

# Bologna Process – a New International Higher Education Regime

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# Introduction to the Research

- **Main Research Question** – How does the EU exert its power outside of its borders?
- **Conceptual Framework** – the EU acts as a normative player in the international arena
- **Main Hypothesis:** The EU uses the Bologna Process as an international regime in order to act as a hegemonic power in the field of higher education.

# What are International Regimes?

“Implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given area of international relations” (Krasner, 1982)

**Regime Theory asks to define political phenomena as regimes by looking at several elements:**

1. Regime formation (Regime initiation and institutionalization)
2. Regime outcomes (public goods)
3. Ruling mechanisms (interdependence and reciprocity)
4. Enforcement
5. Hegemonic behavior of actors (Power and Leadership)
6. Regime transformation
7. Spotting failures as “free riders”
8. Legitimacy

# Regime Typologies

- **Spontaneous order**— evolve from a general consensus among the participants without the intervention of an external power or early design.
- **Imposed order**— created by and for the hegemon, forced on the participants.
- **Negotiated order**— an outcome of a global cooperation aimed at finding agreed solution for a mutual problem.
- **Formal/classic Regime** — clear rules and ruling mechanism
- **Tacit Regime** — normative cooperation without any controlling mechanism or institution.

# Theoretical Perspectives

- **Neoliberalism** - which bases its analysis on constellations of interests; regimes as promoters of liberal economic order.
- **Realism** - which treats power relations among states as its key variable; regimes as a tool in the hand of the hegemon to exert its power and dominance.
- **Cognitivism** - which emphasizes actors' causal and social knowledge; regimes as socialization method through which actors learn and develop.
- **Marxist** – emphasizes class relations. Regimes as a controlling mechanism of the rich over the poor, global North over the global South.

# The Bologna Process

- European local initiative which aims at harmonizing all European HES, by building a mutual architecture for HE (1999-2010/20)
- The process aims to increase mobility of students and faculty, and to increase the efficiency of HEIs and HESs as a whole.
- Local-regional initiative turned into a global one by the development an “External Dimension” to the process.
- Today 49 countries are part of the process.
- Ever growing and expanding process – both in geography and in content

**NOT an EU initiative**

# **Bologna Process as a Regime**

# Regime Formation and Implementation

- Historical agenda settings – Maastricht Treaty, Magna Carta Universitatum and the Sorbonne declaration.
- Bologna Declaration and the founding of the “Bologna Process”, secretariat, BFUG, BP-WG etc.
- Ministerial Communiqués (1999-2015)
- Distribution of rules, norms, standards and guidelines – ENQA, ESG, Diploma Supplement, ECTS, Internationalization as an objective Etc.
- International implementation by establishing/providing support to institutional infrastructure: ENQA, ENIC-NARIC, BPF, HERE, etc.
- International implementation by funding: Tempus, Erasmus+ (Capacity Building and Mobility schemes)

# The External Dimension of the BP

- Magna Carta Universitatum 1988 (signed by 388 European Rectors - declarative)
- Sorbonne Declaration 1998 (4 major countries in Europe)
- Bologna Declaration 1999 (measures and action lines for signatory members only)
- Prague Communiqué 2001 “Furthering the Bologna Process”
- Berlin Communiqué 2003 “International Openness”
- Bergen Communiqué 2005 – External Dimension
- Looking Out – Bologna in a Global Setting (conceptualization of the external dimension)
- The establishment of the Bologna Policy Forum 2008
- The establishment of the International-Openness WG - 2010
- Bucharest Communiqué – Cooperation with other **regions** in the world
- Yerevan Communiqué 2015 – international governance by institutions and standards

# Externalization of the BP (diffusion mechanisms)

- **Externalization by Institutional Infrastructure**

The BP has promoted the establishment of several new bodies or the reformation of existed ones (ENQA, BFUG, BPF Etc.).

- **Externalization through Transparency**

As the Bologna Process gained international prominence, the ministers responsible for higher education in the EHEA countries started actively to disseminate the reforms and its tools.

- **Externalization by the Bologna Policy Forum**

As the Bologna Process grew larger and gained international interest, the need for an international dissemination strategy became clearer – an international open forum was created.

- **Externalization through the Inclusion of Non-State Actors**

Aside from the 47 member states and the CoE, the Bologna Process enjoys the active participation of 8 NGOs which act as consultative members in the policy shaping/making processes

- **Externalization Through Funding – ERASMUS+ Framework**

The Erasmus+, Lifelong Learning Programme, The Erasmus Mundus Programme, Tempus (modernisation of HE), Alfa and others

# Bologna Process as a Public Good

The Bologna Process as a facilitator of international higher education integration creates a framework which enables all nations/HES/HEI to promote their internationalization strategies.

It is an inclusive process which a nation can adapt even without joining the treaty.

# Regime Transformation

The evolution of the BP:

- from 6 principles in 1999 to 10 today
- Enlargement process (from 29 members in 1999 to 48 today)
- Changes in the ruling mechanism and the creation of WGs
- Development of Bologna Process' "Dimensions": "Social Dimension", "External Dimension" and "International Openness".
- Governance and implementation through international bodies and standards (TEMPUS, ERASMUS+, ENQA, ESU Etc.)

# Meta-Dynamics in the Life of the Bologna Process

## **1999-2001**

Inter-governmental initiative of Europe's 4 leading countries with the support of several IGOs for the enhancement of the academic harmonization of European HESs

## **2001-2005**

A tool in the hands of the EU which can be used to ease on the implementation of Lisbon Strategy

## **2005-2020**

International governing method, an international HE regime, which promotes the compatibility between the European and non-European HESs.

# Leadership

The Bologna Process as part of the European integration and regionalization process.

## **Lisbonisation of the Bologna Process**

By linking the Bologna Process and EU's Lisbon Strategy, in light of the leading role the EU has taken upon itself in financing the Process, it has become the hegemon of the Bologna Regime.

## **Transparency and legitimacy (BPF)**

European led international epistemic community: inclusion of non-partner countries and non-state actors

# The BP and the EU

- Higher education is mainly a local policy area in which the EU has a very limited legal competence.
- The commission gained its full membership status in 2001
- The Commission funds the BP's meetings, dissemination efforts, and even bodies taking part in the process as individual actors (ESU, ENQA, BusinessEurope Etc.)
- The Commission funds Erasmus+ (capacity building projects and mobility schemes).
- The commission identifies the mission of the BP with its own aspiration to become the most competitive knowledge based economy in the world (Lisbon Strategy)

# Lisbon Strategy

- The European Union is confronted with a quantum shift resulting from globalization and the challenges of a new knowledge-driven economy.
- NEW strategic goal for the next decade (2000): *to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion*
- Higher education as a growth engine – the contribution of HEIs to achieve the strategy's objectives.
- Harmonization, standardization, facilitation of HE in order to strengthen the attractiveness of European HE.

# Lisbon Strategy and Bologna

- Higher education at the service of the labor market and economy – outcomes based learning (LO and EQF)
- Development of measurable academic outcomes (ECTS, ENQA)
- Promotion of standardized documentation and tools (DS)
- Education as a growth engine – “the role of Universities in the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy”. Meaning: higher education is aimed to a specific goal.
- Increasing Europe attractiveness in the eyes of the foreign (fee paying) students.

European Parliament report on the implementation of the Bologna Process, 2015

(The European Parliament) Underlines that study programmes should focus on long-term market demands; stresses also that employability means that students should master a wide range of different competences preparing them for the labour market and equipping them for lifelong learning; encourages in this regard active dialogue and national and crossborder cooperation on programmes and work placements between the university community and business, which could help counter the economic crisis, stimulate economic growth, and contribute to a knowledge-based society and thus provide opportunities in a wider social sense; encourages HEIs to be open to transdisciplinary studies, the creation of university research institutes and collaboration with diverse partners;“

(European Parliament, 2015: Art. 35)

# Legitimacy

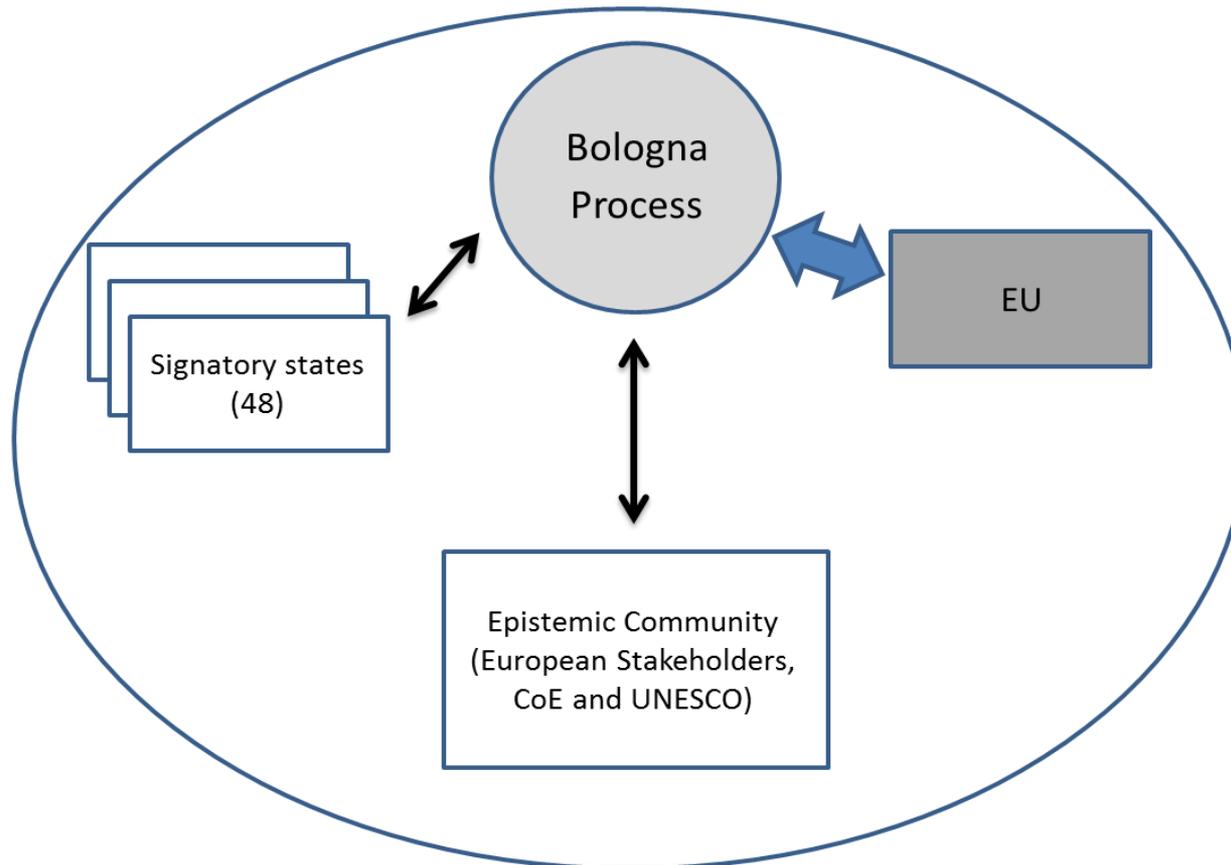
- Inclusion of Non-state actors.
- Creation of an international epistemic community in the field of HE (BPF open for non-signatory state's representatives).
- Countries wish to learn and join the non-legal binding process – external validation.
- Semi-open club – BPF, HERE forum, Tempus/Erasmus

# BP as a Regime - Summary

“Implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given area of international relations” (Krasner, 1982)

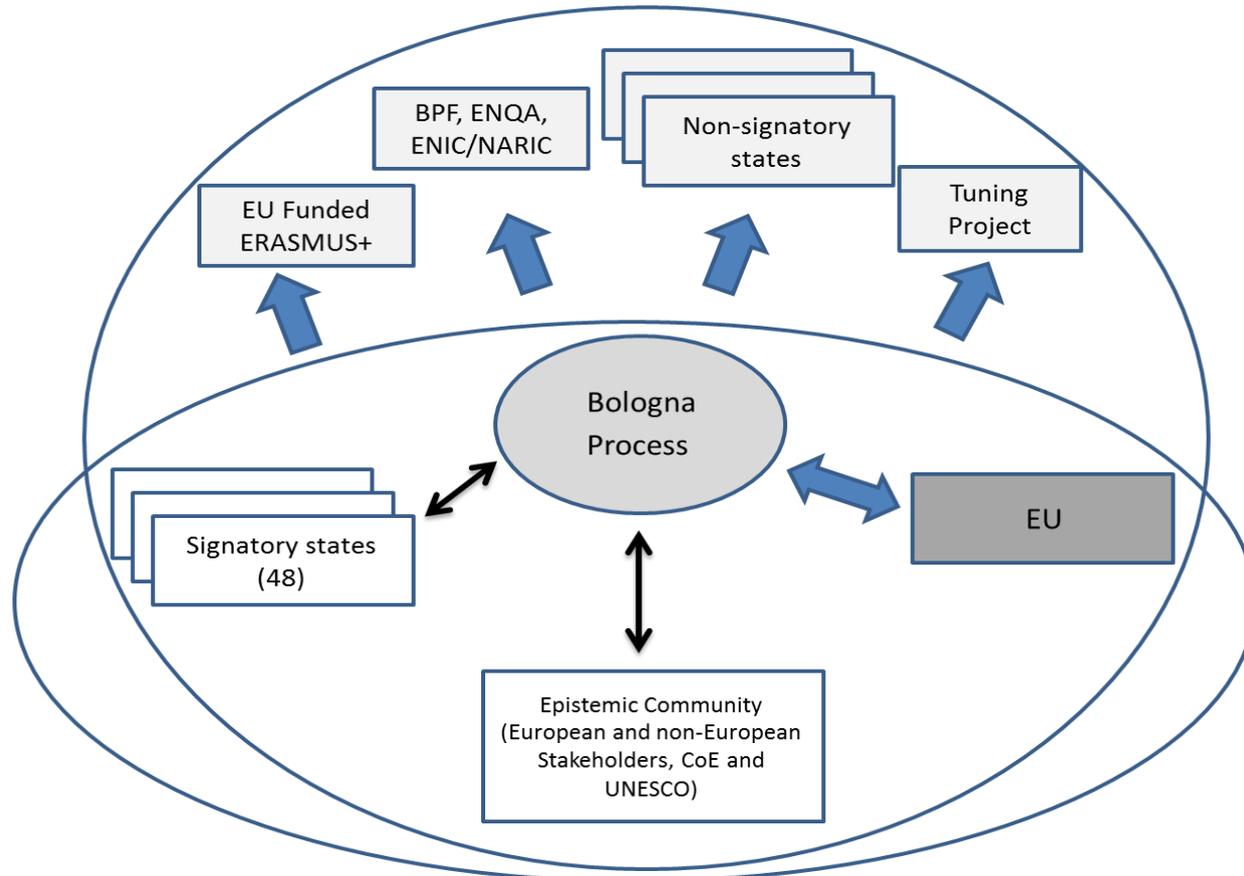
- Declaration-based cooperation which evolves in an incremental institutionalization process.
- Backed by a European-led secretariat
- Provides and protects a public good
- Periodically meetings of all stakeholders
- Monitored by a benchmarking mechanism (OMC)
- Hegemonic (and intellectual) leadership
- International influence – The External Dimension
- Enjoys international legitimation

# European Regional HE Regime



איור מס' 1: תהליך בולוניה כמשטר אזורי - מבוסס על המודל של (Pursiainen and Medvedev, 2005: 23)

# International HE Regime



# Europeanization

Europeanization is a Processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, ‘ways of doing things’ and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies.

(Ladrech, 1994)

# Tibor Navracsics, the EU commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

“Today, in Europe and across the globe, “Bologna” continues to signify a highly ambitious, successful example of pan-European cooperation – one where the European Commission is playing an active part’

“Bologna embodies ‘remarkable’ efforts at ‘cooperation to internationalize higher education, establishing an interlocking set of **European tools and a common language for reforms: standards and guidelines for quality assurance, a common credit system and results integrated into a qualifications framework**”

# Critique

- Link between HE and economic goals (Outcome based academia)
- Bologna Process is being used by the EU as a mechanism complementing the Lisbon Strategy, which intends to assist Europe in becoming “the most competitive knowledge based economy in the world”.
- Without any legal competence in this area, the EU successfully externalizing various European tools that strike at the heart of fundamental domestic policies for education in and beyond Europe.

# The Case Studies – Main Findings (Canada)

- Uses the BP as a reference for the development of Canadian internationalization strategy.
- Uses the BP as a catalyst for cooperation among provinces and territories (via bodies like the CMEC, CBIE).
- Uses the BP as a reference for the creation of a knowledge-based economy.
- CETA – BP as a basis for recognition of degrees which will facilitate the mobility of educated workers.

# The Case Studies – Main Findings (Australia)

- BP was grasped as a threat to Australian domination in HE service market.
- BP as a reference for integration model within Australian HEIs to foster the Australian attractiveness to the foreign student.
- BP as an inspiration while developing the Australian academic QA mechanism.

# The Case Studies – Main Findings (Israel)

- Israel tried twice (2007/8) to join the process but was denied.
- Uses the BP as a model/catalyst for internationalization and cooperation among Israeli HEIs.
- Israel demands academic departments to implement LO in their academic programs, and assures it through the applied QA mechanism.
- Israel participates in Erasmus+, Horizon 2020 and other EU funded programs aiming at implementing the BP
- Bologna Training Center at BGU

# 7 dynamics in non-European Countries Response to the Bologna Process

- Recognizing the significance of the BP as a world-wide reform;
- Reluctantly cooperative – fear of harming existing ties with other players;
- Recognizing the benefits of Bologna's policy tools and features;
- Acceptance vs. rejection of policies and tools;
- Exploiting new opportunities;
- Monitoring the European developments promoting market-driven HES;
- Bologna Process as an international reference for internationalization of higher education.

# Conclusions

- Bologna Process – more than a “process”: it is a reference for many HESs around the world.
- European presence in non-European HESs – policies and agencies.
- Brings to an influence of European practices, norms and values on non-European countries.
- EU as a hegemonic actor in the international arena using non-coercive means in order to take HE “Somewhere”
- Which values are actually diffused by the BP?
- The Philosophy of Bologna – outcome based academia.
- Critique – Bologna Process as a neo-liberal policy (standardization, commodification and marketization of HE)

**Bologna Process – a European international higher education regime.**