

Statement by the Bologna Policy Forum 2009



Meeting, for the first time, at this Bologna Policy Forum held in Louvain-la-Neuve on April 29, 2009, we, the Ministers for Higher Education, heads of delegation from the 46 European countries participating in the Bologna Process and from Australia, Brazil, Canada, P.R. China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Tunisia, USA, along with the International Association of Universities and other international organizations and NGOs, have taken part in a constructive debate on world wide cooperation and partnership in higher education with a view to developing partnership between the 46 Bologna countries and countries from across the world.

We note, with satisfaction, that this Policy Forum has fostered mutual understanding and learning in the field of higher education, and has laid the ground for sustainable cooperation in the future.

We also note that there are shared values and principles underpinning higher education and a common understanding that it is fundamental to achieving human, social and economic development.

We consider that higher education constitutes an exceptionally rich and diverse cultural and scientific asset for both individuals and society.

We emphasize the key role that higher education plays in the development of our societies based on lifelong learning for all and equitable access at all levels of society to learning opportunities.

We underline the importance of public investment in higher education, and urge that this should remain a priority despite the current economic crisis, in order to support sustainable economic recovery and development.

We support the strategic role of higher education in the pursuit and advancement of knowledge and therefore advocate global sharing of knowledge through multi-national research and education projects and exchange programs for students and staff, in order to stimulate innovation and creativity.

We are convinced that fair recognition of studies and qualifications is a key element for promoting mobility and we will therefore establish dialogue on recognition policies and explore the implications of the various qualifications frameworks in order to further mutual recognition of qualifications.

We hold that transnational exchanges in higher education should be governed on the basis of academic values and we advocate a balanced exchange of teachers, researchers and students between our countries and promote fair and fruitful “brain circulation”.

We seek to establish concrete cooperation activities which should contribute to better understanding and long-term collaboration by organizing joint seminars on specific topics, like on quality assurance for example.

The next Bologna Policy Forum will be convened in Vienna on 12 March 2010.