European Higher Education Policy
Outside of Europe:
From the "External Dimension"
to the Global Strategy of the Bologna Process

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1. Introduction: The historical context

2. From the Bologna Process to the EHEA

3. From the "External Dimension" to the Global Strategy

4. Implementation of the Strategy

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1.0 The historical context: the 1990s

→ *"Europeanization" of higher education*, in particularly:

    → Erasmus programme (since 1987);

    → Maastricht Treaty (1992), article 126 & 127

→ *"Global competition", also in higher education*:

    → "European universities lagging behind" USA and some other countries (e.g. of the Pacific rim).

→ *Fall of the Berlin wall*, its material & symbolic effects:

    → "higher education in transition" (Tempus, 1990);

    → "explosion" of the CEE higher education sector.

→ *Increasing co-operation and competition, mobility and migration* in European and global higher education.

1.1 European convergence/divergence

From the Bologna Conference background survey *Trends and issues in European higher education* (G. Haug and J. Kirstein, **June 1999**); key findings:

→ *"extreme diversity*, to such a degree that it may well be called confusion, or even chaos; the dense jungle of degrees, institutions and systems is *the single biggest obstacle to more mobility in higher education in Europe"*

→ "no ready-to-use external model (e.g. in the USA) that would be replicable; *Europe needs to develop its own model* to suit its unique cultural and educational needs"

→ "a convergent set of reforms recently introduced or in progress in several European countries: they signal *a move towards shorter studies*"

1.2 "Concerns for Post-Bologna" of 1999

G. Haug and his five "main areas of concern for the post-Bologna developments" (***December 1999***):

► *the risk of non-concerted reforms* ("if some countries were to introduce superficial, window-dressing reforms, e.g. taking a long curriculum and just cutting it in bits and pieces");

► *the risk "to focus on very small differences rather than looking at the big common issues"* (e.g. tracking the minor differences in content and organisation between degree in chemistry in two countries) ;

► *the risk that the challenge from abroad remains under-estimated* (e.g. transnational education, etc.);

► *the risk if "not all countries in Europe be included in the process* of setting up the European space for higher education";

► *"the most important risk* […] is *that HE institutions themselves under-estimate the level of change* […] and wake up a little bit too late".

2.0 The birth of the Bologna Process (1999)

"We are witnessing a growing awareness in large parts of the political and academic world and in public opinion of the need to establish a more complete and far-reaching Europe, in particular building upon and strengthening its intellectual, cultural, social and scientific and technological dimensions." […] We must in particular look at the objective of increasing the international competitiveness of the European systems of higher education. […] "we engage in co-ordinating our policies to reach in the short term, and in any case within the first decade of the first millennium, the following objectives":

(1) adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees;
(2) adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles;
(3) establishment of the system of credits;
(4) promotion of mobility […] to the effective exercise of free movement;
(5) promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance;
(6) promotion of the necessary European dimensions in higher education.

Bologna Declaration, 19 June 1999

2.1 Developing and consolidating 'the EHEA principles' (1998–2009)

Zgaga, 2012. + explicit + implicit - absent

N.	"The EHEA is based on…"	98	99	01	03	05	07	09
1	Respecting cultural etc. diversities; democratic values	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2	HE is a public good and a public responsibility	-	-	+	+	+	-	+
3	Institutional autonomy, academic values	-	+	-	+	+	+	+
4	Responsiveness to the needs of society; accountability	-	+	+	+	-	+	+
5	HE, innovation, competitiveness, employability, LLL	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
6	Compatibility and comparability; common FQ	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
7	Recognition of HE qualifications etc.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
8	Educational co-operation; enhanced mobility	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
9	Co-operation in quality assurance	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
10	Working in partnership; HE stakeholders	-	-	+	+	+	+	+
11	Linking HE and research; doctoral programmes; etc.	-	-	-	+	+	+	+
12	The social dimension	-	-	+	+	+	+	+
13	The European dimension	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
14	**The "external" / global dimension**	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
15	HEIs continue to fulfil their full range of purposes	-	-	-	-	+	+	+

2.2 The birth of the EHEA (2010)

"3. The Bologna Declaration in 1999 set out a vision for 2010 of an internationally competitive and attractive EHEA where higher education institutions, supported by strongly committed staff, can fulfil their diverse missions in the knowledge society; and where students […] can find the best suited educational pathways."

"6. […] While much has been achieved in implementing the Bologna reforms, the reports also illustrate that EHEA action lines such as degree and curriculum reform, quality assurance […] are implemented to varying degrees. Recent protests in some countries […], have reminded us that some of the Bologna aims and reforms have not been properly implemented and explained. We acknowledge and will listen to the critical voices raised among staff and students. We note that adjustments and further work, involving staff and students, are necessary at European, national, and especially institutional levels to achieve the EHEA as we envisage it."

Budapest/Vienna Declaration, 12 March 2010

2.3 From design to implementation

Implementation of structural (higher education) reforms is always *risky/uncertain process.*

National HE reforms: centrally initiated but responsibilities are (should be) shared between partners at different levels.

Bologna reforms: voluntary process of "connecting" national reforms. Design at the European level, implementation at the national / HE institutions (HEIs) level.

A success at the European level (an emerging EHEA) is accompanied by *problems at the national/HEIs level.*

The 'Bologna Stocktaking' (2009) – a confirmation that something went wrong; e.g.: "It seems that there is not enough integration at national level between the qualifications framework, learning outcomes and ECTS."

2.4 Dichotomy cooperation vs. competition in HE

Dichotomy of *enhancing international cooperation* and *strengthening global competition* in higher education.

European and global *mobility* remains a hard issue:
- *reducing administrative barriers* to the mobility of students and staff (visa policy; recognition of credits from abroad; etc.);
- *mobility and the "social dimension"* (financial support but also language learning, elimination of prejudices, etc.);
- providing *two-way mobility* (identifying priority fields for attracting students from other countries / world regions);
- mobility and *institutional support* (international offices, qualified staff, both teaching and administrative);
- last but not least, *mobility* as "commercial aim" vs. *migration* as "political threat".

2.5 The entanglement of national and international impact

International policy influences (BP but also WB, OECD, etc.) vs. specific national contexts / needs / problems.

The result? – Transvestism of particular reform aims (at least in some countries) into '*Bologna reforms*' (the phenomenon of 'pan-boloniasation'):

→ an inadmissible 'broadening' of the Bologna action lines into various '*bolonia*' scenarios (e.g. "*bolonia* requires that students pay fees in all countries" etc.);

→ nationally constructed '*bolonia*' reform aims as an excuse for domestic pushes and clashes;

→ darkening of the national responsibility for higher education (excuses like "*Brussels requires it*" etc.).

2.6 A case study: Perceptions of the Bologna reforms in the Western Balkans

"*The Bologna Process has contributed importantly to the quality of my institution*" – assessments given by decided respondents (by countries and institutions). - (8 countries; N=1,742; Zgaga et al., 2013)
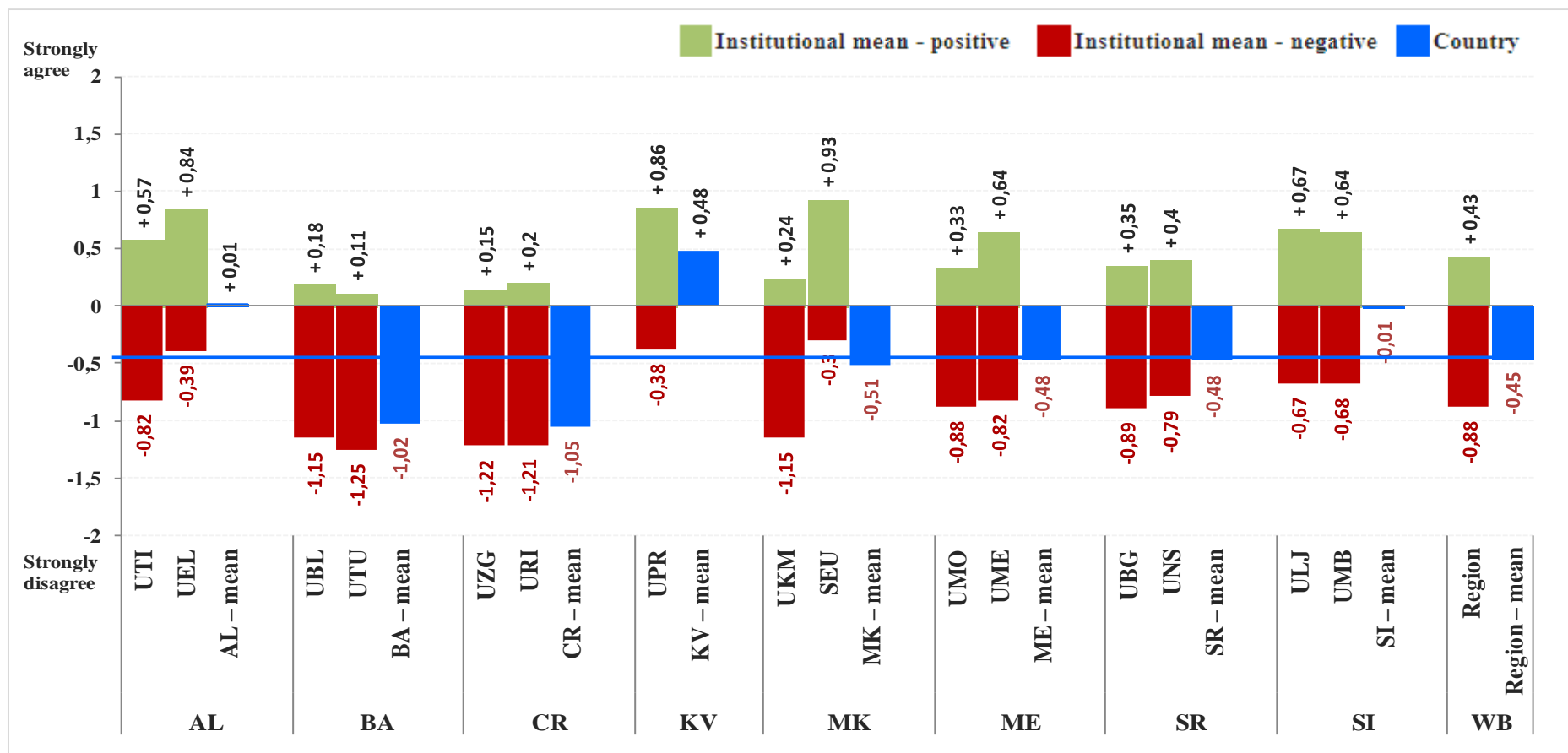
3.1 The "Bologna Club" vs. the "outer world"

Around 2005 the Bologna Process became a "success story" and a policy model for several non-EU countries and regions.

Applications for membership in the "Club" were growing; where should the geographical borders of the "Club" be set?

A new question was raised within the "Club": how should the emerging EHEA relate to the "outer world" and/or how to conceptualise its "external dimension"?

The main decisions were taken at Ministerial Conferences in Bergen (2005) and London (2007).

However, this issue did not arise out of the blue; its roots can be found in at earlier stages of the Process.

3.2 Europe between its "attractive potential", "cooperation" and "competitiveness"

1998: "An open European area for higher learning [...] requires [...] to develop a framework [...], which would enhance mobility and an ever closer cooperation. [...] The international recognition and attractive potential of our systems are directly related to their external and internal readabilities." (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998)

1999: "We need to ensure that the European higher education system acquires a world-wide degree of attraction". [...] We must in particular look at the objective of increasing the international competitiveness of the European systems of higher education." (Bologna Declaration, 1998)

3.3 Focus on "attractiveness" and "cooperation"

Promoting the attractiveness of the EHEA *(Berlin Communiqué,* 2003):

Ministers agree that the attractiveness and openness of the European higher education should be reinforced. […] They encourage the co-operation with regions in other parts of the world by opening Bologna seminars and conferences to representatives of these regions.

The attractiveness of the EHEA and cooperation with other parts of the world *(Bergen Communiqué,* 2005):

"We see the EHEA as a partner of higher education systems in other regions of the world, stimulating balanced student and staff exchange and cooperation between higher education institutions. We underline the importance of intercultural understanding and respect. […] We ask the BFUG to elaborate and agree on a strategy for the external dimension."

3.4 The Strategy: EHEA "in a global context"

The EHEA in a global context *(London Communiqué,* 2007):
"We are pleased that in many parts of the world, the Bologna reforms have created considerable interest and stimulated discussion between European and international partners on a range of issues. […] Moreover, we acknowledge that efforts have been made in some countries in other parts of the world to bring their higher education systems more closely into line with the Bologna framework.

We adopt the strategy "The European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting" and will take forward work in the core policy areas: improving information on, and promoting the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA; strengthening cooperation based on partnership; intensifying policy dialogue; and improving recognition. This work ought to be seen in relation to the OECD/UNESCO *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education."*

3.5 The European Higher Education in a Global Setting. A Strategy (2007)

European Higher Education in a Global Setting
A Strategy

NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

bologna process

"The idea is that all actors at the European, national and institutional levels need to pursue the strategy together."

"In many parts of the world, 'the European reform model' has created considerable interest. It has a strong – and growing – appeal in other parts of the world."

"As a prerequisite for being an attractive partner world-wide, the European reform process needs to continue a coherent implementation of the Bologna Process."

"As the term *External Dimension* has been deemed confusing, the title has been changed to a *Strategy for the EHE in a Global Setting*".

3.6 Guiding principles

A. European heritage and values: Innovation and renewal can only be successful if they build on an awareness of traditions and values. The *Strategy* reconfirms the centrality of the principles of institutional autonomy and academic freedom. It is build on a belief in democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It is based on the ideas of cultural and religious dialogue and tolerance.

B. Stakeholder participation: the Bologna Process success factor – the close cooperation by all HE stakeholders in an atmosphere of trust. A successful strategy must rely on the same model.

C. Geographical scope: The Strategy doesn't exclude any region or country of the world. The diversity of the international cooperation activities of individual nations and HE institutions should be perceived as strength and an asset for the EHEA, rather than as a disadvantage.

3.7 Core policy areas

A. Improving Information on the EHEA: to monitor the global perception and assessment of the Bologna Process and to provide correct information about the EHEA.

B. Promoting EHE to enhance its world-wide attractiveness and competitiveness: the goal of the EHEA in which students and staff move freely cannot be reached through measures of HE policy alone; it equally depends on facilitating the granting of visas, social security, work permits etc.

C. Strengthening cooperation based on partnership: a need for enhanced HE cooperation with non-EHEA countries in a spirit of partnership and solidarity, aiming at mutual benefit on all levels.

D. Intensifying policy dialogue: to systemize and broaden the policy dialogue with non-EHEA countries' governments and stakeholders; to exchange new ideas and share good practice.

E. Furthering recognition of qualifications: the fair recognition of qualifications is a key element of the *Strategy*.

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4.0 Towards "a proper and full implementation"

"The Bologna Process and the resulting EHEA, being unprecedented examples of regional, cross-border cooperation in higher education, have raised considerable interest in other parts of the world and made European higher education more visible on the global map. We welcome this interest and look forward to intensifying our policy dialogue and cooperation with partners across the world.

We, the Ministers responsible for the EHEA, ask the Bologna Follow-up Group to propose measures to facilitate the proper and full implementation of the agreed Bologna principles and action lines across the EHEA."

Budapest-Vienna Declaration on the EHEA (2010)

4.1 "How do *they* see *us*?"

Does "Europe" exist in the perception of international students?

"There is a perception of Europe as an "entity" in general terms and as an economic union. However, when it comes to cultural aspects and higher education, most students rather see Europe as a range of very different countries."

The survey confirms this perception of a 'reduced Europe': most students only had considerable knowledge about higher education in the United Kingdom, Germany and France; smaller groups about Spain, Portugal and Italy (Latin-Americans), Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Austria […] The number of students who were well informed about other [EU] countries was negligible."

4.2 Promoting the EHEA – or promoting own higher education? (The BFUG point of view)

"Conclusions

It is clear that the Bologna Process has enhanced the cooperation between countries, organisations and higher education institutions inside and outside Europe. However, while considerable progress has been made in the fields of information and promotion, most countries seem to promote their own higher education systems internationally and very few promote the EHEA."

Bologna Process *Stocktaking Report*, 2009

4.3 Promoting own higher education?
(The institutional point of view)

"The Bologna Process has had multiple and positive impacts on European higher education identity within Europe and beyond. The growing European identity in the world – while strong at policy level – still seems to leave practical aspects of institutional behaviour unaffected. There is little joint European cooperation outside Europe, with each European country pursuing its own internationalisation strategy despite the '*Global dimension strategy*' adopted at the 2007 Bologna Ministerial meeting. In addition, the question as to whether European cooperation will not be diluted in internationalisation will require monitoring in future years."

Trends 2010 Report

4.4 "Looking out": The EHEA countries' priorities

Priority regions for attracting students (46 EHEA countries' responses, 2010)								
N=16	N=16	N=16	N=13	N=7	N=14	N=11	N=6	N=2
OEU = 9 NEU = 2 WEu = 3 EEu = 2	OEU = 5 NEU = 5 WEu = 1 EEu = 5	OEU = 3 NEU = 6 WEu = 0 EEu = 7	OEU = 5 NEU = 4 WEu = 0 EEu = 4	OEU = 3 NEU = 3 WEu = 0 EEu = 1	OEU = 7 NEU = 4 WEu = 0 EEu = 3	OEU = 6 NEU = 1 WEu = 0 EEu = 4	OEU = 4 NEU = 1 WEu = 0 EEu = 1	OEU = 1 NEU = 1 WEu = 0 EEu = 0
All are of equal priority	EU Europe	Non-EU Europe	Middle East	Africa	Asia	USA & Canada	Latin America	Australia & New Zealand

Total = 46 EHEA countries (as of before March 2010)
OEU ("old" EU) = AT, BE, DK, DE, FI, FR, EL, IE, IT, LU, NL, PT, ES, SE, UK (15)
NEU ("new" EU) = BU, CY, CZ, EE, HU, LV, LT, MT, PL, RO, SK, SI (12)
WEu (West Europe; non-EU) = AD, CH, IS, LI, NO, VA (6)
EEu (East Europe ; non-EU) = AL, AM, AZ, BA, HR, GE, MD, MK, ME, RU, RS, TR, UA (13)

4.4 "Looking out": the institutional priorities

International regions of interest for the European HEIs			
Q: "In which areas would **your institution** most like to enhance its attractiveness?"			
Regions	**"Trends 3" (2003)**	**"Trends 5" (2007)**	**"Trends 6" (2010)**	**+ / –**
EU	92	86	86	–
Eastern Europe	62	62	65	+
Asia	40	59	60	+
US/Canada	57	50	53	–
Latin America	32	31	32	o
Africa	24	26	25	o
Arab world	16	21	22	+
Australia	23	20	14	–
Source: Trends 2010 (EUA)			

4.5 Evaluating the Strategy's implementation

Higher education structures in Europe are now more compatible and comparable. […] The vision of an integrated EHEA is within reach. […] For 2012-2015, we will especially concentrate on fully supporting our higher education institutions and stakeholders in their efforts to deliver meaningful changes and to further the comprehensive implementation of all Bologna action lines. […]

Cooperation with other regions of the world and international openness are key factors to the development of the EHEA. We commit to further exploring the global understanding of the EHEA goals and principles in line with the strategic priorities set by the 2007 strategy for "the EHEA in a Global Setting". We will evaluate the strategy's implementation by 2015 with the aim to provide guidelines for further internationalisation developments.

Bucharest Communiqué, 2012

4.6 Evaluation and revision of the Strategy

Revision of the EHEA in a global setting strategy
The Strategy review is not a comprehensive mapping but a selective review attempting to capture some general trends at European and national level. It is based on contributions received from WG members of examples under the five priority areas of the Strategy. […]

The M&I WG emphasises the following […]:
➢ EHEA membership could help smaller countries to promote their educational systems worldwide;
➢ Quality assurance is one of the attractiveness indicators of EHEA;
➢ Incoming student mobility should be increased in EHEA, however different countries may have different needs and targets;
➢ Data should be collected and reported to assess the attractiveness of EHEA on a regular basis.

Report of the 2012-2015 BFUG working group on mobility and internationalisation (08/01/2015)

# 4.7 Interest in EHEA worldwide

Figure 1. Density of ehea.org web traffic between July 2012 and November 2014
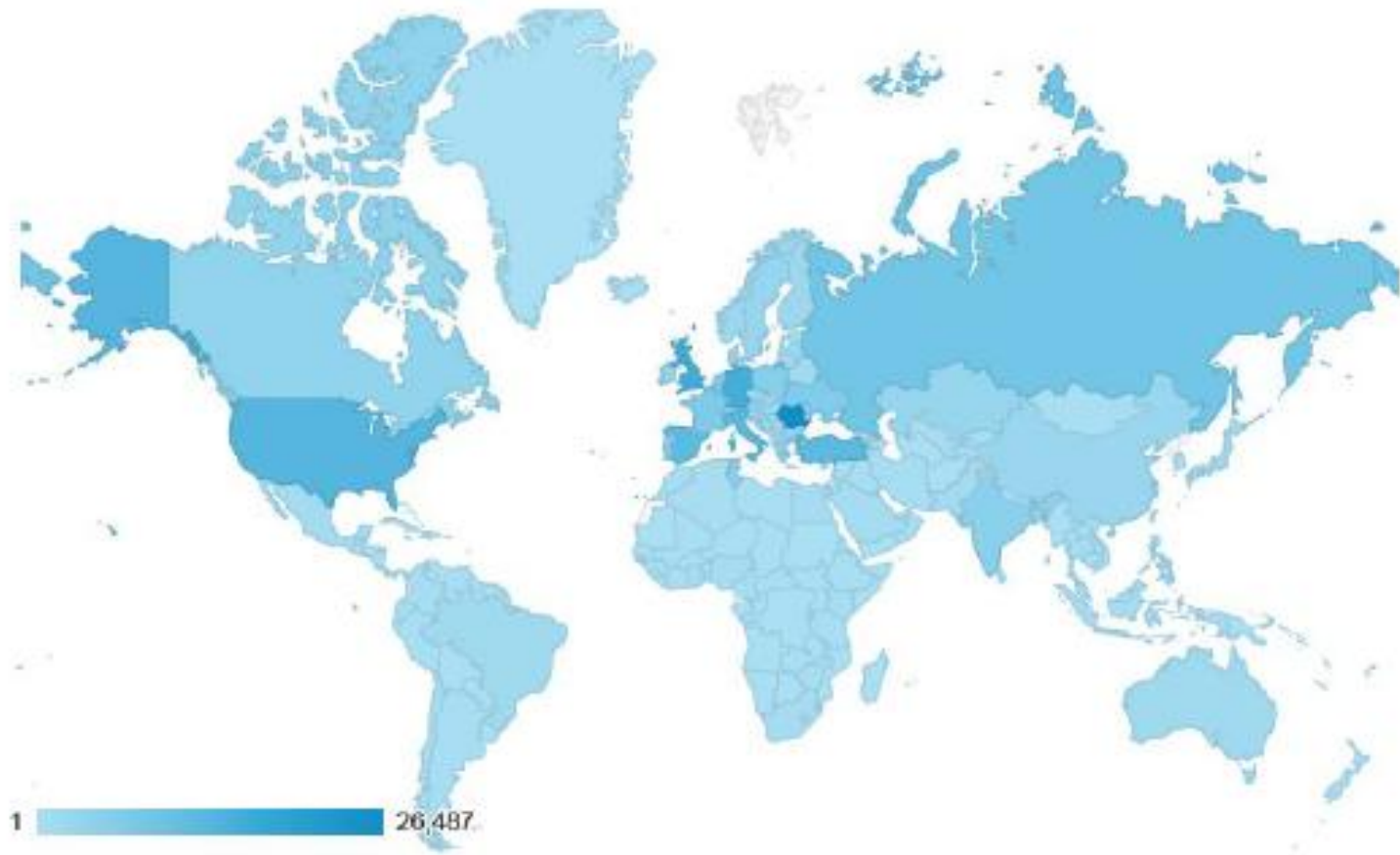
Source: Report of the 2012-2015 BFUG WG on mobility and internationalisation

4.8 Non-EHEA students studying inside EHEA

Figure 7.14: Incoming degree mobility rate – tertiary education mobile students from outside the EHEA as a percentage of the total number of students enrolled, by country of destination, 2011/12
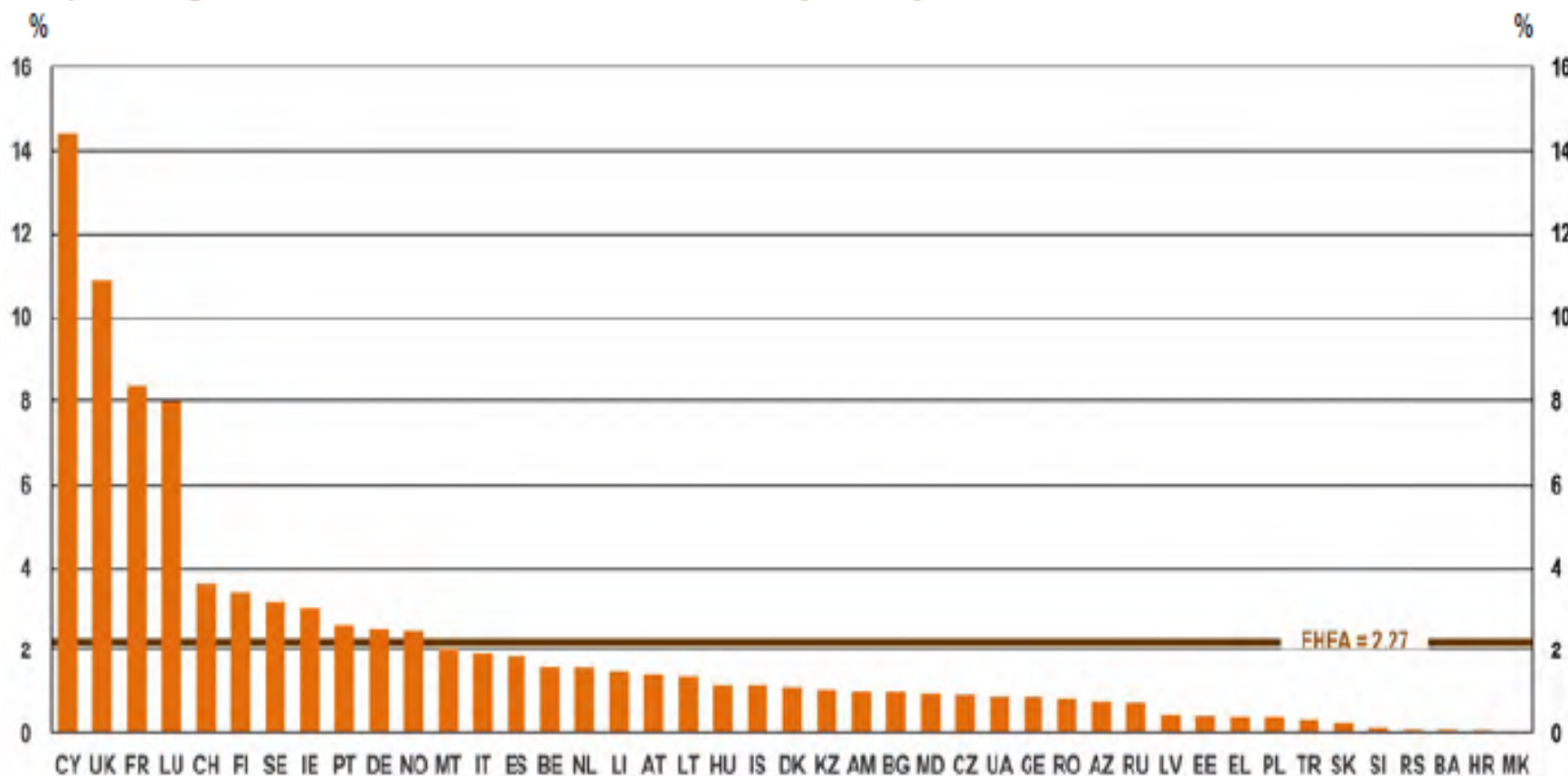
Source: Bologna Process Implementation Report 2015

4.9 EHEA students studying outside EHEA

Figure 7.16: Outward degree mobility rate – tertiary education students studying abroad outside the EHEA as a percentage of the total number of students of the same country of origin, 2011/12
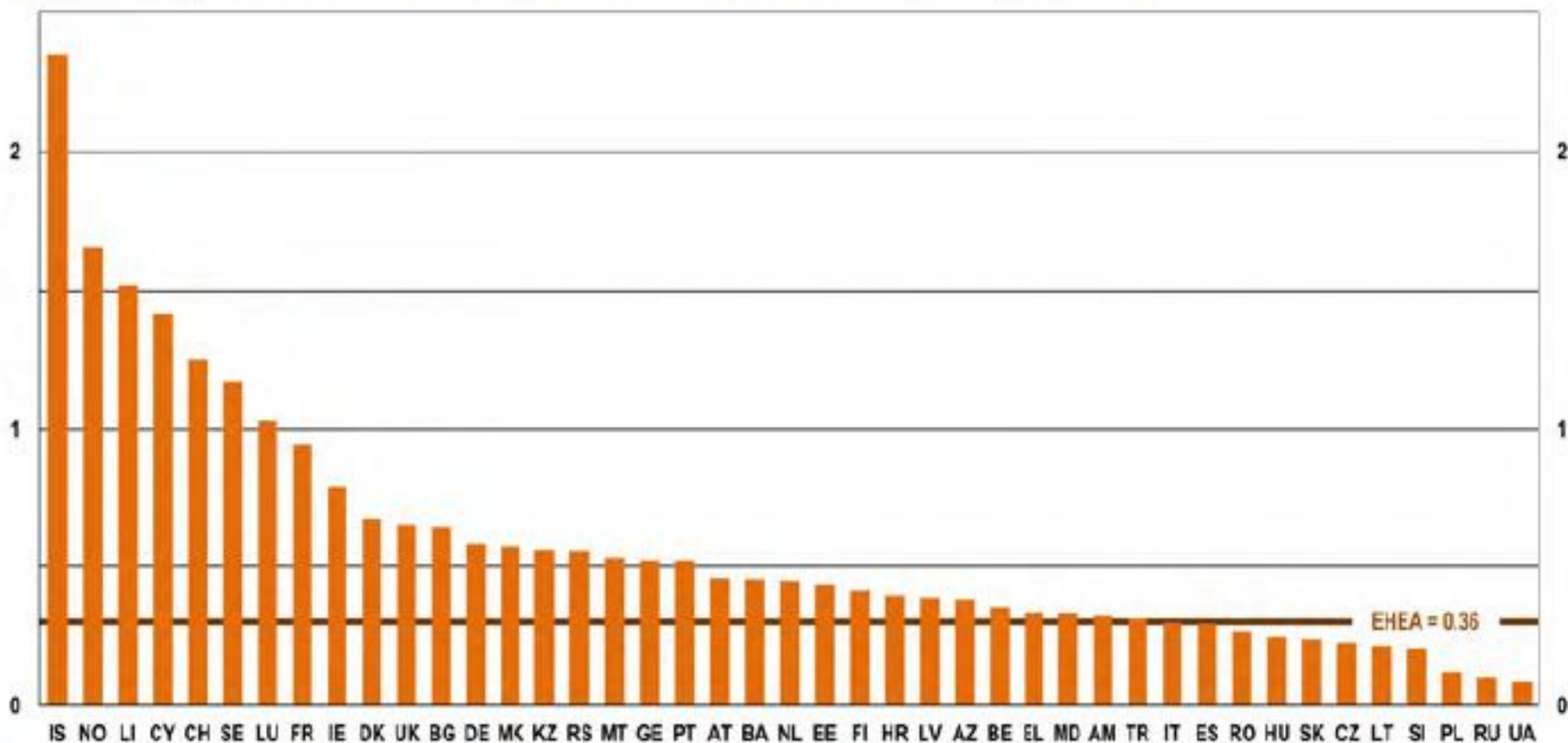
Source: Bologna Process Implementation Report 2015

4.10 Regions of cooperation for joint programmes

Figure 7.10: Countries' perceptions: Main regions of cooperation for joint programmes/degrees, 2013/14
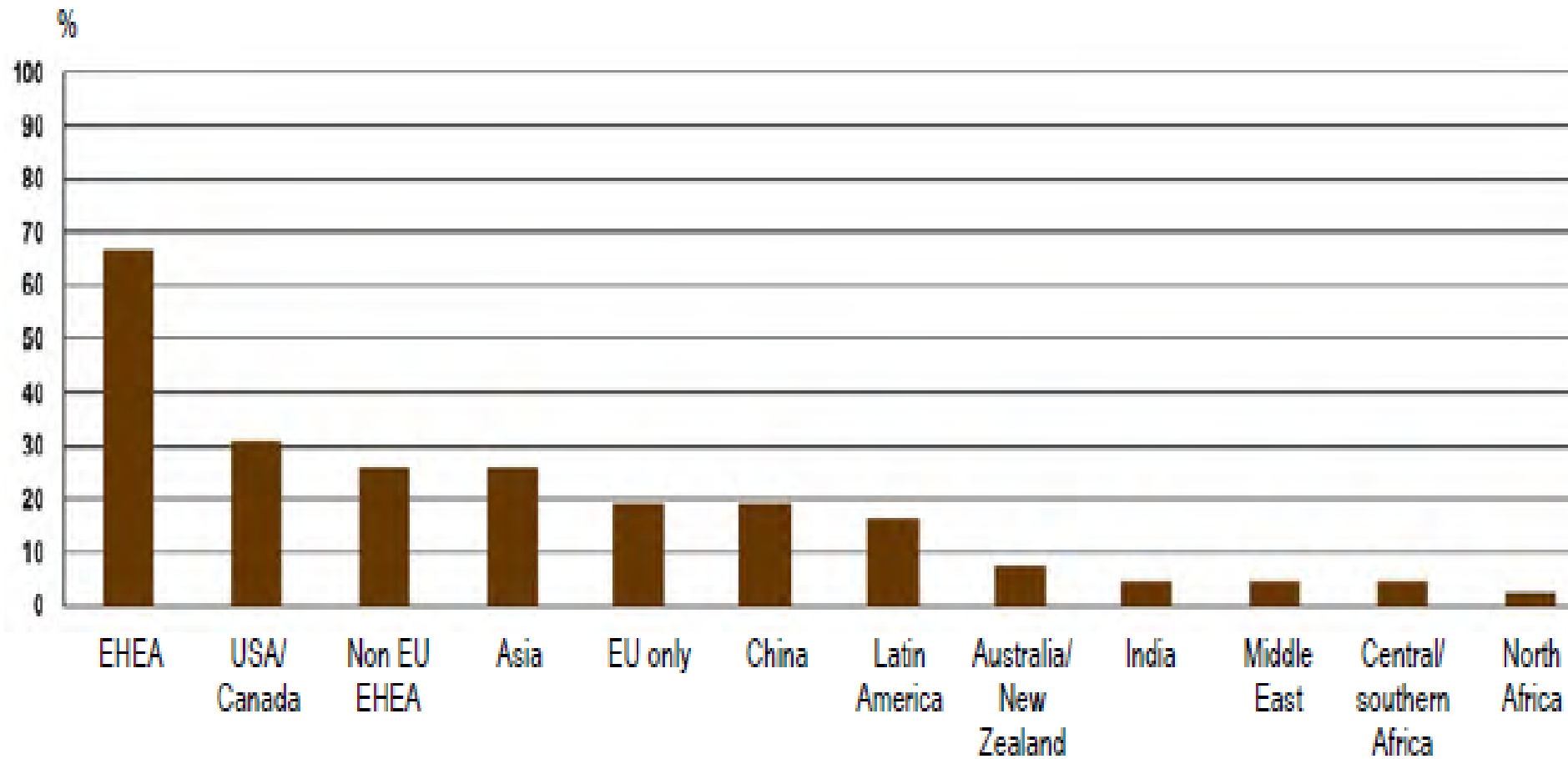
Source: BFUG questionnaire.

Source: Bologna Process Implementation Report 2015

4.11   Strategy still relevant?

"Are all five elements of the Global Setting Strategy still relevant? The evidence of this report and the discussion of the BFUG would indicate that this is indeed so. However, the more nuanced question is to what extent these five areas should features in a distinct strategy of the EHEA going forward and whether/how they should be monitored. This would be an important question to address in the post-2015 Bologna agenda and the subsequent structures for the process that are put in place."

ANNEX IX (to the Report WG M-I, 2015):
The EHEA in a Global Setting: 2014 Strategy Review

4.12 … "committed to completing the work"

"Thanks to the Bologna reforms, progress has been made in enabling students and graduates to move within the EHEA […]. The EHEA has opened a dialogue with other regions of the world and is considered a model of structured cooperation.

Nonetheless, implementation of the structural reforms is uneven and the tools are sometimes used incorrectly or in bureaucratic and superficial ways. […] We are committed to completing the work, and recognize the need to give new impetus to our cooperation. […]

Finally, we take note with approval of the reports by the working groups […]."

Yerevan Communiqué, 2015

Note: no explicit statement on the Strategy's implementation

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4.0 Conclusion: open issues and challenges

(a) EHEA has been constructed: systems are now more compatible, cooperation and mobility have increased.

(b) Quality enhancement within the EHEA and its global attractiveness are interdependent categories.

(c) "Global Strategy": an opportunity for a global higher education policy dialogue – but not a tool to increase attractiveness and competitiveness of the *whole* EHEA.

(d) EHEA – a loose association of national HE systems; no central body; diverse (contradictory?) interpretations.

(e) Huge heterogeneity within the EHEA: EU (28? 27?) vs. non-EU (20 …); West vs. East; North vs. South, etc.

(f) Attractiveness – cooperation – competition: "external" as well as "internal" point of view ...

(g) The "EU crisis" as a challenge to the "European idea": a challenge also to the EHEA and its "external dimension".

4.1 Concluding remarks

Ongoing debates on the future of (European) Higher Education (Area) raise several dilemmas, e.g.:

What is (should be) the EHEA:

- an area which is based on common academic heritage and values while respecting the diversity and promoting the development of all and each?
- a global free market area dominated by the logic of centres and peripheries?

What is (should be) the EHEA:

- an original response to the need for creating regional HE policy spaces (synergy of national HE systems)?
- a tool for the expansion of neoliberal HE policies?