



Student-centered learning in the European Higher Education Area

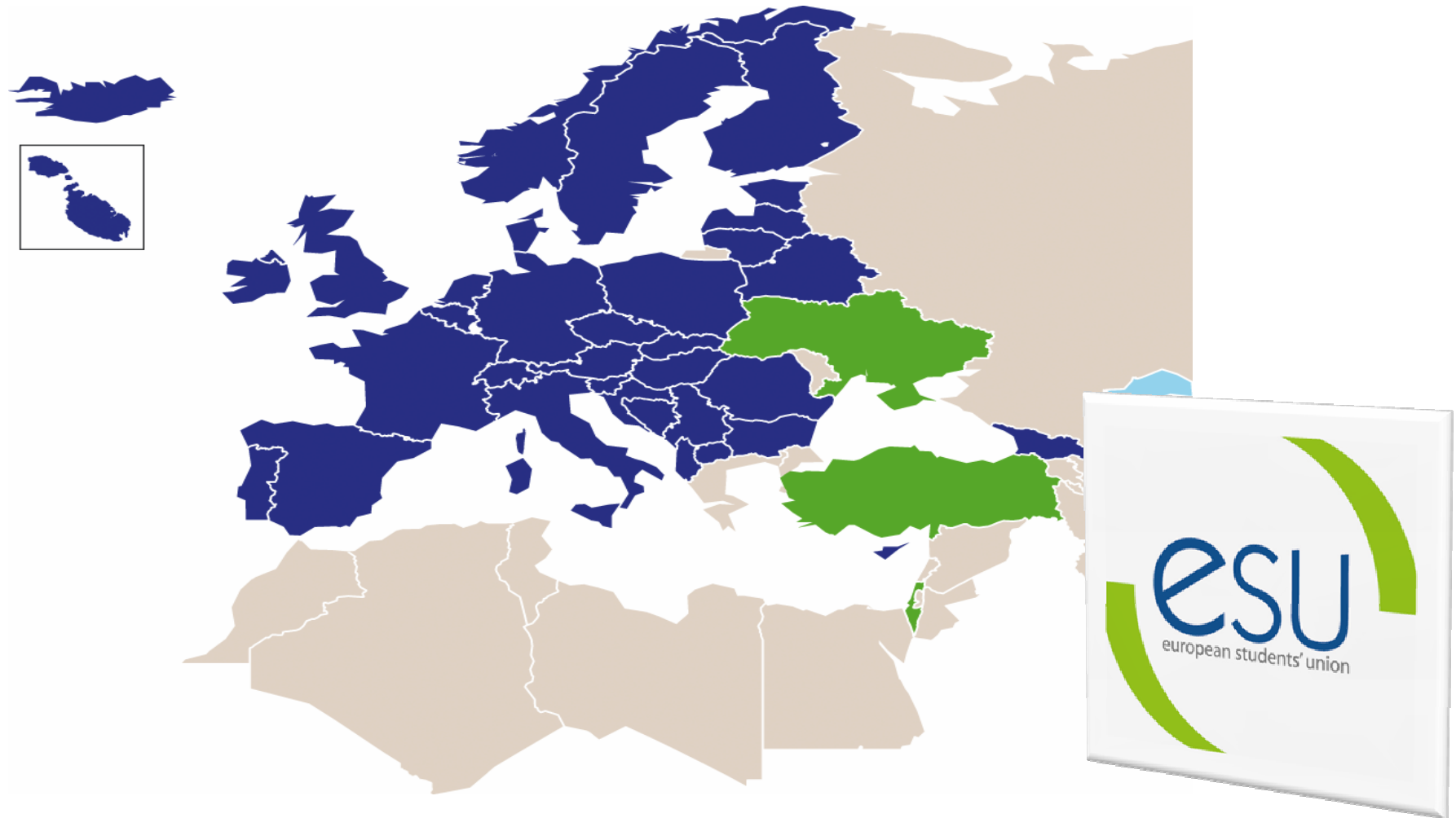
An opportunity for reform

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ESU Bologna Process Committee



Over 11 millions of students in Europe!





The Bologna Process

- Voluntary national-based process of reform
- 45 European countries
- 8 representatives of organisations and stakeholders

- Key element for the success of the implementation of the Bologna Process:
 - Action lines implemented as a package
 - Students involvement at national and local level



Bologna Process as a package

- Bologna Process is more than technicalities
- Students at the heart of the changes
- Focusing on the people
 - Mobility
 - Social dimension
 - Lifelong learning
 - Recognition of prior learning
 - Enhancing quality
- Is it about the goals or the processes?
- Bologna is not meant for standardisation



Degree Structures

- Absurd debate on shape (3+2; 4+1; 5+0; 2+1+2)
- Obsession with public image
- Discussion tainted by the concerns on financing
- Need for refocus on learning outcomes, levels and competences
 - *A meaningful reform of degrees and curricula*
- Reshaping curricula, teaching and assessment methods, focus of the degree, etc.
- Training for teachers; conditions for students?



The Tuning Project in Europe

- Working since 2000
- Developing reference points for 1st and 2nd cycle programmes for generic and subject-specific competences (9 scientific areas)
- Promoted level and subject descriptors
- Developed ECTS as transfer and accumulation system, linked with learning outcomes
- Developed a common language for competences, learning outcomes, workload, profile, etc.



Focus on the student!

- From the teacher perspective (‘what should be taught?’) to the learner perspective
 - Which are the goals of the learning process?
 - Is it useful for my goals? Employability?
- Empowering the learner
 - Discussing the curricula and learning outcomes
 - Understanding what are the learning goals
 - Flexible and multiple choices and paths
 - Recognition of prior learning achieved
 - Competences matter; HEI status or type, no!



Student-centered learning

- Defining the learning outcomes
 - Clear and defined goals of the course/degree
- Adjusting the teaching and assessment methods
 - Direct link with the learning outcomes
- Students' active role in the learning process
 - More autonomy and independent study
 - More activity and work for better results
- Constant feedback
 - Quality of the teaching and the teacher
 - Suitability of methods and equipments



Student-centered learning

- The institution actually takes into account!
 - Ongoing process of assessment and amendment
- The teachers' and the institutions' role
 - Respond to the students' and stakeholders' needs
 - Guidance and counselling for students
 - Setting up support services for students
 - Constant follow-up of the students' work
 - Introducing students to research
- A matter of teaching and learning culture



Trends in Europe 1

- Tension: “knowledge” and “broad competences”
- Tension: “labour market” and “academia”
- Camouflaging the absence of reforms
- Experimenting new methods:
 - Problem-based learning
 - Curricular flexibility and interdisciplinarity
 - Integration between study and work
 - Transferable skills and languages
 - Tutoring: teacher as a guide
 - Focusing on autonomous work of the student

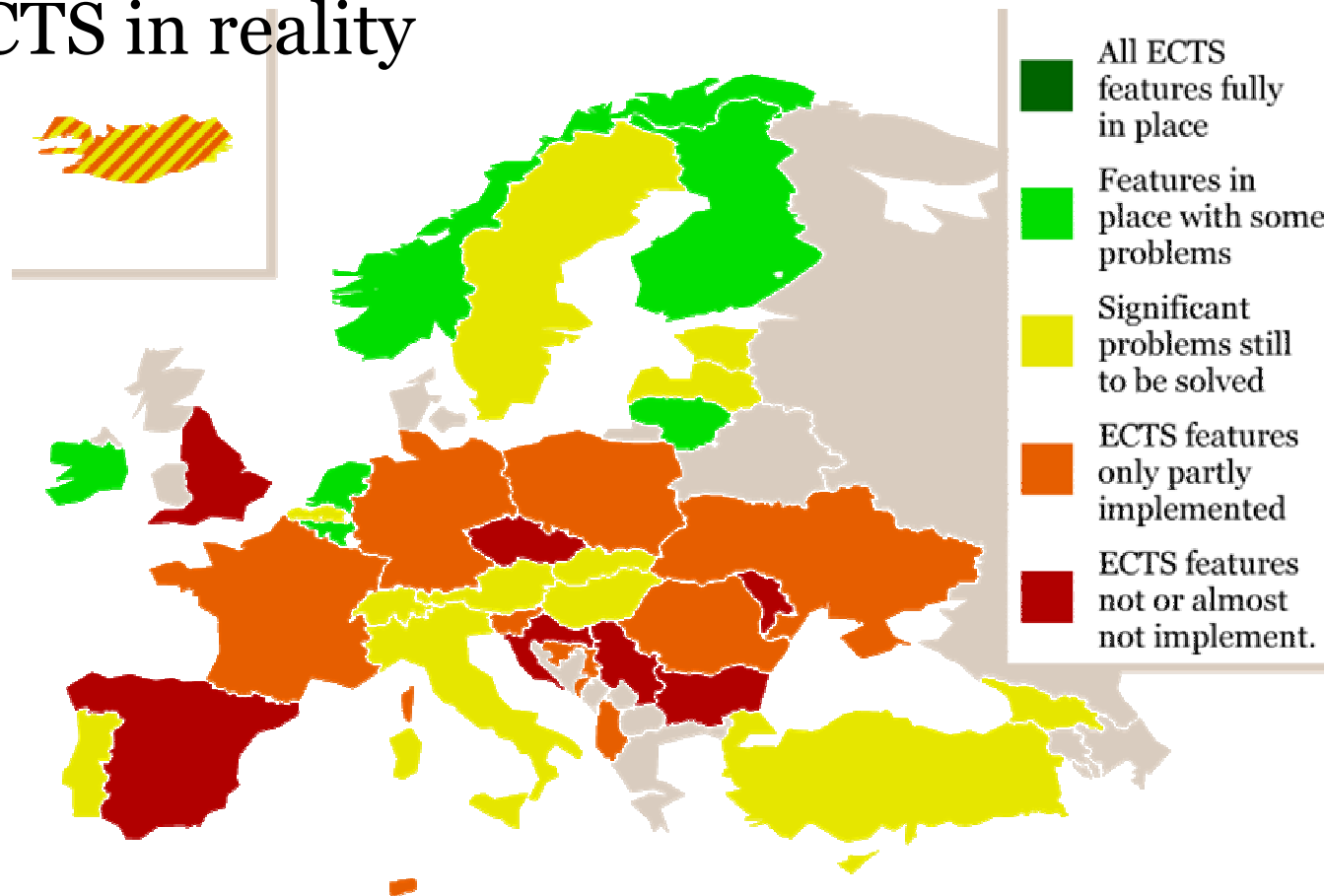


Trends in Europe 2

- E-learning, distance learning, mixed methods
- Especialisation vs. general training
- Smaller classes and team work vs. big rooms
- Integration of the students in research activities
- Diminishing value of the bachelor qualifications
- Rethoric priority on employability and LLL
- Opening HEI to new publics
- Development of student support services
- Exams vs. reaching learning outcomes

ECTS - examples from Europe 2

- ECTS in reality



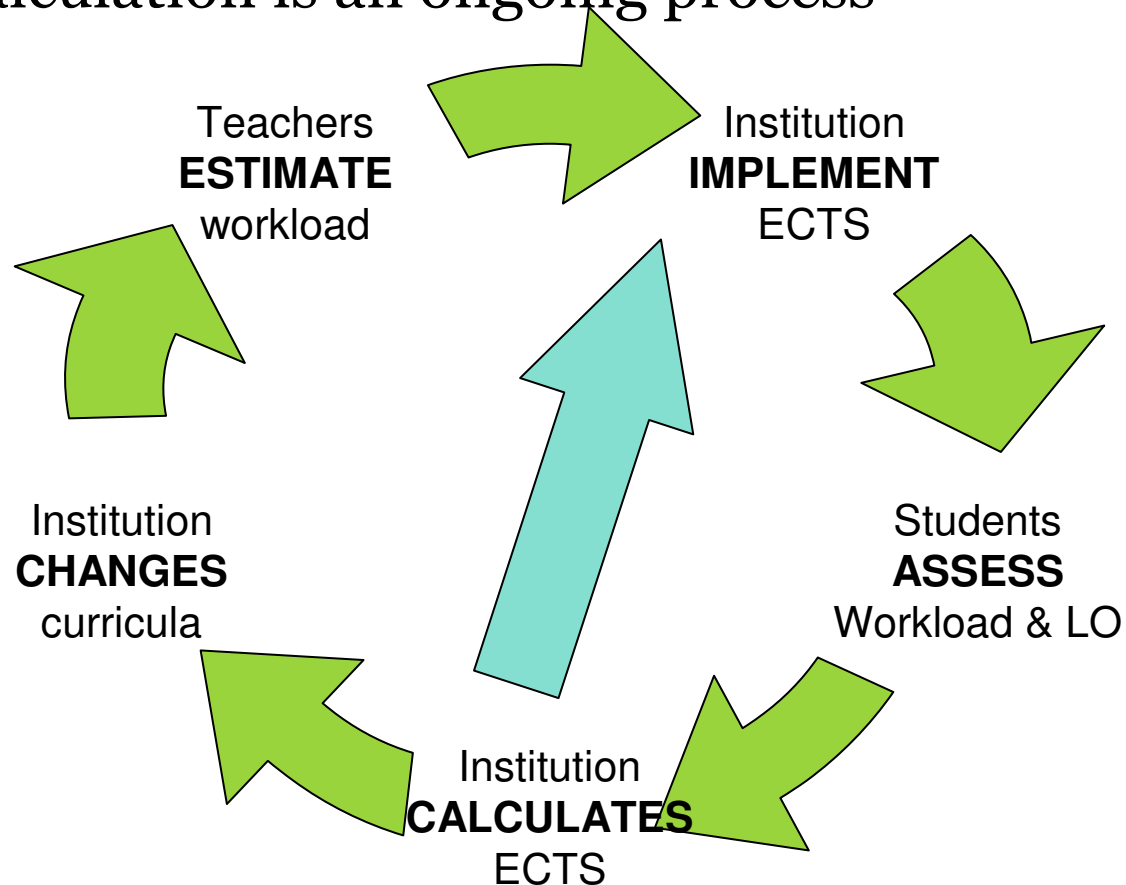


ECTS from a student perspective

- Measuring student workload
 - classes, studying, research, meetings, group work
- Associated with clear defined learning outcomes
 - Knowledge, skills, competences
- Accumulation and transferable credits
- Recognition of knowledge; not of type of course/HEI
- A tool for designing and thinking the curricula
- **ECTS is not:**
 - **Measuring teachers' prestige or number of classes**
 - **A teacher's estimation of the student workload**

ECTS - ask the students!

- ECTS calculation is an ongoing process



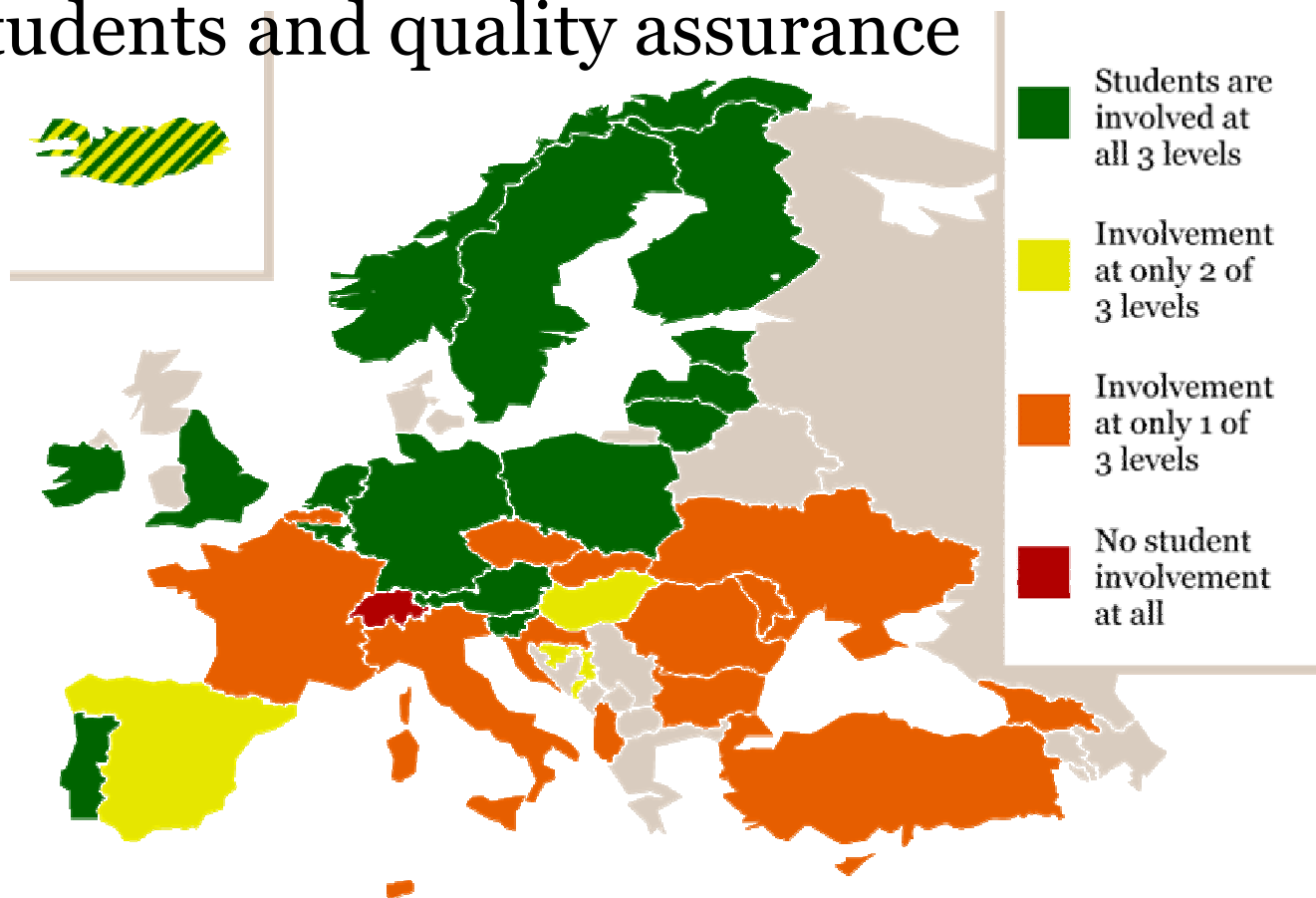


Quality enhancement and students

- Shift from closure to responsiveness
- Reporting and questionnaires
- A internal quality culture project in every HEI
 - Quality of learning experience
 - Study and work conditions
- Students have to be involved!
 - Consulted and free to suggest
 - Partners in governance and management
 - In the team of external review teams
 - In the governance of the evaluation agencies

Quality assurance in Europe

- Students and quality assurance





Concluding: students and universities

- Strategic partner for the improvement of the quality of the institution
- Critical attitude is pushing forward for changes
- New profile of the students
 - different age groups and new publics
- Cooperation in all fields
 - Changing curricula and discussing learning outcomes
 - Calculating ECTS
 - Cooperating for the quality of the institution
- **The students are experts!**
- **Their opinion should be valued!**



Challenges ahead

- Design an educational project for the institution
- Tutoring vs massification of higher education
- Lack of teacher training
- Tension between research and teaching
- Lack of career incentives for teachers
- Support services for students and staff
- Increase of funding not matching increase of students in the educational systems
- A meaningful reform

Thank you for your attention!

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