



HERE Seminar

**Towards the 2024 Tirana Ministerial Conference:
Implications and points of interest for higher education systems in
Partner Countries neighbouring the EU**

7-8 November 2023
Hosted by the University of Sarajevo

Venue: University of Sarajevo – Rectorate
Obala Kulina bana 7/II
71000 Sarajevo
Bosnia and Herzegovina

INTRODUCTION

The Bologna Process is in its second decade of implementation. In advancing the agenda of the [European Higher Education Area](#) (EHEA), its long-standing objectives have been augmented by others prompted by social change and technological progress.

Through the work of various structures of the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) there is still a strong focus on the three “[key commitments](#)” - (1) the implementation of a three-cycle tertiary education system, (2) recognition of study periods and degrees in alignment with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and (3) quality assurance practice which complies with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). These three commitments serve as the foundation of the Bologna Process. Until they are implemented, the EHEA cannot be brought to completion. This sustained focus is conditioned by the fact that not all higher education systems have fully implemented the three objectives; even if they feature formally at system level, higher education institutions and their members still have to cope with major challenges, as confirmed by the experience of the [European University Alliances](#).

Moreover, the ongoing changes in higher education and society require the Bologna Process commitments to be adapted and augmented. Currently, there are many questions still to be resolved. For example, can the existing quality assurance and recognition frameworks accommodate micro-credentials and digital learning formats? Is the challenge of climate change, with the net zero goal now enshrined in national and institutional policies, compatible with the further expansion of physical mobility?

At the same time, it is now clear that some of the Bologna commitments have been taken for granted - such as the importance of academic freedom, autonomy, staff and student participation. In the Bologna Declaration and early Communiqués they appear as key



conditions for the success of the reform of higher education, while it is only in recent years that the question of how they can be defined and assessed has emerged.

This is the context for which the upcoming HERE Seminar organised under the SPHERE project will provide an update and facilitate debate on the major developments. With the upcoming Tirana Ministerial Conference taking place in Albania in May/June 2024 this is a good time for looking at the recent achievements, ongoing challenges as well as the future orientation of the EHEA.

Through a mix of plenary discussions and smaller workshop sessions, the event will offer space for region-specific exchanges with an EHEA focus, as well as for consideration of any parallel developments in the [European Education Area](#) (EEA). (The EEA is a specifically EU project encompassing primary, secondary and tertiary education.) The participants will also be invited to engage in discussions on the situation in their own institutions and systems.

The event addresses those involved in higher education policymaking at all levels of experience and knowledge. It will be especially relevant for HERE from national authorities/ministries, higher education leaderships and student representatives.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Gain insight on the state of art of the Bologna Process, as well as on the future developments towards the Tirana Ministerial Conference in 2024
2. Identify how the Bologna Process is currently perceived by different HERE countries, and in which ways it remains relevant.
3. Critically reflect on the implementation of the Bologna key commitments at system and institutional levels, identify new approaches to address them in the context of participants
4. Explore examples of higher education greening policies and understand better how this can translate in the context of participants
5. Reflect on the correlation between emerging higher education policy issues and the Bologna Process
6. Understand the role of student involvement in the Bologna Process and identify approaches for addressing student expectations

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

Day 1

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| 8.30 – 9.00 | Registration and welcome coffee |
| 9.00 – 9.30 | Welcome and introduction
<i>Moderated by Elizabeth Colucci, SPHERE team</i> |



Hosted
by:





- Welcome from the hosts
- Welcome from EC/EACEA: Xavier Flament, Project Officer
- Welcome from the SPHERE Team & introduction of the SPHERE initiative and the event: Michael Gaebel, SPHERE Team Lead

9.30 – 10.30	Session 1: Where does the Bologna Process stand now? <i>Chair and Introduction – Michael Gaebel, SPHERE Team Lead</i>
10.30 – 11.00	Coffee break
11.00 – 12.30	Session 2: Intro presentations followed by parallel workshops Parallel Workshops 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshop 1: Quality Assurance and Accreditation• Workshop 2: Recognition of Qualifications• Workshop 3: Mobility and Student Exchange
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch
13.30 – 15.00	Session3: Intro presentations followed by parallel workshops Parallel Workshops 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshop 1: Quality Assurance and Accreditation• Workshop 2: Recognition of Qualifications• Workshop 3: Mobility and Student Exchange
15.00 – 15.30	Coffee break
15.30 – 17.00	Session 4: Greening in HE: Reflections on the SPHERE Study
17.00 – 17.30	Closing of day 1
19.00 – 21.00	Dinner

Day 2

8.30 – 9.00	Welcome coffee
9.00 – 10.30	Session 5: Parallel Workshops 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshop 1: Micro-credentials• Workshop 2: Academic freedom and other values



10.30 – 11.00	Coffee break
11.00 – 12.00	Session 6: Student Perspectives and Engagement
12.00 – 12.45	Session 7: Outlook towards the 2024 Ministerial Conference in Tirana
12.45 – 13.00	Closing of the event
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch
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14.00 – 15.00	Post-event session (optional): Erasmus+ interim review
15.00 – 17.00	Cultural visit