

Between National Higher Education Systems and Internationalisation: the case of Teacher Education

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1. Introduction

The perspective of this paper is that:

- *teacher education* is and should be considered as an *integral part of higher education and research*;
- higher education and research systems in 46 European countries are *on the way towards a common European Higher Education and Research Area* (the Bologna Process as a convergence process, etc.);
- *internationalisation of teacher education* is much more complex and complicated process than *internationalisation in higher education* in general;
- a consideration of these issues is *not* an exclusive *European affaire* but important from a *global point of view*.

2. Setting the context

Modern higher education systems – as well as education systems in general – had been established as *national* systems, i.e., not as *universal* (global) systems. Concrete troubles which people can meet when they try to get recognition of their qualifications in another system provide evidence that a *national character of education system* in principle contradicts to a *universal character of human knowledge*, understanding and skills. This contradiction is under discussion in contemporary period. As a result of dominating economic globalisation, differences of national markets are disappearing; national markets are levelled to a global market. Parallel to this process, national qualifications are also levelled on a global scale. On the other hand, in a globalised world of today the concept of universal knowledge gets a new context and new opportunities (cultural globalisation). International cooperation in (higher) education has long traditions; for various reasons there have always been strong calls for less obstacles and more compatibility between systems. Yet, incompatibilities and obstacles still exist today.

Europe – being divided for centuries but associating today – could be a particularly interesting case. Since the early 1990s, European national systems have encountered new challenges of internationalisation and globalisation. The European ‘internal internationalisation’ (as the ‘Europeanisation’ process could be also called) entered various agendas, also in education. Since 1999, probably the most distinctive expression of the ‘Europeanisation’ in a context of higher education has been established as the *Bologna Process*. It has been an answer to ‘internal’ challenges (first of all, convergence of different and even incompatible national systems) but, simultaneously, it has been also a response to global processes (the issue of competitiveness and attractiveness). Three years remain to an important European deadline (2010: common education area) and European higher education systems are already more comparable and compatible. There is a high consensus that the Bologna Process has contributed a lot to this goal.

However, there is broad evidence that European ‘coming together’ in (higher) education opens also a number of dilemmas. Step by step, the ‘Europeanisation’ of national higher education systems has become a matter of fact (not so much due to traditional bilateral co-operation but due

to genuine European co-operation in education and research, e.g. in Erasmus, Tempus, research framework programmes, etc.). Despite an obvious progress, it can't be foreseen that at certain points European countries jealously stick with their traditional national systems. This is particularly true when we analyse *teacher education* as a part of higher education and as the key point at which Europe would really need more compatibility – not only to strengthen mobility but also to strengthen cultural dialogue by means of education.

In this paper, attention will be given to teacher education, but a context for such consideration should be established first. Namely, teacher education in Europe is considered here as a part of European higher education at large. Therefore, it is necessary to ask to which point the Bologna Process has arrived until today. What are those main challenges to higher education which dominate also teacher education?

A lot has been written about general aims and features of the Bologna Process¹ and this is not to be repeated again here. European countries and higher education institutions are already at the 'second half of the game'; EHEA as well as ERA² are expected to be established until 2010. It is not a secret at all that a lot of questions still remain to be answered at governmental as well as at institutional levels. The *Trends 4 Report*³ of 2005 already found out that »[s]ome institutions chose to use the opportunity which the Bologna process presented in a very proactive manner, trying to optimise the institution's position with the help of the new framework for structural changes, while others refrained from reviewing their teaching and learning processes until it could no longer be avoided« (Reichert, Tauch, 2005, p. 41).

Proactive as well as passive approaches, encouraging as well as concerning points can be found in parallel. Discussions do not take place only at a general level of higher education systems at large but also at more down-to-earth horizons and in concrete areas (disciplines, professions) – also in *teacher education*. Thus, the Tuning project⁴ identified »an anomalous situation with regard to Teacher Education within the context of the implementation of first and second ['Bologna'] cycles of degree awards. [...] Although students may have accumulated a total of 240-320 ECTS in order to obtain their initial teacher education qualification, in a number of countries 300+ ECTS accumulated in this way does not result in a second cycle award« (Gonzales, Wagenaar, 2005, p. 77). On the other side, a note has been also made that »whilst European teachers work within a European context, we still know very little about their 'Europeaness'« (Schratz, 2005, p. 1).

A question »*What is a European Teacher*«, as Michael Schratz noted in his discussion paper for ENTEP⁵, »is not intended to create a 'standardised teacher model'«. This position is not limited to teacher education only but it is an underlying principle of the Bologna Process as well as of any other 'Europeanization agenda' today. Diversity is often stressed in today's discussions as 'the

¹ See the new official Bologna website <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/>.

² EHEA (*European Higher Education Area*) is the initiative of the 'Bologna' countries (today, 46 of them) while ERA (*European Research Area*) is the initiative of the European Union Member countries (today 27 of them). The Berlin conference of the 'Bologna' Ministers (2003) agreed that both initiatives should be linked together; however, in political and administrative terms there is still certain discrepancy (or at least difference) between the both as there is also a difference between the Bologna Process and the Lisbon Process (i.e., the agenda '*Education and Training 2010*' as an important part of the Lisbon Process).

³ There has been constant monitoring of the Bologna Process since 1999; the so-called "*Trends*" reports (provided by European University Association) are among most important sources to analyze and comment its developments and achievements.

⁴ The *Tuning project* (launched in 2000) is described as 'the universities' contribution to the Bologna Process'; over one hundred representatives from European universities joined together to develop new approaches to teaching and learning in a number of disciplines and/or study areas and to 'tune' previously incompatible study paths from various institutions. Tuning has produced echoes also outside Europe, e.g. in Latin America. – See <http://www.relint.deusto.es/TUNINGProject/index.htm>.

⁵ ENTEP: *European Network on Teacher Education Policies*; an initiative of Ministries of Education from EU Member States (launched in 1999). – See <http://www.pa-feldkirch.ac.at/entep>.

European richness'; a real matter of concern is incompatibility of systems and systemic obstacles which hinder mutual enjoyment of this 'richness'. The Bologna Process and the Lisbon Process (*Education and Training 2010*) deny that any progress towards a common European Higher Education Area would be possible if trans-national (legal) *harmonisation* is taken as starting point. On the contrary, it is usually stressed that 'Bologna' is a *voluntary action* of European countries and institutions and that the 'European dimension' shouldn't be an argument in favour of hard standardisation and/or implementation of 'one European model': neither in a case of education systems at large nor of teacher education in particular.

3. Higher education: national vs. trans-national; institutional vs. disciplinary

Therefore, 'Europeanization' and the Bologna Process do not aim at transferring existing (legal) responsibilities for education at a trans-national body. National responsibility for education is a characteristic feature of all countries and it will remain so at least for a reasonable period of time. Political reality in Europe (in EU-27 as well as in EU-46) depends on independent country states. Within EU (compared to the rest of European countries it seems so different and almost a 'centralised' entity), there is a clear consensus that »[t]he Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging co-operation between Member States« while »fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organization of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity« and »excluding any harmonization of the laws and regulations of the Member States« (The Maastricht Treaty, 1992, Art. 126).⁶

Tools have been designed to make progress towards a common EHEA and ERA »excluding any harmonization of the laws and regulations«. The agenda *Education and Training 2010*, offers the so-called *Open Method of Coordination* (OMC) as a »fully decentralised approach using variable forms of partnerships and designed to help Member States (EU-27) to develop their own policies progressively«. OMC has proved successful, in particular while »spreading best practice and achieving greater convergence« (Council..., 2002, par. 4.1). On the other side, the Bologna Members (EU-46) have proven in an even larger 'club' that without trans-national legal harmonization their educational systems can come closer and become more compatible. Doubtless, these are important developments in European higher education.

As it was already said, these achievements bring forward new challenges as well. On one side, it is truth that there is *no trans-national harmonization* 'from above' – but there is an obvious 'bottom-up' process of *voluntary harmonisation* of systems. It seems absolutely necessary with regard to highly consensual contemporary political goals: »In the new Europe of the knowledge society, citizens should be able to learn and work together throughout Europe, and make full use of their qualifications wherever they are« (Council..., 2002, p. 42). However, the process of strengthening *convergence* and *compatibility* of *national higher education systems* is gradually moving certain responsibilities – willing or not – to a *trans-national (European) level*.

At the Bergen meeting (2005) a proposal was presented that »a European register of quality assurance agencies will be produced« and a »European Register Committee« will be established to act »as a gatekeeper for the inclusion of agencies in the register« (ENQA, 2005, p. 5). The European Commission, on the other hand, proposed that higher education institutions »should be

⁶ To this point, politically reached as far as in 1991-1992, no changes have occurred until today. While reading the highly disputed *Draft European Constitution*, the Maastricht wording could be found with almost no changes; e.g.: »The Union shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action. It shall fully respect the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity«. Etc. – See *Draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe*, 2003, Art. III-182).

given the freedom to choose an agency which meets their needs, provided that this agency figures in the Register« (Commission..., 2004, point D). There have been also discussions on »the EHEA after 2010« that have led to not a merely rhetoric question: »Can the European Higher Education Area be established as a sustainable structure without a formal/formally binding commitment from participating countries?«⁷

The last Bologna Ministerial meeting (London, May 2007) politically confirmed the idea of the Register: »We welcome the establishment of a register by the E4 group, working in partnership, based on their proposed operational model«. On the other side, it also recognized the importance of a discussion on the EHEA after 2010 and announced further, perhaps even more ambitious steps: »We will take 2010 as an opportunity to reformulate the vision that motivated us in setting the Bologna Process in motion in 1999 and to make the case for an EHEA underpinned by values and visions that go beyond issues of structures and tools. We undertake to make 2010 an opportunity to reset our higher education systems on a course that looks beyond the immediate issues and makes them fit to take up the challenges that will determine our future« (London Communiqué, 2007).

No doubt: national authorities are still the most responsible actors in implementing commonly agreed principles of the EHEA and ERA but it seems that their *exclusive* authority with regard to governance of higher education systems has been relativized. Not only that a *trans-national level* has been established but *universities* and other *higher education institutions* as well as *student organisations* have achieved an important role in implementing Bologna objectives.⁸ Gradual implementation of the commonly agreed guidelines and principles comes to a point where a voice of higher education institutions – and also a voice of *disciplines (study areas)* – can be a decisive factor for the success of the whole enterprise. Some disciplines and/or study areas are already deeply involved in taking as good position as possible in a further run⁹ – and *teacher education* should position itself within this process as well.

As the decisions made at a ‘macro-level’ are important and far reaching, it remains true that the new higher education ‘reality’ will depend primarily on institutions. There are cases of good practice at the institutional – as well as at the inter-institutional – level; a number of European development projects are running in support of curricular renewal and organisation of studies but also in favour of ‘Europeanization’ and internationalisation of higher education institutions and their provision.

How far has advanced the Bologna Process and how much is the *area of teacher education* involved in these processes?

4. The emerging EHEA: developments and open issues

Early years of the Bologna Process were predominantly a period to develop principles. Since Berlin (2003), there has been a fast change of focus towards *implementation*; yet, this change also raised a question of *interpretation*. There is a growing evidence that steps made at national levels have not always been parallel and simultaneous or understood in a same way. *Trends 4* made an interesting observation on *conflicting interpretations*: »Creating a system of easily readable and

⁷ Quoted from a ‘Bologna’ internal document of 27 April 2005 (in the author’s archive).

⁸ »We [Ministers] underline the central role of higher education institutions, their staff and students as partners in the Bologna Process. Their role in the implementation of the Process becomes all the more important now that the necessary legislative reforms are largely in place, and we encourage them to continue and intensify their efforts to establish the EHEA« (Bergen Communiqué, 2005).

⁹ On one hand, there is a case of the so-called ‘regulated professions’ (at European level; e.g. medical doctors, nurses, architects etc.) while on the other hand there are non-governmental associations (agencies, organizations) like e.g. *Euroing*. Teacher education is *nationally* regulated profession and there has been no European / trans-national associations in this area so far (ENTEP is not more than a consultation forum).

comparable degrees is a central – and for many even the essential – objective of the Bologna process. Since 1999, however, the experience of introducing two or three cycles to Europe's national higher education systems has demonstrated that there is [...] ample room for different and at times conflicting interpretations regarding the duration and orientation of programmes. Especially the employability of 3 year Bachelor graduates continues to be an issue in many countries. [...] There are various modes and speeds of introducing the new systems« (Reichert, Tauch, 2005, p. 11). We will come back to this issue; there is another point in *Trends 4* which attracts our immediate interest.

Namely, there was an observation regarding *disciplinary and/or study area differences* in implementing Bologna principles: »Numerous institutions confirmed that the speed of (and motivation for) reforms is perceived very differently across some disciplines and faculties. In some universities the Humanities disciplines seem to have the least problems offering first- and second-cycle degrees; in others they find it almost impossible to do something meaningful at Bachelor level. The same is true for the regulated professions where professional bodies play a significant role in helping or hindering the introduction of the new degree structures« (p. 12).

In this context, *Trends 4* referred also to *teacher education* and addressed an important issue: »Overall, however, the situation is remarkably different from two or three years ago, when not only medicine, but also teacher training, engineering, architecture, law, theology, fine arts, psychology and some other disciplines were excluded from the two-cycle system in many countries. Today, if at all, this restriction seems to apply only to medicine (and related fields) in most countries. [...] Teacher training and certain other disciplines still pose problems, in some national contexts more than others, and here national systems are experimenting with a variety of solutions« (p. 12).

The transition from agreed general principles to 'devil details' is always difficult and this also proves within the Bologna Process. All disciplines, study areas and professional profiles are today confronted with pressures of 'urgent and immediate' implementation but each of them finds itself in a different position. So far, one of the most spicy questions for majority of institutions (but not in all European countries, e.g. not in UK) has been the *composition of study programmes* at new 'Bologna' first and second cycles; the issue becomes tense when it is observed in relation to (national) traditions of academic professions and to new Bologna principles of flexibility of learning paths and employability of graduates.

In this line, *Trends 4* could only re-establish that »[d]iscussions on both the duration and the purpose of programmes at Bachelor level continue. The misconception that the Bologna process 'prescribes' in any way the 3+2 year structure is still widespread. 3+2 is indeed the dominant model across the European Higher Education Area, even in countries where HEIs have the choice between three and four years for the Bachelor level [...]. In many universities professors and, to a lesser degree, deans and sometimes the institutional leadership, still express profound doubts regarding the possibility to offer a degree after only three years that is both academically valid and relevant to the labour market: 'Employability' to these critics often seems to be synonymous to a lowering of academic standards. Reservations about the validity of three-year Bachelors are particularly strong in engineering, the physical sciences and fine arts« (p. 13). *Trends 4* didn't note at teacher education in this group. However, employability with a Bachelor degree in teacher education is a very spicy issue in many countries as it will be commented later.

Yet, uneasiness in relation to (re-)composition of new two-cycle study programmes and to employability is not only an institutional issue. Difficulties in reforming old curricula and transforming them into new – the Bologna ones – depend very much on *system incentives* and/or *system obstacles*. *Trends 4* also stated that a »very important impediment for a better acceptance of the Bachelor degrees is the failure of many governments to set a clear example of the value of Bachelor graduates with regard to public service employment, through adjusting civil service

grades, and demonstrating positively the career and salary prospects of Bachelor graduates.« (p. 14).

Trends 4 Report has, of course, a *general* focus: the issue is European higher education at large. Many findings can be easily applied also to individual disciplines and/or study areas but from our point of view, it is important now to sharpen this focus with regard to *particular* issues of teacher education.

5. The position of teacher education within ongoing higher education reforms

We will try to check the position of teacher education in relation to the Bologna Process and the emerging EHEA in a rather simple way: sharpening the focus to some key Bologna categories like study structures, degree system, mobility, quality, etc. However, before doing it, we should ask again a few rather general questions.

First of all: when we say '*teacher education*' – what do we mean? We know that teacher education is a rather young study field at universities; its university roots are usually not deeper than in the 1980s. Before – and in some rare cases still today – teacher education was organised outside universities. Usually, nobody stressed teacher *education* but teacher *training*. Since the 1980s, arguments in favour of teacher education at universities or at least in higher education (yet, not excluding professional training) have multiplied but today, still, the term 'training' can be often found instead of 'education' and not parallel to it. Is this terminological dispute important?

Yes, it is. If the teaching profession needs only some training – even if it is higher training – there would be *no need for a recognised study field*. It would suffice if higher education takes place in a *subject discipline* – e.g. mathematics, language, arts etc. – and than some additional teacher training should be added on top. This 'cream' could be added also outside higher education, e.g. in special inset courses organised e.g. by Ministries of Education. If this was the case, the teaching matter and education couldn't be an 'independent object' of higher education and research and there would be no need to enable teachers to continue their studies – i.e. teacher education studies – at second and third cycle (Masters and PhD). They could only transfer from their initial education: either to a 'pure' subject discipline or to 'pure' education as such ('pedagogy' as in many countries).

There have been criticisms against such understanding of teacher education since the 1980s. From today's point of view the picture is rather positive; it seems that teacher education was accepted as a university study area even in broad public outside strict circles of teachers of teachers. There have been ups and downs and there are several questions which remain open and still make confusion. Nevertheless, teacher education underwent substantial reforms – and entered new millennium a bit 'tired' but 'upgraded'. Unfortunately, there is no time to rest; new reforms have been launched.

It could be said that *the Bologna Process bring a new but serious challenge to teacher education at the present stage; a stage which is characterised by fast developments that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s*. Is there enough strength within teacher education to proceed with the pace of development known from previous years? What are weaknesses which could endanger the already achieved developmental level?

5.1. The European dimension. Worldwide, we have been witnessing deep changes in education during the last 25 years. As basic education became a standard in the first half of the 20th Century, upper-secondary education became a standard at the beginning of the 21st Century. On the other hand, the increasing internationalisation of higher education has had much in common with globalising economies. However, despite clear international trends and some degree of international 'standardisation', as it has been already discussed above, changes in education systems are still predominantly nationally oriented. Even in most globalised economies,

curriculum remains nationally based. The weight of the national context and the national culture seem to be a determinant with a specific 'excess' (surplus) with regard to internationalisation and globalisation processes. Along the 'Europeanisation' process, a lot has been said in favour of strengthening the 'European dimension'; however, in public this term often sounds as mere words and not as a value which politics really aimed at. It shouldn't be disregarded that the 'European dimension' could importantly contribute to more 'soft' aims as e.g. intercultural dialogue etc.

Not only educational systems in general but particular *systems of teacher education* can be clear indicators of on-going 'national reservations'. Traditionally, teacher training colleges were – to certain degree – more similar to police and military academies than to universities: teacher education and training was perceived almost as a part of the 'national sovereignty'. With changes of recent decades, this feature seems to sink into history but teacher education encounters new and new challenges within the rough sea of modern education reforms. A teacher is still predominantly perceived as *a teacher within the national context* (e.g. language of instruction, traditions, history, identity, citizenship etc.) but there is also an increasing necessity to position her/him within the *European context* (e.g. mobility, languages, histories, multiculturalism, multiple identities and citizenship). This is not a specific feature of European education; all this could be applied also within a global context. This challenge is sometimes understood as a *dilemma* and hinders faster developments in internationalisation of teacher education and teacher profession.

With regard to fast internationalisation of academic fields and professions (e.g. medicine, law, science, engineering, business and management, etc.) teacher education (could) lag behind if more ambitious goals are not set up.

5.2. Employability: discipline vs. profession. Employability is rather a new concern to curriculum designers pressed by the Bologna reforms. Nevertheless, it has been frequently stressed in fundamental policy documents, e.g.: the EHEA should be »a key way to promote the citizens' mobility and employability and the Continent's overall development« (Bologna Declaration, 1999); measures should be taken »so that students may achieve their full potential for European identity, citizenship and employability« (Berlin Communiqué, 2003) etc. But when we try to translate general strategic guidelines into concrete field concrete troubles appear always again.

Unclear definition of teacher education disciplinary field brings a conceptual problem: *what is the 'epistemological ground' of teacher education?* We already touched this issue. Does teacher education belong to a 'subject discipline'? If *yes*, there is no special teacher education disciplinary field; on the contrary, there are only fragmented disciplinary subject fields (language, mathematics etc.). Students get their higher education in a subject disciplinary field and – after/above/outside that – some specific training (e.g. how to hold a piece of chalk and keep kids obedient). If *no*: does teacher education belong to 'pedagogy' as a 'subject-free' area? This option seems not much better than the previous one. Unfortunately, both of them have influenced discussion on teacher education in many of European countries. The opposition between 'subject discipline' and 'pedagogy' is a kind of a 'chain of tradition' which teacher education today has to take off.

Since its affiliation to university life, teacher education has been a prisoner of a conflict between a 'subject' and 'pedagogy'; »a conflict of faculties« if a paraphrase to a famous Immanuel Kant's essay is made. However, there is reach evidence that this kind of opposition necessarily belongs to the past because »scholars and scientists of one discipline can readily cross-fertilize colleagues in other. [... P]roblems increasingly transcend the competence of single disciplines or departments« (Hirsch, 2002, p. 2). This is not a case only in highly reputed fields as e.g. medicine is; it could be applied also in a case of teacher education. The strategic question is not 'who will take over premises and students of teacher education' (i.e. money) as it often is in university disputes but

rather a question on how to build studies and research in an *interdisciplinary* way.¹⁰ This plea goes along some central Bologna ideas on flexibility and interdisciplinary character of academic study today.

Yet, the problem – at least in some national contexts – can be even more difficult. Not only that the ‘epistemological ground’ of teacher education (discipline) has to be built but *teacher profession* has to be established and clearly recognised. On one hand, there is a generic comprehension of ‘a teacher’ in all languages: skilled and qualified people who work with kids and students in schools. But when we say ‘a teacher in a first grade of primary school’, do we mean the same as in case of ‘a teacher in a gymnasium’? Usually, it is not the case. There are many different ‘categories’ of teachers and this makes an obstacle to identify teachers’ profession clearly.

Further, there are important formal *differences among teachers* in existing national systems: in salaries, in responsibilities, in social status and recognition, last but not least, in their degrees and in types of teacher education institutions. Teachers’ prestige usually depends on their position on educational vertical; lower levels of education and VET ‘don’t count’ much. A popular understanding – even within academia – is that ‘a teacher for small kids’ deserves less education and training (and lower status) than ‘a teacher for more adult kids’. Teachers in European countries are almost by rule a *nationally regulated profession*; it seems to be easier if national (or regional) regulations simply absorb prejudices of ‘a popular culture’ than to *make new provisions, try to upgrade the teaching profession at all levels of educational vertical and contribute to homogenous teachers profession*.

Higher education institutions (in particular institutions of teacher education) could contribute a lot towards achieving the later option. Further reforms of teacher education should address this issue. Within this perspective, the hottest topic seems to be *the structure of teacher education curricula and the division of teacher education to first, second and third Bologna cycle*.

5.3. Structural dimension of the Bologna Process and teacher education. In the *Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area* adopted by European Ministers in Bergen (2005) it is stated that first cycle qualifications »may typically include 180-240 ECTS credits« while second cycle qualifications normally carry 90-120 ECTS credits but »the minimum requirement should amount to 60 ECTS credits at second cycle level« (Bologna Working Group, 2005, p. 9 and 102). The Framework made also clear that the issue should not be reduced to an abstract duration of study programmes but the focus should be given to descriptors of learning outcomes, including competences, credits and workload, profile etc. Despite this warning, popular Bologna jargon used at higher education institutions today formulates the principal question as an arithmetic dilemma: 3+2 or 4+1?

This is a really simplified approach; an excuse could be that ‘Bologna’ brought headache for many who consider how to organise a two-cycle system in terms of study years and in relation to academic traditions. As we already saw, *Trends 4* addressed this issue and pointed that the »misconception that the Bologna process ‘prescribes’ in any way the 3+2 year structure is still widespread«. How do institutions decide about this problem in practice?

At the University of Ljubljana Centre for Education Policy Studies (CEPS) two similar surveys were performed in 2003 and 2006: a survey on trends in learning structures at institutions of teacher education in 33 Bologna countries (Zgaga, 2003) and a survey on prospects of teacher education in 12 Bologna countries of Central and South-east Europe (Zgaga, 2006). An interesting

¹⁰ “Therefore, researchers and students must become competent to engage in interdisciplinary undertakings if they are to meet societal and scientific challenges. [...] In short, as challenges facing society become increasingly complex, multidimensional, and multi-faced, education must stimulate horizontal, thematic thinking and exploration. Emphasis on interdisciplinary curricula and research is thus in order.” (Hirsch, 2002, p. 2-3)

picture was constructed on basis of responses to a question *what model of a two-cycle degree structure individual institutions plan for future*. It is true that samples from both surveys are different but some general trends are easily visible.

First of all, it is important to note that there has been *an important increase of curricular reform activities at institutions of teacher education* between 2003 and 2006. According to the 2003 survey, more than a half of institutions of teacher education (58.9%) already started with a Bologna curricular reform: two fifths (39.3%) of them reported that they recently initiated a reform in connection to the Bologna Declaration at all departments, an additional fifth (19.6%) of them did the same at some departments and a quarter of them (28.6%) said that they plan a reform in near future. Only 12.5% didn't see a need for change (Zgaga, 2003, p. 192). In 2006, there were already more than two thirds of institutions (68.7 %) reporting that they initiated a frontal reform of the curricula in connection to the Bologna Process; a fifth (20.9 %) of them reported that they started a reform at least at some departments or study programmes. The rest (10.4 %) said that they will do so in near future (Zgaga, 2006, p. 14).

The survey brought a rather surprising picture of trends in organisation of the two-cycle system. According to the 2003 survey, *institutions were completely divided into two blocks* when the formula 3+2 vs. 4+1 was in question: there were two distinct and totally equal majorities, both close to one half of respondents: 42.8% vs. 42.8% (Zgaga, 2003, p. 194). Interestingly, almost *equal shares of responses centred around both main options* also in the 2006 survey: 32.3 % of institutions opted in favour of 4-years programmes at the first cycle (Bachelor) followed by 1 year at the second cycle (Master) while 30.6 % of institutions opted in favour of 3 years at the first cycle (Bachelor) followed by 2 years at the second cycle (Master). A group of 17.7% of institutions seems to remain undecided and a group of 14.5% of them plans to provide only the first cycle (Zgaga, 2006, p. 15). It could be concluded *that institutions of teacher education have certain problems with the new two-cycle structure of study*.

Is this a special problem in teacher education? First, it is not a problem *only* in teacher education. Secondly, insofar as it is a special problem in teacher education, it relates to all its main characteristics; teacher education studies are more complex than most of other studies in higher education. Let check only three elements of this complexity.

A. Interdisciplinary character of teacher education. As it has been already argued, teacher education study programmes should combine in a best possible way both 'subject' and 'pedagogy'. The problem is that there is no 'one subject' but almost all main disciplinary fields in higher education could compete to be recognised as the 'teacher education subjects'. As a result, there are often 'clashes among faculties': more cruel and pragmatic than in Kant's time, and Faculties of Teacher Education are often not so aggressive fighters. Academic politics and academic power balance can decisively determinate how certain dilemmas – which should be in normal conditions treated exclusively expert issues, e.g. redesigning curricula – are solved in practice.

B. Initial vs. continuous teacher education is a traditional differentiation within the concept of teacher education. With the Bologna two-cycle structure this differentiation comes under a new light. In most countries, initial teacher education was traditionally understood as undergraduate study and continuous education as in-service training. Now, is second cycle teacher education initial *or* continuous education? The answer largely depends on *national regulations*. Traditionally, the first diploma was quite enough to get a licence for teaching. Finland was the first country which decided – before 'Bologna' – to upgrade initial teacher qualification to the second cycle (Masters) level. Today, some countries try to follow it; but under new circumstances the announced changes go parallel to fears that this will not necessarily contribute to quality of teachers' qualifications. On one hand, there is a fear that qualifications for teaching at pre-school and primary school level will require 'only' first cycle degree and in certain cases the effect could

be that programmes are one year shorter. This is a double danger: to decrease existing standards and to split (again) primary and (upper-) secondary school teachers. *It is crucial for future of teacher education systems in Europe what new national regulations will governments approve until 2010.*

C. Parallel vs. consecutive mode is another characteristic feature of teacher education but not a characteristic feature of other higher education study areas. It seems that Bologna hasn't endangered this specific feature; on the contrary, it gives more opportunities for flexible learning paths and therefore it is a 'Bologna friendly' element. However, it provokes some new questions and dilemmas. For example: a student gets first cycle degree (Bachelor) in Chemistry and then she/he would like to get second cycle (Master) in Teacher Education. Obviously, Master in Teacher Education should be based on second cycle level descriptors and should not be understood as traditional teacher training courses in many countries which offer pedagogic skills to teach Chemistry (but not a degree).

There is another question at this point. What should the second cycle of Teacher Education aim at? Should it be about getting a teaching licence (initial teacher education)? Or should it be about getting a research degree? If this was true than a transfer from a 'pure subject', e.g. first cycle Chemistry, to second cycle Teacher Education would be difficult. In some study areas a differentiation between a shorter (60 credit ECTS) 'executive' or 'professional' degree and a longer (120 credit ECTS) 'research' degree is taking place. Is the area of teacher education ready for this challenge?

5.4 European and international mobility is a key – if not the central – Bologna concept; therefore, it is important to ask *how mobile students in teacher education are today*. Several statistical sources are available which can help to draw a rather clear picture. To read mobility statistics across European countries from study area point of view it is important to know what is distribution of students and graduates by area or field of study. At the beginning of this decade (2000/01), there were on average 8.4% of students in EU-15 who were studying in the area of education (*European Communities*, 2003, F.8a); with the enlargement process (EU-25) this share has only increased (in the new Member States, this share is by rule higher than 10%, e.g. in Latvia 18% and in Slovak Republic 17% while at the bottom of this list it is 11% in Slovenia and 10% in Estonia). On the other side, the share of new teachers within the total body of new graduates in EU 15 was a bit higher: 10.0% (it means that drop-out in teacher education is lower than on average) while in most new Member States it was again much higher. *An average share of students in teacher education in EU 27 of today is a bit over 10%.*

And what is the share of international and mobile students in the area of teacher education? According to recent OECD indicators (OECD, 2005a, table C3.5), it is *smaller* than the average share of students in general. Within EU-15, the highest share of foreign students in education¹¹ is noted in Sweden (7.3%), followed by the Netherlands (5.7%) and Austria (5.3%). Among the new EU-10 countries the highest share of foreign students in education is in Hungary (9.6%) and in Poland (9.0%). Data also show that the share of foreign and/or mobile students in education is proportionally lower than in most of other study areas and/or disciplines.

A recent ACA study on student mobility in European higher education (Kelo, M., Teichler, U., Waechter, B., 2006) gives an additional evidence for such conclusion. In the EU Socrates-Erasmus Programme (see p. 166, table 10.4), there was a share of 3.9% of students from "education + teacher training" area in 1998/99, which fell down to 3.4% in 2002/2003. There are only three study areas – out of a total of 16 areas – where a decrease was noted: languages + philology (a fall from 18.4% to 16.3%); law (a fall from 8.1% to 7.1%) and natural sciences (a fall

¹¹ There are several methodological difficulties with statistics at this point: category "education" by rule comprises teacher education but in some cases there are also other categories included.

from 4.4 to 3.9). The picture is much worse in Tempus programme: there were only 0.5% of mobile students in the area of 'education + teacher training' (p. 172, table 10.11). *Position of teacher education in two main EU mobility programmes – Erasmus and Tuning – is surprisingly weak and decreasing!*

To make an additional checking results from the Erasmus Student Network Survey of 2005 can be also used – but results are similar: »The most popular *major subjects* among the respondents were: business studies / management sciences (20%), engineering / technology (19%), languages and philological studies (11 %) and social sciences (8 %)«. Education and teacher education is almost at the end of the figure (2.2%) followed only by agricultural sciences (1.2%) and geography, geology (1.0%) (Krzaklewska et al., 2006, p. 10, Figure 5).

Only a brief comment is needed to these extremely talkative statistics: *in overall European student mobility, teacher education is a rather disregarded field of study*. This is a fact and this fact is not an encouragement when we discuss a possible enhancement of the European – and global – dimension in teacher education. *An increase of mobile and foreign students in teacher education is necessary*: not only to keep closer to other study areas and disciplinary fields but also to promote European and international mobility in education *in general*. Teachers who had an opportunity to experience the advantage of mobility as students are much better prepared for their work with pupils and students in the context of European and international cooperation and intercultural dialogue.

5.5 Quality is another key Bologna concept, and we could start a long discussion here. Instead, let just briefly mention that there has been no transnational organisation, association or network in the area of quality assurance in teacher education so far. There are cases of good practice in some national environments (e.g. Campos, 2004) and ENTEP also engaged in quality assurance issues at the last seminar in September 2006. However, on the European and international level teacher education lags behind other fields of study as e.g. medicine, engineering, economy and business etc. It is a strong trend today that specialised trans-national accreditation and/or quality agencies are established to act in the 'prominent' individual fields of studies – but this is not the case in teacher education. The energy behind this trend is principally linked to issues of mobility, internationalisation, competitiveness, excellence and attractiveness. It seems that teacher education lacks this energy: it is still treated predominantly 'national' and hold distant to internationalisation. This is a serious obstacle which hinders teacher education not only to improve its academic positioning and enhance quality but also to play an active role in international cooperation (in broadest meaning of the term) and in cultural dialogue.

6. Conclusion

We come to the final point. Many contemporary teacher education institutions achieved – or strive for – an academic critical mass and position themselves within academic environments. Through their teaching and research, they could and should address not only questions of e.g. teaching, learning and assessment, not only questions of understanding 'teaching subject(s)' and/or educational phenomena, acting in schools and educational processes in general etc. Faculties of teacher education have been also often playing a constructive role in national education reforms as well as in bilateral and multilateral education cooperation. They could/should play an active role also in researching and teaching in this area as well as in designing *teacher education policies*. Predominantly, it is still taken today that teacher education policies are an exclusive responsibility of national ministries of education. ENTEP has shown that ministerial representatives can do their work better in close cooperation with representatives from institutions. This practice should continue and should be enhanced. It is also important to strengthen the European and global dimension in education.

Let's conclude. Since the 1980s, teacher education has been 'upgraded' ('universityfication' of teacher education). Turbulent processes in a higher education at large and in a global context bring further challenges to teacher education as a specific area within higher education. Today, teacher education can be described

- as a young 'academic discipline' and, therefore,
- with relatively lower 'critical mass' than traditional academic disciplines;
- at higher level of political (governmental) influence than traditional professions;
- as more sensible to 'national interests';
- at a beginning of internationalisation process;
- confronted with a challenge to contribute to the emerging knowledge society.

It is often heard in today political discourses that 'the role of teachers is crucial' in national development as well as in international understanding and cooperation etc. If we consider these statements seriously and try to make them a reality, the role of teacher education within higher education and in society at large should be significantly improved, in particular it is important:

- to 'tune' educational structures and approaches to teaching and learning at teacher education institutions in order to facilitate and increase the international mobility of students;
- to strengthen the international mobility of acting teachers, also as an instrument of their continuous education and training;
- to strengthen interdisciplinary research at teacher education institutions which provide teacher education and training;
- to enhance quality in international context and
- to enhance the position of teacher education within higher education at large.

All this is important when we link education and intercultural dialogue. To say more simple: all this contributes to living together.

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