From the two tier degree structure of the Bologna process to the Erasmus Mundus European Master

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Abstract
This paper wants to underline the effective change in the Higher Education system in the European area since the last Conference in BERLIN 2003. The EU wants to improve the incoming of third country students. The EU wants to create its proper European Higher Education Area with the possibility of grant for good foreign students.
It is the principal objective of Erasmus Mundus programme to support this goal.
The three following points will help us to explain this programme:
- Structure of the European master,
- Funding possibilities,
- Aim and key numbers characteristic,
The grant programme of Erasmus Mundus can be compared with the equivalent US system named Fulbright. It will offer another possibility for students from all over the word to access a Higher Education Area in Europe.

1. Introduction

The introduction of a new educational system with Bachelor's and Master's degrees will allow the creation of the European Higher Education Area. The goal is to increase mobility, quality assurance and the constitution of accreditation systems at the European level. We propose a none exhaustive survey on the different kinds of existing international masters in Europe.
Secondly, we see how the European community wants to improve the mobility of third-country graduate students into the European education area by the constitution of European masters. As example we provide the principal key numbers of the equivalent US system. We give the main
points for proposing a European master (Erasmus Mundus programme) and the characteristics of the funding programme.

2. Fundamental objectives of the Bologna process

The Bologna Declaration was signed in June 1999 by a group of European Education Ministers from 29 countries. The goal is mainly to obtain a convergence of their higher education systems to improve European students and teacher mobility and incoming students [1], [2]. Two years after signing the Bologna Declaration, higher education Ministers of 32 European signatory countries met on September 2003 in Berlin to follow up the Bologna Process. All countries involved in the Bologna Process are asked to present their country reports [3]. Dead line set for the implementation of the Bologna process is 2010, the figure 1 gives the timetable of the implementation.

A questionnaire of the state of the Bologna process has been sent to THEIERE partners (European thematic network) in order to get information from the various countries. The principal result has shown us that only few people are not familiar with the implication of the Bologna process on their own system. However, some of the academic staffs feel the new laws like a decision imposed by the government without consultation. For more information see the complete result on the following THEIERE website:

http://www.eaeeie.org/theiere/Result/task1

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Figure 1: Timetable of the Bologna process implementation

A part of this objective is the decision which comes in January 2004 to create a new programme, called Erasmus Mundus. As a comparison the Erasmus Mundus budget is about 13 % of the second phase of the Socrates programme for the time period of 2000-2006.
3. State of the art of International Master in Europe

Since a long time, International Masters have been made in Europe with different kinds of Degrees structure and were very used in Business and management curricula. In the EIE field (Electrical and Information Engineering), some masters of science (joint degrees) were made by the voluntary agreement of two (or more) European institutions [4]. The development of this "European Course" was supported by the European Commission with a CDI (Curriculum Development at Intermediate Level)- and an ILC (Integrated Language Course) -program. For this case the number of student involved was not very important and only European students were concerned. Some international masters have been made too for specific purposes: when industrial companies want to establish new structure into a foreign country they can decide to be associated with a university to create a master degree to turn out their own future partners. A third example is the case of The MASTERE SPECIALISE international partnerships programmes of the "Conférence des Grandes Ecoles" in France. It has been set up in partnership with foreign universities since the beginning for several specialities. The first country involved was Poland in 1992, followed by other countries from Central and Eastern Europe. Today The MASTERE SPECIALISE programmes are being offered all over the world.

4. US model to promote incoming student in the US high education area

For third-country graduate students, we have the example of the US system where the Fulbright grant is available and allow the improvement of the mobility of the good foreign students studying into US universities. The Fulbright Program was created after the event of World War II with the hope that educational exchanges could help understanding and lasting peace by the creation of this foundation. It was made by the initiative of J. William Fulbright that the American government was able to create a program of educational and cultural exchange between the United States and participating countries. J. W. Fulbright has seen the program as a tool for mutual understanding that would provide the opportunity for leaders and future leaders to create future contact and better comprehend the institutions, cultures and societies of other countries and peoples. Since its creation more than fifty years ago 255,000 "Fulbrighters," 96,400 from the United States and 158,600 from other countries, have participated in the Program. The Fulbright Program awards approximately 4,500 new grants annually. The Fulbright Scholar Program offers lecturing and research awards in 140 countries. Some Fulbright grants are generous while others are less, depending on the country. Fulbright grants are budgeted to cover travel and living costs in-country.

5. Erasmus Mundus: The model of the European community

Now the European commission wants to create its proper European Higher Education Area with the same possibility of grant for good foreign students. On July 17, 2002 The European Commission adopted a proposal to establish a new programme Erasmus World [5] to enhance quality in European higher education through co-operation with third countries in higher education. This proposal followed the Communication released on June 18, 2001 by the Commission on reinforcing co-operation with third countries in the field of higher education. The Erasmus Mundus programme is the following part of this objective by the creation of the European
master. The three following points will help us to explain the programme:

- Structure of the European master,
- Funding possibilities,
- Aim and key numbers characteristic of Mundus,

- **Point 1**: Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses (postgraduate level) will involve at minimum two higher education European member institutions with a minimum of three institutions composing the consortium with at least one or more could be from a third country from all of the word. The European institution will ensure the management of the consortium. The studies can last from one to two years carrying between a minimum of 60 and 120 ECTS credits and the master courses should involve the use of at least 2 languages. The goal is to develop 250 European Masters courses over 5 years up to 2008, leading to dual or multiple recognised or accredited degrees form the participating institutions. The masters Courses can be from all fields of study but students on the Master courses will need to study in at least 2 of the 3 universities offering the joint course.

- **Point 2**: The consortium get an annual flat-rate of 15 000 € which it is free to charge students as it wishes according to their national legislation and according to the agreement reached within the consortium. Eligible students and scholars must be citizens of the European Union or third-country nationals who had been legal residents in the European Union for at least three years. Scholarships will be distributed to students via the consortium. The grant agreement for a one-year Erasmus Mundus Master Course is for a ten-month period. The average student scholarship from 3rd countries to Europe: €1600 per month and for scholars 4000 € per month. The average visiting scholar grant from 3rd countries to Europe: 13000 €. The same amount will apply to all participating countries. Additionally, participants are given a fixed amount (students 5000 € and scholars 1000 €) for expenses such as registration and tuition fees, establishment and relocation costs and teaching material.

- **Point 3**: The budget of the Erasmus Mundus programme is 230 million of Euros during a period of five years (2004-2008). The objective is an academic exchange scheme between universities in Europe and the rest of the world by the creation of around 90 inter-university networks. it will provide grants for some 5,000 postgraduate’s students from none European countries to follow master’s courses provided jointly by the European universities consortium. The programme will also allow over 4,000 European graduate’s student mobility in third countries universities which participate to the consortium. In the same time Erasmus Mundus programme will offer teaching or research scholarships in Europe for incoming academics and for a similar number of outgoing European scholars. The programme would provide 4170 scholarships for the most succeeded students with degrees from third countries, for a maximum of 20 months to study on these courses; 1020 visiting scholars with outstanding academic and/or professional experience from third countries to be hosted by the Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses.

### 7. Conclusion

In the next 6 years the goal of the Bologna process should be achieved and all the European countries should have comparative degrees curricula. All these new objectives of the European commission show us clearly that the orientation of the research and education activities will be supported for a part at the European level. Excellence in research and in education should be strongly linked and clearly identified in the European Higher Education Area. The objective of the European
Community is not only to create some centre of excellence but in the same time to save money at national level because education is a big part of the government budget.

References


