



**HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION  
AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS**

*Secretariat of Higher Education*

*20 December 2002*

**BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP SEMINAR**

**“EXPLORING THE SOCIAL DIMENSIONS  
OF THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA”**

**ATHENS, GREECE  
19-20 FEBRUARY 2003**

**General Outline**

***The concept***

The Seminar is organised in the context of the Bologna Process and is part of the cycle of Seminars organised throughout Europe in the way from Prague to Berlin. The Seminar aims at clarifying and enriching the related characteristics of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), and its outcomes will serve as an input to the Summit of the European Ministers in charge of higher education, which is to be held in Berlin on 18-19 September 2003.

The Seminar is jointly organised by the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs and the Education Research Centre in Greece in co-operation with ESIB (the National Unions of Students in Europe) and is carried out with the support of the European Community in the framework of the Socrates Programme. The Seminar is to be considered as a twin event with the European Student Convention, which is organised by ESIB in Athens on 21-23 February 2003, its theme being “How to achieve genuine mobility”.

***Relevance to the Bologna Process***

The relevance of the Seminar to the Bologna Process derives from the following three points appearing in the Prague Communiqué:

First point: “Ministers also reaffirmed the need, recalled by students, to take account of the social dimension in the Bologna Process”.

Second point: “Ministers supported the idea that higher education should be considered a public good and is and will remain a public responsibility (regulations etc.), and that students are full members of the higher education community”.

Third point: “Ministers confirmed their commitment to pursue the removal of all obstacles to the free movement of students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff and emphasised the social dimension of mobility”.

The Greek Bologna Follow-Up Seminar is related to the one which will be organised by Norway in Oslo on 12-14 June 2003, its theme being “Student Participation in Governance in

Higher Education". It is obvious that the Greek and the Norwegian Seminars are complementary in their content and in their objectives as well, regarding the several aspects of "student involvement".

### ***Aims***

In relation to the above three points, the Seminar will seek answers to the following questions:

- What are the major characteristics of the social dimension of the European Higher Education Area which are to be taken into account in the Bologna Process?
- What are the primary consequences of considering higher education a public good and a public responsibility, instead of considering it a "commodity"? What are the fields in which public responsibility for higher education is exercised? How should the above consequences affect the GATS negotiations?
- What are the primary consequences of accepting students as full members of the higher education community instead of considering them "consumers" or "customers" and "clients"?
- What should the role of students be in strengthening and securing the social dimension of the European Higher Education Area and what should their consequent involvement be in the Bologna Process?
- What should the appropriate policies be towards removing the obstacles to the free movement of students and personnel, especially as far as the social dimension is concerned? How can these policies be harmonised with the ones arising from the EU Action Plan for Mobility?

### ***Organisation***

The Seminar is scheduled to begin at 9.00 a.m. on Wednesday 19 February 2003 and to conclude by 1.00 p.m. on Thursday 20 February 2003. The Seminar will consist of plenary sessions and working groups, and the working language will be English. There will be three plenary sessions with the form of panel presentations, the themes of which are shown in the attached Preliminary Programme. The actual discussions concerning the topics to be presented during the first two sessions (Wednesday morning and Wednesday afternoon) will take place in working group sessions immediately after each thematic plenary session. Discussion in plenary session is provided only for the third panel presentation (Thursday morning). The reports on the outcomes of the first day working groups will be presented by the respective chairs/rapporteurs in the beginning of the second day. The last plenary session of the Seminar will include the introduction to the draft conclusions by the general rapporteur of the Seminar, who is Stephan Neetens, member of the Bologna Process Committee of ESIB, and will conclude with the adoption of the Conclusions.

In order to provide a useful basis for the discussions at the Seminar, a Questionnaire consisting of eight "open" questions is sent to the members of the Bologna Follow-Up Group. Its purpose is to present an overall outline of the situation, the trends, the positions characterising each country with respect to the issues to be discussed at the Seminar. Our intention is to prepare in due time a compilation of the answers to the Questionnaire which is expected to be a most valuable contribution to the forthcoming discussions.

### ***Participation***

The Seminar is addressed to academics, students, experts, politicians and stakeholders, involved in the Bologna Process and/or concerned about its consequences. The participants are estimated to be about 200 and they are expected to come primarily from the countries and the organisations involved in the Bologna Process, from the Greek higher education institutions, from the Greek unions of higher education students and personnel, and from the Greek Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs and the Education Research Centre in Greece.

Because of space limitations, the participation to the Seminar will be restricted to three persons from each country and from each organisation (except ESIB) participating in the Bologna Follow – Up Group. ESIB will be represented in the Seminar by the members of the Steering Group of the European Student Convention and the chairs of the Convention's workshops. All the experts involved in the Bologna Follow – Up Group will be invited as well.

The Greek participation will also be restricted, for the same reasons, to:

- one person from each Greek higher education institution
- ten persons totally from the Greek student organisations
- ten persons totally from the personnel unions of the Greek higher education institutions
- ten persons totally from the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs and from the Centre for Educational Research

Participation is free of charge and so are the lunch buffet on Wednesday and the coffee breaks on both days. However, participants will have to cover their own travel and accommodation expenses.