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# Hungarian Higher Education in the European Higher Education Area



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# HUNGARIAN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

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Photo: Eszter Gordon

**Dear Reader,**

Knowledge and talent are assets of great value: quantifiable, marketable and in high demand the world over. Regardless of their nationality or homeland, gifted graduates are much sought after by businesses, research centres and governments everywhere.

Like the rest of the world, Europe must also face the challenges of brain drain: what is at stake is the competitiveness of the continent, and hence, of Hungary. It was with an awareness of this that the Bologna Process was started over a decade ago, to establish the European Higher Education Area, a zone of higher education marked by quality and a competitive edge.

Hungary joined the Bologna Process at its inception, in 1999, to make the system of its tertiary education more consistent, transparent and accessible, and thereby to improve the country's competitiveness. Now, with the benefit of a decade's hindsight, we can appreciate the advantages of the system, as well as its shortcomings. We see what must be changed and what must be continued to achieve an efficient and competitive system of higher education, one that is in accord with Hungary's own traditions and structure of education, while ensuring compatibility with the European model. The studies in this publication sum up the past decade, point out the system's strengths, identify the necessary developments and define directions for the future.

Dear Reader,

Austria and Hungary have gained the possibility to organise the Ministerial Anniversary Conference in 2010, a summit that will evaluate and close the first phase of the Bologna Process. The ministers responsible for higher education, the heads of rectors' conferences and student unions from 46 countries will be in attendance, together with other stakeholders from the higher education sphere. It will be a great opportunity to assess the achievements of the past decade, the trends of the future, and the essential qualities of the Bologna Process.

**István Hiller**

Minister

Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Hungary



## **BOLOGNA AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN HUNGARY**

The Bologna Process: each word in the expression that stands for a comprehensive reform of higher education is replete with symbolic meaning. In the history of Hungarian higher education, Bologna reminds one of the tradition of studying at foreign universities – “peregrination” being conventional both before and after the first, 14th-century Hungarian attempts at establishing universities –; the Collegium Hungaricum, founded in Bologna in 1553; the academic connections of Hungary; and more recently, the Magna Charta of 1988, a statement for the values of European higher education, which Hungarian rectors signed along with about 400 of their of European peers.

The Bologna Process is thus rooted in, and secure by, the fundamental values of European higher education: autonomy, scholarship, unity and freedom of education and research, humanistic traditions, and the service of science and social transformation.

Signed by the representatives of 29 governments, the Bologna Declaration of 1999 establishes the basic principles of the reform and the structural change, of the mission of higher education to shape society and economy, of a university policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and of a competitive European Higher Education Area.

The transformation of Hungarian higher education in the “spirit of Bologna” had actually started before the Bologna Process began. The effort became manifest in the first dedicated Act of Parliament on higher education (1993), which regulates autonomy and academic freedom, in the university exchanges of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that were enabled by various forms of cooperation and projects in Europe, and in the promotion of teacher and student mobility. The range of training programmes has also changed considerably with the integration of further and adult education. The number of students quadrupled in the past twenty years, and the Hungarian Accreditation Committee was established to guarantee quality.

The turn of the millennium saw the modernization of the institutional structure. The organisational, structural and operational changes that affected the entire system of higher education in a spectacular way – such as Act C of 2001 on the recognition of foreign certificates and degrees, the transition to the credit system in 2003, the diploma supplements issued in order to facilitate mobility, the regulation of transition to multi-cycle training and its implementation as of 2006 – have been commended at both Hungarian and international forums.

While such external recognition may call forth satisfaction, it should certainly not occasion self-satisfaction, because those for whom the transition is a daily experience, i.e. teachers and students, will find the Bologna Process a source of tensions, which challenges them with the need to adapt to prompt changes that turn training, research or the operation of institutions into an arena where interests and values clash.

In the course of a higher education reform, changes that require new legal instruments may be effected in a single year, and those that concern the management and operation of the organisations can be implemented in two or three years; what takes more time, several years or entire training cycles, is the transformation of the core principle of universities, the relationship of the teacher and the student, the very culture of higher education. This is something we must not forget whilst travelling the “Bologna road.”

### **Károly Manherz**

State Secretary for Higher Education and Science  
Ministry of Education and Culture

## **THE BOLOGNA PROCESS FROM AN INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

The essential aim of the Bologna Declaration, which Hungary was among the first to sign in 1999, was to create a unified European Higher Education and Research Area. To facilitate student mobility and to enable institutions to award joint diplomas, it seemed necessary to standardize the various systems of higher education and research, and to make the practice of Anglo-Saxon countries, where tertiary education is closely integrated with research, the prevailing model.

For centuries, the conviction reigned in Hungarian academia that the Prussian (German) model of higher education was a tried and tested system that was worth preserving. Particularly dedicated to such notions were those professors who endorsed Humboldt's tenets of the university, which they believed to be timeless ideals.

Though the experience of partnership with other European universities and colleges gradually convinced the Hungarian institutions about the necessity of transforming the old training system and the need to introduce the Bologna model, years were lost before work on the programmes actually began. While the first pilot courses for bachelor's degrees were offered in 2004, professional debate postponed the general introduction of Bologna-compatible undergraduate programmes at Hungarian universities until 2006. Limited as our experiences are – the first diplomas of the new system were awarded in 2009 –, it is already evident that we will be obliged shortly to modify the programme in certain respects. Some of the problems are caused by undergraduate curricula and syllabuses which were developed without the necessary concern for the transition to graduate courses. Mobility, which students have every right to demand, has failed to become a mass phenomenon either within, or between, the institutions. At the same time, the number of students who pursue some of their studies in another European country has increased. Once we have analyzed the collected data and made the necessary corrections, I am certain the initial setbacks can be quickly eliminated. We seek to establish a Bologna system in Hungary that is both efficient and representative of our national traditions in education.

We can declare the transition to the Bologna system to be accomplished in Hungary throughout the entire system. As it is common in Europe, training at certain faculties – as in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, law and architecture – continues to be single-tier. The Bologna Process has fundamentally transformed the whole of Hungarian higher education: new undergraduate courses and programmes have been established, and the objective of a more practical training has been attained.

In sum, current difficulties notwithstanding, the Bologna Process can be deemed to have accomplished much in Hungary. It is indeed a field in which Hungarian higher education has met with considerable success. Throughout the country, faculties and staffs are dedicated to the creation of a unified European Higher Education Area. It is our hope that this massive transformation, which is of a magnitude Hungarian higher education has not seen for centuries, will be successfully realized in the foreseeable future.

**Gábor Szabó**

President

On behalf of the Presidency of the Hungarian Rectors' Conference



## THE BOLOGNA PROCESS AND QUALITY IN HUNGARIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

By nature and tradition, higher education is a system of institutions whose chief principle is quality. At the classic university, as in most cases today, intellectual, educational and scholarly qualities formed and form the criteria of employment for instructors. In a like vein, above-average knowledge and skills were and are required from those who apply to study for a degree.

The post-transition higher education of Hungary recognized the significance of quality assurance in achieving higher standards in education and research, as well as in the ever keener competition for students, research funds and recognition. Moreover, applicants and students, whose number grew radically, as well as the would-be employers of graduates (the labour market), started to demand quality, together with reliable information on its availability.

It was in acknowledgement of these developments that what is now called the Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC) was established, a national body of experts whose independence is both guaranteed by law and is an acknowledged fact. Ever since its foundation, HAC has safeguarded quality in Hungarian higher education by prescribing and enforcing quality-based criteria. Its duties, as described in the Act on Higher Education, also include assisting institutions in implementing their internal quality assurance, and assessing these systems.

The “*promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies*” was a goal of the Bologna Declaration that Hungarian higher education, including HAC, could easily identify, and concur, with. A founding, and always active, member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), HAC was among the first to set to work towards this objective, and now accepts and applies the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG).

It has to be stressed that quality assurance is a key and increasingly important element of higher education policy in Hungary. The Act on Higher Education defines and explains in detail the related roles and functions of the main actors, i.e. the government, the universities and their funders, and HAC.

Compared to other similar bodies in Europe, HAC fulfils a very broad range of functions, as defined by the law: HAC provides *expert opinion* on the foundation of a new institution; on the establishment of new bachelor and master programmes and doctoral schools; and what is rare in Europe, on professorial tenure applications. At the same time, HAC evaluates training, research, and artistic creative work, and the system of quality improvement, at each Hungarian institution of higher education, repeating the process every eight, or according to new plans, five, years.

Our guiding principle is that quality in Hungarian higher education will depend not so much on legislation or HAC, as on the institutions themselves, their practice in training, research, management and economy, their quality assurance programmes. HAC is convinced that its manifold and quality-oriented activities constitute a substantial contribution to the success of the Bologna Process in Hungary and Europe.

### **György Bazsa**

Chairman

Hungarian Accreditation Committee

## THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS AND THE LABOUR MARKET IN HUNGARY

One of the most significant factors in the introduction of the Bologna model of education is that instead of monitoring interest at its input, higher education must focus on the demand that appears at its output. This places important duties on the Higher Education and Research Council (HERC) as well.

As defined in the Act on Higher Education, the responsibilities of HERC include analysing the links of higher education and the labour market, monitoring the employment prospects of fresh graduates, evaluating trends in the labour market, and using these findings to make proposals for the government on the number of state-financed student positions in the next academic year.

This work can only be accomplished in cooperation with the actors of the labour market (human resource managers of businesses, representatives of professional, trade and interest organisations, experts of head-hunting companies, etc.). HERC goes beyond its legal obligations and holds regular consultations with the labour market on eight to ten occasions a year. With these forums, we seek to help the labour market to know more about the qualifications and skills of those who earn their degrees in the new system.

It was with reliance on widespread professional debates that the policy-makers of Hungarian higher education implemented the reduction in the number of programmes, and developed the system of BA/BSc and MA/MSc degrees, together with the programme completion and exit requirements. In those fields of studies where separate college and university programmes had been available (as in agriculture, technology, economics, etc.), the transformation was faster and more efficient. Where no similar traditions existed (as in the humanities and sciences), the remodelling was effected through the condensation of five-year syllabuses into three-year curricula, often involving chance selections and insufficient regard for the demands of the labour market. During the introduction of the Bologna model, undergraduate and graduate programmes were developed separately, and there is as yet no model for inter-programme mobility. How specialisations are to be represented or what the “new degrees” should be called is still unclear. This is of particular interest in the case of those students who take advantage of inter-programme mobility: what should their diplomas be called, and what qualifications should the latter confer? The situation is made even more complex by the lack of a final concept for a system of qualifications, and that the existing ones are incompatible with the demands of the labour market or official requirements.

In recent years, there have been a number of positive developments in the relationship of higher education and the economy. Research has started, and surveys have been carried out, on the employment of graduates, and databases and services have been established to facilitate monitoring (the legal framework for the Graduate Career Monitoring System, measurement of student satisfaction, laying the foundations of the Alumni system).

Hungary is especially ready to adopt best practices from Europe, and makes every effort to ensure the Hungarian systems are compatible with those that other countries use to regulate their graduate labour markets. We consider it an achievement that Hungary boasts the lowest graduate unemployment rate in Europe, as compared to the active population (2.8 per cent), although the economic recession has considerably worsened the employment prospects of new graduates.

### **Béla Mang**

Chairman

Higher Education and Research Council

## THE BOLOGNA PROCESS – A PARADIGM SHIFT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Among other things, the first Hungarian Act on Higher Education (1993) proposed a law on the development of higher education. During the two years that followed, the chances of such an act grew increasingly dim, and the plans eventually petered out in a Decree of Parliament (1995), which was to have no positive practical impact. A World Bank loan, under negotiation at the time, seemed a great new opportunity to elaborate a strategy for the development of higher education, but in the end Hungary decided against the loan, and no strategy was drawn up.

This was the state of affairs when the Bologna Declaration was issued, which offered the Hungarian higher education sector a new chance to operate within the framework of well-defined objectives and a transparent regulatory system. While the law on development was still not forthcoming, the higher education system of Hungary became part of a general international strategy, offering a new opportunity to solve some of its functional problems in line with, and while adapting to, the international context. Naturally, the countries signing the Bologna Declaration had different higher education systems, and harmonisation was only possible if the states' freedom of decision and the universities' autonomy was to be upheld.

Through the example of one of the Bologna objectives, the system of easily readable and comparable degrees, we will now look at how these objectives helped us solve some of our existing problems.

Due to the dual nature of the Hungarian higher education system, college graduates formerly had little chance of continuing their studies and obtaining university degrees. The introduction of the three-cycle, or linear, system (bachelor/master/doctorate) ensures a chance to progress for all those intending to continue their studies. To enable students to pursue their studies in other countries in a similar manner, national qualifications frameworks will be developed, which will be compatible with the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area and will define the knowledge and skills to be attained by students in each cycle, in the form of learning outcomes. The coordinated development of the systems will be guaranteed by a quality assurance that complies with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. Diplomas, certificates and higher education qualifications awarded in other countries can also expect fair recognition, in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention of the Council of Europe and UNESCO.

Like the other 45 member states, Hungary undertook to realize the Bologna objectives voluntarily. By formulating general principles and frameworks, the Bologna Process aims at facilitating the establishment of a higher education system that works efficiently and cooperatively in a globalized world. This is exactly what we are striving for in Hungary: a higher education system that is internationally successful. The above examples are hoped to demonstrate that the Bologna Process has made possible a paradigm shift, as it were, which makes the higher education of Hungary ready to face the new challenges of a globalized world.

### **János Csirik**

Chairman

Hungarian Bologna Board

## **JUNIOR SCHOLAR TRAINING AND TALENT PROMOTION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF DOCTORAL SCHOOLS**

The doctoral programmes of universities were regulated by Act LXXX of 1993, until 2002, when an amendment established doctoral schools with broader profiles as the institutional framework of doctoral training. Unaltered, these schools could become the third tier in the Bologna-type linear structure of education. There are at present 169 doctoral schools in Hungary, with about 4800 students participating in the three-year regular training, of whom 3000 receive state scholarships. The number of individual students not taking part in systematic training is 2100. The training of the doctoral students and the supervision of their research work is carried out by 2200 professors and 3300 supervisors.

Until the early 2000s, the number of doctoral schools and doctoral students was growing steadily, and has not changed significantly since then.

With the inception of doctoral training and doctoral schools, universities became the scene of training for junior scholars, whilst formerly it was chiefly the responsibility of the Academy of Sciences. Positive developments include the growing independence of doctoral schools within the universities, as regards, among other things, funding and quality control. Doctoral schools have benefited from the improving quality of foreign language training, the widespread availability of the internet and access to international electronic databases. International mobility has also increased, as is apparent in the growing number of scholarships (e.g. *Socrates*, *Marie Curie*, etc.) and joint degrees.

Chief among the weaknesses of doctoral training are the dropout rate (70-80 per cent) and the growing length of time it takes to earn the degree (6-7 years). As in many other cases, the main reason is usually the fluctuating, but permanently insufficient, funding that basic research in general and doctoral schools and research in particular can expect to receive in Hungary. Thanks to international and domestic experiences, we are well aware of practices that can significantly improve the efficiency of doctoral training (as personal tutoring, career monitoring, special scholarships for dissertation writing, etc.), yet they are available in Hungary only to a very limited extent (e.g. Deák Ferenc Scholarship for dissertation writing), if at all. Insufficient financing is also responsible for the practice of admitting excessively large numbers of applicants to universities, and for increasing the workload of instructors to levels that far exceed those common in Europe. Given that the instructors in doctoral training also work in the programmes of the first two cycles, the increased workload is telling on their efficiency in doctoral training as well.

Furthermore, doctoral schools have not yet been given sufficient regard in projects dedicated to talent promotion and the development of quality in higher education.

**János László**

President

Hungarian Doctoral Council

## **THE HUNGARIAN STUDENTS' WAY TO "BOLOGNA"**

The realisation of the objectives of the Bologna Process has not been unproblematic in Hungary, either. The introduction of multi-cycle education involved not only the amendment of legal instruments, but the daunting task as well of informing, and winning the support of, actors in higher education, and society. Adequate information was in fact not always forthcoming in the initial phase, and the resulting problems can to this date hamper the completion of the process.

The true reform of curricula has not yet taken place. Credits do not always reflect the amount of work required, and there are differences in this respect even between institutions. In general, the credit value of a subject is lower in Hungary than in Western Europe, which makes recognition difficult and acts against student mobility.

Most Hungarian students study abroad under the aegis of the Erasmus Programme, but this scholarship does not cover all the costs of their studies or living expenses. It is an improvement that students who enrol for the given semester at their home institution as well can use a portion of their state support (the so-called normative grant) abroad. Beyond the extension of public funds, mobility could also be boosted by businesses taking part in financing.

The National Union of Students in Hungary ("HÖÖK") is committed to the principle of no tuition fees in higher education. This, we believe, is the key to ensuring the broadest possible access to higher education under the current social conditions of Hungary. It is encouraging that the government decree which regulates grants for students, effective as of 2007, pays special attention to the social circumstances of students, especially to those of disadvantaged students. It is promising that, in addition to government grants, local governments and businesses also offer scholarships to disadvantaged or outstanding students.

Beside the economic crisis, the greatest challenge for students who seek employment is the typically high number of contact hours. While even those students who draw state support have the right to hold a full-time job, there is insufficient motivation for employers to take an interest in such solutions.

Enrolled students in Hungary may avail themselves of a student loan, an unrestricted-use credit which is made available in monthly instalments, or as a lump sum upon request. Repayment begins when the graduate finds employment.

The past ten years have seen significant changes in Hungarian higher education, with most of the structural and substantial changes called for by the Bologna Process having been implemented. To make Hungarian higher education a useful and valuable part of the European Higher Education Area, further changes and refinements are needed, along with more efforts from the state, the institutions and the students.

### **Norbert Miskolczi**

President

National Union of Students in Hungary

## THE CREDIT SYSTEM IN HUNGARIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

As early as the 1980s, Hungarian higher education institutions were seeking to initiate a framework for training that improved on the limitations of the traditional, fixed curriculum, and enabled the development of a training system that was more in line with the modern requirements of knowledge transfer. In 1995 the Hungarian Parliament passed a resolution on the principles of developing higher education in the country, in which the need to introduce the credit system was already stated. Following extensive preparatory work, the government issued a decree in 2000, which set a deadline for the compulsory introduction of the standard European credit system in all Hungarian institutions of higher education.

The credit system, which is uniformly applied in Hungarian higher education since 2003, is based on the principles of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), which makes student learning hours the unit of measurement. Even in its early version, the system prioritized the accumulation of credits, which has a bearing on how studies are organized. Therefore, the government decree provided a fairly detailed description of the principles along which institutions were to devise their individual credit systems (preconditions, the rules of credit accumulation, the necessity of a model curriculum, and the mode of evaluating the credits). The government decree established the National Credit Council and entrusted it with the task of creating and developing the credit system, as well as with the responsibility of providing advice, professional development and coordination. With support from its own Office, the Council prepares analyses and concepts, organizes national credit forums, and runs a webpage that is dedicated to the subject.

Since its introduction six years ago, Hungarian higher education has fully adapted to the credit system, and has created the necessary IT infrastructure. It has been a continuous learning process to develop a flexible credit-transfer system and to reduce the traditional elements of the curriculum (the over-detailed preconditions, the fixed and very high number of contact hours, etc.), and institutions are slow to adopt the modern, European qualification requirements. The process of credit transfer – the recognition of credits earned abroad or in another Hungarian institution, or the use of learning agreements – is still inefficient and often contingent on subjective factors. It is a major challenge ahead to establish an effective system of student counselling, and to popularize output-oriented, learning outcome-based curriculum development.

The next significant step in the improvement of Hungarian higher education – now in the research and development phase – is to create a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) on the basis of the European Qualifications Framework, and to define the cycles, levels and descriptors, in line with the principles accepted by the ministers at Bergen. During this work, it must be ensured that the principles of the credit system, and the credits themselves, are appropriately employed.

### **Antal Bókay**

Chairman

National Credit Council

## INNOVATION AND THREE-CYCLE EDUCATION IN HUNGARY

As Hungary acted on the decision it made ten years ago and adopted a three-cycle structure of training, the process went hand in hand with the integration of higher education institutions and the transformation of the system of funding. Unfortunately, the latter took the form of fund withdrawals, which made the reform of the education system more difficult, and its objective assessment impossible. At present the only graduates to have left the system are those of the undergraduate and PhD programmes, the latter launched prior to the reform, which means any evaluation of the implementation and effects of the Bologna Process in Hungary will as yet be of limited validity.

Above all, we must be aware of positive changes in the structure and financing of doctoral training. There are numerous instances of cooperation in this area, and students sometimes develop very close relationships with the companies concerned, producing innovative solutions. The businesses themselves often finance PhD students, thus making a contribution to quality training. Certain European Union tenders aptly complement the Bologna Process, as they help to establish knowledge centres whose achievements can be more easily utilized, often through the technology transfer agencies they establish.

On the other hand, there are problems which have already surfaced. The competence and knowledge of first-cycle graduates are not compatible with the jobs on offer, nor do they match the qualifications prescribed by authorities for licensed activities. The knowledge and experience of fresh graduates rarely meet the expectations of employers, and few of them can be employed efficiently enough immediately, especially in the fields of technology. Furthermore, few of these graduates are admitted into master programs. With the introduction of the credit system and the disappearance of years and study groups, planning the number of the graduates in a given year is becoming increasingly difficult, while students have less and less experience of team work. All this puts businesses' employment strategy developers at a disadvantage. According to fresh data, the average knowledge level of a new graduate falls below the level of previous years, though the number of graduates has grown significantly. With rising student numbers and the changes in financing, the Bologna Process has led to a drop in quality. To improve on this contradiction seems possible only in the long run. Certain large enterprises have recognized the problem and started to make significant contributions to the funding of master programmes, enabling a rise in quality and student numbers at least in that cycle.

Scientific cooperation between higher education institutions and employers is usually realized in the framework of competitions, and this is particularly true of small and medium enterprises, which wrestle with a constant shortage of capital. The present form of PhD training helps to involve students in the innovation processes more intensively, which improves their long-term job opportunities and facilitates successful employment.

All in all, the Bologna Process has created a paradoxical situation in Hungary. Some of its components work as expected, while other parts grossly underperform. The time has come to invite contributions from all parties involved and make the necessary corrections, setting quality in education as the focus of the efforts.

### **Gábor Szabó**

President

Hungarian Association for Innovation

## THE EFFECT OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS

It is safe to say that the introduction of the Bologna-compatible system of degrees is of key significance for the competitiveness of Hungarian higher education. Formerly, Hungarian diplomas, earned in a dual higher education system that produced few graduates and distinguished between college and university degrees, often faced difficulties when it came to their recognition in countries whose degree system was linear. Similarly, the recognition of qualifications obtained in these countries was occasionally problematic in Hungary. (Consider, for example, the difficulties of matching a foreign master's degree, obtained in three semesters, and a Hungarian university diploma, awarded after five years of study.) The situation was only made more intricate by the fact that so many professions in Hungary are officially controlled: to practice them with foreign qualifications, the *de jure* recognition of the diploma is necessary. It was therefore imperative to have a degree system that is comparable to other countries', as well as to create the necessary legal framework for the recognition of foreign qualifications.

As for the latter, when Hungary had signed the Lisbon Recognition Convention, the legal framework used for the recognition of foreign qualifications was reviewed, and Act C of 2001 was enacted, on the recognition of foreign certificates and degrees, using the terminology and principles of the Convention. At the same time, Hungary ratified and enacted the Lisbon Recognition Convention, making it an integral part of the Hungarian legal system.

Since its enactment, the Recognition Act has been amended several times to keep up with changes in higher education and in the system of recognition. Thanks to the most recent amendment, it is now possible to recognise foreign degrees as Hungarian degrees obtained in the new Bologna-type system.

There is positive feedback on the new Hungarian system of degrees from outside of Europe as well; the new system is found more transparent and comprehensible. The ECTS and diploma supplements have also proved beneficial, they seem to make the recognition of qualifications and studies considerably smoother. In view of the above, we have every right to hope that the recognition abroad of Hungarian degrees will also become easier. And since Hungarian law now provides for the matching of the old and new types of degrees, the recognition abroad of Hungarian degrees from the former system will probably be less problematic.

Though different grades of degrees existed even in the old system, the new structure has created a novel situation for employers. Institutions and employers at home and abroad will need some time to become familiar with the new qualifications, and there is still much to do to make our legal system respond to the changes more quickly.

**Gábor Mészáros**

Head of Unit

Educational Authority – Hungarian Equivalence and Information Centre



## THE RECIPROCAL INFLUENCE OF MOBILITY AND THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

Marked by a spectacular activity in mobility programmes and the related developments, the last decade brought about fundamental changes in higher education. It is not by chance that several studies on higher education emphasize the impact of mobility on the Bologna Process.

Hungary joined international mobility in 1991, when the Tempus Programme started, which has since then contributed €182 million to the development of Hungarian higher education. Through Tempus, 7707 students studied and 11001 instructors taught in other European countries – no other resources were available for such activities in the 1990s. By the end of the 1990's, Tempus had laid the foundations of Hungary's participation in the European community programmes (first and foremost, in Erasmus).

Ever since they were introduced in 1998, Erasmus grants have been popular with students. The figures reflect a strong demand for mobility from students and universities: in the course of ten years, 25,000 students took advantage of a grant for studies abroad, and 10,000 students visited Hungarian institutions, which was enabled by €52 million from Erasmus. The programme allows 1.7 per cent of Hungarian students to study abroad annually. Though this is lower than the EU average of nearly 2.5 per cent, Hungary keeps producing a dynamic increase in the number of participants (8 per cent annually), which makes the country one of the few where intra-European mobility is still on the increase. Students in the new EU member states seem to be keen on gaining international experiences, something they see as a key to developing business relations or improving their language skills. Today, 50 Hungarian universities cooperate with 4000 peer institutions in Europe. The Erasmus Programme has been instrumental in initiating development at the organisations, changes in the role of students, and the widespread use of good practices in transparent decision making. It helped to establish the use of mobility tools like the diploma supplement or ECTS. These initially served "only" international mobility, but later went on to influence institutions and the system in general, contributing to the realization of the Bologna Process.

The development of international relations is a keystone of the Bologna Process. The millions of internationally mobile European students bear testimony to the timeliness of such goals as the transparency of training systems, professional cooperation that leads to the harmonization of content or structure in study programmes or to issuing joint diplomas, the recognition of qualifications gained abroad, and the improvement of the quality of higher education. As mobility has become part of the universities' routine, quality improvement comes to the fore, especially as regards equity of access, internationalisation, mainstreaming mobility, cooperation between businesses and academia, employment for graduates, or the position of Hungarian higher education among other systems of the world.

The latter will be one of the most exciting questions in the near future. Development related to the Bologna Process should not and cannot be separated from student mobility – something that is indicated by an objective of the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, which proposes that by 2020, 20 per cent of all graduates should have taken part in mobility. There can be no doubt that the mutually beneficial influences of international mobility and the Bologna Process will increase the ability of the European Higher Education Area and Hungary to rise to the challenges that a globalized higher education faces.

### **Katalin Kurucz**

Head of Unit for Higher Education and R&D programmes  
Tempus Public Foundation

## **EU-PRESIDENCY IN 2011: HUNGARY TO PRIORITIZE CULTURE AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

In 2010-2011, Hungary will share the Presidency of the EU with Spain and Belgium. Hungary is scheduled to take over the reins for six months on January 1, 2011.

As regards the plans of the European Union on higher education, it is almost of symbolic value that the city to represent Hungary in 2010 as the „European Capital of Culture“ is Pécs, a place with a unique atmosphere, one of the oldest university towns in Central-Europe. By winning this title, Pécs has become part of a European process of development and integration that is also in accord with the Bologna Process, whose goal is the establishment of a European Higher Education Area.

Higher education is now an increasingly international scene, a fact that is featured heavily in the higher education policies of nations. With the Bologna Process and the creation of the European Higher Education Area, Europe seeks to establish a leadership role in global knowledge generation and transfer, while preserving the outstanding traditions of European higher education.

During its presidency, Hungary will prioritize certain issues of the programme for the modernization of higher education. This will be complemented with efforts to map the possibilities of cooperation within, and the conditions and operation of, the knowledge triangle, i.e. education, research and innovation. Within this broader context, the diversification of higher education institutions may receive special attention – from mass education to the opportunities related to research-centred universities.

To further the cause of internationalising (higher) education, Hungary will initiate a review of the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme, and an international discussion of the related new possibilities. Also, Hungary attributes considerable significance to the social dimension of higher education and changes that could be accomplished in student-centred education.

National priorities aside, the Bologna Process, which began in 1999, will come to a very important milestone in 2010 precisely in Budapest and Vienna, when the original goals will need to be reviewed. I am certain that the Spanish-Belgian-Hungarian presidency trio will do everything in its power to take stock of the accomplishments and use them to give a new impetus to the Bologna Process for the coming decade.

### **Ferenc Csák**

State Secretary for International Affairs  
Ministry of Education and Culture

## **HUNGARY'S FIRST UNIVERSITY TOWN IS THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE**

In 2010 a Hungarian town with a unique atmosphere, Pécs will represent Hungary among the „European Capitals of Culture.“ By winning this title, Pécs, one of Hungary's oldest university towns, has become part of a European process of development and integration which is also in accord with the Bologna Process, whose goal is the establishment of a European Higher Education Area.

Situated in Southern Hungary at the foothills of the Mecsek Mountains, Pécs, a place with a delightful Mediterranean character, owns a long history as a university town, the first institution, one of the earliest in Central Europe, having been founded in 1367.

A walk through the streets will reveal further layers of the region's history: the Roman crypts that are a world heritage site; the seat of the thousand year-old Bishopric of Pécs; the architectural heritage of the Ottoman Empire; or the turn-of-the-century culture of a modernizing Hungary. Ethnic minorities, notably Croatians and Germans, lend a further flavour to life in the city with their institutions and communities.

Yet, the most decisive influence on the town's character is provided by those 35,000 students from Hungary and abroad who attend the University of Pécs. Beside its location and climate, the city's Mediterranean character is due in no small part to the presence of young people, the effervescent life of cafés and clubs.

Historical heritage, colourful ethnic traditions and the dynamism of youth provide an ideal context for culture, from sophisticated contemporary painting to popular street festivals.

As a European Capital of Culture, in 2010 Pécs wants to showcase the culture of a European frontier region, as well as to demonstrate that culture knows no frontiers, to prove which there is no better place than this “town without borders.“ Pécs is a multicultural city where squares burst with life, a home of cultural heritage and innovation, a celebration of regionalism and a gateway to culture.

### **Ferenc Csák**

State Secretary for International Affairs

Ministry of Education And Culture



# TALÁLKOZZUNK!

## 2010-BEN PÉCS EURÓPA KULTURÁLIS FŐVÁROSA



**május 9–29.**

**Utazás a török félhold körül** – Összművészeti programsorozat a török kultúra jegyében. Amira Art Company (HU), Replikas (TR), Selim Sesler (TR), Yasim mesterszakács, Ziya Azazi (TR), Arasinda zenekar (HU), Sarikamis zenekar, Sebestyén Márta (HU), Taksim Trio (TR) ... és még sokan mások

**július 9–25.**

**Cirkusz- és UtcaSzínház Fesztivál** – A Cirkuszművészet világhírű képviselői Pécs hangulatos közterein mutatkoznak be.

CNAC (Francia Nemzeti Cirkuszművészeti Központ), Bångdító (D), Grupo Puja (ARG), Teatr KTO (PL), Tuniszi Cirkuszkiskola, Baross Imre Artistaképző Intézet, Pavel Vangeli (CZ), Cirkuszház Társulat, Adrian Schvarzstein (ES) ...és még sokan mások

**július 24. – augusztus 1.**

**ICWiP (International Culture Week in Pécs)** – A dél–dunántúli régió tematikus nemzetközi ifjúsági fesztiválja, ahol a nyári egyetem mellett sűrű fesztiválprogram is várja a diákokat.

Goran Bregović (SRB), Big Daddy Wilson (US), Russkaja (RU) Pécs–Ruhr–vidék–Istanbul Zenekaraván (HU–TR–DE) ...és még sokan mások

**augusztus 4–8.**

**Ördögkatlan Fesztivál** – Összművészeti fesztivál a borairól híres Villány és Nagyharsány közötti hangulatos „Ördögárokban”.

**augusztus 15. – október 15.**

**A művésztől az életig – Magyarok a Bauhausban** – A nagyszabású kiállítás elsősorban a magyar, ezen belül pécsi származású bauhäuslerrek munkásságát mutatja be. (Breuer Marcell, Forbát Alfréd, Johan Hugó, Molnár Farkas, Stefán Henrik, Weininger Andor, Fodor Etel...)

[www.pecs2010.hu](http://www.pecs2010.hu)

# PÉCS2010

# EURÓPA KULTURÁLIS FŐVÁROSA



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