

18.12.2025

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**Title**

A tale of two Bolognas : academic freedom in modern entrepreneurial universities / Peter Scott

**Publication year**

2014

**Source/Footnote**

In: Journal of the European higher education area. - 4 (2014) 3, S. 47 - 64

**Inventory number**

36934

**Keywords**

Bologna-Prozess ; Freiheit von Forschung und Lehre ; Ausland : Europa : Studenten, Studium, Lehre  
; Ausland : Europa : Hochschulwesen allgemein

**Abstract**

In the last two decades of the 20th century Bologna hosted two important events in the history of European higher education. The first was the drafting and signing of the Magna Charta Universitatum in 1988 and the second was the signing of the Bologna agreement by, initially, 27 European Ministers eleven years later. These two events are typically not seen as having much, if anything, in common - except that both had their origins in the same city, Bologna. However, the relationship between them, whether tensions and contradictions or complementarities and synergies, may reveal much about the dilemmas facing European higher education in the 21st century. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)