

# Unica Students Conference 2010 “Europe through Students’ Eyes”

## FORUM 6

The Bologna Process and the development  
of the European Higher Education:

### QUALITY, EMPLOYABILITY AND SOCIAL ISSUES.

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# Sources & references

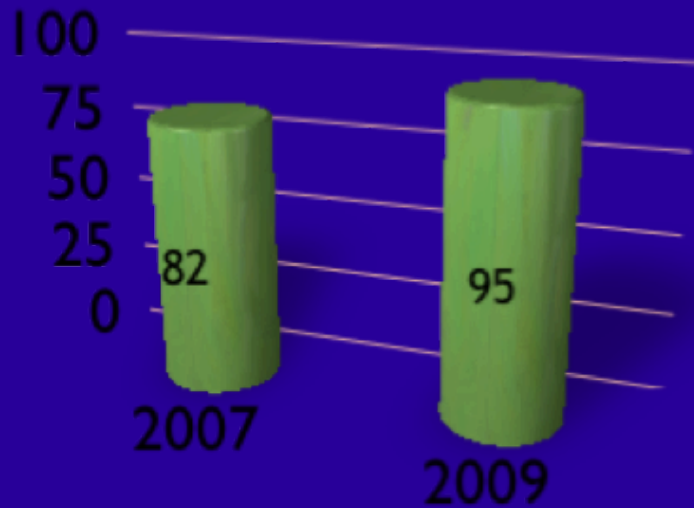
1. Bologna Declaration 1999
2. London Communiqué 2007
3. Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve, 28-29 April 2009
4. EACEA Report 2009
5. National Reports 2009 ( 46 countries)
6. EUA : Impact of the BP 2010

# Bologna Process

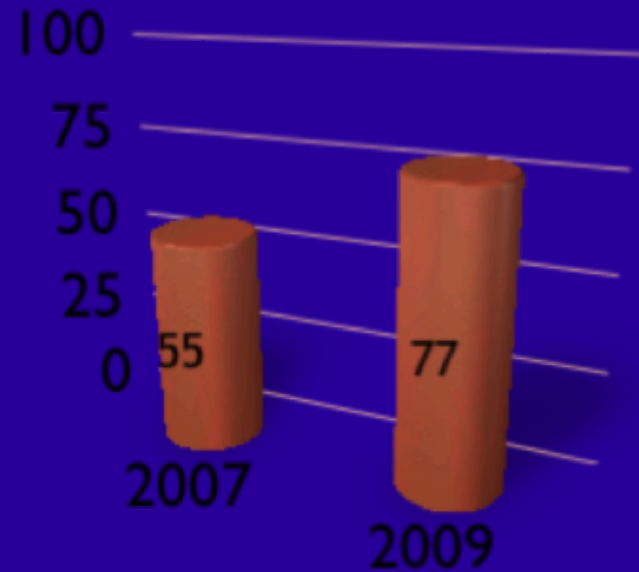
- Objective: Structure Higher Education along 3 cycles:
  - Bachelor - Master - PhD
- ECTS credit system
- Diploma Supplement
- Joint Degrees
- Quality Assurance



# Impact of the Bologna process on Europe's universities



% of universities that have adopted the ECTS system



% of universities that have reviewed curricula according to the Bologna Process

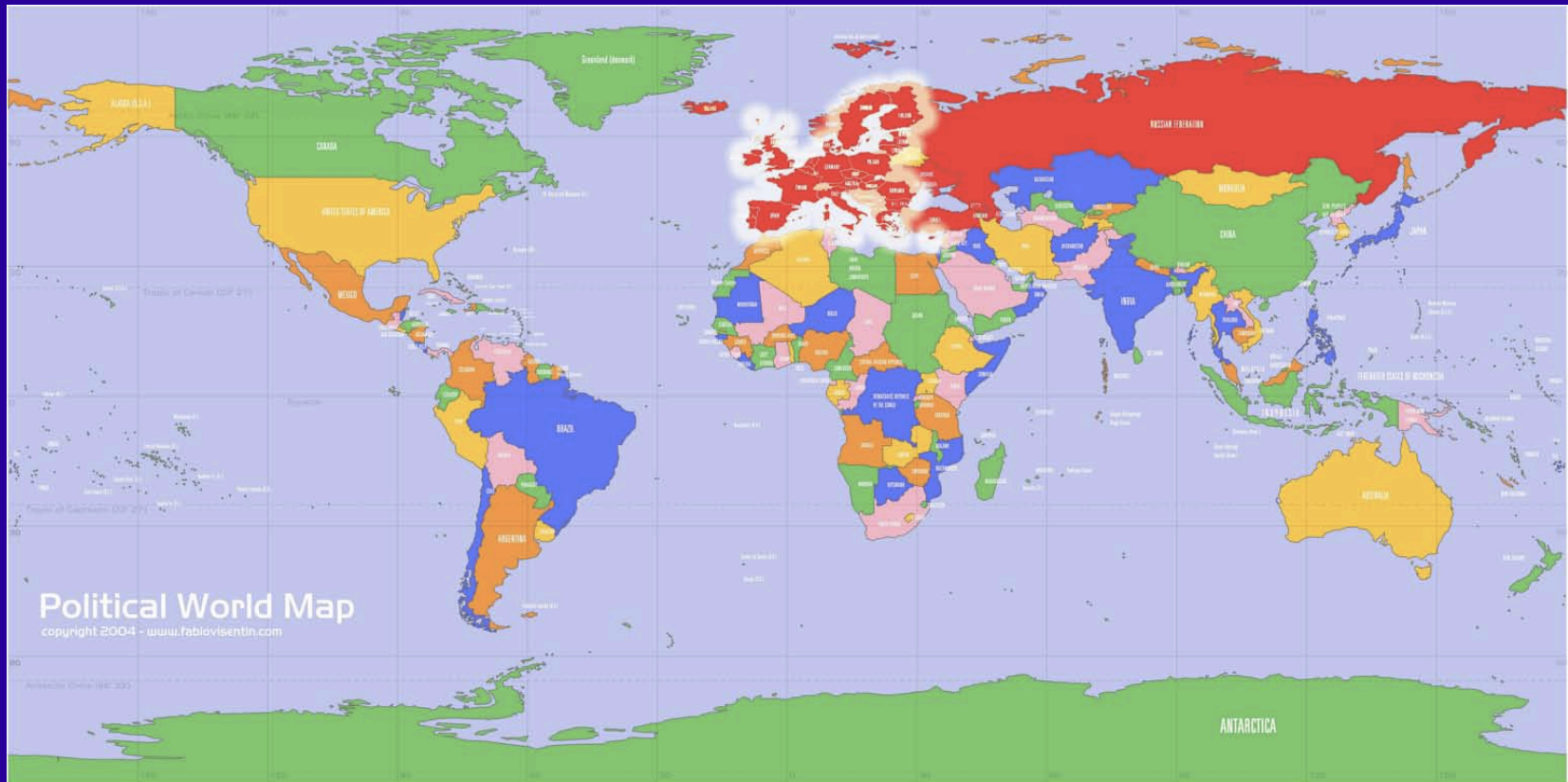
## Difficulties

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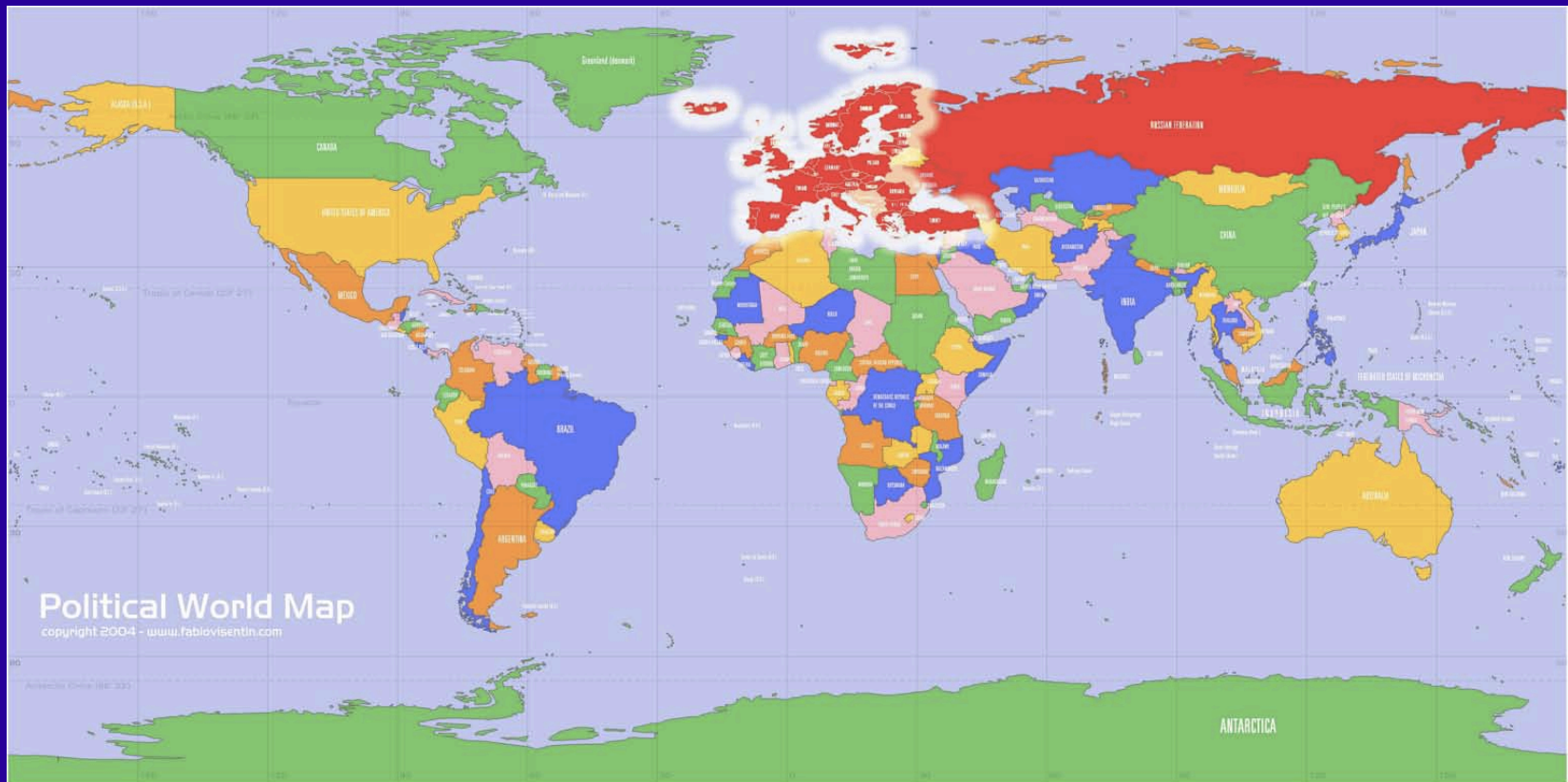
## Challenges

- Implementation of degree structures in professional disciplines has been more difficult ( medicine, law, engineering etc.)
- Lack of additional public funding at national level to implement reforms
- Improving communication
- The Bologna Process must focus on a vision of education rather than on measurements or the more technical aspects of the tools
- Closer link between the EHEA and the European Research Area
- Promote mobility

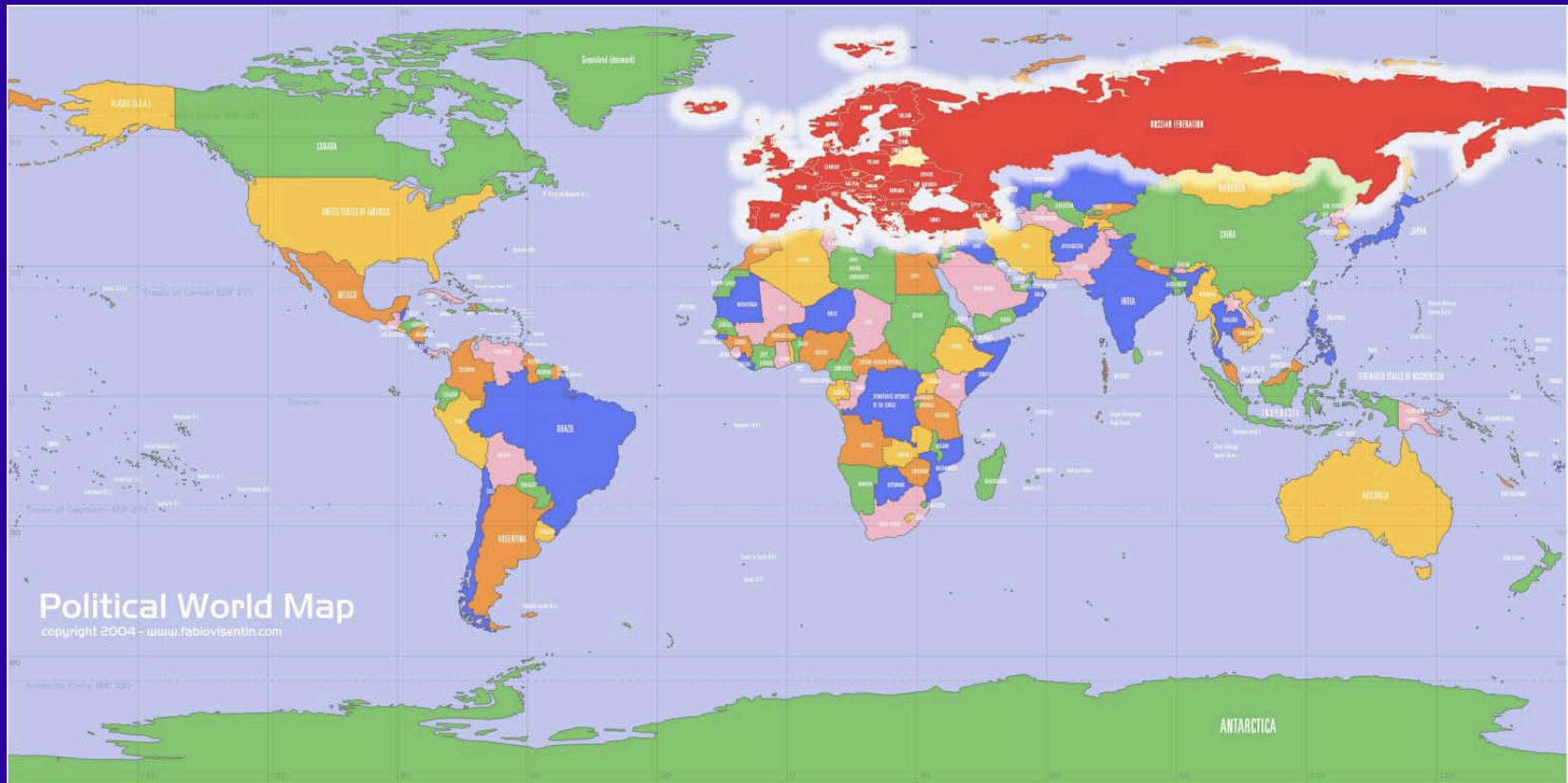
# EU members as of 2010: 27



# Erasmus partners: 31

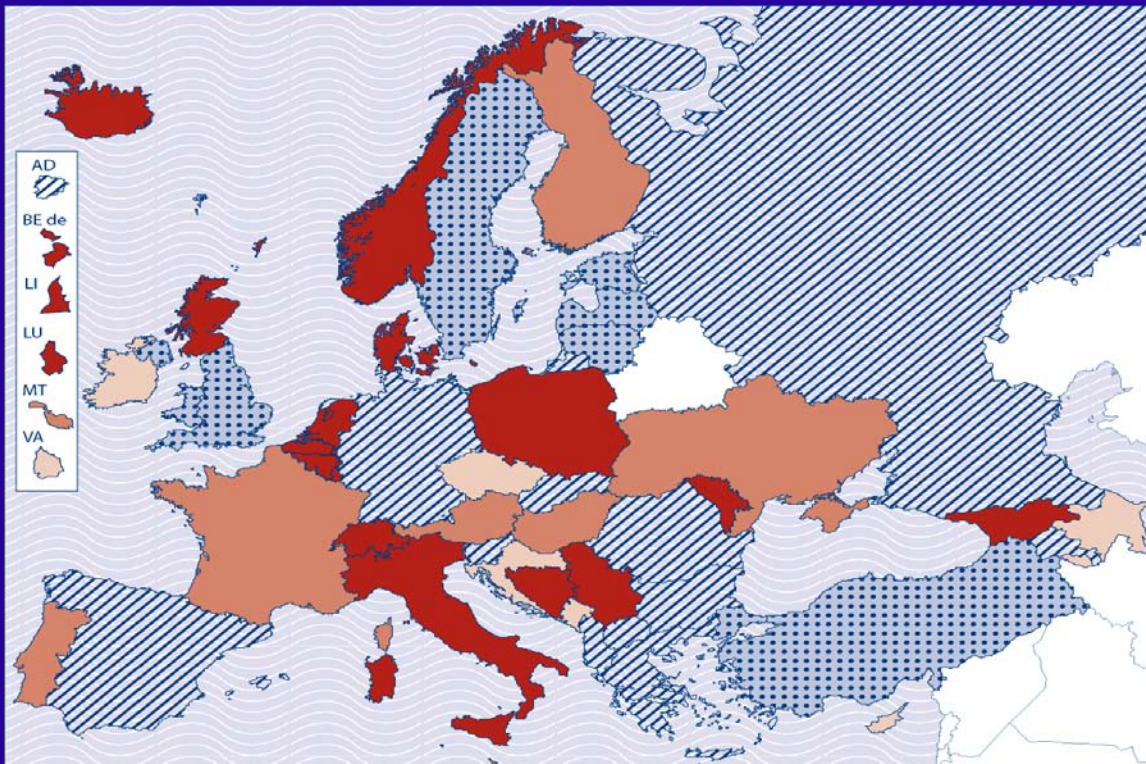


# Bologna Process members: 47





# Level of implementation of ECTS

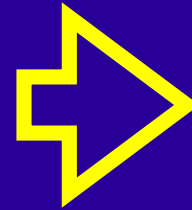


- 75 % + using ECTS based on learning outcomes and student workload
- 75 % + using ECTS based on student workload
- 75 % + using ECTS based on contact hours, or contact hours & student workload
- ▨ 75 % or less using ECTS with variety of credit definitions
- ▨ National credit systems in parallel. ECTS mainly used for transfer

Source: Eurydice

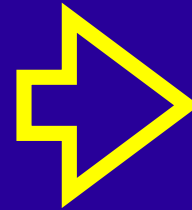
# Main aspects of the three-cycle system:

- Possibility to take the Master's degree at a different university



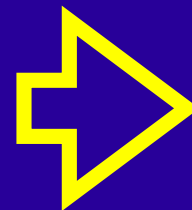
What are the barriers to overcome?

- 
- Employability with a Bachelor's degree



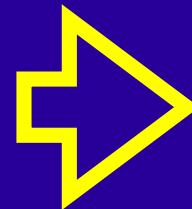
Is it enough for the market and the industries?

- 
- Mobility in a common educational and professional frame



Are degrees already equivalent in the "Bologna zone"?

- 
- European dimension



What is Europe?

# Diploma Supplement



## WHAT IS IT ?

- It is an official document issued by your university, which provides general information about your degree in a widely spoken language
- It is the key to the internationalisation of your curriculum!
- It should be issued free of charge by every university in the bologna zone

# Joint degrees

They are important because they increase the quality of teaching

They can be the perfect way to integrate one educational system with another

They are the best way to show that Europe is actually one large country!

A successful example: ERASMUS MUNDUS, with 110+ joint Master's degrees



# Employability

1 of 3



# Employability

It is an issue that raises more questions than answers:

1. At what stage is a graduate student considered as “employable”?
2. What skills are requested by the labour market?
3. How can the universities deal with employability?

# Employability

1. At what stage is a graduate student considered as “employable”?

- A “cut and paste mentality” has brought to a complete failure of the three-cycle system
- Employers do not value Bachelor's degrees; the Master degrees seem to have been accepted more easily
- In 2007, only 22 institutions throughout the Bologna zone expected their students to enter the labour market after the first cycle
- Only 38% of all academics consider employability a matter of concern

# Employability

## 2. What skills are requested by the labour market?

- A lack of attention to the skills requested by the employers has resulted in negative implications for curriculum development
- There is a negative attitude to change in the department level
- There is little communication and cooperation between academics and employers
- Lack of a common view between universities and companies



# Employability

## 3. How can the universities deal with employability?

- By partially connecting the foundations of higher education with the objectives of employers, industries and companies
- By putting a stress on the skills requested by the labour market
- By giving the possibility to students to undertake undergraduate internships
- By providing a job placement support

**One-million EURO question: how can the higher education world keep up with the continuous changes in society?**

# Employability

## Proposals:

- Defining which Bachelor's degrees make you employable and which ones do not
- Fostering the role of companies within the university
- Putting a stress on soft skills
- Extending diploma supplement to PhD's

# Social issues

2 of 3



# Social issues

There are 4 areas to be looked after:

- Economical issues
- Family and gender equality
- People with disabilities
- Selection procedures

# Social issues

## Economical issues

- Should universities be free of charge?
  - If not, what should be the fees?
- Should they be the same all over the country or should they be different in each university?
  - How could this affect the **social mixture** within the student population?
- Student loans vs. student salaries - which one?
- Cost of living

# Social issues

## Family and gender equality

- What can be done for students who already have a family?
- And what for pregnant women and single parents?
- Is part-time studying a valuable solution for every subject?
- Incentives for parents with more than a child studying?

**FACT: PART-TIME STUDENTS ARE MUCH OLDER,  
PARTICULARLY IN THE CASE OF WOMEN!**

# Social issues

People with disabilities

- Access to the university premises and facilities should be guaranteed to everyone
- Possibility to attend every lecture in the best possible way

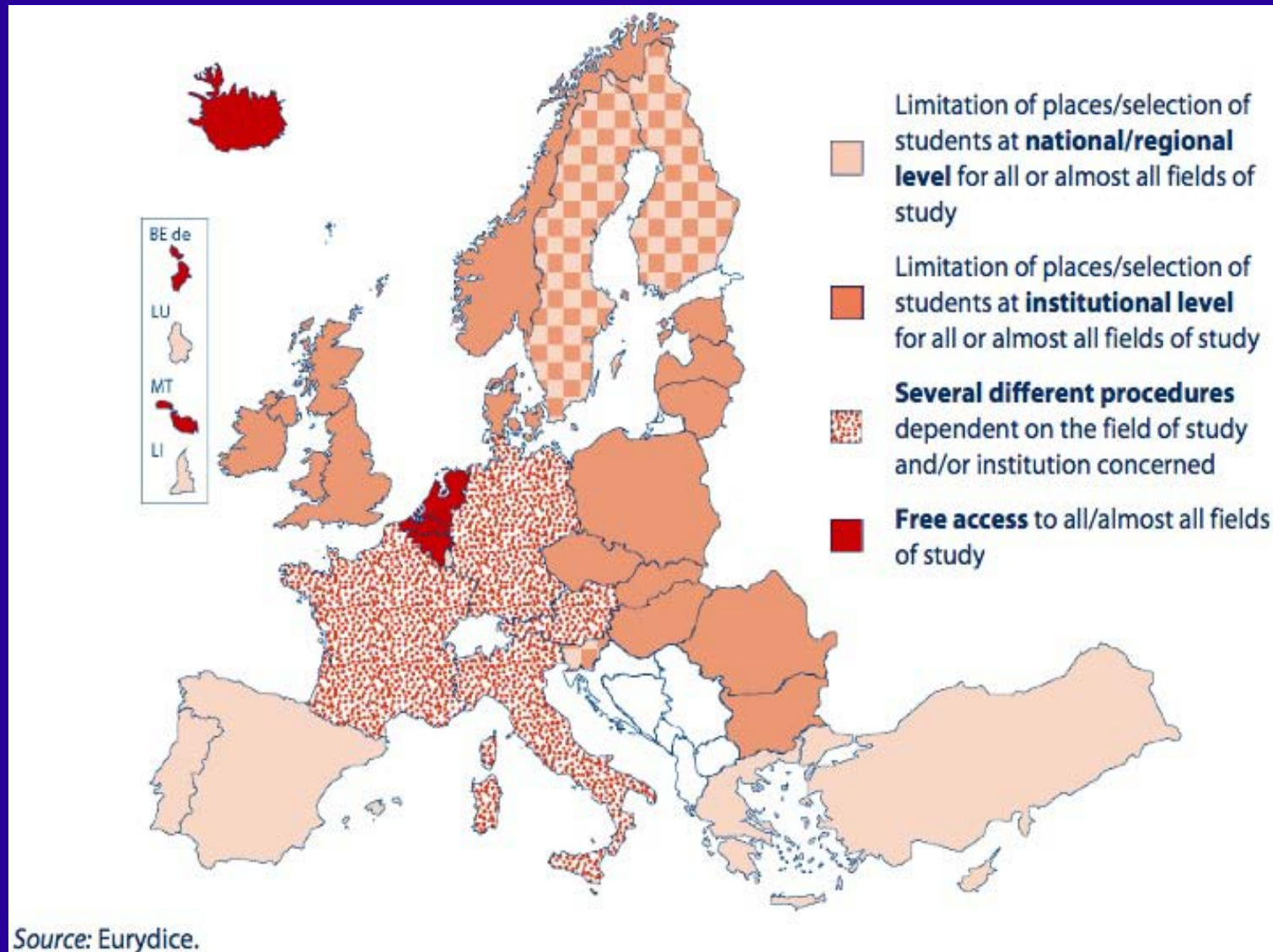
**A. Social inclusion at every cost**

**OR**

**B. Dedicated lectures?**

# Social issues

## Selection procedures





# Social issues

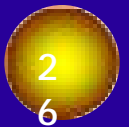
## Selection procedures

Overall Europe, there is a general trend towards limiting the access to faculties via selection procedures.

- Should it be like this both for first-cycle and second-cycle degrees?
- What is the role of Governments in determining the maximum number of students for a certain subject? (e.g. medical and artistic fields of study)
- How would free access affect employability?

# Quality Assurance

3 of 3



# Quality Assurance

The EHEA, with its 40 members, is characterised by a diversity of political and higher education systems, socio-cultural and educational traditions, languages, aspirations and expectations. This is why a single, monolithic approach to quality standards and quality assurance in higher education is widely considered as “inappropriate”.

This situation raises two questions:

- 1. What is quality? Is there a common definition?**
- 2. Is such a definition necessary?**

# Quality Assurance

European universities must assure the quality of the teaching they provide to students.

Only in this way they can fulfil one of the most important challenges regarding the EU: to become the most advanced economy based on culture and knowledge.

The educational standards have to be set at a national, European and institutional level, in order to provide a valid system of comparison among European higher education institutions.

# Quality Assurance

**National level:** there must be an external agency that assesses on a yearly basis all the academic institutions throughout the country.

**European level:** there is a strong need for a table of comparison in order to understand the differences between one academic system and the other.

**Institutional level:** universities must provide a common standard of teaching in order to be evaluated equally.

# Quality Assurance

## Introducing ENQA

ENQA stands for **European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education**, and is the body in charge of the dissemination of information, experiences and good practices in the field of quality assurance (QA) in higher education to European QA agencies, public authorities and higher education institutions.

Website: [www.enqa.eu](http://www.enqa.eu)

# The End!

Thank you for your attention

