

***Abstract.** The Bologna process aims at creating a European Higher Education Area where inter-country mobility of students and staff, as well as workers holding a degree, is facilitated. While several aspects of the process deserve wide public support, others are less consensual. The paper checks the extent of academic staff confidence in the restructuring of higher education currently underway, by looking at its implications in Romania. Based on six open-ended interview questions of 29 faculty members in Romania, the results of our study identify central themes associated with this relevant stakeholder group's perception of benefits and issues/challenges associated with the implementation process. Most notably the themes of process planning, accreditation, lack of information, and unexpected results emerged as issues/challenges, while mobility, wider choice of programs, improved quality, and international standing were perceived as benefits.*

Keywords: academic staff, Bologna process, curricula, higher education.

BOLOGNA PROCESS TRADE –OFFS. THE PERCEPTION OF THE ROMANIAN ACADEMIC STAFF

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1. Introduction

European countries are in the midst of a massive project called the Bologna Process that is dramatically changing the face of higher education in Europe (Terry, 2006). The Bologna process is a far-reaching reform, involving currently 45 countries, which aims at the creation of a Europe of Knowledge, which includes European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and European Research Area (ERA). The educational policy of Bologna Process is the performance driver for close cooperation and structure between research and education in Europe (Kettunen and Kantola, 2006). According to Neave (2002) it represents a series of political actions, which can be interpreted and analysed using the terms of strategic planning and quality assurance at the European level. The final objective is to make Europe „the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth and with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion” (Berlin communique, 2003). This objective cannot be achieved unless there is a change in university paradigm from continental university management paradigm to entrepreneurial university management paradigm (Brătianu, 2009; Brătianu and Stanciu, 2010).

Major steps in that direction, currently underway, include the creation of a comparable structure of academic degrees, mutual recognition of diplomas and course units, the assessment of academic institutions and programs based on common quality standards, and direct incentives to geographical mobility of students and staff (Cardoso et al., 2007, p. 12). Implementation of a common structure of academic degrees means that some continental European countries are having to move from a four- or five-year first cycle of studies to a shorter three-year one, which led to controversy. On the one hand, the advantages of having a degree recognized in a wider geographical space are praised, together with the redevelopment of curricula that makes learning more student-centered and focused on the development of competencies, while enabling earlier entrance into the labor market (Terry, 2006). On the other hand, distrust has been expressed over the academic contents and adequacy to labor market needs of the competencies transmitted in a shorter three-year period, with fears that the employability of graduates will be reduced, when compared to graduates of the longer cycle (Pastore, 2007).

This study aims at checking the degree of public confidence in the restructuring of the first cycle of higher education studies currently taking place under the Bologna process. More precisely, we concentrate on the perception of the academic staff, to analyze the impact of the Bologna process in Romania at the moment when the first generation of Bologna students graduated.

The purpose of this paper is to present the results of a study which examines faculty perceptions of the implementation of the Bologna Process at their respective institution. This interest is formulated on the basis that this body of educators may have

a more keen insight into similar challenges to provide education to those who may not be as mainstream as students found in a developed economy nation (Yin, 2003).

The approach to the presentation of the research agenda will be two-fold. Firstly, there will be a brief presentation describing the Bologna Process and its implementation in both participating European nations, as well in Romania. Secondly, there will be a presentation of the results of a study, including the implications of this process, which will serve as a basis for a further detailed research including academic staff, students and business community, all the stakeholders of the Bologna process.

2. Challenges of the Bologna Process

With rising international mobility of students, European countries started considering the coordination of their higher education systems. It is important to mention that individual EU countries have traditionally regulated higher education – including legal education – because the EU itself is viewed as having very limited competence to regulate education (Terry, 2006). At the same time, globalization and increased international competition highlighted the importance of making European higher education institutions attractive to the world (Cardoso et al., 2007).

The Bologna process aims at creating a European Higher Education Area, where internal mobility of students, teachers, and administrative staff is facilitated, whose competitiveness attracts students from outside and contributes to the broader aim of turning Europe into a leading knowledge-based society (van der Ploeg and Veugelers, 2007). The main pillars of the process include:

- a. comparability of the degree structure, based on three cycles: the bachelor degree (three years, according to the dominant model), the master (normally two years), and the doctorate;
- b. mutual recognition of degrees, other awards and course units. Further to a comparable degree structure, a system of academic credits was created, whose accumulation and transferability across countries is guaranteed, enabling mutual recognition of degrees, other academic qualifications, and periods of study abroad. In the same line, a Diploma Supplement was introduced, which describes the degree and qualifications obtained, in terms of workload, level, and learning outcomes. The overall aim is to improve transparency of higher education degrees and to render more flexible progression into further studies and access to the labor market, while improving the attractiveness of the European higher education system;
- c. assessment and accreditation of institutions and academic programs based on shared quality standards and procedures;
- d. development of mobility programs by student, teaching, research and administrative staff, including measures such as the portability of national loans and grants;
- e. external dimension of the process, through exchange and cooperation with other parts of the world.

Even though the process is far-reaching and multifaceted, much attention has been devoted to the changes in the degree structure. Indeed, according to the model that predominated in several continental European countries, the first higher education degree was obtained after four to five years of successful study. Therefore, the curricula changes necessary to bring the first degree down to three-years are being implemented amidst some controversy. On one hand, the advantages of having a comparable degree structure are stressed, as the system becomes more transparent and obstacles to the mobility of students and workers are reduced. However, the new curricula are often interpreted as a compressed version of the longer programs, and critics claim that there will not be enough time for assimilation, reflection and a critical approach to learning, which will undermine the quality of the degree.

The focus of the Bologna principles is to allow for a global learning platform with an emphasis on a transparent and common curriculum throughout Europe. The expanse of the effort can by no means be described as less than Herculean (Voges et al., 2010). A recent report prepared for the Institute of Higher Education alerts those in U.S. higher education institutions that the advances from the Bologna Process are being implemented in the 'New World' and that the U.S. can no longer consider its educational framework to be universally superior (Adelman, 2009).

However, while there has been notable progress in the implementation of the principles (Bologna Process Stockholder Report, 2009), there are also noted issues and challenges (Bologna with Student Eyes Report, 2009; Higher Education in Europe, 2009) or an unevenness in the pace of successful implementation at the national level, as well as some discord between what is intended to be implemented and the actual outcome result.

Understanding the issues and challenges as well as the perceived benefits associated with the implementation of the Bologna Process principles can provide fruitful learning opportunities for all the stakeholders involved in this process. The focus of the Process is predicated on the acknowledgment that highlighting the importance of cooperative education reform is paramount to the development of stable, peaceful democratic societies (Bologna Declaration, 1999).

The Declaration is reflective of recognition that the European economy is knowledge-based and that higher education systems are the cornerstone for the generation of knowledge. Effective implementation of any initiative is a challenging and noted as the most difficult phase in the change process. While it is duly noted that there has been a tremendous amount of research associated with the implementation of the Process, the orientation of our study is an attempt to identify in an exploratory manner, the opinion of faculty regarding their understanding, involvement in and perceived issues/challenges and benefits associated with implementation of the Process. We suggest that the faculty represents a significant internal stakeholder group and is 'the point of impact' at which implementation of the Bologna Process may be most evident. The ultimate hoped result is that a better understanding of successful

implementation conditions will provide for the advance of a very valuable effort (i.e. the Bologna Process), whose ultimate goal is to advance the benefits of higher education in a global forum. We direct our attention in the following section to a discussion of the study including the sample, methodology and results.

3. Methodology

The data for this study were collected via an on-line survey application from a list of Romanian attendees to an international business conference held in Romania in the fall of 2009. The questionnaire consisted of demographic data questions in addition to the following six open-ended questions:

1. Are you familiar with the Bologna Process?
2. What has been your interaction with the BP?
3. What challenges/issues have you experienced?
4. What challenges do you think will come in the long term?
5. What benefits have you experienced?
6. What benefits do you see in the long term?

The intent of the open-ended questions was to probe for the respondents' understanding and role in the implementation of the Bologna Process at their institution, as well as to generate their perception of current and future issues/challenges and benefits of the Bologna Process.

There were 29 useful responses from the 150 surveys administered. Of the 29 respondents, nineteen were professors at the Academy of Economic Studies of Bucharest, the remaining respondents were from eight other Romanian universities. Twenty five of the respondents held a PhD degree as their highest level of education. Analysis of the responses focused on two considerations. First, there were identified the central themes offered by the respondents. Through content analysis, identifying central themes allows us to assess the extent to which this stakeholder group recognizes and understands the objective of the Bologna Process paradigm shift (necessary to prompt interest dissatisfaction, value commitment, capacity for action), the extent to which they perceive to be involved in the shift (necessary to demonstrate power dependencies) and the extent to which they perceive that they are capable to make the change effort occur (Voges at al., 2010). Second, we were interested in identifying the extent to which the faculty has favorable attitude toward the paradigm shift (that is, to identify the pattern of value commitment).

4. Discussion of results

The presence of mixed perceptions of stakeholder groups is not uncommon during periods of radical change. Based on the results of our study we provide the following evaluative observations based on these results as viewed through the lens of the organizational change:

4.1. Understanding of the Bologna Process

A large part of the respondents identify the *main goal or purpose* of the Bologna Process as being the creation of The European Area for Higher Education. This is considered the framework for all the other major issues related to this process, like recognition of diplomas, transferable credit system, comparable quality assurance standards etc. The most used terms in defining this objective are: *standardization, equalization, harmonization, common standards and procedures*, which make an image of how the Bologna Process is perceived: a process initiated by the European countries designated to achieve a common base of rules and procedures for teaching and learning (like transferable credit system), to better define the quality in education using the same standards and ratios, to stimulate exchange programs and mobility of students and professors aiming to achieve a free movement of labor, as one of the four freedoms of EU common market.

None of the respondents mentioned the *convergence in the education system*, since the overall intent of the Bologna Process is to move toward the development of convergence at the European level of higher education systems (such that each participating nation implements transparent and common system practices in all aspects of its administration and academic operations). This initiative is not *an attempt to standardize the higher education systems*, as some of the respondents suggested.

The quality in the higher education system is a very sensitive issue when we discuss about compatibility and comparability, so *a greater emphasis being placed on the quality of the education provided* would be an essential point within the Bologna process identified by the respondents. The majority of the respondents consider that *quality assurance should be based on standards and similar procedures* that will make the higher education systems *more comparable and compatible* throughout Europe. Even more, this will increase *competitiveness of the European education system*, compared with US or other internationally recognized education systems (e.g. *'This will hopefully lead to a European higher education area which will attract students who traditionally would go to the US or Australia', 'The European higher education, a strong response of Europe to the supremacy of the American universities'*). Having the same quality assessment methods will help to easily *compare them in order to identify specific positive and negative aspects of each system*, as well as to find appropriate paths for countries which lag behind and aim by convergence to reach similar levels in educational field (like Romania). As a matter of fact, as most of the respondents identified, quality assurance is one of the three main objectives of the Bologna Process Declaration.

Various respondents suggest that one of the achievements of the Bologna Process is the restructuring of the higher education system on three tier level (Bachelor, Master and PhD), which suppose a better organization of studies, making the process more complete and changing the perspective of every stage's

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achievements ('the doctorate became a form of higher education to the highest degree and not a turning point in career showing superior skills in one field of activity and research'). However, most of these achievements could be lost if there is no transfer of added value from one cycle to another. Some respondents consider that the reorganization of the learning process is determined by the reduction of number of years of study from four to three ('*dramatic change*').

The Bologna process also facilitates the mobility and exchange programs that will be helpful to achieve greater openness for the educational system. Though some respondents have noticed more opportunities for students lately-once the Bologna process started to be implemented-, others consider that exchange programs for professors should be also stimulated (*to share experience in teaching short modules outside the country*). This will be useful for the harmonization of education throughout Europe.

Additionally, the transferable credit system, recognized by a large part of respondents as one of the achievements of the Bologna process is a very useful tool, which contributes to the harmonization of higher education. This will facilitate mobility of students since the credits can be obtained for similar subject/topics studied in any European university (e.g. *each student to spend one semester in an EU country*).

Most of the respondents consider that the Bologna process will create equal competencies based on a harmonized learning process and will help develop more practice-oriented skills that will facilitate a better integration into the EU labor market. All in all, the Bologna process will *better connect the education system to the requirements of the EU labor market, providing universal skills and competencies for graduates that will facilitate free movement of labor throughout the EU*.

4.2. Specific activities related to the implementation of the Bologna Process

The main impact of the Bologna process identified by the most of the respondents is new course assignment. Due to the changes in the curricula, in order to harmonize it with the curricula of most important European universities or to adapt it to the market requirements, new courses and subjects were introduced for the economic degree (*Smart Business, Business and Media Communication, Entrepreneurship, Business Management, Strategic Management, Cross-cultural Management, Expert Systems in Accounting-undergraduate, Intelligent Systems in Economics-Masters, Modeling in Information Systems Accounting-PhD*) or some old fundamental courses were updated/changed (such as *Commercial Management into Management for Business*).

Another major involvement in the implementation of the Bologna process for most of the respondents was participation in redesigning the curricula according to the

Bologna architecture. This is because they are part of the faculty management (4 respondents), having among the responsibilities the implementation of the changes required at the level of department (vice-dean or chair). Few of them (2 respondents) were directly and deeply involved in this process even before implementation (law design), working in the Ministry of Education. But also staff – with no administrative responsibilities – were involved in this process, mainly because they were members of the team appointed to develop the curricular changes at the level of the faculty/department. Some respondents pointed out the methods they used to adapt the curricula: link Bachelor courses to those at the master level, analyze the curricula of foreign universities in the same fields and suggest new subjects, examine similar courses and programs, the content and methods known from other European universities, identifying competencies for different programs and comparing them.

Re-accreditation of the new programs (bachelor-master) was a very difficult and bureaucratic task related to the Bologna process. Since everything changed (courses content, curricula, number of years of study), the faculties also needed to pass through the process of re-accreditation of all the programs (bachelor and master). This was a direct consequence of the Bologna process, where most of the department management but also academic staff was highly involved. Surprisingly, only two respondents declared that they were involved in this process that actually took several months and highly impacted the teaching and research activity.

Some respondents consider that the Bologna process also has a negative side/impact, especially on their career development (due to the changes in the curricula every year or because they are part of the first generation of PhD program or to the changes in the discipline content). An important effect suggested by one respondent is the reduction of the number of teaching hours and consequently the academic staff incomes (by reducing the number of years of study from four to three at the bachelor level). Two respondents were neutral or consider that the Bologna Process didn't have any impact at all (e.g. young assistant professors).

4.3. Challenges with the implementation of the Bologna Process

The results of the study show that the *main issues or challenges* encountered by the respondents can be divided in five categories: problems regarding the students and their level of knowledge and experience, which was the most frequent issue raised by the professors; curricula problems with regards to the adaptability to the new system requirements; the lack of knowledge and enough information for both the students and the academic staff in what concerns the Bologna Process and its differences with the old system; the people mentality and resistance to change as well as the bureaucracy and administrative problems existing in the Romanian faculties.

Thus, the respondents underlined the importance of the *curricula design*. They found challenging and important to harmonize the denomination and the content of the

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courses with the ones from other European universities and also to adapt the curricula to the new structure of the education system: 3 years for bachelor degree and 2 years for master. This simplified the first cycle program and reduced the classes and, at the same time, transferred some of these classes to the second level of higher education. There were also some respondents saying that their subjects were assigned less hours and semesters of study but the content was large enough and difficult to teach in a shorter period of time, so they hardly adapted to the new conditions.

Because of the reduced number of years for the first cycle of the higher education (bachelor), the respondents argued that the students don't have enough time to become familiar with all the necessary information and that the graduation paper needs to be done too early – thus, the professors have to decrease the complexity of the graduation paper and also to develop new tutorials and additional standards to be followed. The respondents to the study agree that the 3-year study period is too short for the students to find a good job and the labor market is not prepared to integrate the graduates with a lower level of knowledge and training (*'most of the students continue their studies with the master program without having any practical experience'*).

The changes of the curriculum also provided an opportunity for remarkable educational development, which enabled a reduction in excessive study load for students and an educational development and increase in high quality learning. The concept of core curriculum was used in educational development (Chester, 1989; Short, 1989). The definition of core curriculum is based on a shared and clear understanding of the competencies required of graduates entering the labor market. Even though there were some doubts at first, the change was fairly easy for management, because it was planned at the European, national and institutional levels.

Another issue raised by the participants is the *lower level of knowledge of the master students*. This could be explained by *the reduced number of years and simplified curricula for the first cycle* of higher education because the majority of master students are fresh graduates of the 1st cycle, with little or no experience. As a consequence, the professors should rely more on case studies at their seminars, than on their practical experience. The lack of work experience combined with the short time period for practice for the 1st cycle of study (3 weeks) do not provide practical skills and competencies for graduates when facing labor market challenges.

This certifies the conclusions of some studies showing that in new EU member states youth unemployment is worrisome (Pastore, 2007). When the bachelor graduates are fully-employed but they continue their studies, the most important issue is decreasing of the number of students attending the master program. Young people in transition countries have to face a trade-off between continuing to invest in their own education, therefore reducing the household's budget, on the one hand; and accessing immediately the labor market, therefore contributing to the household income, but reducing their own chance to find gainful employment in the future, on the other hand.

The increased mobility of the students is one of the challenges of the Bologna Process. Even if it has a good effect in increasing the number of foreign students coming to learn in Romania, the mobility of students is also one of the factors that lead to fewer students (Romanian ones) attending the master programs (because they prefer to leave in other countries to complete their studies and even to remain there to work). A positive aspect of the program implementation is the elimination of 'comparability', since the academic curricula is mutually recognized by all parties.

Overall, the level of information and knowledge about Bologna implications at the academic level is very weak (students and academic staff). One respondent suggests that there are also some academic members who do not understand the main values of this process or do not have all the knowledge necessary to implement it, thus making the implementation difficult and slow. Some consider that the current strategy is not the appropriate one because it lacks *a sound vision of education*. This is considered to be an effect of the resistance to change and conservative mentality of some academic or administrative members. In a recent paper related to education in Romania, Brătianu et al. (2010) characterize the Romanian higher education system after 1989 very centralized and rigid one, with no tradition in terms of management and academic governance.

4.4. Future challenges or issues related to the Bologna Process

Analyzing the main challenges on long term based on the respondents answers, the greater concern arises from the efficiency of the Romanian education system (the respondents consider *that the new system, driven by the Bologna Process, will lead to a discrepancy between the labor market conditions and expectations and the level of the students knowledge, skills and abilities, obtained after graduation*). The four main themes were identified: the labor market conditions correlated to the students' knowledge/abilities and the development and future of the Romanian education system, attractiveness of the education system and the mobility and international recognition of the diplomas.

Correlation between the labor market conditions and the graduates' level of knowledge/skills/abilities acquired during the faculty courses is an area of concern and divergent opinions. Even if all the respondents agree that the market conditions and the students competencies are not strongly correlated, some respondents believe that the students are thought too many things which makes them overqualified for the job offers provided on the market, and others believe that the practical orientation and experiment emphasis is extremely useful for getting a job, but leads to a thinner theoretical background of the graduates.

However, there is one point that almost all respondents identified in the survey: in Romania, the short practice period provided by the curricula (3 weeks for bachelor) is not very helpful for their future career and job finding. Beside this, there

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are no strong and enough partnerships between universities and the business environment (e.g. *there are few or none agreements in order to help students achieve the level of abilities and skills necessary in order to meet the labor market conditions*).

Another important issue within the Bologna process context is the need for universities to create a framework that allows the development of skills required on the labor market and also for the companies to redesign the job spectrum in order to meet the students' level of knowledge. According to the respondents of the survey, there is a need for a strategy to focus on better correlation of the educational outcomes with the dynamic requirements of the labor market and the population dynamics in Romania, because the decreasing trend of Romanian population will have a greater impact on the future generation of students.

The Bologna Process facilitates the mobility of the students and also the recognition of diplomas which helps students to obtain jobs in other countries more easily. However, as suggested by one respondent, a better level of training can be obtained by students in more developed countries than those in less developed countries (due to differences in the economic development of the various European countries).

Since the increased mobility helps the students to obtain a better training and better jobs, some respondents raised other important issues as following:

- a. the need to increase the quality of the Romanian education system in order to attract more foreign students but also Romanian students willing to leave in other countries to seek for a better education (one of the respondents was concerned about the future of bachelor and master programs in Romania since the number of students decreased significantly in the recent years); and
- b. there are still challenges that must be overcome in the harmonization of the Romanian education system with the European standards and for mutual recognition of the degrees and diplomas (e.g. *there are still countries that are not accepting Romanian undergraduates*). As one of the respondents said, *we still have a lot of work, to adapt, to learn etc.*

Increasing the quality of the education also means, in the opinion of some respondents, better skilled and certified professors and also more implication of qualified people in the top management process (since we note the lack of leadership within the university structure). As Brătianu et al. (2010) mentioned, the socialist regime created the illusion of an academic leadership because a good professor in his/her own field is not necessarily a good manager or leader. Another issue is raised related to the administrative and academic processes which, in opinion of the respondents, have to be separated because a good manager cannot be at the same time a good teacher.

To improve the quality of the education and to achieve a level comparable with the European education system is a sine qua non condition if the Romanian universities intend to attract more students and motivate them (especially in the 2nd and 3rd cycle). Also, extra facilities and opportunities for students to get experience

and prepare them for the labor market by setting up partnerships with business environment will improve the students' knowledge/abilities/skills and the labor market and education will become compatible.

None of the respondents mentioned financial issues related to Bologna process implementation since this European educational project requires financial support from national governments and European bodies. Ministers have agreed to reinforce the openness of European Higher education and develop scholarship programs for students from outside the EHEA. On the other hand, the HEIs are to take measures to make their processes and structures more efficient in order to ensure sufficient funding (Kettunen and Kantola, 2006).

4.5. Benefits related to the Bologna Process on short term

The analysis of the responses for the question concerning the benefits of the Bologna Process reveals that the most three important issues are related to:

- a. the opportunity to study abroad;
- b. the modern curricula; and
- c. the balanced design of qualifications.

More than one third of the subjects identified the benefit to study abroad and increased mobility, less bureaucracy, reduction of financial effort. An important number of respondents believe that a big advantage is the upgraded curricula, with new courses and seminars. The short period of time and the reduction of the financial effort can be seen positive but nevertheless there is also concern regarding the lower level of preparation of the students. Also the BP offers the opportunity to chose courses and seminars, transfer credits and even take extra classes in order to get more credits.

Another relevant point of the BP is the relationship between the graduates skills and labor. Respondents believe that there is a correlation between the curricula of various universities on the international level. This ensures international recognition of the studies and qualifications. Nevertheless, there isn't any mention of a long life learning system and a close collaboration between universities and the business community.

We note that a large number of respondents do not see any benefits of the BP. One forth of the responds couldn't think of any benefits and more than one third of respondents could only think of one benefit. This might suggest that the Bologna process and its effects is not a common issue for the academic staff.

4.6. Benefits related to the Bologna process on the long-term

While analyzing the long term benefits responses, it can be noted that half of the respondent believe that there will be a better quality in education on the long run. There are also people stating that in some cases the time period is too short, leading to

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a poor quality of education in the doctoral program. Nevertheless the benefits of this program include better opportunities to study abroad, increased responsibility, focus on practice, know-how exchange, variety of degrees etc. By forming strong and flexible links between universities and the business communities the programs can be better adapted for the job market. Moreover this will facilitate the creation of transnational interdisciplinary working groups within the universities.

The increased competition on the labor market will create a competitive working environment, competent specialists and young professionals that are creative and resourceful. The internationalization of the business environment will improve the quality by creating opportunities for international students. Motivation is also an important factor for the students as the recognition of the studies abroad but also the opportunity to continue the studies in other EU countries. There are also incentives for the academic community as well as the opportunity to become part of an international ranked university.

There are also concerns regarding the stability of the Bologna process implementation in Romania (quality of the infrastructure level and professionalism in universities, a system of values and independence of the educational system that is still influenced by the political climate). Also some criticize that the BP has negatively affected the PhD program because 3 years of research in some specialization fields could be insufficient. An important number of respondents cannot identify any benefits of BP on long-term. We could assume that the BP still represents something new for Romanian education and, like in every change, there will be people reluctant to it.

5. Conclusions

Analysis of the responses for the first question centered on familiarity generated three top three responses: harmonization of degrees offered through the Educational Credit Transfer System; creation of a European Higher Education Area; and mobility/exchange programs for students and professors.

With regard to faculty involvement, the activities identified by the respondents centered on the following themes: administrative responsibilities, degree/curriculum design, and course design and revision. Faculty indicated that the predominant current issues/challenges are focused on the shifts in paradigm, process planning issues, re-accreditation of the degrees, limited resources, lack of student information, and the shortened cycles for each of the three degree levels. In the long term, a noted superficiality and lack of leadership were of concern.

With regard to benefits, the faculty currently perceives them to be the following: career opportunity, mobility, wider choices and program improvement with both national and international benefits. In the long term, the faculty perceives the implementation of the Bologna Process to: improve programs to benefit students,

businesses and external stakeholders, improvement in administrative changes and international exchange outcomes.

One could note that the involvement with lifelong learning and the development of a diverse student body are not mentioned by the respondents. Further, there is little mention of a connection with the business community in the development of revised course/curriculum. Although by no means conclusive, given the noted deficiencies in implementation progress, it is possible that lack of awareness or engagement by the faculty could be related to slow progress or effects of implementation progress.

One of the problems of the Bologna process is that even though the causal linkages between the objectives have been understood there is no sufficient funding to implement the educational policy. Another problem is that the funding mechanism is not efficiently used to align the activities to reach the desired objectives. Typically the strategy, internal processes and structures follow the funding. The third problem is that there is not enough strategic awareness about the importance of the European educational policy to create a powerful driving force. The communication about the objectives of the Bologna process could be more effective (Kettunen and Kantola, 2006).

There are no doubts that Bologna process implementation requires change in university management paradigm. These universities “are forced to become more agile, more flexible and especially more efficient in meeting a continuously growing and changing requirement” (Brătianu and Stanciu, 2010). In order to achieve a smooth transformation, the university management should switch from *linear* thinking to *nonlinear* thinking (Brătianu and Vasilache, 2009; Davenport 2005; Davenport and Prusak 2000; Senge 1999), which is the appropriate path to excellence and performance (Brătianu, 2009b).

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