



Choices and Responsibilities: Higher Education in the Knowledge Society

Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE)

Beyond the “Ivory Tower” perceptions.

Higher Education Policy in the Public Policy complex.

The role of the Bologna Process.

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The Bologna Process was set as the fundamental response of the EU Member States to the demands of the Knowledge Society and is considered a clear indication of the increasing internationalization of the Educational Policy. Issues of comparability and compatibility are set by new challengers, while the interest politics affect more and more the “actions” and the discursive practices that constitute both the new European Higher Education Policy and its relation to other crucial public policies (especially the macro-economic one). The fact that the agenda underpinning Bologna Process, does not preclude other purposes outside the economic (notions of inclusion, citizenship and civil society coexist with the demand for a more flexible and adaptable workforce), challenges researchers to focus on the above-mentioned relation.

Within this context, the proposed paper deals with the Bologna Follow-Up Process. It analyses the procedures, taken place, from the Bologna Declaration to the recent Berlin Communiqué.

How the principles of comparability and compatibility affect the national Higher Education Policy in Europe? Are there any explicit influence of the OECD/ IMHE (Institutional Management in Higher Education) project to the Bologna Process? Which are the main policy initiatives, in the context of the ongoing procedure towards the European Higher Education Area, in order to promote a pragmatic contribution of HEIs to the construction of a competitive Knowledge-Based Economy? How this changing Higher Education Policy interacts with the new priorities in other fundamental public policies (i.e. active labour policy, social policy, regional policy), especially in the context of crucial supranational strategies (such as the European Strategy for Employment)? Which are the convergences and divergences, concerning the policy content and policy instruments? Which are the main components of the ongoing reforms in several EU states and how do they cope with the quality assurance “stake”?

In order to answer in these questions, the paper attempts a policy-impact analysis that focuses on:

- issues of interest politics, key-actors, governmentality of Higher Education Institutes (HEIs), interaction among supranational policy agendas, policy networks and national policy styles and;
- issues of decentralization, internationalization and deregulation in Higher Education Policy,

The main hypothesis of the proposed study is that HEIs as perceived as Key partners/ providers and this exact perception transforms the role of the HEIs within the context of strategic partnership interests (national, regional, institutional level).