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Abstract

The Flemish government used the Bologna Process as a window of opportunity to implement thorough changes in the higher education system. From the academic year 2004–2005 onwards, the question arises what the actual effects of the policy changes have been and whether these effects are still in line with the initial goals of the Bologna Process. In order to assess the possible divergence between the intentions of Bologna and the results of this process, we applied Pettigrew's model (1987; Pettigrew et al., 1992) of organizational change to developments in Higher Education (HE) in Flanders. In a broad sense, Flanders has, together with other European countries, met the intended goals. When we focus on the details, gaps become apparent between the intended policy goals and the results at the system level. Flanders has been quick to adopt the Bologna goals, but has also been quick in adapting them. On the basis of the Flemish case, we conclude more in general that the Bologna Process has been broadened in scope in the course of its existence, partly based on an overly optimistic assessment of reaching the intended results. It might be time to refocus the process on a

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more limited number of goals, in order to leave room for every HE system to catch up with the original goals and to avoid a further deviation towards alternate results that might no longer be in line with what was intended initially. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)