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The European higher education area : going the "Whole Nine Yards" with the Bologna Process or charting new territories?

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Abstract

The official launch of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in 2010, by ministers responsible for higher education in 47 European countries, raised public expectations and prompted a series of questions, especially from the wider public and the specialised press, regarding the impacts and future relevance of the Bologna Process. This article starts with an overview of how the process is seen from a variety of disciplinary views. It then provides a critical reflection on the evolution of the Bologna Process, from the point of view of what is largely deemed by the EHEA policy and practice community as achievements and challenges. The final aim of the article is to provide a possible answer to the question of whether the launch of the European Higher Education Area and the political call for its consolidation are mainly about realising the existing Bologna Process objectives or whether the newly established EHEA is increasingly seen as a political forum for European policy cooperation in higher education, which would impose some minimum requirements on the members, but also increasingly include 'non-traditional' topics for the Bologna Process, such as governance,

12.9.2025

funding etc. The political discourse in the latest EHEA Bucharest Communiqué is finally analysed in order to support this main question. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)