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Survey report

Bologna Hub Peer Support II

Main take-aways from the preparatory survey of selected HEI

February 2024

Prepared by EUA, BHPS II project partner

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Higher Education



What is BHPS II?

- Builds on the achievements of the project [“Bologna Hub Peer Support”](#) (2020-2022)
- The main objective is to continue fostering the implementation of the Bologna key commitments and the application of the Bologna tools at higher education institutions (HEIs) throughout the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)
- Co-funded by the EU in their support of the EHEA

Coordinator:	German Academic Exchange Service (Germany)
Full partners:	Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Germany) European Students' Union (ESU) European University Association (EUA) Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Hellenic Republic (Greece)
Associated partners:	Conference of Spanish University Rectors (Spain) Ministry of Education and Youth (Albania) German Accreditation Council (Akkreditierungsrat)
Duration:	1 September 2022 – 31 December 2024

The aims of this presentation

- Present findings of a preparatory study conducted among selected 33 HEI who have applied for BHPS II counselling missions
- Raise discussion questions related to the findings, to probe deeper into the implications and potential avenues for further exploration
- Offer some conclusions for HEI in the EHEA

Objectives of the preparatory survey

- Offer a self-assessment of the HEIs on the degree of the implementation of the Bologna key commitments
- Answers intended to give the experts a solid overview of the situation prior to the counselling missions
- Report with data provides a snapshot of needs as it relates to implementing certain priority areas
- Results are qualitative, and reflect the diversity of institutions and countries engaged in BHPS II
- Results must be taken in context

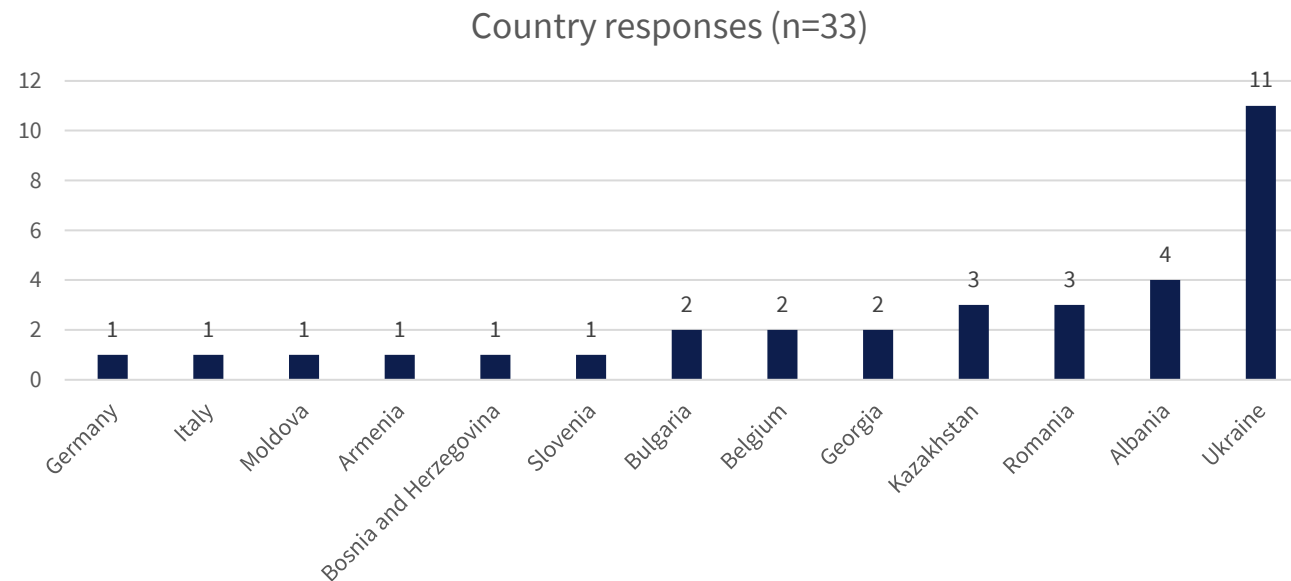
Methodology and structure

- Conducted between April and June 2023
- Sent to 33 HEI selected to participate in the project, who responded to a call for interest
- Sections of the survey were answered in accordance with selection of thematic areas of focus for the counselling missions
- Themes of focus within the survey:
 - ECTS, learning outcomes and curricula development
 - Innovative approaches to teaching and learning/ digitalisation
 - Internationalisation
 - Recognition
 - Quality assurance

Participating institutions

Distribution per country

- In response to the original call for interest for BHPS II, in total 91 applications were received
- A large demand has been noted from Ukranian institutions, which were also targeted in the selection due to current operational challenges caused by crisis and conflict
- A large applicant pool was also from Kazakhstan and Albania
- Few applications were received from EU and Western European countries



Diversity of HEI in the selection

Geographic, size and mission

Examples:

Varna University of Management, Bulgaria

Bachelors/Masters – Business management, IT, tourism, hotel management...

Academy of Physical Education and Mass Sports, KZ

Opened 2021/ Science and training for elite sports

Odesa I. I. Mechnikov National University, Ukraine

Comprehensive university

Thomas More, Belgium

University of Applied Science, 21 bachelors in English

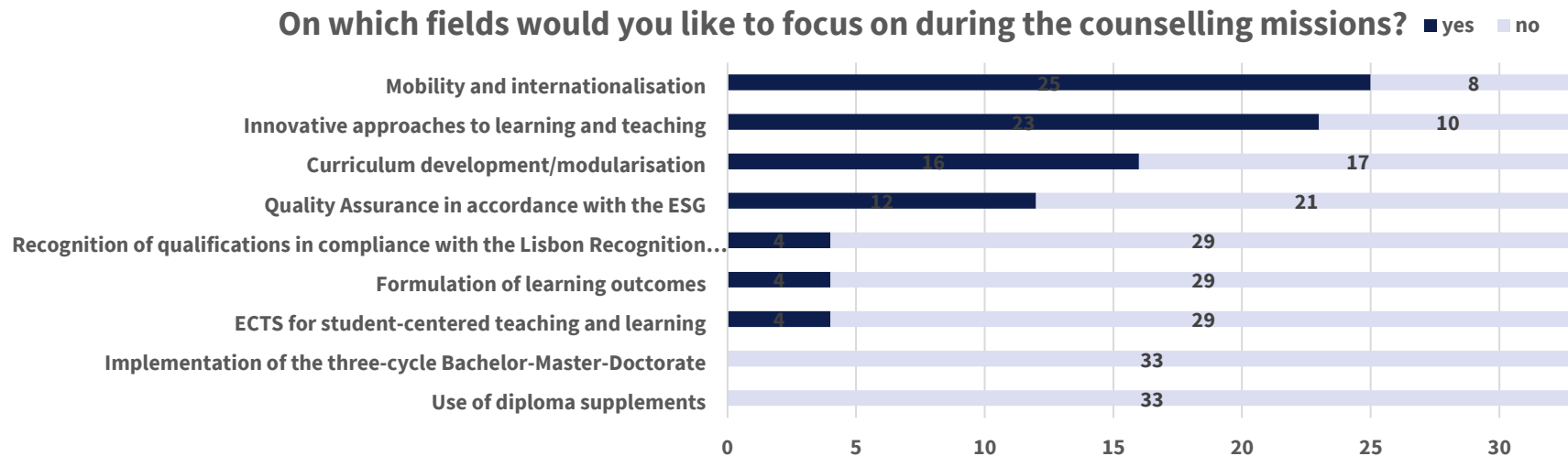
European University Institute

Postgraduate studies and research focus/EU institution

Primary interests

- The respondents were able to choose minimum one and maximum three thematic fields
- “Mobility and internationalisation” and “Innovative approaches to learning and teaching” were the top choices followed by “Curriculum development/modularisation”. These broad categories likely relate to a number of current trends that are shaping higher education, from digitalisation to micro-credentials. It is not clear if the HEI associate this directly with the Bologna Process
- Relatively low to no interest in some issues which are at the core of the Bologna Process:
 - Quality assurance, recognition, learning outcomes, student centred learning
- “Implementation of a 3-cycle system” and “Use of diploma supplement” were not selected

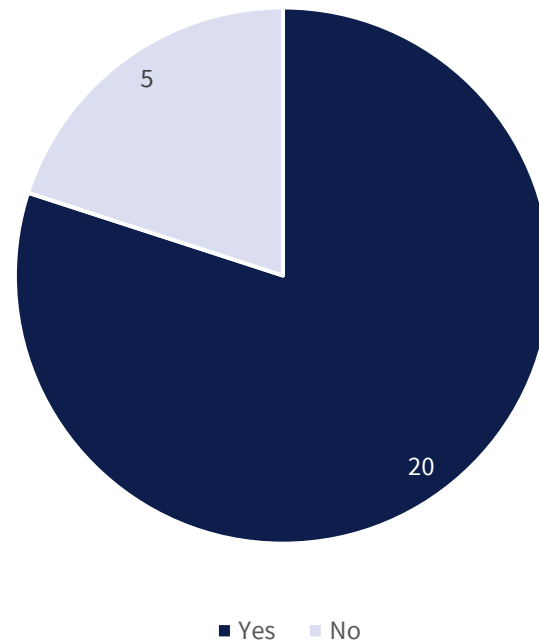
Possible explanations? A) these issues are solved B) they are not yet considered



Internationalisation strategies

- 25 answers
- Majority have a strategy (5 do not)

Has your institution adopted an internationalisation strategy?



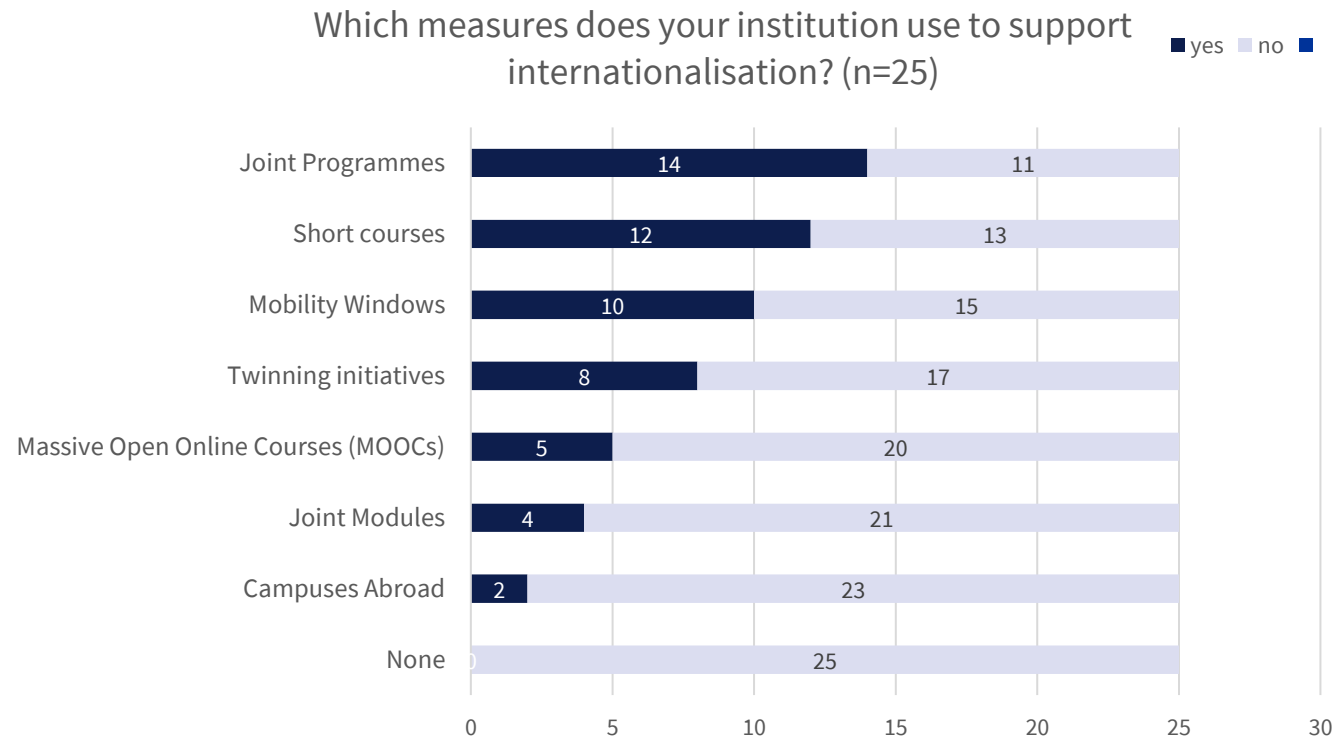
Factors that influence internationalisation in your country or institution

Selection of remarks

- “Kazakhstan is situated on the crossroads between Europe and Asia, meaning that we could act a bridge in all spheres including higher education”
- “To fulfil the requirements of Accreditation; to become part of global academic society”
- “Erasmus+; cooperation in research & teaching”
- “European integration of Ukraine and the war”
- “The state programs that allocate places for academic mobility of students, teaching staff and top managers”
- “EU benchmark regarding mobility: 20%”
- “Outflux of Ukrainian students due to war and the necessity to compete on the global educational service markets”

Measures for internationalisation

- 25 answers
- Joint programmes and short courses stated as the most popular measures for internationalisation, though only for 14 and 12 respondents respectively



Open questions: For those who cited 'joint modules', what form does this take and what role does collaborative online learning play?

Digitalisation challenges

Top 5

- Resistance to change
- Resources available
- Lack of training
- Infrastructure
- Development of inter-disciplinary programmes

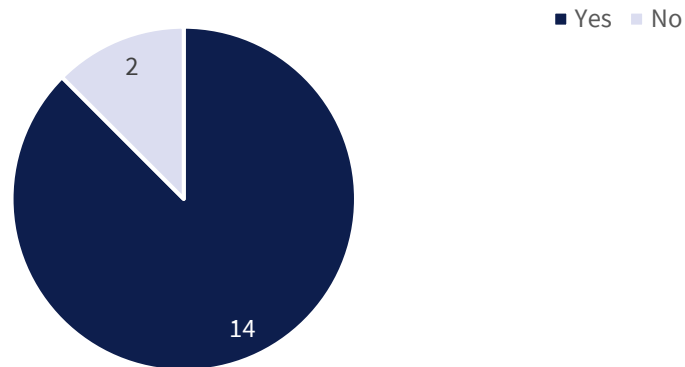
Open question: Are these issues contemplated in the digitalisation and digital tools strategies cited in the previous question?

Curriculum development

- 16 answers
- Curricula are largely guided by frameworks and have degrees of flexibility

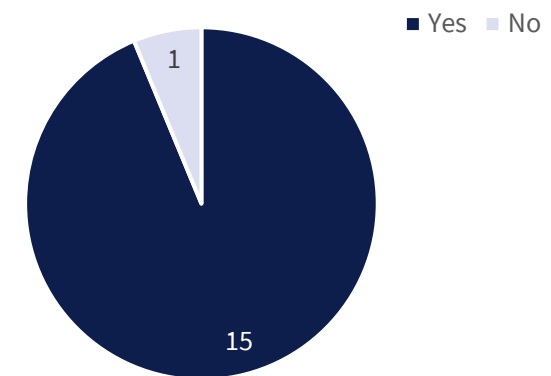
Flexibility

Do you have flexibility to adhere/support curriculum development regarding different focuses on employability, global citizenship, entrepreneurship etc.?



Frameworks

Does the institution have a curriculum framework or common structure?



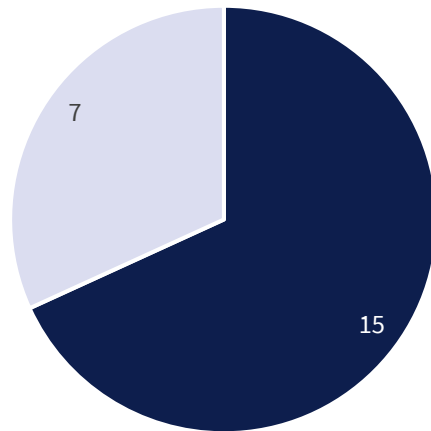
Open questions: But who decides on flexibility? Do students have flexibility in their learning path? Do teachers have flexibility in curriculum design?

Innovative approaches to teaching and learning

- 22 answers
- About two-thirds have digitalisation strategies and policies on digital tools.

Flexibility

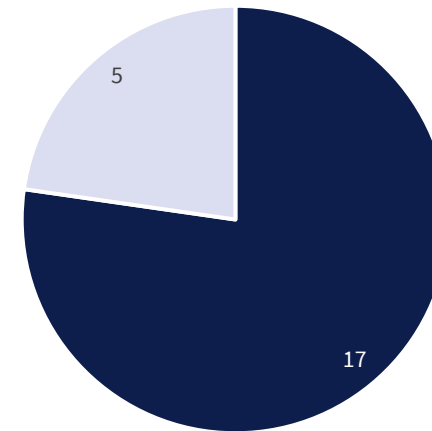
Does your institution pursue a digitalisation strategy?



■ yes ■ no

Frameworks

Does your institution have a policy on the use of digital tools?



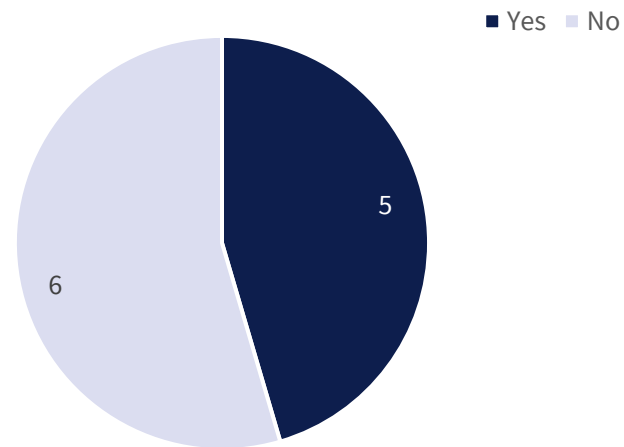
■ Yes ■ No

Open question: But what do these strategies entail?

Micro-credentials

- A form of short courses, or potentially MOOCs
- A trending issue for the EU and Bologna, but only 11 answers, and only 5 confirmed they use them
- Despite the fact short courses are seen as a measure for internationalisation (in 12 respondents) and curricula seems to have a degree of flexibility, micro-credentials are not yet a widely known or used tool in the sample

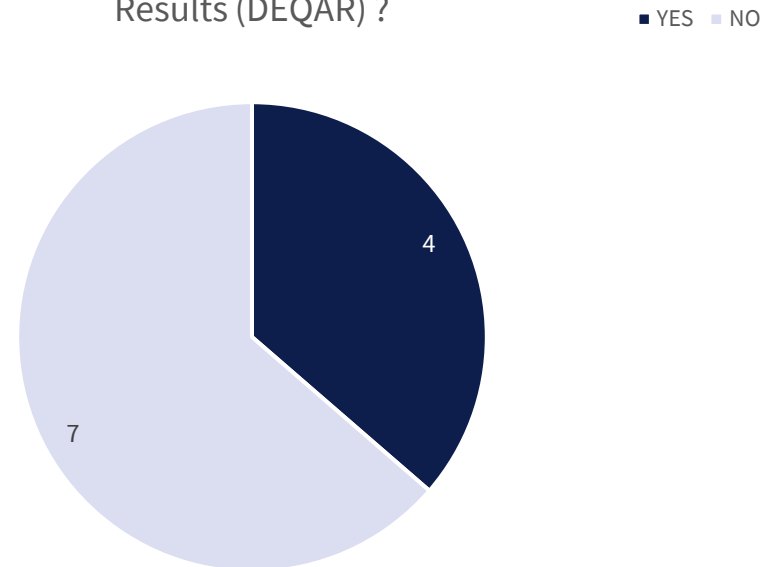
Do you use microcredentials? (n=11)



Quality assurance

- Only 11 institutions selected this as a priority
- Four are from countries with a national agency registered in DEQAR, implicating a compliance with the ESG at national level/for external QA

Is your HEI registered in the Database of External Quality Assurance
Results (DEQAR) ?



Quality assurance challenges

Selection of remarks

- “Difficulty to measure the staff academic and research performance”
- “To develop the effective system of internal quality assurance in accordance with the ESG”
- “Lack of competence in experts is the challenge and it does not provide institutions with relevant external evaluation”
- “Provision of high-quality educational services to students of higher education. Increasing the relevant ratings and forming a positive image of the university”
- “As...[our institution] is outside of any national higher education system, there is no obligation for...[us] to follow any particular QA scheme”
- “Lack of working internal QA system on an institutional level. Some actions are taken, but they are mostly non-systematic and done to react to external accreditation procedures”

Open questions: Are institutions entitled to establish their own internal QA system? Is it a requirement? How is this taken forward?

Some observations/conclusions

- “Mobility and internationalisation” and “Innovative approaches to learning and teaching” are highly cited areas of need across a diverse sample of ‘older’ Western European Bologna countries and newer Bologna signatory countries
- This exceeds the interest in some of the Bologna ‘basics’ like a three-cycle system, ECTS, recognition and even quality assurance
- This said, challenges with quality assurance culture, designing and implementing a national but also institutional systems and training staff and experts persist
- Digitalisation strategies are not uncommon, but resistance to change and lack of staff training persist

Some observations/conclusions

- BHPS II remains a flexible tool for targeted support to very diverse HEI in EHEA
- It is not clear if the participating HEIs associate their top priorities and thematic areas of interest (e.g. digitalisation) with the Bologna Process or not.
- While there is high demand from newer accession Bologna countries and also from Ukraine (currently in crisis), the added-value of such an exercise for HEI in Western Europe/longer-term Bologna countries should be explored and promoted where necessary.

Open question: What expectations do you have regarding the potential tangible benefits that the Bologna Process could yield for your institution?

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