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## **The Emergent European Educational Policies under Scrutiny: the Bologna Process from a Central European perspective**

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**ABSTRACT** In this article, the Bologna Process and the European Research Area are viewed as the two sides of the same coin: that of the redefinition of the missions of the institution of the university. The Bologna Process is viewed as relatively closed to global developments: as largely inward-looking, focused on European regional problems (and European regional solutions), in the absence of references to global changes and huge globalization-related political and economic transformations underlying them. Higher education in central and eastern Europe has been in a state of permanent crisis since the fall of communism and there has not been enough general reflection on its transformations. The author's concern about Bologna is that it is not trying to rise to the conceptual level that would be required to assist higher education systems in central and eastern Europe with their integration with western European systems. Bologna could be a useful policy agenda; it could provide clear recommendations on what to do and how, presenting a comprehensive package of reforms. But it is not. In this respect, it does not meet expectations of the academic community in the region; it is unclear in its visions, and consequently in its recommendations for actions. In conclusion, the author states that while it may be quite successful in promoting its agenda in western Europe, it may fail in the transition countries, especially because of the combination of old and new challenges and because of chronic underfunding of national higher education systems. While western European institutions currently seem to be afraid of losing their autonomy, for educational institutions in most transition countries the Bologna Process could be a coherent reform agenda.

### **1.**

The Bologna Process of creating the European Higher Education Area and the simultaneous emergence of the European Research Area can be viewed as two sides of the same coin: that of the redefinition of the roles, missions, tasks, and obligations of the institution of the university in Europe's rapidly changing and increasingly market-driven and knowledge-based societies and economies. Both teaching and research are undergoing substantial transformations today and the institution of the university (that until fairly recently had been the almost exclusive site for hosting these two interrelated activities) in all probability will not be able to avoid the process of substantial, in part planned and in part chaotic, transformations of its functioning.

The two parallel processes are already relatively well advanced in some countries and being promoted all over Europe, including central and eastern Europe and the Balkans (called here, for the sake of brevity, the 'transition countries' or 'the region'). While the effects of the emergence of the European Research Area are restricted mostly to the beneficiaries of research funds available from the EU, the Bologna Process may potentially influence the course of reforming national higher education systems in 40 countries. While the Sorbonne Declaration (1998) was signed by ministers of education of France, Italy, the United Kingdom, and Germany, the Bologna

Declaration (1999) was signed already by ministers from 29 countries, and finally at the Berlin conference in September 2003 more newcomers were accepted (Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Holy See, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). Though official Bologna documents usually refer in this context to the 'diversity' of countries and institutions involved, one thing is certain: the Bologna Process in its present geographical, economic and political composition faces the tremendous challenge of keeping to a single pace of changes in all the 40 countries involved. Judging from the experience of social and economic transformations in central and eastern Europe and the Balkans, to keep the process going at one speed is going to be very difficult; in the coming years, most probably, the process will require separate tracks accompanied by separate descriptions of the most urgent reforms, of different challenges and, most importantly, by separate sets of policy recommendations for clusters of countries implementing reforms at different paces – if the reforms are not going to be a theoretical exercise in the region.

Even though the tracks of the European Higher Education Area and of the European Research Area (ERA) had been separate, there has been clear convergence between them recently.[1] (In more general terms, we can distinguish between three tracks: inter-institutional, intergovernmental, and supranational. First, the *Magna Charta Universitatum* signed in Bologna in 1988 by rectors of European universities initiated the track of higher education institutions, followed by the Salamanca and Graz Conventions organized in 2001 and 2003; second, the Sorbonne–Bologna–Prague and Berlin meetings have been all on the track of national ministers of education/governments; and third, the last track was that of the EU level and consisted of subsequent communiqués of the European Commission and other documents, the first being *Towards a European Research Area* of 2000, and the two most recent being *The Role of Universities in the Europe of Knowledge* and *Researchers in the European Research Area: one profession, multiple careers*, both in 2003). Recently, the supranational, intergovernmental and inter-institutional levels are being increasingly mixed (see Zgaga, 2003, p. 7).

The European Commission, European governments and the vast majority of rectors of European higher education institutions seem determined to implement the Bologna requirements. The least determination is shown by the academic profession. Consequently, the actors most directly involved in the actual implementation of the Bologna ideas are still mostly unaware of its consequences, at least in the majority of the countries of the region. However, without clear support both for the general reform agenda and for the details of its implementation that go down to the level of each department on the part of the academic faculty, the Bologna Process may fail, especially in the countries other than 'old EU' (EU-15). The whole process might come to a halt if the academic community is not convinced of new opportunities it provides. But I agree with Alberto Amaral and António Magalhaes' warning signal that 'if the Bologna's convergence process gets out of control of academics and becomes a feud of European bureaucracy, then one may well see a process of homogenization, and this represents another factor endangering the traditional role of the European universities' (Amaral & Magalhaes, 2002, p. 9). There is also a danger that the Bologna Process may, in the region, turn out to be a theoretical exercise; the two parallel processes of creating a common European higher education area and a common European research area in 'core' European countries are not theoretical at all: what already occurs is the rechannelling of European research funds, changing research and development policies, as well as policies about the recognition of diplomas for educational and professional purposes on the integrated European labour market.

## 2.

The Bologna Process in its present form seems relatively closed to global developments in higher education: it may be perceived as largely inward-looking, focused mostly on European regional problems, and European regional solutions, in the relative absence of references to global changes in higher education and huge political and economic transformations underlying them (for broader views on these changes, see Currie & Newson, 1998; Burbules & Torres, 2000; Enders, 2002a). The institution of the university is playing a significant role in the processes of the emergence of the common European higher education and common European research spaces. What is clear,

though, is that in neither of them, the university is seen in a traditional way we know from the debates preceding the advent of globalization, the speeding up of the process of the European integration and the passage from the industrial and service societies to the post-industrial, global, knowledge and information societies. The institution, in general, has already found it legitimate, useful and necessary to be evolving together with radical transformations of the social setting in which it functions. The new world we are approaching assumes different names in different formulations and the social, cultural, and economic processes in questions are debated in multiple vocabularies of social sciences: for some theorists, the processes of recent two decades or so are referred to as 'postmodernity' (Jean-François Lyotard, Zygmunt Bauman), for others, as 'the second, national modernity' (Ulrich Beck), 'reflexive modernization' (Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens, Scott Lash), 'glocalization' (Roland Robertson) or 'global age' (Malcolm Waters); still other descriptions include 'network society' (Manuel Castells), 'knowledge and information society' (Peter Drucker) or, on more philosophical grounds, the 'postnational constellation' (Jürgen Habermas). For almost all of these analyses, globalization widely understood is of primary importance. As a German sociologist, Ulrich Beck, describes current transformations: 'new kind of capitalism, a new kind of economy, a new kind of global order, a new kind of society and a new kind of personal life are coming into being, all of which differ from earlier phases of social development' (Beck, 1999, p. 2).[2]

In this new global order, universities are striving for their new place as they are increasingly unable to maintain their traditional roles and tasks. As Zygmunt Bauman put it, once evident functions of the universities are:

far from obvious today. The principles which in the past seemed to legitimize beyond doubt the centrality of their universities are no more universally accepted, if not dismissed as obsolete or even retrospectively condemned. One is tempted to surmise that it is this ever more visible absence of *institutional* anchorage that is reflected in the widely noted, and mostly bewailed, transformation of the intellectual atmosphere characteristic of academic work – and particularly in the striking lack of intellectual confidence and trust in *philosophical* foundations of academic work. (Bauman, 1997, p. 49)

Both the official discourses on the common European space in higher education and research as well as a large part of the accompanying academic debates on the subject increasingly acknowledge that the current role of universities could be that of engines of economic growth of countries and regions, contributors to economic competitiveness of nations or suppliers of highly qualified and well-trained workers for the new knowledge-driven economy – which is undoubtedly a radical reformulation of the traditional account of the role of the university in society. Without much discussion about principles (such as those accompanying the emergence of the Humboldtian model of the university in the beginning of the nineteenth century or such as the major twentieth-century debates about the 'idea' of the university), the university in the European context seems to be about to enter willy-nilly a new era of its development (see Kwiek, 2004).

From among a plethora of factors, some should be especially emphasized here: the globalization pressures on the nation state and its public services and the strengthening of the common European political and economic project at the turn of the twentieth century [3], the end of the 'Golden age' of the Keynesian welfare state (so positively inclined towards national public research and strong national public higher education systems) as we have known it in the almost three decades of the second half of the twentieth century [4], and the emergence of knowledge-based societies (and economies) in the countries of the affluent West. In more general terms, the processes directly or indirectly affecting the institution of the university today would be the gradual individualization (and recommodification) of our societies, the denationalization (and desocialization) of our economies, as well as the universalization of higher education and the commodification of research. The recent European discourse on the ERA leaves no doubts about the direction of changes in roles and social and economic tasks of the institution in emergent new societies.

There are many issues in which Bologna has been relatively uninterested, to mention the GATS negotiations and the role of 'borderless' education, the emerging private and for-profit sectors in higher education, the role of market forces in higher education, declining public funds for higher education and public research, differences in challenges faced by old EU-15 and the transition countries etc. Some recommendations provided by *Trends in Learning Structures in*

*European Higher Education III* report seem abstract, especially with respect to the transition countries (Reichert & Tauch, 2003).

The general feeling from reading the Bologna documents is that they talk about relatively homogeneous higher education and research structures with fairly similar problems, and similar challenges for the future. Despite numerous references to the 'diversity' of systems, cultural and linguistic differences between them, varying degrees of the implementation of the process in various countries so far, it is very difficult to read the Bologna documents as if referring to the same degree to old EU and the transition countries (say, Germany or France on the one hand, and Albania, Macedonia and Russia on the other). What level of generality in describing challenges and providing recommendations for actions is needed if they are to refer to the countries in question? What do these contrasted national systems of higher education have in common today the moment we leave the most general level of analysis? The relevant analysis comprising both EU-15 and the transition countries is still a job to be done, is a huge challenge in the future. Certainly, it is possible to introduce changes in these second tier countries on an official, especially legislative level. It may be relatively easy to change laws on higher education, especially if the Bologna Process arguments of catching up with the West are used for promotional purposes. But changing laws is not enough to reach the objectives of the Bologna Process, although it may be understood in this way by many government officials. Consequently, it is going to be another huge challenge for Bologna to avoid the reform on paper, especially to go beyond merely the national laws, in many transition countries.

### 3.

Let us start with the inter-institutional level. The *Magna Charta Universitatum* (signed by European university rectors in Bologna in 1088, which precedes the Bologna Process per se by a decade and is referred to in both the Bologna Declaration and the Salamanca Convention message) is a document from a different register than later declarations and communiqués, from both supranational, intergovernmental and inter-institutional levels; it is general, humanistic, and – from the perspective of current global and European developments in higher education – vague.

As a general declaration, it contains few details on how to proceed; but most of all, it is written in the vocabulary of a pre-knowledge economy and pre-globalization era. Consequently, there are no remarks about globally competitive knowledge economies and societies, universities as drivers of economic growth, the need of more and better jobs, social cohesion and social exclusion/inclusion, external pressures on higher education, emerging market forces in research and development, changing European (or any other) labour market requirements, long-term risks for private investment in public research etc. – all of which are mentioned in later ERA and Bologna documents. Instead, there are traditional ideas of universities' social roles and tasks. It is interesting to note that the idea that the university is an institution which 'produces, examines, appraises and hands down *culture* by research and tradition' (*Magna Charta* 1088, p. 1, emphasizes mine) would find very few followers among promoters of either the ERA or Bologna: it is knowledge rather than culture (understood along the German lines as *Bildung*) that is at stake today. It is specifically defined knowledge to be commercialized and traded rather than traditionally 'universal' knowledge as presented in major nineteenth and twentieth century works on the 'idea of the university'.<sup>[5]</sup> (A counterpoint to the ideas of culture and universal knowledge in the new vocabulary comes from European Commission's Communiqué on the role of universities: 'the knowledge society depends for its growth on the production of new knowledge, its transmission through education and training, its dissemination through information and communication technologies, and on its use through new industrial processes or services' [European Commission, 2003b, p. 2], or from a recent World Bank framework policy paper on *Constructing Knowledge Societies*: 'the ability of a society to produce, select, adapt, commercialize, and use knowledge is critical for sustained economic growth and improved living standards' [World Bank, 2002, p. 7]).

Consequently, from the perspective of developments of a recent decade, the *Magna Charta Universitatum* comes as a remembrance of things past. In the context of the ERA developments, it is hard to find the continuation of ideas about the university as an institution whose 'constant care is

to attain universal knowledge' and which is a 'trustee of the European humanist tradition' in current discussions about the 'Europe of Knowledge'.

It is not only no longer possible to talk about European integration of higher education and research in the language of the founders of modern German research university (von Humboldt, Schelling, Fichte, Schleiermacher and others) but also no longer possible to use solely the language used by rectors of European universities 15 years ago in Bologna for the description of recent course of events on both global and European planes. The working vocabulary used for debates on the future of the university – the vocabulary of the ERA, Bologna Process and global accounts of higher education and research (including those provided by UNESCO, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], and the World Bank) – has changed substantially since 1988, and the shift in vocabulary underlies the shift in the ways we account for the roles and tasks of our educational institutions in society.

#### 4.

One of the tasks of the present article is to analyze how the Bologna Process may affect national higher education systems in the region. The Bologna Process occurs on several interrelated planes: the official plane of ministers of education/governments, conferences of rectors and university associations, and accompanying changes in laws on higher education, laws on for-profits, laws on (educational and other) non-profit associations, on research funds etc.; the official plane of particular higher education institutions, i.e. that of senior university management; and finally the practical plane of particular institutions and their faculty. There is a gap between good intents on the part of ministers of education and the reality of the functioning of higher education systems in most transition countries. There is a huge gap between intentions expressed by the officials and capabilities to act they – and institutions themselves – can currently offer for the Bologna integration project (also the motivation for joining the Bologna Process seems often more 'political' than 'educational' in the region; see Tomusk, 2002b).

Higher education in the region, generally and with a few exceptions, is in a state of permanent crisis since the fall of communism (for case studies of success stories, see Marga, 1997, 2003; *Ten Years After*, 2000): from the paralysis of substantial research functions to steady decreasing public funds to the mushrooming of both public and private diploma mills to corruption to lowering of the professional ethos and morale, with the combination of the above depending on the country (see Scott, 2000; for Poland, see Kwiek, 2003b). There has not been enough general reflection on transformations of higher education systems in the region. Paradoxically enough, in the majority of countries in question (in the Balkans more than in central Europe) the situation of the universities, in the areas other than academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and international mobility of students and faculty, has severely decreased in the last decade. Even though it may be quite possible to go on with the Bologna Process in these countries in terms of legislation, it is much more difficult to follow with the implementation at the institutional level.

The Bologna Process is based on a few underlying assumptions (not really formulated in a single place): both Europe and the world are entering a new era of knowledge-based and market-driven economies competing against each other; Europe as a region has to struggle with its two main competitors in higher education and research and development: the USA and Japan (Australasia); the knowledge society depends for its growth on the production, transmission, dissemination, and use of new knowledge; the underlying goal behind current transformations of educational systems and research and development, whether expressed directly (in ERA documents) or indirectly (and accompanied by the 'social dimension', in Bologna documents), is more or less to meet the target set out by the European Council in Lisbon (in 2000). The target is that Europe by 2010 must become 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion' (also the creation of the European Higher Education Area must be completed by 2010). Europe is at the crossroads; it is trying to combine higher competitiveness and social cohesion in an increasingly globalized world and it is in the process of transition towards a 'knowledge society'. Thus, knowledge, and consequently the *knowledge rich* and the *knowledge poor*, becomes the key issue in the years to come.[6]

But the Bologna Process, as mentioned, seems inward-looking: while globally, the impact of globalization on higher education policies is widely acknowledged, none of the official documents – from Sorbonne to Bologna to Prague to Berlin, and none of the accompanying declarations from the academic world (Salamanca and Graz) – even once uses the word ‘globalization’. (Even though the *Trends III* report prepared for the Berlin summit in 2003 mentions ‘globalization’ no more than five times in total, which is a reflection of its descriptive rather than analytical ambitions, it states overtly that ministers and higher education institutions should ‘ride the tiger of globalisation rather than hope it will disappear’ [Reichert & Tauch, 2003, p. 57]). In general, though, the underlying assumptions are not developed in more detail in any of its documents or reports. Unquestionably, though, globalization is one of the main driving forces behind current transformations of the public sector, welfare state model (and educational policies worldwide) (strong supporters of the view, see Mishra, 1999; Teeple, 1995; much weaker, see Pierson, 2001b; Esping-Andersen, 2001; United Nations 2001); globalization is also one of the main reference points in the EU overall Lisbon strategy.

Consequently, the Bologna Process so far seems relatively weak on analytical level. It may be worrying that main and supporting documents of a huge intellectual and institutional undertaking which aims at changing the way our universities function in both their teaching and research aspects do not attempt to present a wholesale analytical approach to current challenges and solutions based on perspectives wider than European ones.[7] The analytical part of the job needs to be done; otherwise we may not be sure whether the solutions refer to the right problems.

The ambivalence of the Bologna Process concerns the process of globalization itself: roughly, following Dirk Van Damme, there may be at least two contrasting (and simplified) global views of Bologna. The first view may present it as a merely introduction to a much further-reaching integration of national educational systems in the future, resulting from competitive pressures from other parts of the world resulting in turn from global liberalization of operations of higher education institutions worldwide (especially in two biggest ‘exporters’ of educational services, North America and Australasia). The second, contrasting, view may present Bologna as a large-scale defensive mechanism to avoid the pitfalls of globalization as seen (and mostly disliked) globally today and to stay together in Europe against the global odds. Thus, the first view may imply a strong convergence between Bologna and globalisation processes on a regional scale, especially in the future, while the second may imply an attempt to make national educational systems stronger against the forces of globalization and to stay away from whatever is seen as its excesses in higher education, especially from the processes of privatization, commercialization, commodification of higher education and research etc. Bologna is certainly ambivalent; the two threads are very much interwoven in its documents. Both ‘protectionist’ threads for the European level (especially in referrals to education as a public ‘good and responsibility’ which means mostly calls for public funding from national states in the future) and ‘expansionist’ threads of attracting foreign students and researchers in a global competition for talent can be found. As Van Damme put it, ‘Europe is seeking its own way out between the Scylla of academic capitalism and the Charybdis of protectionism’ (Van Damme, 2003, p. 6).

##### 5.

Major concerns may be raised about ‘cosmetic’ changes to be introduced by Bologna; but also concerns should be raised about potentially misguided policy decisions which might be taken in some transition countries based on regionally-irrelevant analyses or recommendations provide by the Bologna Process. There may be also concerns about various senses of ‘harmonization’ of higher education, some of which may potentially lead to some still unspecified core (European) curricula, as evidenced by such pilot projects as ‘Tuning Educational Structures in Europe’, pan-European accreditation schemes and quality assurance mechanisms (see Neave, 2001a).[8]

However, the question is also whether problems facing most of the EU-15 countries and their higher education systems are the same as problems facing the transition countries. I believe the important aspect of the Bologna Process in its current geographical, economic and social scope is its analytical (and consequently practical) negligence of some most pressing issues present in transition countries today. The analytical flaw of documents and reports is the lack of description of

old challenges that the transition countries still face (and which are mostly irrelevant to old EU-15 countries), and consequently the lack of clear recommendations on how to proceed in transition countries plagued by two different sets of challenges at the same time, old and new ones.

To put it in a nutshell, while the affluent western European countries face merely new challenges brought about by the emergence of the knowledge-based economy, globalization pressures on higher education and research activities, lifelong learning etc., almost a dozen transition countries, to varying degrees, face old challenges as well. A recent report by the World Bank (*Constructing Knowledge Societies: new challenges for tertiary education*) argues that developing and transition countries are confronted with a 'dual task': 'a key concern is whether developing and transition countries can adapt and shape their tertiary education systems to confront successfully this combination of old and new challenges' (World Bank, 2002, p. 2; see also Tomusk, 2002a).

The Bologna Process seems to focus on new challenges and new problems (i.e. problems of Western countries); the countries of the region, in contrast, are still embedded in challenges and problems of the old type generated mostly in a recent decade by the process of shifting from elite to mass higher education under severe resource constraints (see Kwiek, 2001a, c). Even though the way western Europe has dealt with the passage from elite to mass higher education is well documented, the global environment in which the process took place will not recur. It was a process which was taking place under different political, economic, and social constraints. Both higher education and research and development had totally different reference points at that time; the universities were still national treasures lavishly funded by nation states in the period of the consolidation of the expanded welfare state model, politics still mattered more than economy, and national prestige often more than particular decisions about resource allocations.[9]

But this time is over. It is a real challenge in some European transition countries today to undergo the passage from elite to mass higher education, to have steadily declining public funds almost each consecutive year and develop higher education systems towards the 'Bologna goals', with no external funds, and virtually no, on average, additional government funds. The *Trends III* report makes it clear that it is unrealistic to believe that Bologna reforms are costless: public funds are expected to come if reforms are to succeed. For most of the countries of the region, the funds are guaranteed not to come. The chronic underfunding of higher education, widely documented by statistical data (as the percentage of GDP devoted to higher education, as the percentage of GDP devoted to research, as funding per student etc., referred to the USA, EU-15 or OECD) makes it very difficult to implement Bologna recommendations in any other than theoretical way.[10] It makes it difficult to face old and new challenges.[11] There are no specific recommendations or prescriptions for the transition countries about how to proceed based on experiences that EU-15 or OECD countries had with the same process of passing from elite to expanded models of higher education two or three decades ago.

It is a crucial point in educational policy for the countries in transition: how to combine educational reforms pressed from two types of challenges, old and new, traditional and knowledge economy- and globalization-related? How to weigh their relevance today – should transition countries look for past or for current experiences of other advanced and affluent countries in thinking about their higher education systems? How to progress in basic reforms related to much higher demand and consequent massification of higher education if the material basis for these reforms, the welfare state, is either already dismantled or in the process of decomposition or even never had had a chance to exist?[12] As Voldemar Tomusk captures the point:

with the decline of the welfare state and massification of higher education in the West, the Eastern vision on the resource abundant University has become mere dream. The simple truth about the current higher education reform is that the only thing we know for sure is that we want our Universities to have considerably more resources; ... Looking at the resources available in the particular countries one can easily conclude that this is absolutely impossible. It is an empirical fact different from many unrealistic growth programs developed to attract foreign matching funds. (Tomusk, 2000, p. 55)

And let us remind ourselves very briefly of some key figures to show the gap between the new EU countries and EU-15. First, percentage of GDP spent on research and development (R & D): none of the candidate countries reaches the level of the EU average of 1.9%, even though Slovenia (1.5%) and the Czech Republic (1.2%) have relatively high levels of research and development expenditure in relation to their GDP. Estonia, Poland, Hungary, and the Slovak Republic invest in

R & D at the same level as the EU countries with the lowest R & D intensities (such as Greece and Portugal). All other candidate countries (as well as all the remaining Bologna signatory countries) from the region have very low R & D intensity. The above figures need to be viewed from the perspective of GDP, though, and the differences are still huge. While GDP per capita in the European Union in 2001 was 23,200 in PPS (purchasing power standards) at current prices, it was in the range of 5,000 to 10,000 in Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Estonia, with the top level reached by the two small countries (Cyprus 18,460 and Slovenia 15,970) and the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovak Republic in the range of 11,000-13,000 (European Commission, 2002a, p. 18). If we look at other Bologna signatory countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, Macedonia or Russia) the gap gets drastically wider (World Bank, 1999, p. 60).

The share of research and development activities financed by the business sector is lower than the EU average in almost all candidate countries (and all other Bologna signatory countries from the region), except for Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Romania. The current distribution of researchers (government, business, higher education) is much different in candidate countries than in the EU – the share of the business sector is much lower than the average EU 50% (except for Romania). In terms of patents applied for per million population, the difference is huge, with the range between 1 and 12 for almost all candidate countries (and 22 for Slovenia), with 126 as the EU average (European Commission, 2002a, p. 72). Also, spending on higher education is generally considerably lower in the region, as are current enrolment rates in higher education (World Bank, 2000, p. 122).

These data cannot be neglected in thinking about the emergent European Higher Education Area in EU-15 and in transition countries: we are talking about mostly different societies and economies, with mostly different standards of living, and substantially different higher education systems still facing large structural reforms, especially if we go beyond EU-15 and the eight new EU countries. If the knowledge economy, the point of reference for both the Bologna Process and ERA, is emerging from two defining forces – the ‘rise in knowledge intensity of economic activities’ and the ‘increasing globalisation of economic affairs’ (Houghton & Sheehan, 2000, p. 2), the region is far behind indeed, and the chances to get closer to old EU countries are very low in the medium term (for more data, see OECD, 1999).

## 6.

Surprisingly enough, the private sector in higher education has so far been absent from the scope of interest of the Bologna Process (for the need to compare *privateness* and *publicness* of higher education, see Levy, 1986). From the very beginning, the Sorbonne Declaration, through Bologna – Prague – Berlin, as well as from Salamanca to Graz declarations of higher education institutions, the private sector has never been discussed. What may have been understandable in *Magna Charta Universitatum* of 1988 can hardly find a good explanation in 2003, taking into account both global developments in higher education and the explosion of the private sector in many central and east European countries participating in the Bologna Process. For the official documents and accompanying reports of the Bologna Process, the private sector does not exist. Higher education, both implicitly and explicitly, means public higher education. Declarations and communiqués of the Bologna Process do not make a single reference to private higher education – not even once in the last six years; the *Trends III* report of 150 pages mentions the term half a dozen times but only in connection with the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) negotiations.

I want to argue here that the rapid development of the private sector in some transition countries is of crucial importance to their higher education systems and that its omission creates a severe analytical and operational flaw in the Bologna Process referred to the region. The omission also goes against global trends according to which the role of the private sector in teaching and research is becoming increasingly significant. As Philip G. Altbach put it, ‘private higher education is one of the most dynamic and fastest-growing segments of postsecondary education at the turn of the 21st century. A combination of unprecedented demand for access to higher education and the inability or unwillingness of governments to provide the necessary support has brought private higher education to the forefront’ (Altbach, 1999, p. 1). Both globally and in the region, private

higher education is part of the problem and part of the solution; no matter how we view the problem and the solution, we certainly should not disregard the phenomenon itself. Again, this is job to be done. The number of private higher education providers has been sky-rocketing in recent years in some transition countries and the number of students enrolled in the private sector is reaching (in some countries, like Poland and Romania) the level of 30%, and in others (like Estonia or Moldova) almost 25%, in 2000/01 (with the lower end of the Czech Republic with 1.0, Albania 0.0, Slovakia 0.7; and Russia with 10, Belarus with 13, Bulgaria with 11.5 and Hungary with 14% staying in the middle). Poland, Romania, and Estonia from the higher end and Russia, Bulgaria and Hungary from the middle are all signatory countries of the Bologna Process (Kwiek, 2003b, c). While the issue of the private sector is not viewed as problematic in the Bologna Process, it certainly is a huge problem (problem/solution) for several transition countries. The majority of international literature in the field of higher education policy and research deals with reforming *public* higher education. The role of the private sector in the countries of central and eastern Europe – considering its ability to adapt to the new societal needs and new market conditions combined with the drastically underfunded and still unreformed public institutions – is bound to grow. Central and east European private universities represent a wide variety of missions, organizational frameworks, legal status and relations to the established institutional order (see Tomusk, 2003; Kwiek, 2001b, 2003a).

Generally, the triumph of the market economy has contributed to the emergence of the private sector and its huge social (and tacit political) acceptance in many countries of the region. From the perspective of changing societal needs and relatively declining public support for higher education, rapidly increasing demand for access combined with the institutional and financial paralysis of the public sector generally, there is a growing need for clear policies and thoughtful legislation with respect to the private sector (especially as what we are facing in the region is what D. Bruce Johnstone calls *creeping austerity* from a global perspective: ‘a slow but unrelenting worsening of the financial condition of most universities and other institutions of higher education, particularly as they are dependent on governmental, or tax-generated, revenue’ (Johnstone, 2003, p. 2). The Bologna Process should be able to provide clear guidance on how to proceed with the private sector/public sector relations in transition countries. How to accommodate principles of the ‘European Research Area’ and requirements of the Bologna Process to local conditions of those new EU countries where the private sector has recently grown surprisingly strong? Unfortunately, the Bologna Process in general remains indifferent to these developments even though their appearance may prefigure some future options which governments of western European countries may face, should the dismantling of the welfare state be as radical as some sociologists and political scientists present it (Clayton & Pontusson, 1998; Pierson, 1996, 2001a).

Both the *Trends III* report and official Bologna documents (from Sorbonne to Berlin) generally disregard market forces in higher education; whenever the reports uses the word ‘market’, it is almost always ‘labour market’, not only in its descriptions but also in its projections and recommendations for the future. The exclusive passage in the *Trends III* report where possible market orientation of (segments of) higher education and research are mentioned is a short passage on GATS. It is especially interesting to note the omission of market forces in higher education in the context of the reference point for the ERA (as well as for the Bologna Process) being the USA, ‘the prime competitor’, where market forces are increasingly important. Obviously, market-driven and market-oriented higher education does not go in a pair with the so-called ‘European social model’; however, in such an overarching integrating initiative as Bologna, with the objectives of the joint European research area behind it (and the plain political and economic goal of making the European Union ‘the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy (and society) in the world’ (EU Lisbon Council), it is a flaw to disregard the theme of the market forces altogether.

EU-15, from a global perspective, is one of the few places which are relatively resistant to market forces in education and research; again, some countries of central and eastern Europe, for a variety of institutional, political and economic reasons, are much more influenced by market forces and their higher education institutions are already operating in highly competitive, market-driven and customer-driven environments. The world today is too strongly interrelated (globalization) to assume that although market forces are affecting higher education globally, the last bastion of resistance against market forces will be the signatory countries of the Bologna Process (especially as the market forces have already come as part of a much wider package of institutional changes of

the welfare state model and they will not go away). We may not care about the market; but we have to care about universities increasingly exposed to its forces.

It may prove difficult to 'ride the tiger of globalisation' in the European higher education of the future, to repeat the *Trends III* recommendation (Reichert & Tauch, 2003, p. 57), while forgetting about market forces. I am in agreement with Marijk van der Wende when she states that 'the fact that present and future students already live in a global world is simply forgotten ... This should help shape the universities' response to globalisation. Our customers expect their lifestyles to be taken into account and higher education to prepare them adequately for life and work in a global work' (Van der Wende, 1999, p. 64; see Neave, 2001a; Enders, 2002a). And the emergent influence of market forces on all aspects of our social life is what globalization is about, among other things (Kwiek, 2000a).[13]

7.

My concern about Bologna is that it is not trying to raise to the conceptual level which would be required to assist higher education systems in the region integrating with western European systems within the emergent European higher education area. My perspective is that Bologna might be a good chance – possibly a useful policy agenda – to assist with reforming those national higher education systems in the region which need reforms most; it might provide clear recommendations on what to do and how, presenting almost a blueprint for reforms, a comprehensive package of reforms, even though their scope would be quite different in different countries. In this respect, Bologna does not meet expectations of the academic community in the region; it is still unclear in its visions, and consequently in its recommendations for actions with respect to the region. At the same time, there is no way to use it as a lever for external, additional funding for educational reforms. Although the success of the process is conditional on public funding of the project, it is obvious to many that no public funding will follow ('the Bologna reforms cannot be realised without additional funding' (Reichert & Tauch, 2003, p. 29). So the question is what should be done under the circumstances.

Today, there are crucial differences in thinking about reforms in western Europe and in transition countries generally. Reforms to be undertaken in western Europe are much more functional (fine-tuning, slight changes etc.); reforms to be undertaken in some countries of central and eastern Europe and of the Balkans, by contrast, should be much more substantial (or structural) (see Rado, 2001). There is little common ground between the two sets of reforms except for technical details and the Bologna Process in its official documents so far has not drawn a clear distinction between functional and structural reforms, and the respective regions of their future implementation. The differences between the condition of higher education systems in these parts of Europe are very substantial indeed; and so should probably be analyses, descriptions, and policy recommendations. Problems and challenges, and consequently the depth of reforms required, are different in the transition countries; fine-tuning and small adjustments undertaken within the Bologna Process, perfectly suitable for many western institutions, without accompanying structural transformations in east and central European institution may lead to merely cosmetic changes while what is needed is the transformation of underlying structures of higher education systems, at least in some countries of the region.

My concerns about Bologna are both general and specific and they refer to the process as a whole and to its potential impact in the region. They are based on theoretical assumptions (such as, for example, the traditional 'idea of the university' and the universal role of the university; see Sadlak, 2000) on the one hand and practical knowledge of functioning of higher education in many countries of the region on the other. Some concerns derive from traditional notions of sovereignty of nation-states and sovereignty of their educational policies (see Enders, 2002a), some from irreconcilable differences between educational systems deriving from different cultures, languages, traditions and inheritance from the past; but other concerns derive from more technical and pragmatic understanding of the global picture of changes in higher education whose role is clearly, and wrongly, downplayed in Bologna. Still other concerns derive directly from the awareness of the budgetary situation of the public sector in many countries of the region, and trends that have

emerged there over the last decade or so (often towards welfare state retrenchment rather than towards a 'European Social Model' emphasized in the EU Lisbon Strategy).

Let me refer briefly to Martin Carnoy, who draws in his *Globalization and Educational Reform: what planners need to know* a very useful distinction between the three factors that in practice are crucial to the approach governments take in educational reform, and hence in educational responses to globalization:

Their *objective* financial situation, their *interpretation* of that situation, and their *ideological* position regarding the role of public sector in education. These three elements are expressed through the way that countries 'structurally adjust' their economies to the new globalized environment. (Carnoy, 1999, p. 47)

Even though, as we emphasized here, the dimension of globalization challenges in higher education is certainly severely underestimated in Bologna documents, the phenomenon is one of underlying factors behind the wider Lisbon strategy of the European Union: its role is crucial for understanding the whole package of reforms, including those in the education and R & D sectors within the process of the emergence of the European research area. It is interesting to refer the above distinction to transition countries involved in the Bologna Process and make comparisons with EU-15. All the three Carnoy's parameters are drastically different in transition countries: the objective financial situation does not require any statistical data, it may be taken for granted in the majority of transition countries; as a consequence of mostly objectively disastrous financial situations, the interpretations of the differences in objective financial situations may be even more dramatic; finally, in a number of transition countries escaping the model of command-driven economies, the ideological position regarding the role of the state in the public sector differs considerably from the position taken, with few national exceptions, on a European level: the ideal of the state about to emerge once the chaos of the transition period is over is the American model of cost-effectiveness and self-restraint rather than the 'European social model' of the EU-15 (which, by the way, is also testified by subsequent EU progress reports about formerly accession countries in central Europe.[14] There are several determinants of this but certainly a general dissatisfaction with the inefficiency and incompetence of state bureaucratic bodies is one of them, another being the increased role of market mechanisms in public sector reforms already undertaken (ranging from healthcare to pension systems to decentralization of primary and secondary education) and the role of the private sector in economy in general. Again, it would be interesting to see how the Bologna Process documents are going to conceptualize these crucial differences between its signatory countries.

To use another set of Carnoy's distinctions – between 'competitiveness-driven reforms', 'finance-driven reforms', and 'equity-driven reforms' in higher education (Carnoy, 1999, p. 37; see also Carnoy, 1995) – it is possible to argue that not only two speeds of reforms are necessary within the Bologna Process (as some reforms required are merely functional, and others are structural), but also the current drivers of reforms are different: while in the EU-15 it is competitiveness (decentralization, improved standards and management of educational resources, improved teacher recruitment and training), in at least some transition countries, by contrast, it is mostly the wish to change the 'business climate', to make use of structural adjustments and refer to the reduction of public spending on education (which results both from objective situation, its interpretation, and the ideological stance governments take). These complications in the picture of 'European' higher education systems are not evoked in Bologna documents, and I believe they should be.

Further concerns may be raised about the potential bureaucratization of the process and the potential transfer of power concerning higher education policies to supranational European bodies; however, at the same time, the Bologna Process provides good opportunities for rethinking – and hopefully reforming – inefficient, outmoded, sometimes and in some places corrupted, institutions which should really play central role in the new 'knowledge economy' to finally come to the region. Concerns may be raised about the break with traditional tasks and roles of higher education institutions as evidenced by roles and tasks suggested for them by both Bologna and the ERA (as Jürgen Enders remarks, universities today are 'rather vulnerable organizations that tend to be loaded with multiple expectations and growing demands about their role and functioning in our knowledge-driven societies', [2002b, p. 71]). However, the traditional rhetoric may also cover

institutional or professional interests rather than genuine love for the search for truth, disinterested research and other traditional ideals of the university.

The new vocabulary in which both higher education and research is cast in both Bologna and ERA initiatives may be worrying; but at the same time, especially in connection with the ERA, the vocabulary used, and concepts employed, are standard in current global discussions about higher education and research and development, from UNESCO to OECD to the World Bank. It is hard to use any other vocabulary today *and* be engaged in meaningful contemporary debates on the future of higher education and research. Concerns should be raised about apparently economic accounts of the role of higher education in the ERA discussions. Although the ideals behind the Bologna Process are cast in a slightly different vocabulary, ultimately, the message is similar: we need tangible and measurable results from our educational institutions; universities will change and the kind of research they do, as well as teaching they have in their offers, will have to be changed, too; the responsibility of universities is no longer the search for truth in research and for moral and civic constitution (*Bildung* of the traditional German model of the university) of students/citizens in teaching; it is much more, if not exclusively, the competitiveness, mobility, and employability of their graduates; the responsibility of universities is towards the economic growth of Europe as a whole, supporting knowledge-based economy, contributing to new skills for the new emerging workforce of the emerging competitive, global age (the three goals of the Bologna Process are enhancing the employability of graduates, promotion of mobility, and the attractiveness of Europe to the rest of the world (Reichert & Tauch, 2003, pp. 36-60).

From a European perspective, the promotion of mobility in higher education is 'clearly the most concrete, easily interpreted and uncontroversial' (Reichert & Tauch, 2003, p. 39). I can agree with that in general but one reservation has to be made: thinking of the Bologna signatory countries (a group of EU-15 plus mostly transition countries), the direction of mobility is likely to be towards most affluent, generally Western countries; thus from a national perspective, there are gains and losses of such increasing movement of the best talent available; for the more 'exporting' (transition) than 'importing' (old EU) countries the issue is not going to be uncontroversial in the long run. As a World Bank report rightly argues, with no reference to the Bologna Process, though, the international mobility of skilled human resources will continue to present 'long-term risks for tertiary investments in many nations' (World Bank, 2002, p. 19). The intra-European mobility issue is uncontroversial in most affluent countries as the level of higher education there is similar and the incoming and outgoing mobility between them is relatively balanced, compared with new EU countries; but in the case of the least advanced higher education systems, and the poorest countries in the region, increasing student mobility might become an easy escape route leading to permanent brain drain. This is not a theoretical issue: the European Union is very much concerned about young researchers and PhD students leaving for the United States and (mostly) never coming back (OECD, 2002; European Commission, 2003c).

This brings us in turn to the critical issue of the bipolar character of the Bologna Process: the ideas of cooperation (or solidarity) and competition. The *Trends III* report is explicit about that while acknowledging that the initiation of the Bologna Process has to do with 'a sense of threatened competitiveness vis-à-vis prime competitors like the US, rather than from sheer enthusiasm for the increasing intensity of cooperation within European higher education' (Reichert & Tauch, 2003, p. 52). From the perspective of transition economies, it is important to remember a play of interests *within* the emergent European higher education area, and the competition among European higher education institutions. Some countries are already global players in higher education; some are already exporters of higher education to central and eastern Europe in various, but mostly highly lucrative, disciplines. It may be hard to combine the 'competitive' spirit presented to the non-European global competitors with the 'solidarity' spirit presented at the same time to the (central) European partners. Can we imagine sheer cooperation and solidarity as driving motives in contacts with the countries of the region on the part of institutions from the countries with strong market traditions and good share in global educational market (like, for example, the UK or the Netherlands)? Finally, within national systems and between national institutions, the competition motive is bound to be on the rise, proportionately to the increasing competition for shrinking national (public) funds.[15]

Commenting briefly on 'ambivalent Bologna', *Trends III* notes two potentially conflicting agendas: the 'competitiveness agenda' and the 'social agenda', and rightly concludes, without much

further discussion: 'it would be naïve to assume that the EHEA [European Higher Education Area] is being built only on the latter agenda' (Reichert & Tauch, 2003, p. 149). In the case of the region, it is the cooperation and solidarity motives as well as the social agenda that would count much more than competitiveness today; it would be naïve to assume that institutions of the region are competing with the US and Japan.

## 8.

While Bologna may be quite successful in promoting its agenda in western Europe (especially combined with funding already available and additional incentives already included in the instruments of the European Research Area), it might fail in the transition countries, for a variety of reasons, but especially because of the combination of old and new challenges faced simultaneously by their higher education systems and of the chronic underfunding of their public higher education institutions. While western European institutions currently seem to be much more afraid of losing their autonomy, freedom to teach and do research in the way their national priorities and funding allocations still lavishly allow them to do, for educational institutions in several transition countries the Bologna Process might be a coherent reform agenda, should it be further developed to include this purpose. I wish this 'transition' dimension would be acknowledged, analyzed and developed in the future so that the countries of the region could use the Bologna Process for their benefit and the evident gap between its western and central European signatory countries might stop getting wider.

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### **Notes**

- [1] I wrote a complementary paper on the role of the institution of the university in the discourse of the European Commission on the ERA; see Kwiek (2004).
- [2] Martin Carnoy describes the impact of globalization, new information technologies and innovations in a similar vein: 'a revolution in the organization of work, the production of goods and services, relations among nations, and even local culture. No community is immune from the effects of this revolution. It is changing the very fundamentals of human relations and social life' (Carnoy, 1999, p. 14).
- [3] Paul Pierson, one of leading welfare scholars, reminds us that the pressures on the state are structural and will not easily go away: 'the welfare state now faces a context of essentially permanent austerity. Changes in the global economy, the sharp slowdown in economic growth, the maturation of governmental commitments, and population aging all generate considerable fiscal stress. There is little reason to expect these pressures to diminish over the next few decades. If anything, they are likely to intensify' (Pierson, 2001a, p. 411).
- [4] As Gøsta Esping-Andersen put it recently, 'most European social protection systems were constructed in an era with a very different distribution and intensity of risks and needs than exist today. ... The problem behind the new risk configuration is that it stems primarily from weakened families and poorly functioning labor markets. As a consequence, the welfare state is burdened with responsibilities for which it was not designed' (Esping-Andersen, 2001). Ulrich Beck calls ours the 'post work' society which turns upside down all major assumptions of the post-war Keynesian welfare state.
- [5] Karl Jaspers in his famous *The Idea of the University* describes the university as an institution 'uniting people professionally dedicated to the quest and transmission of truth in scientific terms' (Jaspers, 1959, p. 3). The modern founding fathers of the German research university (Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Schleiermacher, von Humboldt), introduced a radically new perspective: 'uniting people' (students and professors working together for the sake of science, rather than professors working merely for students), 'professionally' (rather than in an 'amateurish' way characteristic of the institutions of

Enlightenment), 'the quest and transmission' (rather than merely transmission to students, i.e. instruction becomes accompanied by research) of truth and 'in scientific terms' (originally referred to the German ideal of *Wissenschaft*). So almost all components of the definition contrast the new idea of the university with the old, Medieval, one. The aim of instruction and research is the 'formation of the whole man', 'education in the broadest sense of term' – *Bildung* (Jaspers, 1959, p. 3).

- [6] To refer here to an interesting distinction drawn recently by a European Commission's communication on *Investing Efficiently in Education and Training*; as it argues, 'with an increasing premium on skills, the polarisation between the *knowledge rich* and the *knowledge poor* puts strains on economic and social cohesion. Access to employer funded training is often limited to those who are already well qualified and some groups get locked into the lower end of the labour market. An important challenge is to develop education and training throughout life in such a way that change and restructuring in the economy have no adverse effects on social cohesion' (European Commission, 2003a, p. 8). Although European social policies are very much focused on making increasing use of educational opportunities throughout life for their citizens, in most if not all transition countries, this dimension seems largely absent, despite efforts of governments to promote lifelong learning. The educational offer is still tailored for the student of 19-24 years of age.
- [7] As Erkki Berndtson in a paper on Bologna rightly remarks, 'the goals of the Bologna Declaration (and of the Prague communiqué) have been presented as solutions to the problems which have never been outlined systematically. This may have been one of the reasons for the fast development of the process, but without a systematic analysis of problems and challenges which the European Higher Education Area faces today, there is a danger that the cosmetic features of the reform will be strengthened' (Berndtson, 2003, p. 10).
- [8] The concern is the traditional diversity of European universities. As Zygmunt Bauman stressed well before the Bologna declaration, 'it is the good luck of the universities that despite all the efforts of the self-proclaimed saviours, know-betters and well-wishers to prove the contrary, they are not comparable, not measurable by the same yardstick and – most important of all – not speaking in unison. Only such universities have something of value to offer to the multivocal world of uncoordinated needs, self-procreating possibilities and self-multiplying choices' (Bauman, 1997, p. 25).
- [9] Ramesh Mishra in *Globalization and Welfare State* comments on the European (Continental) welfare from an American perspective: 'True, many European nations have inherited a large welfare state from the golden age and, for the moment, seem to be able to hold on to them. But can they hold out against global pressures?' (Mishra, 1999, p. 70). This is a crucial point, especially in medium-term and long-term perspectives. The answer is negative in the case of the eight new EU post-communist transition countries which in fact never had a chance to have Western-style welfare systems.
- [10] Let us remember Martin Carnoy's advice, though: 'To what extent public resources for education in a particular country really cannot be increased, and to what extent the "shortage" of public funding represents an ideological preference for private investment in education is crucial to educational policy-making in the new global environment. It does make a major difference to educational delivery how the role of the public sector in education expansion and improvement is played out' (Carnoy, 1999, p. 51).
- [11] Higher education has to compete with other forms of state spending; other social needs are growing rapidly and higher education has not been competing successfully with other programmes in recent decade in most central and east European countries. The chances for increasing public funding for it are low. Seeing higher education policies in isolation from larger welfare state policies would be taking a short-sighted perspective: as a significant (and funds-consuming) part of the public sector and part of the traditional welfare state, it is now under severe pressures, even though the pressures may not be as strong as pressures on reforms of healthcare and pensions. Knowing the zero-sum game character of fiscal decisions of national governments, it is useful to view higher education through the debates about welfare state reforms and transformations of the public sector.
- [12] One of the major differences between affluent Western democracies and the European transition countries is that the point of departure of welfare transformations is different. Paul Pierson rightly notes that 'in most of the affluent democracies, the politics of social policy centers on the renegotiation and restructuring of the terms of the post-war social contract rather than its dismantling' (Pierson, 2001a, p. 14). In central and east European countries, in most general terms, there is no social contract to renegotiate and welfare provisions need to be defined from the very

beginning. Consequently, an already 'dismantled' welfare state may be built along neoliberal lines without actually renegotiating the post-war European social contract. Ideologically, there is an important difference between the potential dismantling of the welfare state (in western Europe) and the actual dismantling of the remnants of bureaucratic welfare of the ancient regime central and east European countries. Christiane Lemke (2001) rightly assumes that emerging patterns of social support and social security in central and east European countries 'diverge from the typology described in the comparative welfare state literature inasmuch as the transformation of postcommunist societies is distinctly different from the building of welfare states in Europe' (Lemke, 2001, p. 5). She seems to be wrong, though, when stating that the applicant countries had to adapt to the rules and regulations of the EU, 'including the *social acquis*' and that the idea of European-wide social standards 'gained a higher profile' in central and east European countries (p. 14). It was not the case.

- [13] While Paul Pierson admits that welfare states face an unprecedented budgetary stress today, he claims that it is related to 'post-industrial' changes characteristic of affluent democracies. Perhaps the most important is the question whether in the absence of globalization welfare states would be in a radically different situation. His answer is negative (Pierson, 2001c, p. 82). I believe Pierson's theses are very strong, but I am not sure we get from him the convincing arguments that globalization just does not matter. The affluent industrialized countries are strongly influenced by global pressures, as is the selection of policy options at their disposal; there is an interplay of international and domestic factors and it is very hard to distil them in today's world. For it is not only the real impact that globalization is having on societies; it is also the way social, economic, and political problems are actually perceived as problems. Pierson may be right about the real influence, in measurable terms, of the internationalization of economy on the welfare state. He is very much correct about the growing domestic pressures common to all major affluent welfare states. But the way they are perceived by policy makers, the way they are framed for public discussions, the way they enter the social world through the social sciences, experts and the media seems crucial. In this sense, globalization is much more than a simple economic phenomenon.
- [14] As Zsuzsa Ferge shows, 'the EU suggestions for some reforms of social security may steer these countries in a more American than European direction' (Ferge, 2002, p. 9). Based on careful reading of the Accession Reports from the Community to the ten applicant countries, Ferge finds a 'hidden policy agenda' there: '*the Union has a different social security agenda for the accession countries than for the EU members. ... The hidden agenda suggests to the accession countries measures contrary to the European model, such as the privatization of pensions and health, or the cutback of already low social expenditures*' (Ferge, 2002, p. 9, emphasis mine).
- [15] As Henry et al sadly remarked, 'though education is now deemed more important than ever for the competitive advantage of nations, the commitment and capacity of governments to fund it have weakened considerably' (Henry et al, 2001, p. 31).

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