

Webinar «ENI»

The Development of National Qualifications Frameworks in Europe and Involvement of Italy



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ENI Webinar Session 1

Summary

- 1. The beginning: late '80s and '90s in Europe**
- 2. Founding events: 1998-2002**
- 3. Building the EHEA: the overarching Framework (QF for EHEA) and the National Qualifications Frameworks**
- 4 . Addressing the challenges of implementation**



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1. The beginning: late 80's and 90's in Europe

The problem: can European citizens study and work freely in other countries of the then European Community?

Answer: No

But....



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Are not European Universities remarkable organizations, stemming from the Middle Ages, where scholars should be able to circulate freely?

Answer: uhm, yes, but....



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Was anyone worrying about this?

Answer: yes....



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1988: the Magna Charta Universitatum tried to put the ancient ideal back at the forefront. Universities should defend their principles and be able to ensure their academic freedoms and values around the world.



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Today, there is an updated version of the MCU. The Charta has been signed by **904** higher education institutions, from **88** countries around the world.

The problem is, and was, that in most countries higher education institutions as they existed in the late '80s were not products of wandering scholars, but of nation states and national governments.



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Who could start the process that eventually led to the QF for EHEA and thus to the NQFs, the National Qualifications Frameworks of today?



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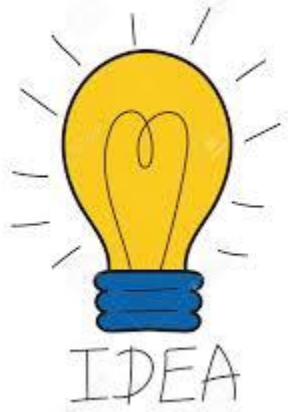
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As a matter of fact, it was the Commission of the European Economic Community, the forerunner of today's European Commission of the European Union.

No power over education =





No power...but a great idea.
Fund student mobility to test and
pressure the systems to converge.
“Erasmus” =
EuRopean Community Action Scheme for
the Mobility of University Students



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Erasmus starts in 1987.



But...very difficult.

Very few students in the first years.

If not common structures, something is needed to 'translate' studies from one country to another.





Another great idea: ECTS

European Credit Transfer System
Pilot Project (forerunner of the European
Credit Transfer and Accumulation System)
Starts in 1989.

Five subject areas, five networks of
universities to experiment and create the
necessary tools (the transparency tools we
use today for student mobility).



What we found (1989-1996):
European higher education systems were very different, neither **compatible** nor **comparable**.

Different for

- degree structure
- subject matter (content and approach)
- calendar
- teaching traditions and styles



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2. Foundations



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The concrete realization of the extent of difference led to:

- Sorbonne Declaration **1998**: cycles, credits, creating of a 'European Area of HE (Agreement between Ministers of Education of Italy, UK, France and Germany...)
- Bologna Declaration **1999**: cycles, credits...towards the EHEA (29 Ministers of HE) and the beginning of the «Bologna Process»



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- Sorbonne Declaration **1998**:

*«A system, in which **two main cycles**, undergraduate and graduate, should be recognized for international comparison and equivalence, seems to emerge...»*

*“Much of the originality and flexibility in this system will be achieved through the **use of credits** (such as in the ECTS scheme) and semesters...”*



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Bologna Declaration 1999:

«Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees...

“Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles...

“Establishment of a system of credits - such as in the ECTS system...”



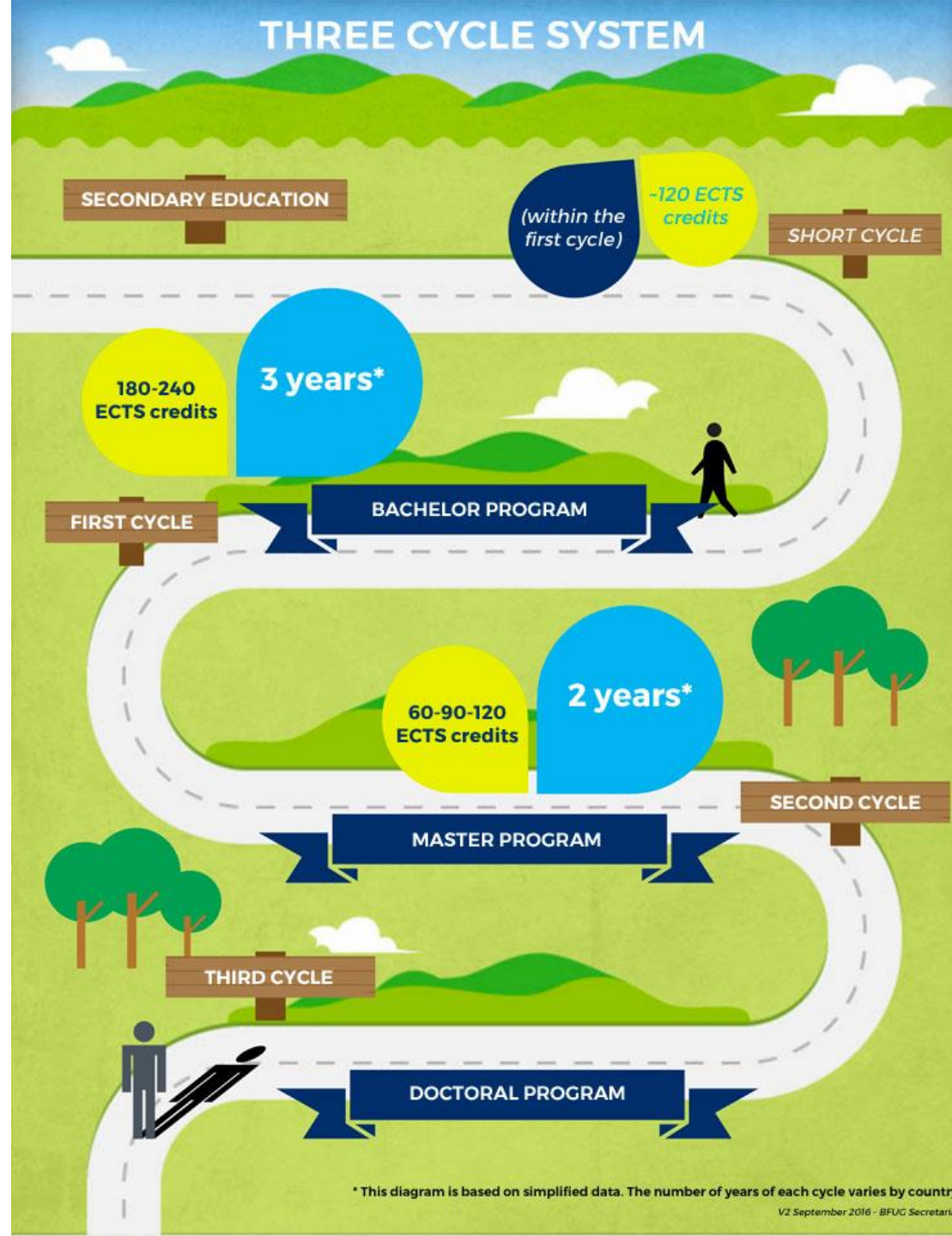
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Three cycle system today



Implementing this system is the **first** of the «Key Commitments» that ministers of countries that join the European Higher Education Area commit to.



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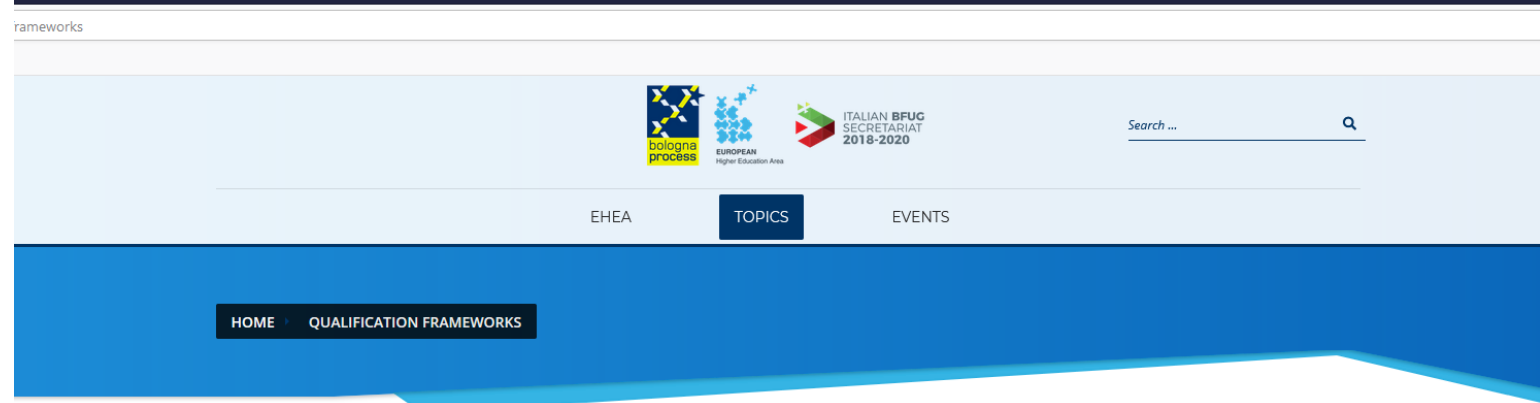
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Key Commitment

Qualifications Frameworks compatible with the Overarching Framework of the European Higher Education Area

and ECTS



QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORKS

QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS / THREE-CYCLE SYSTEM

Qualifications frameworks describe the qualifications of an education system and how they interlink.

National qualifications frameworks describe what learners should know, understand and be able to do on the basis of a given qualification as well as how learners can move from one qualification to another within a system.

National qualifications frameworks are developed to be compatible with the **overarching framework of qualifications of the European Higher Education Area**, which was adopted in 2005 and consists of three cycles (e.g. bachelor, master, doctorate). The overarching framework makes **recognition of qualifications** easier since specific qualifications can be related to a common framework.

[The framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area - May 2005](#)

For more details read the **2005 background report** and visit the section about **qualifications frameworks in the European Higher Education Area in 2007-2009**. This section contains important information on qualifications frameworks, which have become an essential instrument in developing the European Higher Education Area, and provides updates on relevant events and developments at European, regional or national level.

[A Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area 2005](#)

For more information on the third cycle, read our section on [doctoral education in 2007-2009](#).

Qualifications Frameworks in the EHEA

- [Introduction](#)
- [Overarching frameworks](#)
- [National Qualifications Frameworks](#)
- [Glossary](#)
- [Sources and resources](#)
- [Bologna Coordination Group for Qualifications Frameworks 2007-2009](#)
- [Report on Qualifications Frameworks 2009](#)

Updates from the EHEA Network to the BFUG

[BFUG Meeting 65 Bucharest April 2019](#) (under item 7 *Update from the EHEA Network of National Qualification Frameworks Correspondents*)

[BFUG Meeting 67 Helsinki November 2019](#) (under item 5.2 *EHEA Network on NQF Correspondents*)

BOLOGNA ACTIVITIES

Thematic Peer Group A on Qualifications Framework (TPG A on QF) 2018-2020

[READ MORE](#)

Coordination group

A Coordination Group was formed, with the Council of Europe providing Chair and Secretariat.

The Council of Europe also encouraged regional cooperation in South East Europe and in New Independent States. In South East Europe a regional network on qualifications frameworks has been established.

The Coordination Group signalled that implementation of national qualifications frameworks demands a lot of efforts at national level and proposes that self-certifications of the national qualifications frameworks against the overarching Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area should be completed or prepared by 2012.

[Coordination Group](#)

[Overarching Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area](#)

Bologna Seminars

Learning outcomes based higher education: the Scottish experience hosted by the Scottish Government at Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh (Scotland) on 21-22 February 2008

Today's EHEA is very impressive.

The first step for each country has been to sign the declaration, or to ask to enter the Bologna area, committing to implement voluntarily the joint agreements.

Each country must find its way of implementing its obligations.

Each Ministerial Communiqué contains new elements, as well as reformulating the existing ones.



EHEA / BFUG members are **48 countries** and the **European Commission**.



Particularly at the beginning of the process,
some countries took **quite drastic action**,
changing their HE systems from the
foundations.

Universities and their organizations have
dedicated great efforts to making the new
system work.

Italy was one of them, probably the country that had to modify the most. The Italian system had only 1 cycle, that led to the 'Laurea' degree. At the beginning of the '80s a "Research Doctorate" was instituted.

This process was carried out immediately, in fact the law creating the new system came a few months before the actual signing of the Bologna Agreement.

The reform process involved directly all the Italian universities, each one of which had to decide which degree programmes to implement in which disciplinary areas (divided into 'classes') and design them according to the new rules.

But...at that time in the 'Bologna' area, there were 'cycles' and 'credits' but no criteria for the level to be reached. These were developed by the 'Joint Quality Initiative'. They are known as the 'Dublin Descriptors' and became the basis for the 'overarching' QF that all EHEA must use as the basis for their National Qualifications Framework.

QF for EHEA 2005



A Framework for Qualifications of
The European Higher Education Area



Ministry of Science
Technology and Innovation

First Cycle Outcomes

ECTS

Typically include 180-240 ECTS credits

Qualifications that signify completion of the first cycle are awarded to students who:

- have demonstrated **knowledge and understanding** in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education, and is typically at a level that, whilst supported by advanced textbooks, includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront of their field of study;
- can **apply** their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and have competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study;
- have the ability to gather and interpret **relevant data** (usually within their field of study) to inform judgments that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues;
- can **communicate** information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- have developed those **learning skills** that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy.

Second Cycle Outcomes

ECTS

Qualifications that signify completion of the second cycle are awarded to students who:

- have demonstrated **knowledge and understanding** that is founded upon and **extends and/or enhances** that typically associated with the first cycle, and that provides a basis or opportunity for **originality** in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context;
- can **apply** their knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or **unfamiliar** environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study;
- have the ability to **integrate knowledge** and handle complexity, and formulate judgments with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on **social and ethical responsibilities** linked to the application of their knowledge and judgments;
- can **communicate** their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously;
- have the **learning skills** to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.

Typically include 90-120 ECTS credits, with a minimum of 60 credits at the level of the 2nd cycle

Third Cycle Outcomes

ECTS

Qualifications that signify completion of the third cycle are awarded to students who:

- have demonstrated a **systematic understanding** of a field of study and mastery of the **skills and methods of research** associated with that field;
- have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a **substantial process of research** with scholarly **integrity**;
- have made a contribution through original research that **extends the frontier of knowledge** by developing a substantial body of work, some of which merits national or international refereed publication;
- are capable of **critical analysis**, evaluation and synthesis of **new and complex** ideas;
- can **communicate** with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with **society in general** about their areas of expertise;
- can be expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, **technological, social or cultural advancement** in a knowledge based society.

**Not
specified**

+
ECTS

The 2015 version of the ECTS Users Guide was officially adopted as an EHEA document at the Ministerial Conference held in **Yerevan in 2015**.

Implementation of ECTS comprises:

- Using **workload based credits** and learning outcomes
- Agreed **credit ranges** for qualifications
- **ECTS transparency tools**, not only for mobile students, but also as a basis for the national system.

Still...
Some countries are still working on
their NQFs

At present (2018 and beyond), the EHEA is testing a new approach.

It has created a **Bologna Implementation Coordination Group** (the “BICG”) tasked with organizing **three “Thematic Peer Groups”** where countries assist each other in implementing three basic commitments currently considered “Key” .

Interestingly, **all 48 countries** have volunteered to join at least one of the **Thematic Peer Groups**, and many have joined all three.

They are all engaged as helpers and/or as recipients of help, in implementation projects, some of which enjoy EC support, and the approach seems to be working.

The first “Key Commitment” (Thematic Peer Group A):

- Implement a **National Qualifications Framework** compliant with the **Qualifications Framework of the EHEA**,
- Implement **ECTS** correctly.

Co-chairs

Czech Republic, Finland, Kazakhstan

Members

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium
Flemish Community, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria,
Croatia, Council of Europe, EI-IE, Estonia, ESU, EURASHE,
European Commission, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary,
Malta, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Turkey.



In September 2018, the BFUG formally established this **Thematic Peer Group A on Qualifications Framework (TPG A on QF)** – more specifically on Key Commitment 1: a three-cycle system compatible with the overarching of the EHEA and first and second cycle degrees scaled by ECTS – based on the interests and needs indicated by the BFUG members and Consultative members in a survey conducted during the summer of 2018.

Specific thematic indications include topics such as:

- self-certification of the national qualification frameworks the overarching Qualifications Framework of the EHEA,
- complete implementation of the ECTS User's Guide,
- short cycle higher education,
- multiple purposes and use of the qualifications frameworks by the stakeholders,
- study programmes outside of the Bologna three-cycle structure,
- relationship between the qualifications frameworks and quality assurance.

Work plan of the Thematic Peer Group A on Qualifications Framework (will be uploaded in April 2019)

TPG A on QF Meetings

1. First Meeting of the TPG A on QF in Helsinki on 15 January 2019

The members of the Thematic Peer Group met for the first time and discussed the work plan of each single country and the overall work plan of the group.



[Minutes of this meeting](#)

Documents and presentations of this meeting:

- [Meeting Agenda](#)
- [The Bologna Process key commitments and peer support](#)
- [Activities to support implementation of national qualifications frameworks: design, implementation and self-](#)

COMPOSITION

Co-chairs

- Czech Republic
- Finland
- Kazakhstan

Members

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Flemish Community, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Council of Europe, EHE, Estonia, ESU, EURASHE, European Commission, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Malta, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Turkey.

Qualification Frameworks

[READ MORE](#)

ECTS

[READ MORE](#)

Three-cycle system

[READ MORE](#)

[http://www.ehea.info/page-peer-group-A-QF:](http://www.ehea.info/page-peer-group-A-QF)

“a three-cycle system compatible with the overarching framework of qualifications of the EHEA and first and second cycle degrees scaled by ECTS”

More information:

<http://www.ehea.info/page-peer-group-A-QF>

Thank you
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