

ACADEMIC MOBILITY IN THE DECLARATIONS AND COMMUNIQUÉS OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION MINISTERS OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS MEMBER STATES IN STAGE 1 OF SYSTEMIC HARMONIZATION IN EUROPE

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Purpose: The subject of the study is the issue of mobility related to the harmonization of higher education systems within the framework of the Bologna process. As a theoretical and cognitive goal, the author has adopted the presentation of the characteristics of the Bologna process and its desiderations with regard to academic mobility. The analysis is in line with the conference theme on knowledge management at the higher education level, in which learning institutions are among the learning organizations, playing a rudimentary role in the generation and implementation of scientific knowledge. They foster the development of a knowledge-based economy, in which access to high technology is essential, so considerable attention is paid to knowledge management combining concepts and ideas from many parts of Europe resulting in higher education institutions increasing innovation and competitiveness in the market of educational services. An opportunity for higher education institutions is provided by socio-educational projects such as the Bologna Process, which has been successfully harmonizing academic management systems since 1999.

Design/methodology/approach: The article adopts methodological elements specific to the field of social sciences, including the monographic method. It is implemented in this work as a way of researching specific, individual cases and focuses on the overall recognition of one relevant problem, in this case the Bologna process and mobility. What is important here is the verification of each element of a given phenomenon, which is implemented by focusing on the mobility desideratum as a component of the issue addressed based on qualitative-descriptive elements. The work uses the declarations of representatives of the member states of the Bologna process, communiqués of European ministers of higher education and continuous prints, including the *European Journal of Higher Education*, *International Higher Education*, *The European Journal of Social Science Research*, *Zarządzanie Publiczne*, *Podstawy Edukacji*, *Język w edukacji – edukacja językowa*, *Lubelski rocznik pedagogiczny*, *Kultura–Społeczeństwo–Edukacja*, *Kultura i Edukacja* oraz *Zoon Politikon*.

Findings: The research problem is framed by the questions: what are the characteristics of the Bologna Process as a socio-educational project, and what is the role of academic mobility as a Bologna Decider in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)? It is also problematically important to establish the characteristics of academic mobility in the early period of the Bologna process on the basis of the Sorbonne Declaration, the Bologna Declaration and the communiqués of the higher education ministers of Prague, Berlin, Bergen, London and Leuven, and thus until the full EHEA was announced.

Practical implications: The practical-implementation goal was defined in the form of comments on the needs for changes in the course of the Bologna process in relation to the mobility desiderate.

Originality/value: The study consists of three rudimentary parts and a summary, including a characterization of the Bologna process and its de-statements with regard to academic mobility, the role of academic mobility as a Bologna de-statement. The warp of the work also includes an analysis of the implementation of academic mobility in the early stages of the Bologna process on the basis of the Sorbonne Declaration, the Bologna Declaration and the communiqués of the ministers of higher education from Prague, Berlin, Bergen, London and Leuven. This characterization fits into the thematic area of education management understood as a potential of the European region. The author of this article takes up the issue of higher education management as a factor in the development of the European region, and in doing so aims to analyze the most current de-siderations for harmonizing higher education systems in Europe, especially those raised at the periodically held conferences of ministers of higher education of the member states of the Bologna process.

Keywords: Higher (tertiary) education, Bologna Process, harmonization, academic mobility.

Category of the paper: Conceptual paper.

1. Introduction: characteristics of the Bologna process and its de-siderations with regard to academic mobility

In terms of the subject matter of harmonizing higher education systems in accordance with the Bologna de-siderata, national studies can be cited, including works by Dominik Antonowicz, Małgorzata Dąbrowa-Szeffler, Anna Frąckowiak, Julita Jabłecka-Pryśłowska, Andrzej Kraśniewski, Alfred Lutrzykowski, Bohdan Macukow, Tomasz Saryusz-Wolski and Pavel Zgaga (D. Antonowicz, 2005; A. Frąckowiak, 2007; A. Kraśniewski, 2004; A. Lutrzykowski, 2006; M. Dąbrowa-Szeffler, J. Jabłecka-Pryśłowska, 2005) and environmental reports, including entities such as: Ernst and Young, Instytut badań nad Gospodarką Rynkową, Fundacja Rektorów Polskich, Fundacja Rozwoju Systemów Edukacji. Current national studies in which references to the Bologna process can be found include the journal: *Nauka i Szkolnictwo Wyższe* (since 2019 year not published), *Nauka*, *E-mentor* and *Forum Akademickie*.

Foreign studies are centered around journals, including: *Excellence in Higher Education* in University of Pittsburg (USA), *Higher Education* Springer Publishing (USA), *Higher Education Research and Development* Taylor & Francis Publishing (Australia), *International Journal of Higher Education* Sciedu Press Publishing (Canada), *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* Campus Compact Publishing (USA), *Research in Higher Education* Springer Publishing (Netherlands).

The document marking the beginning of international cooperation in higher education (including mobility) was *Magna Charta Universitatum* (1988). It was signed by 388 university rectors, who thus, contemporaneously, pledged for the first time to consolidate such a significant part of the academic community. Included in the document was the creation of

a unified system of evaluation and promotion of graduates, as well as a common system of undergraduate and graduate education. The rectors' aspiration was for cooperation among the nations of Europe and the belief that member states would begin to recognize universities as exhibitors of an internationalist society (Magna Charta Univeristatum Principles, 1988)

An important document, with regard to mobility, was the Lisbon Convention, signed on April 11, 1997, which was a convention of UNESCO and the Council of Europe, in which the process of recognition of qualifications related to higher education in Europe was regulated (Braband, Powell, 2021).

A year later, the higher education ministers of France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom, at the University of Paris anniversary celebration, suggested that the fragmentation of the European higher education area would not be conducive to socio-economic development. As a result of the work undertaken in this vein, the Sorbonne Declaration was signed in May 1998, through which the introduction of a common system of educational levels and the fostering of student and faculty mobility began. Soon this initiative began to gain rapid popularity in European academic circles. In the following years, ministers from other countries also signed on to it, which allowed hope for real changes in European higher education. The far-reaching goals of the Sorbonne Declaration (like those of the Bologna Declaration) were to harmonize higher education systems in a manner conducive to meeting the needs of society and the economies of Europe. It is noteworthy that even then it was possible to see the emerging need to compete with the US economy, especially because it was strongly associated with the supportive activities of American universities (np. Massachusetts Institute of Technology), whose graduates most often received Nobel prizes, and whose schools themselves topped various global rankings (Sorbonne Joint Declaration, 1988).

The Bologna Process, initiated by the Bologna Declaration, has been a socio-educational project since 1999 and is considered an example of harmonizing higher education systems in most European countries. Its main goal is to make them as consistent as possible, which is achieved in the form of convergence. As part of the Bologna process, a European Higher Education Area was established in 2010. European Higher Education Area (EHEA), which is intended to foster the mobility of students and employees of all 48 member states (Belarus and Russia were removed from the process on June 6, 2021) participating in the harmonization, as well as to promote easy and universal access to European higher education and increase its attractiveness and competitiveness at the global level (Klemenčič, 2019).

The Bologna Process is one of the most contentious and one of the most influential long-term policy changes ever to be initiated in the European Union. Though there are also critical reflections. On the one hand, its goals seemed rather basic: to increase the comparability and compatibility of European higher education structures. On the other hand, it is more than astonishing that the process has not yet been more successful in changing university structures, entrenched in the Middle Ages, in so many EU member states (Dienel, 2019).

The Bologna Process is legitimized by the voluntary declarations of the signatory states, which also makes it not in the form of a convention. It constitutes an agreement between European states, on which no implementation obligations have been imposed for the agreed measures, which fundamentally limits the effect of sanctions in the event of failure to implement within the planned timeframe. Thus, we can say that the Bologna Declaration document is a form of political commitment, which does not legally bind, member states. What is worth emphasizing, even more so, is the expression of will towards activity in education for building the field of higher education in Europe. Instead of legal mechanisms (directives and guidelines), incentives and support are used. One can also note here another mechanism in the form of legal harmonization, which has been replaced by a softer instrument - harmonizing the system. Thus, the Bologna process is the harmonization and convergence of higher education systems, and not, as is erroneously assumed, their standardization or unification (Piekarski, Urbaniak-Zajac, 2010, pp. 109-110).

The goals of the Bologna Process are achieved as a result of intergovernmental cooperation in the adjustment of legal regulations, organizational institutional changes and in the activity of student organizations and institutions participating in harmonization. The Bologna Process is also an integrative project in the field of higher education, and it is coordinated by ministers issuing legal documents containing assessments of results and decisions guiding further directions (Solska, 2011, pp. 201-203).

As part of the Bologna process, European ministers have been continuing to reform higher education systems for many years now, and are trying to overcome the obstacles that have been piling up for the EHEA. The key directions of reform are improving the quality of education and making mobility more dynamic, which, according to Bologna standards, is not taking place uniformly everywhere. These statements similarly apply to other desiderata, including the use of the ECTS points system, multidegree studies, employability of graduates, inclusiveness of higher education systems, the diploma supplement, various forms of distance learning (distance learning, lifelong learning), as well as recognition of diplomas, degrees and titles and the European Training Framework. It should be remembered that since the late 1990s, this process has largely determined the shape of reforms of most higher education systems of countries in the European region. Regular implementation reports indicate that significant progress has been made in this regard, in EU member states and beyond.

The results of the work of the participants in the Bologna process are announced in the framework of periodically organized conferences and communiqués of European ministers of higher education in important cities for harmonizing stage 1, including Bologna, Berlin, Prague, London, Leuven and Bergen (Table 1). The activity of member states, understood as the activities of the Bologna Follow Up Group and other entities representing member states (currently 48) in the Bologna process from 1999 to 2023 included the following provisions, which were successively implemented in national academic systems in the form of de-statements (Chmielecka, 2019; Bologna Process, 1999; Skinder, 2021).

Table 1.*Stages of development of the Bologna process. Stadium 1*

Stages of development	Bologna Documents	Number of countries	Countries participating and successively joining the Bologna Process
Sorbonne stage	Sorbonne Declaration 1998	4	France, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom
Bologna stage	Bologne Declaration 1999	29	Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland
Prague stage	Prague communiqué 2001	33	Croatia, Cyprus, Liechtenstein, Turkiye
Berlin stage	Berlin communiqué 2003	40	Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vatican City, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, Macedonia
Bergen stage	Bergen communiqué 2005	45	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine
London stage	London communiqué 2007	46	Republic of Montenegro, communiqué of global expansion of the Bologna Process
Leuven stage	Leuven communiqué 2009	0	The announcement of the global expansion of the Bologna Process and the establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)

Source: Bologna process declaration and communiqués (1998-2009).

Among all the desiderates, one can point to mobility, which links others, including the Erasmus program (European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students), promotions of the Bologna process throughout Europe, multidegree studies and ECTS credits. Thus, the mobility of the entire academic community is a fundamental Bologna desiderate and successfully compensates for barriers of intra-European and global scope. The European Union is therefore developing a number of programs funded by the European Commission. They enable students and academics to travel to study part of their studies and internships at foreign universities (Berkowicz, Włodarska, Gurba, 2011, p. 141). As student mobility gained popularity, it became clear how difficult it was for individual institutions to recognize periods of study in different national higher education systems with divergent academic structures and traditions. Since the launch of the Erasmus program some 30 years ago, the European Commission, together with national authorities, higher education institutions, affiliated students and other stakeholders, has contributed to more intensive and structured cooperation to increase mobility achievements between European higher education institutions. It can be emphasized that the reforms proposed under the Bologna Process are rudimentary for building trust between its implementers, which can be important for the success of academic mobility, cross-border cooperation between universities, as well as mutual recognition of periods of study and qualifications obtained in other countries. Here, the Bologna Process provides a forum for dialogue with neighbouring countries, but also more distant member states, regarding higher education reforms and issues related to common academic principles regarding university autonomy.

In the following sections of the paper, references will be made to the characteristics of the Bologna Process as a socio-educational project and the role of academic mobility as a Bologna Deisder in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)? It will be important to establish the characteristics of academic mobility in the early period of the Bologna process on the basis of the Sorbonne Declaration, the Bologna Declaration and the communiqués of the Ministers of Higher Education of Prague, Berlin, Bergen, London and Leuven.

2. The role of academic mobility as a Bologna deisier

The concept of mobility has quite a few philosophical-historical-social references. Views about this category were presented, for example, by Zygmunt Bauman (Bauman, 2007), if only in the context of the characteristics of liquid-modern reality, including to mobility in social space, as well as physical space, that is, materially existing places. These peculiar types of space are united by the necessity to be ready to "travel" in each of them, and any form of attachment to anything in a given space takes away flexibility, restrains "freedom of movement" and, from this perspective, is undesirable. This can be closed with the observation that the happiness of society is associated with the process of mobility, not with the place. Rootedness is sought less and less, and all places are traversed as quickly as possible, and the process of mobility is understood as ease of movement while constituting a remedy for uncertainty and transience. Such a way of life also has pejorative references, as it can promote the stratification of the existing collective system, a new elite is being produced for whom space has little meaning, distances cease to matter, no place deserves to stay for long. Unfortunately, in the long run, the ruthless pursuit of mobility leads to fundamental changes in the social space, especially it is a matter of entering into impermanent relationships without commitments, which inevitably leads to various devaluations in the functioning of society as a whole and its infrastructure (Marciniak, 2019, p. 207).

The mobility of higher education has developed into education across borders (transnational education). The form of such education consists in the transfer of study authorizations abroad and their certification, the creation of a subsidiary of a foreign education provider in the student's home country or the use of the mechanism of joint degree programs (Knight, 2015, pp. 1-3). International student mobility is understood as taking up full higher education or part of it, various internships, placements, courses in a country other than the country of residence. Mobility defined in this way is part of a broader internationalization strategy developed by major European political bodies, including the Council of Europe, UNESCO, OECD and the European Commission. It is intended to increase the quality and coherence of educational programs and strengthen the multicultural dimension of higher education in Europe. A tool for achieving this goal is the Erasmus program, launched within the formal framework of university

cooperation. It can be added that activities oriented toward the promotion of student mobility were already undertaken in the first half of the 20th century. The period between 1950 and 1970 is referred to as benevolent *laissez-faire* (benevolent *laissez-faire*) because of its open-door policy for foreign students, who came mainly from various foreign colonies. At the time, this way of promoting mobility was part of France's and Britain's foreign policy toward the dominions, stemming from the desire to maintain political influence in the colonized territories. On the other hand, between 1970 and 1990, there was a turnaround, and mobility efforts took a turn in the opposite direction, and began to promote study abroad. In turn, in the 1990s, the idea of educational mobility for students was popularized, later also addressed to university employees. Between 1999 and 2006, mobility was determined by technological development and the need for highly skilled workers in the sciences, especially talented students from abroad. At the time, this applied to the US as a destination country for traveling students, but after the 9/11 attacks on the WTC, this process weakened significantly (making the EHEA a much more attractive academic flow). In turn, between 2007 and 2013, due to the global crisis and recession, there were budget reductions in higher education, but interestingly, the interest of higher education institutions in recruiting foreign students increased, primarily due to the much higher subsidies received for foreign students. Between 2014 and 2019, Europe's overall migration policy suffered a crisis, compounded by Brexit and the slowdown of many economies, including China's. At the same time, the aging of Europeans grew stronger, then foreign students were seen as a potential group of workers of the future. The breakthrough, by all accounts, came in 2023, with the Covid-19 pandemic resulting in a significant reformulation of mobility-related policies. Universities around the world focused more on ensuring the continuity of remote classes and health security, with the number and turnover of foreign students significantly reduced (Zapotoczna, 2021, pp. 119-122).

In addition to the genesis of mobility, it is also worth citing the stages of development of the Erasmus program, including the years 1987-1995, in which the most significant was the exchange of students and academic staff, the development of study programs at the interuniversity level, and so-called, intensive courses. Between 1995 and 2006, Erasmus became a component of a broader EU cooperation program called Socrates, aimed at establishing teaching cooperation among universities and internationalizing studies. In turn, between 2007 and 2013, Erasmus became part of the Lifelong Learning Program, based on the idea of lifelong learning, at which time alternative forms of mobility were offered related to internships abroad for students and training trips for lecturers and university administration. Between 2014 and 2020, the program was renamed Erasmus plus, and between 2021 and 2027 it returned to its traditional name while increasing the budget to as much as 30 billion euros. It is worth noting that since the program's launch, three and a half million students from all over Europe have participated in Erasmus. Certainly, such interest in student travel abroad is due to the progress of the Bologna process with the participation of higher education ministers (Zapotoczna, 2021, pp. 221-223).

Among the benefits achieved through Erasmus are an increase in linguistic competence, cultural competence, adaptation, openness to diversity and a consequent increase in employability. There is also a greater likelihood of living or working abroad and realizing an international career. Based on various analyses of Erasmus participation rates, it can be assumed that the majority of students participating in the program report the need to include the obligatory nature of a short exchange abroad in the course of education for all majors. This would be beneficial for Polish students, whose declarations of participation have always been and still are below average (at 24% of declarations, of which 2% actually realized it). The reason for this state of affairs may be the barriers to access to the Erasmus program, with restrictions on admission due to the inequality of scholarship funds, the problem of recognizing the effects of foreign education, the different content of agreements with partner universities and the required fairly fluent knowledge of English (Marciniak, 2019, p. 209).

It is also worth referring to the various forms of mobility that have emerged with the transformation of the higher education system and in connection with socio-economic changes. Horizontal mobility, for example, refers to students pursuing part of their program of study, including first or second degrees, in foreign academic centers. Horizontal mobility promotes the improvement of social, communication and intercultural competencies, which is made possible by distinctive tools, including international exchange programs. Vertical mobility, on the other hand, refers to students who change academic center or field of study when moving from first- to second-level studies. Vertical mobility promotes the acquisition of qualifications in a variety of disciplines and the adaptation of educational paths to changes in the labor market. Vertical mobility is conducive to the implementation of the Bologna deidentification of multidegree studies. Any student, in principle, with a bachelor's or equivalent degree, can continue their studies in subsequent degrees, in the same field of study, sometimes universities apply additional filters in the form of entrance exams (Zajac, 2012, p. 74).

The mobility of the entire academic community is a fundamental desideration of the Bologna Process and serves to bridge obstacles of both intra-European and global nature, as its implementers have ambitions to extend the harmonizing idea to the entire world. In this regard, the European Union is developing a number of programs funded by the European Commission. They support the travel of students and academics to do part of their studies or internships at foreign universities. This creates a friendly environment for university-university, company-university relations, joint research and experience, and the application of international information technology (Berkowicz, Włodarska, Gurba, 2011, p. 141).

The creation of the European Higher Education Area in 2010. European Higher Education Area has dynamized reforms in higher education systems that now make it much easier to study abroad. The primary task was to spread multidegree education in line with the three-tier structure. Subsequent steps have focused on improving quality assurance and strengthening national higher education systems, which has helped build mutual trust and recognition of university qualifications virtually throughout Europe. Mobility would certainly not have gained

such importance were it not for the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and the Diploma Supplement. Also of significance was the creation in 2010, under the aegis of ENQA, EUA, ESU and EURASHE, of the MAP-ESG project on the implementation of the Quality Assurance Deisder in the European Higher Education Area. The ESG formula prepared in this way resulted in the enactment of the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR, 2008) which significantly changed the approach of the Bologna Process member states to the quality assurance deisderate.

It should be emphasized that the European Commission's support activities currently provide important support to the member states of the Bologna process. Thus, the Commission has published a proposal for a recommendation to the European Council on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education diplomas and secondary school certificates, as well as learning outcomes achieved during periods of study abroad. This goal is a key element in the drive to create a European education area by 2025, according to which "...Europe [...] should be a place where borders are no obstacle to learning, studying and research. It should be a continent where it is the norm to spend time in another member state to learn, study or work, and to speak two languages in addition to one's mother tongue; a continent where people have a strong sense of European identity, European cultural heritage and its diversity" (Proposal for a Council..., 2018).

The Commission also supports the European Student Card Initiative, which can improve the exchange of student information, and wants to create a network of associations of European universities (European Universities Initiative). Taken together, this is aimed at increasing competitiveness and improving quality and pursuing excellence in the areas of teaching, research and innovation. Three initiatives on the European student ID card are worth citing:

- European student ID card – replaces existing student ID cards, so that during the exchange students can use various services both on and off the university campus;
- Erasmus+ application – an application that helps Erasmus students with all practical administrative activities – before departure, during their stay abroad and after their return (Erasmus information, 2023).

It is worth recalling that efforts to increase international student mobility began just after the end of World War II, mainly through agreements on the recognition of studies and attempts at financial support for mobile students. The Bologna process can build on this experience, as well as on the immense popularity of the Erasmus program, often called the European Union's most popular program. It offers direct support to those wishing to study or train abroad, and also supports projects that promote cross-border cooperation between higher education institutions.

An interesting question remains what effects were achieved by spreading mobility in academic education back in its early, post-war stage? The spread of multidegree studies has increased student mobility, but rather from outside Europe. Intra-European mobility rates have remained stable. Certainly, the Bologna Process has provided a significant impetus for

structural development and cooperation in the field of higher education around the world. Pavel Zgaga, as a researcher as well as a politician who himself signed the Bologna Declaration on behalf of Slovenia in 1999, confirms this theoretical explanation of the trans-European impact of the Bologna process (<https://eqaa.eu/en/about/board/zgaga>). In fact, a consensus has formed in academia that while the Bologna process was intended to solve internal European problems, it has had a stronger impact outside Europe (Dienel, 2019, pp. 403-405).

One can go much further in this argument, as academic mobility even benefits nations far removed from our culture, including the Nepalese. In 2010, some 24,000 Nepalese students studied outside their country. Factors pushing young people to study abroad include the precarious political situation in Nepal, the instability of the economy, the poor quality of education and politicization of universities, the failure to match curricula with labor market requirements, the lack of prospects for getting a job consistent with their education after graduation and transparent recruitment rules, the commercialization of education, the simplification of emigration regulations, and the formation of a new middle class. The Nepalese benefited from the Erasmus Mundus project (with the participation of Lund, Linköping and Uppsala Universities), Uppsala University's Nepal scholarship program, and programs announced by several universities from Europe in 2015, after the Nepal earthquake (Sadecka, 2018, pp. 193-195).

3. Academic mobility in the early stages of the Bologna process on the basis of the Sorbonne Declaration, the Bologna Declaration and the communiqués of the ministers of higher education from Prague, Berlin, Bergen, London and Leuven

Academic mobility in the initial period of implementation of the Bologna Process desiderates is referred to as Stadium 1. It represents the preparatory stage of the construction of the European Higher Education Area and falls between 1999 and 2009. This caesura includes the signing of the Sorbonne and Bologna declarations and the communiqués of the ministers of higher education of the member states from Prague, Berlin, Bergen, London, Leuven. This stage is sometimes characterized as instrumental, in terms of the implementation of instruments to increase the coherence of higher education systems in Europe. Their function was to generate transparency and comparability of national higher education systems to facilitate comparisons of student and academic performance, and serve to boost mobility in the labor and education markets and lifelong learning. This was the time of implementation of the ECTS system, the basic principles of educational quality assurance enshrined in the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area ESG (Standards and Guidelines..., 2015), the dissemination of the Diploma Supplement, the Bologna and European

Qualifications Framework, the recognition of learning outcomes acquired outside formal education, and the principles of diploma recognition. These ideas and concepts arose mainly within the framework of the work of the Bologna Follow-Up Group, and their implementation was decided by the ministers of higher education, signing successive communiqués from conferences in the capitals of the Bologna Process member states. It is worth noting that their implementation into higher education systems at national and institutional levels determined strong tensions between the academic community and the state administration, and aroused irritation within the higher education institutions themselves. The academic community initially felt this as a curtailment of educational freedoms and institutional autonomy, and as an abandonment of rudimentary academic values and a move toward unnecessary bureaucratic ballast. The implementers of the Bologna Process in Stage 1, introduced into all higher education systems the basic tools forming the final shape of the EHEA (Chmielecka, 2019).

The Sorbonne Declaration, which was signed on May 25, 1998 by the ministers responsible for higher education of France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Italy, included the goal of promoting mobility in Europe, as well as increasing the competitiveness of European educational offerings in relation to the US, with a particular focus on mobility and attractiveness of education, which were not yet (in the 1990s) sufficiently representative of the European Union's higher education systems. The harmonization considerations established at the University of Paris included study structures, degrees and support for the movement of students across the continent with the implementation of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

The idea of harmonizing with priority for mobility was rapidly evaluating, and ministers of higher education of successive countries then came to the work, which resulted in the preparation of the **Bologna Declaration**. In it, the ministers expressed their resolve to coordinate policies in order to achieve, within the first decade of the third millennium, the goals they considered vital to the creation of the European Higher Education Area. These included the establishment of a credit system-such as ECTS-as an appropriate means of promoting the greatest possible mobility for students. They also agreed that credits could also be earned outside the higher education system, and they wanted to achieve the promotion of mobility by eliminating obstacles to actual freedom of movement, with particular attention to students' needs for access to education and training opportunities and related student care, assistance and social benefits. With regard to other participants in the Bologna process, on the other hand, the ministers decided to facilitate the recognition of periods of research, education and training in another European country (The Bologna Declaration, 1999).

The first communiqué of higher education ministers was drafted in Prague in 2001. Two years after the signing of the Bologna Declaration and three years after the signing of the Sorbonne Declaration, the ministers responsible for higher education in Europe, representing the 32 signatory countries, reviewed the report "Continuing the Bologna Process" of the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG), which concluded that efforts to promote mobility should

continue. To this end, it was important to increase the turnover of students, teachers, academics and administrative staff by gradually removing all obstacles to their free movement. They also affirmed the need to make use of European Community programs and launch the Action Plan for Mobility, adopted by the Nice European Council in 2000. The ministers also highlighted quality as a fundamental condition for developing mobility and the attractiveness of the EHEA. With a view to further progress in mobility, seminars were launched to analyze the degree of involvement of member states in the accreditation, recognition and application of ECTS credits, where various omissions would be obstacles to the full implementation of EHEA mobility (Towards The European Higher Education Area, 2001).

On September 19, 2003, higher education ministers from 33 European countries met in Berlin to review achievements and set priorities for the coming years. In relation to mobility, they agreed that students as well as academics and administrative staff collectively form the foundation of the European Higher Education Area, and that their effective movement is important for academic, cultural and policy circles as well as for the social and economic dimensions of the Bologna Process. Indeed, after the 2001 Prague Conference, indications of these flows increased noticeably, thanks to significant support from European Union programs. In addition, for statistical and comparative purposes, it was decided to take the necessary steps to improve the quality and availability of data on student mobility, and to take the necessary steps to facilitate the use of national loans and scholarships. For the mobility situation analyzed in Berlin, the ministers decided to become more strongly involved in the introduction of the ECTS system, which served to facilitate student mobility and the development of an international education program. It was important that ECTS become not only a transfer system, but also a credit accumulation system, which will soon be consistently applied at the halfway point of the establishment of the EHEA. In connection with the proposal of the updated deisder of merging the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area, it was also declared that mobility at the doctoral and post-doctoral level would be made more dynamic, and incentives were made for the involvement of educational institutions to increase cooperation in training young researchers (Realising the European Higher Education Area, 2003).

The 2005 Bergen Ministerial Communiqué was the first to set a timeline for achieving the European Higher Education Area and European Research Area. The ministers announced a mid-term assessment of achievements and the setting of priorities until 2010, which was the expected year of completion of the full harmonization of higher education systems in Europe. Certainly, in such a short period of time, it was not possible to realistically and effectively include new countries in this effort, including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, or Ukraine (already 45 countries in total). With regard to the mobility de-sideration, the ministers, this time more realistically addressed the still unresolved problems, while at the same time reiterating their commitment to introducing solutions to facilitate the "portability" of scholarships and loans, with a view to making mobility within the EHEA a reality soon.

The ministers multiplied efforts to remove obstacles to mobility by facilitating the issuance of visas and work permits, and by re-encouraging participation in mobility programs already characterized by full recognition of periods of study abroad. The ministers of higher education in Bergen also decided to implement the task of reliably assessing progress based on an appropriate methodology, which will include the issues of the two-degree system, quality assurance and recognition of diplomas and periods of study. What is most important is the presentation of comparable data on the mobility of university employees and students, as a basis for future evaluation of the progress of the work, as well as for the preparation of a report before the next conference of ministers (The European Higher Education Area, 2005).

The communiqué of the London Ministerial Conference was released on May 17-18, 2007. The document focused on the de-emphasis of academic mobility in relation to recognition of qualifications, quality assurance of education, doctoral studies and employability of graduates. In terms of mobility barriers to cooperation between universities, issues of immigration, recognition, insufficient financial incentives and inflexible pension arrangements were important to the ministers. To this end, they addressed, the spread of visa facilitation and residence and work permits in Europe. They also launched solutions to further make mobility more attractive for both workers and students. These included increasing the state of joint degree programs and the creation of flexible education programs, as well as urging universities to take more responsibility for the mobility of employees and students. Attention was also given to clear and comparable job titles, degrees and easily accessible information about education systems and qualification structures, which, after all, are a basic condition for citizens' mobility. Higher education ministers, in national reports prepared for 2009, outlined measures to promote student and worker mobility, including mechanisms for future evaluation. They also decided to create a network of national experts to analyze the reasons that hinder the "portability" of scholarships and loans. The ministers, mindful of the need to increase the availability of mobility data, asked Eurostat, through the European Commission, to develop comparable indicators to measure the progress of student and worker mobility in all probolon countries (London Communiqué, 2007).

The communiqué of the Leuven Conference of Higher Education Ministers, held April 28-29, 2009, established that in the decade to 2020, European higher education is to begin to incorporate mobility-oriented forms of education that will make it easier for students to develop the competencies they need in a changing labor market. The Bologna process is leading to greater compatibility and comparability of higher education systems, and facilitating the mobility of learners and the ability of universities to attract students and researchers from other continents. To support the quality of education to be comparable across the EHEA, a European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies (EQAR) has also been created, and a Diploma Supplement has been promoted to further enhance the transparency and recognition of qualifications. The ministers continued the steps announced in the London Communiqué for an independent evaluation of the Bologna process. This involved defining indicators to measure

and monitor mobility, considering how to ensure sustainable mobility in the EHEA. The tools to do so included monitoring the work on transparency and recognition mechanisms, creating the network necessary to share information and promote the Bologna Process outside the EHEA. The Leuven Ministerial Communiqué quite significantly emphasized the priority of mobility to respect diversity and develop the ability to connect with other cultures. It stimulates linguistic pluralism, thus strengthening the multilingual tradition of the European Higher Education Area, and expands cooperation and increases competition among educational institutions. Ministers have stipulated that by 2020, at least 20% of students earning a diploma inside the EHEA should have previously completed a period of study or training abroad for each of their three degrees, and joint diplomas (joint diplomas) should become common academic practice. In addition, the ministers proposed solutions to foster funding for mobility programs, recognition of education, accessible infrastructure, and provisions related to visas and work permits. Mobility was also to lead to a more balanced balance of student arrivals and departures across the EHEA, while working conditions and career advancement paths, as well as open international recruitment, were to attract highly qualified researchers to universities. For the first time, ministers announced framework conditions to ensure adequate access to social security and facilitate the transfer of pension rights (The Bologna Process 2020, 2009).

4. Summary and conclusions

With regard to the introduction: characterization of the Bologna process and its desiderata with regard to academic mobility, it is worth pointing out the need for changes and criticism of the implementation of some of the desiderata, as well as its inadequacy to the realities of the national higher education system. It can be assumed that most of the actions of various bodies in the European Union are corrective in nature, and this attribute can also be attributed to the Bologna process. Already in the introductions to the declaration, a statement was used about the need to catch up and overtake American universities in access to international rankings, using tools (desiderata) such as improving the quality of education, achieving comparability and recognition of education (diplomas) across Europe, which together were supposed to promote the mobility of the academic community. One can also exegesis the multidegree system, which in the field of social sciences may work, while in the field of technical sciences it raises doubts, if only those related to the actual competence of young engineers. Employers in established workplaces make it clear here that they need longer-educated workers. This is evidenced by the situation of graduates, most if not all of whom choose to pursue a second degree. A similar argument can be made with regard to the desideratum of continuing education, which is certainly necessary in countries with highly developed technology and various innovations, but is this the case in Central and Eastern

Europe? This is evidenced by the relatively low share of graduates in the postgraduate sector, with more interest possibly being shown in refresher courses.

Similar conundrums arise from an analysis of the state of academic mobility. It can be concluded that the short mode of study does not allow future undergraduates and engineers to have sufficiently productive stays abroad, which could be used in later professional life. Another problem is the overlooked, invisible, or transparent ignorance of even communicative English by domestic students, which is essential for any foreign education. It is worth criticizing the ECTS system, which, according to higher education ministers, served as a kind of valuation of students' knowledge, qualifications and competencies in order to obtain confirmation of their acquisition at foreign universities. Formally it certainly works, but in reality there are considerable differences between the Western and Eastern member states of the Bologna process. In Poland, the system was introduced haphazardly, without a stage of so-called "solidification" and to this day there are many uncertainties with the assignment of knowledge accumulation points to various subjects, from which pro-deans and program councils assign accumulation in order to meet the conditions of accreditation control.

With regard to the role of academic mobility as a Bologna deicide, it can be said that under the conditions of globalization, increasing mobility processes are easily observable, albeit of varying intensity, permanence and direction. Certainly, mobility will determine the lives of students in the coming years, as it has always done in the US. One can also approach this concept critically, if only because moving between foreign countries causes uncertain existential conditions during various credits and exams, the need to learn the language, or apply for funding for the trip (Erasmus). Polish students also have to contend with cultural habits. According to empirical data (CBOS 2010), Poles are not mobile, as 65% of them have never changed their place of residence. In the case of the analysis of those under 30 years of age, and therefore potentially students, it can be said that about three-quarters (75%) of the respondents have never changed their place of residence in their previous lives, but if they did, it was mainly for educational and earning reasons. We can speak here of a relatively persistent motivational trend among educated youth, based on the view of seeking social spaces that allow for self-realization and self-development regardless of attachment to a particular culture, place of residence or country (Leszniewski, 2022, pp. 200-203).

The state of inadequacy of the assumptions contained in the communiqués of the ministers of higher education to the realities of specific member states can be illustrated by the example of Poland. Back in the year of the Bologna Process implementers' noisy announcement of the completion of the European Higher Education Area, a report was published on the real situation related to the mobility of the Polish academic community. It showed that only 9% of those with doctoral degrees lived outside Poland. Only a little more than 2.5% had actually moved out, the rest had already lived abroad. Thus, only 1.3% of all PhDs have their main place of employment outside Poland, and if we look only at those who were born in Poland, barely 1% have worked abroad. Among the main destinations of employees who based their work on

a PhD, the UK and the US dominated, followed by probolon countries, including Germany, Belgium, China, France and Italy (Knapińska, 2010).

It is also worth noting the philosophical and social parallels of mobility, the finality of which can be destructive, in a sense fostering the stratification of the existing collective arrangement. Completely involuntarily, an avant-garde elite may be formed, for whom space does not matter much, distances cease to matter, no place deserves to stay for long. In the long run, the ruthless pursuit of such an outlined concept of mobility will inevitably lead to fundamental changes in social space, and in part this is already happening. This is especially true of entering into relationships that are impermanent and without commitment. Copying such behavior from the US will not serve the society of the European Union well either, and this will lead to various devaluations on the back of the geographic and historical differences between the two continents, not previously taken into account by the decision-makers.

Criticism must also be levied at the Erasmus program, which is characterized by its incorporation into a centralized structure, which was originally intended to foster efficient management of funds, with the mistaken assumption of reducing bureaucracy. Decentralizing Erasmus would have allowed for better tailoring to the specific target group of a given program and for greater control over its effectiveness, assuming that the management team manages to specialize in remaining in direct contact with beneficiaries. On the other hand, tests carried out before students leave for foreign scholarships and just after their return show that students return not only more confident, more tolerant of other cultures, but also able to solve problems more quickly, adapt to new circumstances and with greater organizational skills. At the same time, these are the character traits most valued by most employers (Erasmus Impact Study, 2017).

The question of extending the influence of the Bologna Process and programs such as Erasmus beyond the European region remains to be resolved. Pavel Zgaga has already theoretically explained the evanescence of the trans-European influence of the Bologna process, which, although intended to solve internal European problems, has had a stronger impact outside Europe. Perhaps this is the right way forward for Europe, they will attract a multitude of students and employees from outside the continent, some experience is already there, if only with Nepalese students.

With regard to academic mobility during the initial period of the Bologna process on the basis of the Sorbonne Declaration, the Bologna Declaration and the communiqués of the higher education ministers of Prague, Berlin, Bergen, London and Leuven, it should be recalled that the implementation of the Bologna process desiderations is referred to as Stadium 1. It represents the preparatory stage of the construction of the European Higher Education Area and falls between 1999 and 2009. This caesura includes the signing of the Sorbonne and Bologna declarations, as well as communiqués from the higher education ministers of the member states of Prague, Berlin, Bergen, London and Leuven. Stage 2 is more extensive and includes communiqués from the higher education ministers of Budapest and Vienna (2010), Bucharest (2012), Yerevan (2015), Paris (2018), Rome (2020) and Tirana

(2024). These will be the subject of continuing claims from this analysis. Stadium 2, which can be called consolidation, falls between 2010 and 2019. This is a period of taming and using the tools implemented in Stadium 1, both by the administration and by the academic community, with increasing participation of external university stakeholders.

Each of the ministerial communiqués from 2001-2009 referred to a mobility desiderate. In principle, if you take into account recognition, ECTS and multidegree, they were all conducive to promoting mobility, in varying proportions, of course. In addition, the ministers in the communiqués tried to emphasize something innovative, serving to highlight the importance of the idea of academic mobility. In the communiqué of higher education ministers from Prague (2001), it was the gradual removal of all obstacles to the free movement of the entire academic community using the Mobility Action Plan of 2000. In the Berlin Higher Education Ministers' Communiqué (2003), in relation to mobility, the ministers agreed that it was necessary to focus on collecting data for statistical and comparative purposes and to take the necessary steps to facilitate the use of national credits and scholarships. It was also proposed that the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area be merged. The Bergen Communiqué of Higher Education Ministers (2005), in turn, established a timeframe for achieving the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area. The ministers announced a mid-term assessment of achievements and the setting of priorities until 2010, which was the expected year of completion of the full harmonization of higher education systems in Europe. Ministers have multiplied efforts to remove obstacles to mobility by facilitating the issuance of visas and work permits. The London Communiqué of Higher Education Ministers (2007) focused on de-emphasizing academic mobility in relation to the recognition of qualifications, quality assurance of education, doctoral studies and graduate employability. In terms of mobility barriers to cooperation between higher education institutions, issues of immigration, recognition, insufficient financial incentives and inflexible pension arrangements figured prominently for ministers. Solutions have also been launched to further make mobility more attractive to both employees and students. The ministers asked Eurostat, through the European Commission, to develop comparable indicators to measure progress in student and staff mobility. In turn, the Leuven Communiqué of Higher Education Ministers (2009) announced the establishment of the European Quality Assurance Agency Register (EQAR), and promoted the Diploma Supplement to further enhance transparency and recognition of qualifications. The ministers assumed, also for the first time, that by 2020 at least 20% of students obtaining a diploma inside the EHEA, and joint diplomas (joint diplomas) should become common academic practice. For the first time, ministers announced framework conditions to ensure adequate access to social security.

It is possible to express the opinion that the de-statement of mobility has become a permanent part of the announced development needs of the European Higher Education Area. The later the communiqués of ministers appeared, the more provisions and assurances about promoting mobility were included in them. The most content in this regard can be read from the 2007 London Communiqué. Certainly, it was circumstantially connected with the soon-to-

be-opened borders of the EU labor market, as it became an area without border controls on December 21, 2007 - the Schengen Agreement (Olak, Konecka-Szydełko, Maruszak, 2020). Realistically, there is still a lot of work to be done by higher education ministers in the mobility desiderat, especially when it comes to supporting socially disadvantaged students. The idea is that mobility should begin to foster the process of social inclusion, take into account the traditions of countries, culture, or social situation, and, above all, language skills. A wide range of electronic education can be used, which as a tool against the Covid-19 pandemic has worked, if only in Poland, perfectly.

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