

**THIRD INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON
CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY**

21-24 April 2006

Manly Pacific Hotel, Sydney, Australia

**Shaping the future: Connecting career development and workforce
development**

FEDORA's contribution to the European Higher Education Area

Report by

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I would like to thank Margaret Dane, Chief Executive of AGCAS, for her support on this report especially for some of her summaries on the FEDORA Symposium

“Updating the knowledge on Higher Education guidance and counselling provisions in Europe” in Krakow, February 8th -10th, 2006

This paper aims to make available some European background information on the relationship between guidance and counselling provision, higher education and employability. It will link these interrelationships to the role FEDORA (Forum Européen de l'Orientation Académique/European Forum for Student Guidance) plays in the important task of developing more coherent policy strategies for guidance within this wider educational framework.

Therefore firstly the paper will look at the so called 'Bologna Process', then provide a basic description of guidance and counselling services and link them to career development and careers guidance and to the lifelong learning process. Finally it will look at contributions FEDORA has been providing.

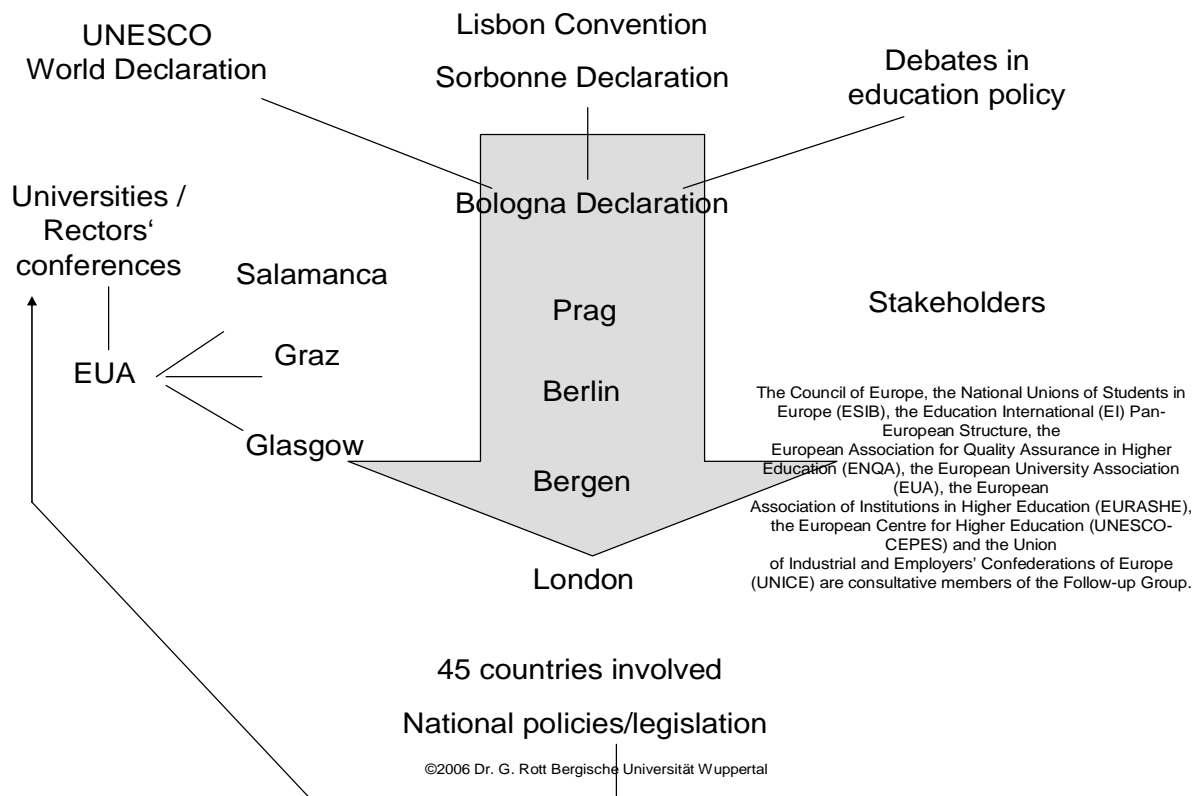
The Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area

The advancement of the Bologna Process in Europe aims to meet the challenges of globalisation and to strengthen the positive effects of internationalisation. Within an increasingly European labour market, enhanced graduate employability has become one of the core issues of this process. At the same time the Bologna Process has introduced a broad and flexible concept of the term "employability". It seeks to encourage the development of a genuine European citizenship and active participation in social life, not only at a local and national but also at a European level.

The universities, with their task to strive for truth and knowledge about the world and human existence, can play a decisive role not only in the growth of a knowledge-driven economy but also in the promotion of reason and cross-cultural understanding and the fostering of civil society on a worldwide scale. The joint OECD – UNESCO declaration on Higher Education seeks to support this potential and to strengthen and assure academic standards and the freedom and quality of teaching and learning. (cf. OECD & UNESCO, 2005).

The internationalisation of universities, which entails competition as well as cooperation, enhances their role as important contributors to a knowledge-based society. Universities are by their very nature universal, but nowadays, the internationalisation and mobility of staff and students are becoming far more vital challenges.

The Bologna Process is built around the principles of mobility, employability, competitiveness and attractiveness. Means to this end are the introduction of a movement towards a two-tier structure in university degrees, namely the Bachelor/Master system, the European Credit Transfer System and a European qualification framework.



The research results of the Trends IV report (cf. EUA, 2005a) show how far implementation has progressed up to now. In 2005 two important steps have been taken for the implementation of the European Higher Education Area: in April the clear commitment of the European Universities to the Bologna Process was expressed at the EUA conference in Glasgow, concluding with the EUA declaration on strong universities in a strong Europe; and in May the Bergen conference of the European Ministers of Education put a clear focus on quality assurance and qualification frameworks, and on degree systems based on learning outcomes and competencies. As far as scope and timing are concerned, 2010 can be considered a realistic framework for establishing the European Higher Education Area. In Belgium and Denmark the BA/MA system has been adapted for all those inscribed in 2004 and in Hungary in 2005. Countries like Germany and France are firmly committed to fulfil the Bologna requirements, though there are still some obstacles to overcome. Despite all the barriers and differentiations, the process can be considered irreversible, since it has become such a broad flow of concerted actions. Yet, to fulfil all its educational tasks it will probably take at least another ten years.

However, the difficult aspects of the developments towards an integrated European job market and system of comparable degrees within the two-tier structure of the Bologna Process should not be neglected. Traditional national and regional structures, which had served quite well up to the restructuring, are facing a deconstruction. For example in Germany a lot of people within universities as well as in industry feel that the system of our traditional "diplom" was quite concise and easily comparable on a national scale while the Bachelor/Master structure provides some uncertainties about the qualifications.

For the individual student a university degree is much more an opportunity, rather than an entitlement, like it used to be in the past, to participate in a market. This is also true for his/her participation in postgraduate studies. It is becoming much more competitive now to get enrolled in postgraduate course that will lead to the level of the "diplom".

The Bologna Process has changed the structure of the qualification framework in Europe immensely; national educational settings are reframed within an overarching structure. This has consequences for the individual student as well as for companies in the economy. A European education market has been established in which the individual students with their individual portfolios, which can be compared to a market value, have to participate.

On the other hand, companies have to participate actively in the market, too. Looking for suitable employees, including the intensive market research requirements of the task of finding employees, increases the transaction costs. In order to reduce these tremendous costs companies intensify the monitoring of recruitment, establish new methods of recruitment such as online recruitment and build up networks with chosen universities. With this networking they find hybrid structures between the market and the enterprise. By doing so they ensure the quality of the degree of future employees and at the same time reduce transaction costs. These processes may endanger the essential targets of mobility and flexibility.

Despite these challenges, the changes implied by the Bologna Process can and should be considered a positive response to the need of an integrated European job market and to the challenge of maintaining the diversity of cultures within Europe. This diversity and the emphasis on the individual can be understood as a strong asset within our European context. The European Economic Area is getting larger and there are more offers and opportunities for companies. Even small and medium-sized businesses need to adapt themselves to a more international position. The production of added value is getting more and more fragmented, and in the supply industry more partners get involved. So the development towards an integrated job market goes along with a more integrated production within the economy.

One further aspect is the digitalisation of economic processes that contributes to the newly required flexibility: information disseminates much faster than it used to do. This is reflected in the attempts of universities to use this digitalisation and to establish a framework that enables students to learn in an IT-supported environment.

The learner centred approach and careers awareness

Over and above this, what is essential now in the construction and deconstruction of knowledge in general is that it should mirror itself in the individual student's higher education experience. If we focus on the education of the student, a far more proactive approach to HE must develop, encouraging students to combine sound methodological and specialised knowledge with generic skills and a clear understanding of the learning process, as well as of their own career profile and choices. It is vital here to accept and promote individual learning targets and needs. Within a change of perspective from teaching to learning (cf. Barr, R. and Tagg, J., 1995), teaching will be

increasingly reflected in terms of learning outcomes and the ability to transfer knowledge into various academic and professional contexts. The Bologna Process sets out to encourage those perspectives, to support learner autonomy and self-regulated learning with the aim of preparing students and graduates better for a future on the European job market. The concept of the diploma supplement emphasises the need for students to feel in charge of their own educational profile and progress. Developing one's portfolio becomes important for entry to postgraduate studies and future employment. Again, increased mobility goes along with the need to acquire cross-cultural awareness and competencies. In general the new university structures put more responsibility on the *individual* student, since the focus is on the actual outcomes of learning processes. For the universities this means a clear shift to learner autonomy and self-regulated learning. The new modularisation of studies and differentiation of the courses are just a few examples of the uncertainties that await students and at the same time open up interesting perspectives. At another level there's the need to acquire additional skills and competencies that can facilitate the transfer of knowledge acquired in the educational setting into any given situation. This competence and learner centred approach in HE links to the emphasis put on the quality of individuals' careers decisions and the ability to cope with educational and work transitions.

In this context it is necessary to focus on the individual student's learning needs including his/her non-academic requirements, since successful learning does not only include the acquisition of knowledge but personal growth and development as well. On the one hand, this change in perspective presents the individual student with new opportunities, especially with regard to finding a field of studies that is most in sync with his/her strengths and goals in life. On the other hand, these opportunities bring with them new risks. The student might easily feel overwhelmed when faced with the task of balancing the inner and outer worlds in an educational setting that is increasingly in a state of flux.

In recent years it has become more and more common to think of learning as a lifelong process. The individual learner is perceived as a learning subject with the ability and the possibility to make educational, training and occupational decisions at any point in his/her life. This is closely connected to the concept of sustained employability and occupational and geographical mobility. In this context, the individual is encouraged to adapt a proactive approach to life and learning and to reflect his or her own inner self to actively shape reality.

Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary competence

Enrolled in their specific courses, students acquire subject based knowledge and its methodological foundation. With regard to an increasingly globalised labour market, possessing interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary skills is an essential feature of employability. Ideally, universities should provide a learning environment which helps their students acquire the capacity to transfer knowledge from the educational setting into any given situation and to apply the skills acquired in one discipline in another context. This might help their graduates to manage future demands. However, the acquisition of these generic skills is not yet sufficiently reflected in university structures, resulting in evident gaps between higher education and professional requirements.

In the past, students' practical experience was a matter of personal commitment and had no influence on the university course programme, since cooperation across faculty or department boundaries was virtually non-existent, despite the fact that it is required as essential within the reorganisation of knowledge. More recently, however, universities are beginning to incorporate courses with a focus on the acquisition of transferable skills into their curricular structures. Cooperation between faculties, departments and centralised services is increasing across Europe, since interaction between theory and experience is essential in the development and stabilisation of transferable knowledge. More and more often, guidance and counselling services are included in these cooperative efforts. Within these complex learning and working requirements students are asked to acquire the competence to build up a foundation to take part in lifelong learning processes in a dynamic, knowledge-based society.

All this increasing flexibility in the economic world together with the widening of access to higher education and the requirement of increased mobility result in demands on students to adapt faster and more coherently to the academic environment and to project themselves into the future. Students have to cope with increasing uncertainties and at the same time to develop an understanding of how the knowledge acquired can be transformed into competencies and qualifications that will open up future job perspectives and build up a foundation for lifelong learning. These efforts on the part of the university and the individual student to support learning competence, self-efficacy and self-esteem put flesh (Rott, G., 2005) on one of the essential objectives of the European Higher Education Area: to make it possible for a large number of students to acquire not only knowledge, but also the ability to apply this knowledge in different situations, and to understand their learning experience within the more demanding context of personality development in which the value-based balance of work, leisure and social responsibility is a core issue.

The framework of lifelong guidance

The OECD has established the concept of lifelong guidance based on debates on lifelong learning as well as on analyses in the field of career guidance policies. The idea of lifelong learning which sees learning taking place throughout the lifespan has of course already been developed and strongly emphasised by the OECD and the European Commission during the 90s. In the OECD analyses, the term "career guidance" comprises all kinds of guidance for individuals facing educational and occupational decisions in all periods of life as well as all institutions supporting career developments by encouraging individual strengths that enable the individual to positively influence and cope with these developments.

The original 14 country studies carried out by the OECD were supplemented by reports on European countries that had not yet been analysed. These reports were promoted by the European Commission and additional ones were produced by the World Bank on seven middle-income countries. The European Commission will now carry out further analyses on the countries of the West Balkans. All the reviews that were published by the OECD in cooperation with the World Bank and the EU conclude that individual-related lifelong guidance as well as the strengthening of individual career competencies are essential for economic wealth.

Thus, Careers Guidance services and the increase in individual's career management competence represent a public good because of their value to

society as a whole, which governments have to support by policy development. Moreover, they represent a private good as they help individuals achieve skills required on the European job market. Guidance and learning targets are closely connected. Career management skills support the increase of the effectiveness of educational institutions and promote the ability of the individual to use them in his/her pursuit to adapt to the new challenges on the European job market. They enhance the opportunities for people "to find jobs which utilise their potential and meet their own goals" so that "they are likely to be more motivated and therefore more productive" (Watts, 2006, p. 3). In general, the concept of the enhancement of individual employability is one of the tools of the European job market. It is also strengthening the individual. It comprises attributes such as the "ability to find and keep a job, and the capacity to adapt to a changing labour market and new job requirements" (OECD, 2004, p. 21). It increases the chances to find individual and social balances within a sometimes difficult and challenging job market.

The Education Council and the European Commission have also taken up this essential concept in a common framework that the European Commission has developed in 2004, known as the "education and training 2010 work programme". This programme contains common targets and principles for lifelong guidance services on a European level. With regard to the individual learner the programme claims the necessity for reorganising existing advisory services so that the ability of individuals to actively organise their careers and learning in line with their aims in life, competencies and interests can be developed.

CEDEFOP (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training) and the European Expert Group on Lifelong Guidance suggest that guidance and counselling services work in all fields in an open-minded, flexible and complementary way. To work in line with the principles of cooperation and coordination of services in other areas on a national, regional and local level should ensure and improve the quality of lifelong educational and vocational guidance. In doing so stakeholders may achieve the establishment of official networks and co-operation on a local level.

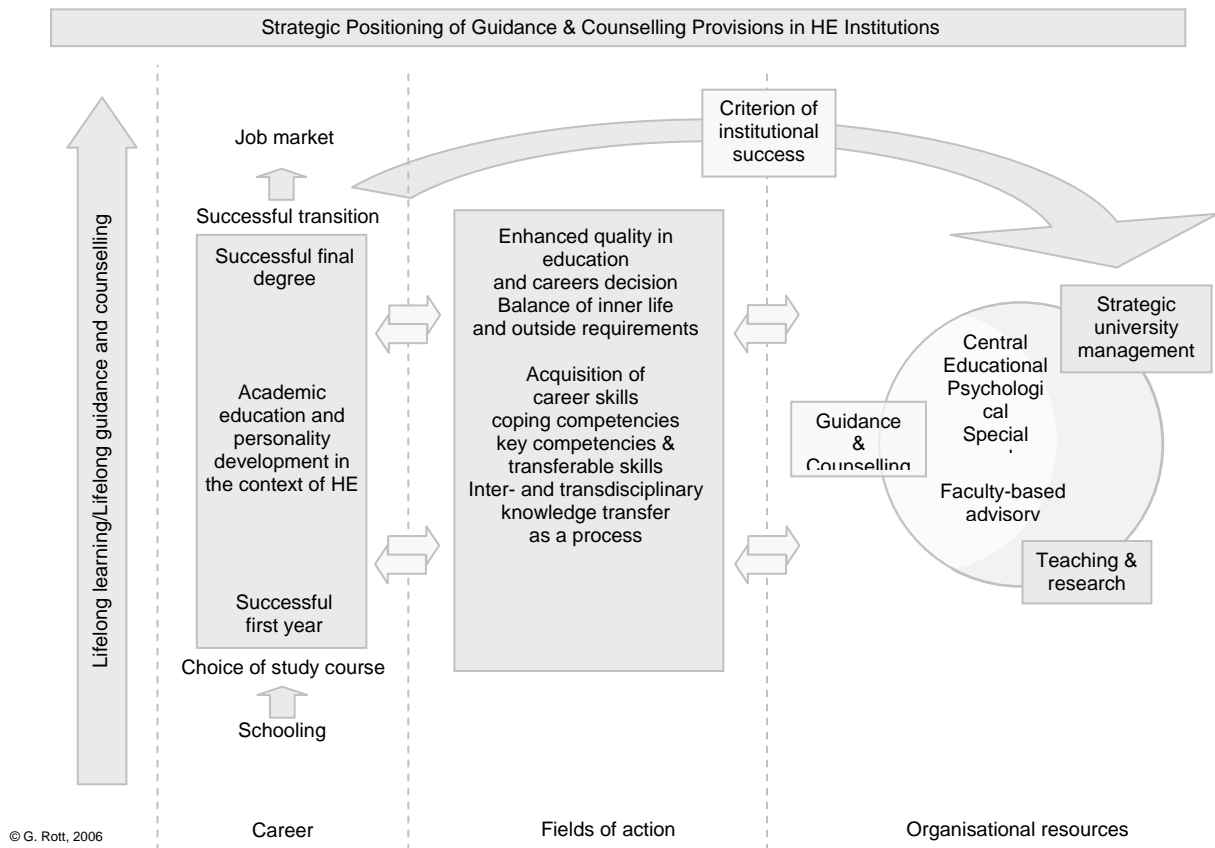
In this context, one needs to consider the fact that in Higher Education the individual students with their individual matters are getting more important and Higher Education has to put a focus on the students' individual competencies so that they are able to meet new and emerging demands. New structures and educational environments therefore have to achieve the objective of enabling a large numbers of students to get actively involved in their own education and career planning.

Though the link between these debates and the Bologna Process have been rather weak, it is obvious that there is quite a bit of common ground and to make this relationship more explicit will be a challenge for the near future.

The increased responsibility of the university and the role of guidance and counselling provision to enhance employability

All these ideas imply a whole new perspective for universities and their strategic management: the success of students and their studies influences the strategic management of the university. Thus professionals and all those who are involved in Higher Education should be aware of the fact that the students themselves, the success of their studies and their further employment can be regarded as indicators for the quality of education.

Adequate resources and appropriate strategies have to be in place to facilitate these transitions and ensure the success of Higher Education. Subject-oriented knowledge including methodologies is acquired within the new system of modularised study courses which require transparency in order to guarantee positive effects. In addition, students need to acquire career management skills, coping competencies, key competencies and transferable skills. In order to meet all these challenges guidance and counselling are essential components.



Accordingly there is an increasing recognition of the need to strengthen provision of guidance and counselling within HE institutions. They have the task to provide settings to enhance students' ability to cope with educational demands.

Four Advisory Services

Of course the structural changes acquired in a university setting do not happen without conflict. There are barriers inherent in this process that prevent higher education institutions from being as supportive of their students as they ideally should be. Institutional and curricular solutions need to be found to overcome these obstacles. As for the individual student this very difficult process of adapting to the new structures and demands often requires support which can be provided by the four areas of advisory services.

Careers guidance and education support students' career planning, decision-making and job-hunting by clarifying career options and opportunities linked to students' courses, interests, abilities and values. They provide access to information, contacts, skills development and jobs. By making close contact with potential employers and personnel departments they provide opportunities to gain work experience and internships. Within the Bologna process careers education and cooperation with academic faculties becomes more and more vital.

The transition from school into higher education can be regarded as a first starting point, and managing the educational process during the course of higher education as a further step in students' career development. Students can use their studies as a kind of training field in which they can develop the transferable skills required in the job market. *Educational guidance* is of particular importance here as it accompanies and supports the individual student during this process. Bearing in mind that the learner centred approach is closely connected with the idea of personal growth it is also important to consider the inner world of a student facing the difficult outer demands. *Psychological Counselling* provides help for students who have to cope with stress, anxiety, mental health disturbance and emotional distress.

Most advisory services also provide help for students with *disabilities and special needs*. They aim to open up ways for these students to become fully integrated so that they can successfully complete and progress from their studies.

It is the aim of professionals in guidance and counselling services to help students balance their position in life by identifying the limits and challenges of their development, and to enhance the competence to acquire the necessary knowledge to make and implement careers decisions.

In addition to helping students directly to cope with problems related to their career development and personal well-being, it is also the task of guidance and counselling professionals to help them indirectly by raising the higher education institutions' awareness of the risk factors and challenges that go hand in hand with studying. It is the responsibility of advisory and counselling services to give feedback to their own university. Given the Bologna Process and its internationalisation, it is still a challenge for such professionals and administrators alike to communicate this feedback within the wider context. FEDORA wants to enhance this dialogue and feedback on a European scale. This dialogue on student support and teaching contributes not only to the internationalisation and the successful implementation of the Bologna Process, but also to the development of a larger body of knowledge on guidance and counselling. FEDORA intensifies this exchange by working closely together with other organisations such as the European University Association (EUA).

FEDORA Working Groups

The work that is provided by guidance and counselling services all over Europe is mirrored in the four core professional activity areas of FEDORA (European Forum for Student Guidance/Forum Européen de l'Orientation Académique) which are summarised in the following four working groups: The "Educational Guidance & Counselling" group is concerned with transition from school to Higher Education and the different European approaches to students' integration in higher education. It is responsible for facilitating the transitions by helping students get into the process of coping with these transitions. The "Disability and Special Needs" group seeks to provide information and guidance for students with disabilities on topics such as study, exchanges and employment; "Psychological Counselling in Higher Education (PSYCHE)" promotes the idea that successful academic learning implies personal growth and development and provides psychological support when it comes to the need of overcoming difficulties of adjustment to the new educational setting or finding new and effective ways of solving developmental queries and problems. Finally, the "Career Guidance &

Employment" group is concerned with careers education, information and guidance as well as graduate recruitment and liaison with employers.

FEDORA

Since its foundation in 1988, FEDORA has been concerned with bringing together colleagues from all over Europe to exchange ideas and experiences in order to further our knowledge about guidance and counselling from a European perspective. FEDORA intensifies this exchange through conferences, summer universities and projects. One of the results of this exchange of information is the "New Skills for New Futures" reports that were produced for every EU member state in 1998 and which give an overview of the guidance and counselling provisions in each country (Van Esbroek & Watts, 1998).

FEDORA Events

This year's congress will take place in **Vilnius, Lithuania, from October 22nd to 25th**. **Prior to this upcoming event, in February** this year FEDORA held a preparatory meeting in Krakow. The **FEDORA Symposium on Guidance and Counselling in Higher Education** featured updates to the 'New Skills for New Futures' reports from 1998, while the new member states presented their reports on Guidance and Counselling within their home country for the first time. This ensured a more thorough insight into the guidance and counselling provision in all EU member states and highlighted advantages as well as disadvantages of the current situation. The various working group coordinators also gave a short summary of their work and a forecast on projects and work in the near future.

In addition we were proud to present several informative and professional contributions by such expert speakers as Jennifer Wannan (CEDEFOP) on 'Policy Development in Guidance and Counselling', Tony Watts giving an outlook 'Towards a "Guidance and Counselling in HE Charter": Reflections on the Implications of Recent International Policy Reviews', Friedrich Wittib (Directorate General for Education and Culture, European Commission) on 'European Universities and their Challenges: The Bologna Process and its Implications for Guidance and Counselling within HE' and finally David Crosier (Programme Development Director, EUA) on 'EUA Projects and Trends for the Next Years with a special focus on Guidance and Counselling within HE'.

Since the specific aim of the Symposium was to provoke a debate and provide input for a first draft of the charter on Guidance and Counselling in Higher Education, we ended our very successful meeting with a general discussion around the broad content of the proposed Charter. The aim of the charter itself is to develop a more political framework for FEDORA's work and to give FEDORA a voice that attracts more attention and interest amongst stakeholders and the wider public. The first steps to the charter that we accomplished in Krakow will then be finalised during the Congress in Vilnius. The title of the FEDORA congress in Vilnius will be: "Professional Challenges: Guidance and Counselling within the European Higher Education Area" and it will draw on practice and theory to provide perspectives on guidance and counselling within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The UNESCO World declaration and the various follow-up activities built up an important worldwide framework for higher education. The world declaration was followed by the European Bologna Declaration in 1999 which initiated the

establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). At the more recent follow-up conferences in Berlin (2003) and in Bergen (2005) substantial progress has been made. Student and learner centred approaches and the development of a European qualification framework have been emphasised to achieve the aim of mobility and employability. We are focussing on guidance and counselling as it is an often unrepresented area in HE.

The European University Association (EUA) clearly committed itself to the success of the EHEA in its Glasgow convention report "Strong Universities for Europe" with a clear statement of dedication to promote student centred learning (cf. EUA, 2005b). The report is based on the research of the Trends IV report, which stipulated the need for better guidance and counselling facilities within the EHEA. Guidance and counselling are also seen as increasingly important in the context of lifelong learning. In 2005, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, CEDEFOP, published a book on "Improving Lifelong Guidance Policies and Systems" (cf. CEDEFOP, 2005) which built on the reviews of career guidance policies in 37 different countries by the OECD, the World Bank, and the European Commission. The latter's research resulted in "Career Guidance. A handbook for Policy makers" (2004) which pointed out that especially in the field of career guidance there are few, if any services available for many students in tertiary education. In addition, "[t]here is a lack of trained personnel to meet tertiary students' career development and guidance needs." (OECD, 2004, p. 20).

The research and results of these declarations and policy papers underpin and inform the work of FEDORA. Through the sharing of experience and expertise, its members would like to foster the implementation of core issues of these international policy papers such as enhancement of employability and mobility, cross-cultural learning, students' personal development or learner centred approaches to guidance and counselling into the daily work of guidance and counselling professionals and their institutions.

The aim of the Congress is to provide a forum for discussions around a number of issues related to the different perspectives on guidance and counselling within the EHEA. Furthermore it aims to further the development of a dialogue between professionals in guidance and counselling in its various aspects, working in similar areas of expertise across Europe and with relevant stakeholders. We hope that a broad debate will facilitate the possibility of examining and emphasising the essentials of the professional practitioners' contribution to guidance and counselling and the sharing of methodological experiences. The broad framework and content of the Congress was prepared at a two-day symposium in Krakow, Poland where the "New Skills for New Futures. Higher Education Guidance and Counselling Services"-reports (1998) produced for the old member states within the FEDORA-Leonardo project were updated and an overview was given about the main features of the guidance and counselling facilities in the new member states. (This repeats some of what was said earlier on page 10).

FEDORA will demonstrate how it represents professional expertise on a European level, focussing on guidance and counselling in the context of lifelong learning, the Bologna Process and the development of the European Qualification Framework Area. Enhancing employability and facilitating the transitions from school to university and into the job market are further issues that will be considered. A focus on the student as an individual and his /her personal growth and development will also underpin the discussion. Guidance and counselling are important to the development of the individual as well as to students' creativity.

Members of the different FEDORA Working Groups, "Disability & Special Needs", "Psychological Counselling in Higher Education" (PSYCHE), "Career Guidance & Employment" and "Educational Guidance & Counselling" will discuss in detail their particular perspectives on guidance and counselling and the development in the EHEA and quality assurance. FEDORA would like to distill the results of the discussions at the Congress into a coherent charter on guidance and counselling in higher education aimed at political and cultural decision-makers and to the wider public. This charter will be based on declarations of official European organisations focussing on and extracting the essential elements related to guidance and counselling. It will also provide a basic common ground for professionals and strong recommendations and objectives for policy makers who are engaged in the European qualification framework and the European Higher Education Area. The charter intends to answer the question of how guidance and counselling can contribute to the overall mission of the universities in the EHEA. It will emphasise the added value of guidance and counselling within HE and to students' personal growth and development. It will highlight possibilities for facilitating the transition from schools to universities, enhancing the student experience and improving retention as well as aiding the transition from HE into employment.

The framework of the Congress will consist of plenary sessions and parallel workshop sessions which will allow participants to explore issues in considerable depth. Prominent keynote speakers such as Jan Figel' (Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism, European Commission) and Prof. Georges Haddad of UNESCO will enrich the Congress with their expertise on topics such as EU policy development in HE, in the field of guidance and counselling or the internationalisation of universities and students' perspectives e.g. with regard to self-directed learning. Panel discussions will provide the necessary background for further consideration.

The series of intensive workshops will allow professionals, academics and others interested in the field of guidance and counselling to bring different perspectives into their wide-ranging discussions. They will be organised into three sessions, each of which will consist of eight parallel workshops addressing different topics. Participants will be asked to choose one workshop group which will work together for all three sessions to thoroughly discuss a topic which will later contribute to the development of the charter. The workshop groups will be supported by a facilitator, a recorder and a resource person. They will offer interesting perspectives, materials and experiences related to a specific topic and help to maintain a focus for the presentations and discussions. In the third session the outcome of the discussion will be summarised so that it can be reported in the plenary. Topics of the workshops will cover key issues related to career guidance, psychological counselling, students with special needs, transition from school to university, quality assurance, guidance and counselling within a cross-cultural context and specific issues of guidance and counselling in the new member states.

In recent years, student and learner centred approaches and the development of a European qualification framework have been emphasised in order to enhance mobility and employability. The emphasis of this event is on guidance as it is an often unrepresented area in Higher Education. Presentations that will be given at the Congress will draw on international as well as national research and reports as well as on international declarations and policy papers in which guidance and counselling are presented as essential for higher education. The results of the

discussions will be channelled into a coherent charter on guidance and counselling in Higher Education addressed to the political and cultural decision-makers and to the wider public with the intention to demonstrate how guidance and counselling can contribute to the overall purpose of the universities in the EHEA.

FEDORA would very much like to invite the participants of the THIRD INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY to take part at this important event on guidance and counselling within the European Higher Education Area, Internationalisation and the enhancement of employability within a globalised economic environment.

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