqué (2010)**

The Budapest/Vienna ministerial meeting held on 11 and 12 March 2010 launched officially the internationally competitive and attractive European Higher Education Area as envisaged in the Bologna Declaration of 1999, based on trust, cooperation and respect for diversity.

The Ministers committed to the full implementation of the agreed objectives and the agenda for the next decade set by in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve. They acknowledged that the Bologna action lines are implemented to varying degrees and that Bologna aims and reforms have not always been properly implemented and explained. Ministers emphasised the need to listen to the critical voices raised among staff and students and to work on improving and better communicating about the process.

In particular, Ministers fully support staff and student participation at decision-making structures (EU, national, institutional) and student-centred learning. Ministers recommitted to academic freedom as well as autonomy and accountability of higher education institutions.

They also reaffirmed that higher education is a public responsibility, and despite difficult economic times, are committed to ensure that higher education institutions have the necessary resources and can provide equal opportunities to quality education, paying particular attention to underrepresented groups.

The country membership expanded to 47 with the recognition of Kazakhstan as a new participating country.

In the Budapest/Vienna Communiqué, Ministers agreed:

- To ask the Bologna Follow-up Group to propose measures to facilitate the **implementation of Bologna action lines**, among others by developing additional working methods, such as peer learning, study visits and other information sharing activities.
- To intensify policy dialogue and cooperation with **partners across the world**.

### ***Beyond Europe, the Bologna Policy Forum***

In 2007, Ministers and European Union representatives decided to develop a strategy specific for the external dimension of the Bologna Process. Two years later, in 2009, the first Bologna Policy Forum was held to encourage closer cooperation with countries outside the process. This meeting immediately followed the ministerial meeting on 29 April 2009 and was attended by higher education Ministers or their representatives from 15 countries around the world, including the US, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Australia, China and several Tempus countries (Egypt, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco and Tunisia).

The first Bologna Policy Forum provided the opportunity to discuss how worldwide cooperation in higher education can be enhanced through the Bologna Process. The final

Declaration highlighted the consensus that a more permanent and structured dialogue between "Bologna" and third countries would be of mutual interest. It stated that the recognition of studies and qualifications as well as the issue of quality assurance are key elements for promoting mobility that go much beyond the Bologna signatory countries. It also concluded that the Bologna Policy Forum should become a regular, institutionalised event.

The second Bologna Policy Forum took place in Vienna on 12 March 2010, right after the Bologna Ministerial Anniversary Conference. More than 20 countries from all over the world were invited to attend and to join this open dialogue along with the European Higher Education Area countries. 5 Tempus partner countries attended this event (Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia).

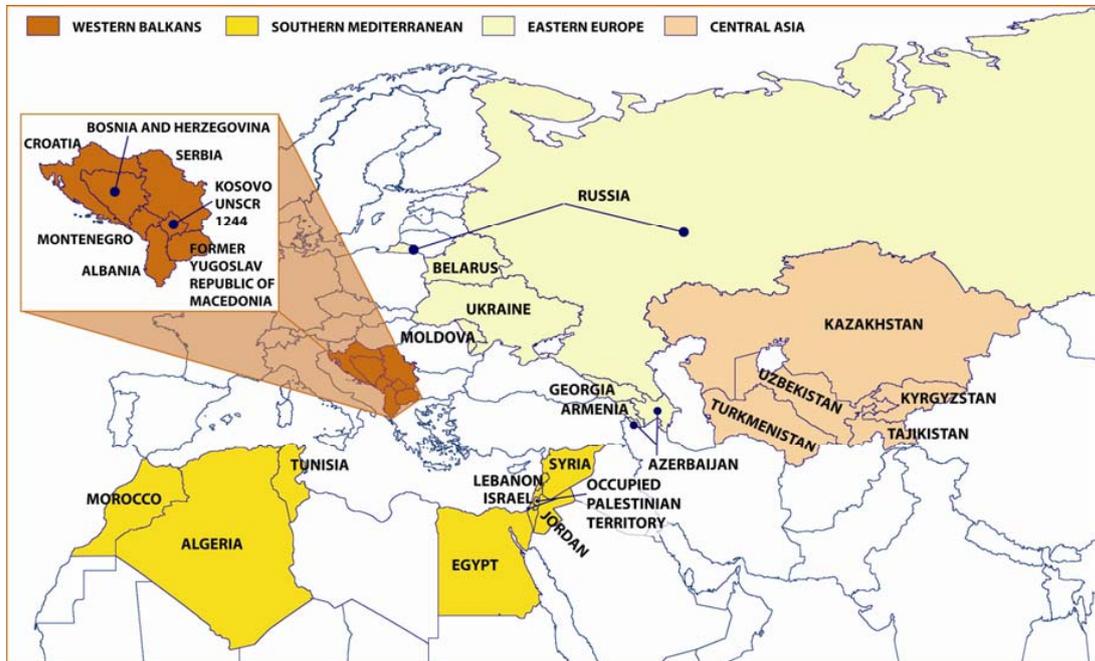
Debates focused on how higher education systems and institutions respond to growing demands, but also on mobility, including the challenges and opportunities of "brain circulation" and the balance between cooperation and competition in international higher education.

It was decided that each country will nominate a contact person who will function as liaison point for a better flow of information and joint activities, including the preparation of the next Bologna Policy Forum at ministerial level.

The Policy Forum will continue to promote dialogue and cooperation among higher education institutions, staff and students and other relevant stakeholders across the world. In this context, the need to foster global student dialogue is acknowledged.

Cooperation based on partnership between governments, higher education institutions, staff, students and other stakeholders is at the core of the European Higher Education Area. This partnership approach should also be reflected in the organisation of the next Bologna Policy Forum at ministerial level in 2012.

## GLOSSARY OF COUNTRIES





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