



Press release

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Focus on the Structure of Higher Education in Europe – 2004/05

National Trends in the Bologna Process

A Eurydice report on how higher education in Europe is structured in 2004/05 has been produced for the Conference of Higher Education Ministers in Bergen on 19-20 May 2005. The publication covers the situation in the 40 current states signatory to the Bologna Declaration, in an attempt to illustrate how the Bologna Process is progressing in all countries cooperating to create a European Higher Education Area.

The two-cycle structure: a reality in Europe

Courses in higher education now have a two-cycle (*Bachelor/Master*) structure in 33 countries. Hungary, Romania and Spain have recently passed legislation to introduce such an arrangement in the near future. Portugal and Sweden are at present preparing draft legislation to the same end ⁽¹⁾. The structure is now applicable to almost all fields of study, although medicine and closely connected fields are generally exceptions.

The system relates primarily to academically oriented programmes (ISCED 5A). In countries with practically oriented programmes (ISCED 5B), opportunities for transferring to ISCED 5A courses vary markedly.

Theoretical training for research is often included in the doctorate

A second-cycle ISCED 5A qualification (*Master*) is generally required to embark on a doctoral programme. Candidates occasionally have to satisfy other requirements often determined by their institutions. In nine European countries ⁽²⁾, it is possible under certain circumstances to gain access to a doctoral programme with a first-cycle (*Bachelor*) qualification. Doctoral studies generally last at least three years, but the duration may be two years in Austria, Liechtenstein, Slovenia and Spain and up to eight years in Cyprus.

In all countries, doctoral students have to carry out an individual research project. They may often receive (compulsory or optional) theoretical training in research prior to or during the doctoral programme.

ECTS is increasingly used for purposes of credit accumulation

Initially devised as a means of facilitating transnational student mobility, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is now used as a system for accrediting courses at national level. Among the 31 countries that

⁽¹⁾ In Andorra and the German-speaking Community of Belgium in which higher education is provided on a very limited basis, there have been no measures to introduce the two-cycle structure.

⁽²⁾ Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Slovenia, Turkey and United Kingdom.

have adopted it ⁽³⁾, only the Holy See and Scotland now use it exclusively for purposes of credit transfer. Some countries have adapted a national system existing prior to ECTS, while others have directly incorporated ECTS within their system.

The Diploma Supplement is now widely used and issued automatically

The Diploma Supplement, which clearly describes particular qualifications in order to facilitate their recognition in Europe, is now very widespread. Only the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Luxembourg and Malta have not yet planned to introduce it.

In most countries in which it is used, the Diploma Supplement is issued as a matter of course and free of charge. Fifteen countries ⁽⁴⁾ provide it in the language of instruction and in English. The Nordic and English-speaking countries and Germany make it available solely in English. Andorra, France, Poland and Spain, are noteworthy for the number of languages into which the Supplement may be translated. With effect from 2005/06, only the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Hungary (in the case of the English language version) will issue the Supplement solely on request and in return for payment.

Frequent student participation in quality evaluation

The great majority of countries have a national body for evaluation and/or accreditation. Most of these bodies are members of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

For the external evaluation of higher education institutions, a third of all countries call on the assistance of experts of national standing and from abroad, students, and professionals from the world of work. Internal evaluation is becoming general practice. It often serves as a basis for external evaluation and students are very often involved in one way or another. In just 11 countries ⁽⁵⁾, students take part in both internal and external evaluation and are represented in the national body responsible for coordinating evaluation.

⁽³⁾ ECTS has not yet been introduced in the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Portugal, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom (outside Scotland).

⁽⁴⁾ Albania, Austria, Belgium (the Flemish and French Communities), Bulgaria, Estonia, the Holy See, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Montenegro, Portugal, Slovenia and Switzerland.

⁽⁵⁾ Austria, Belgium (the French Community), Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom (Scotland).



Background note

Title of the report	Focus on the Structure of Higher Education in Europe, 2004/05 – National Trends in the Bologna Process
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To carry out this study, the Eurydice European Unit drafted a guide to content for the Eurydice National Units and the national representatives of the nine countries outside the Eurydice network which have also signed the Bologna Declaration. The *Bologna Follow-up Group* secretariat lent its support in order to coordinate work with these nine countries. Using the information provided from national sources, the Eurydice European Unit drafted the study and prepared the diagrams. All content was checked for accuracy by each of the national representatives. Data relate to the 2004/05 academic year.

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The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 1997)

ISCED 5

Entry to these programmes normally requires the successful completion of ISCED levels 3 or 4. ISCED level 5 includes tertiary programmes with an academic orientation (type A) which are largely theoretically based, and tertiary programmes with an occupational orientation (type B) which are typically shorter than type A programmes and geared for entry to the employment market.

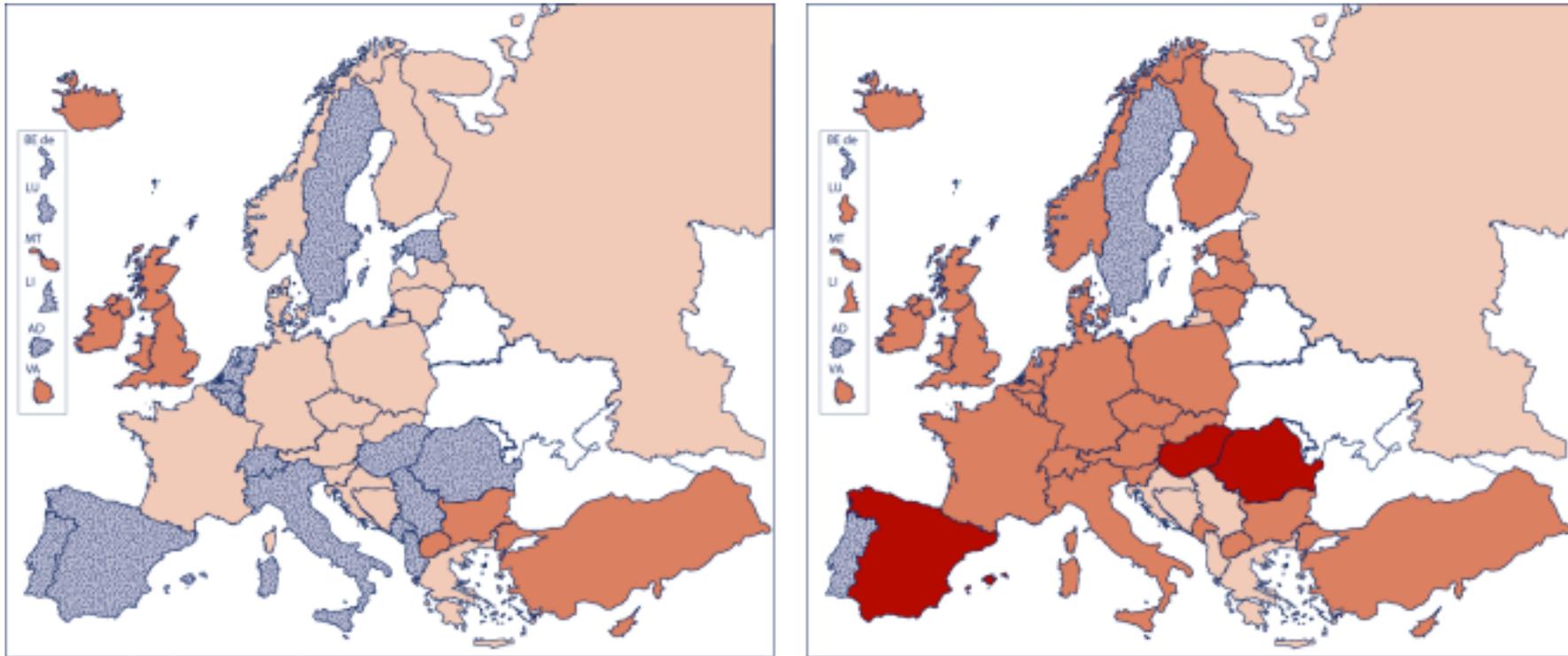
ISCED 6

This level relates solely to tertiary studies leading to an advanced research qualification (Ph.D. or doctorate).

Figure A1: Existence of the two-cycle structure, 2004/05

Situation before 2000

Situation in 2004/05



- Existence of the two-cycle structure corresponding to Bologna
- Existence of the two-cycle structure with subsequent necessary adaptations/extensions
- Law approved in 2004 or 2005, but has not yet come into force
- No two-cycle structure

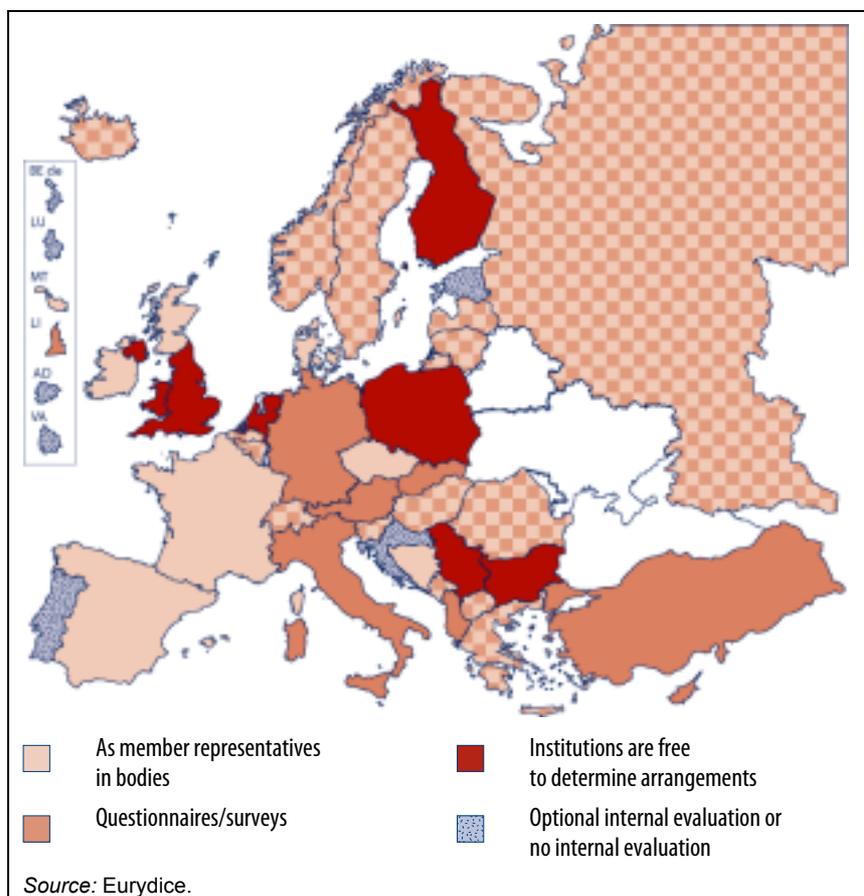
Source: Eurydice.

Additional notes

Hungary: 40 preselected programmes started as first-cycle *Bachelor* programmes in 2004/05. Full implementation of the two-cycle structure will occur in 2006/07.

Italy: The law introducing two-cycle structure was adopted in 1999 and implemented in 2001.

Figure E4: Arrangements for student participation in compulsory internal evaluation, 2004/05



Additional notes

Belgium (BE de): The September 2004 draft decree provides for mandatory internal evaluation and the participation of student representatives.

Bulgaria: According to amendments in the law (2004), student representatives in institutions have to take part in the process of internal evaluation.

Estonia: The majority of institutions use questionnaires to consult students but this is not required in practice.

Finland: The participation of students is recommended by FINHEEC and is the prevailing practice.

Greece: Internal evaluation of academic staff is compulsory. In addition, institutions are encouraged to establish internal evaluation procedures to provide a basis for external evaluation, and to involve students.

Iceland: The law on universities does not refer to student involvement. Their participation is provided for in the regulations on quality assurance.

Luxembourg: The law of 2003 includes a plan for internal evaluation of the new university.