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The ASEAN Higher Education Forum (AHEF) 2015
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Trends and Challenges in ASEAN Higher Education towards ASEAN Integration

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INTRODUCTION

The ASEAN member states are actively working for ASEAN integration to become one community since the end of 2015. Even though they are aware of the three pillars of integration, namely the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC); it is undeniable that many of the public sources of information regarding ASEAN, especially the media, repetitively promote the "ASEAN Economic Community – AEC" while the other two pillars are less referred. This incident is understandable as people are likely to perceive a tangible issue rather than a sensitive issue of political-security or the abstract socio-cultural pillar. However, under the socio-cultural pillar, it is undoubted that education is a keystone serving all the essential segments towards the well-integrated single community.

The establishment of AEC on 31 December 2015 allows the free flow of capital, goods, services and people and also drives the proactive collaboration in trade, services and investment to potentially foster economic development in the region. It is clear that the ASEAN leaders made a decision to engage the AEC as the initial step of ASEAN integration and highlight "Thinking Globally, Prospering Regionally". Therefore, it is essential for particular higher education institutions to effectively adapt to the new regional challenges in order to successfully achieve the goals of building the ASEAN community.

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW?

In general, when considering the ASEAN Statistical Data 2014[1], it shows the demographic size of more than 625 million inhabitants and 50.8% is aged 20-55 years old. The economic potential of ASEAN is highly considerable and attractive not only to the ASEAN member States but also to countries outside the region.

With more than 87% of population aged 5-54 years old, there is a high demand for basic education, at least primary education, but also for higher education to ensure their socio-economic advancement. Particularly as this would result iin higher expected earnings and better quality of life. Therefore, higher education will play a significant role as a driving force in order to enhance and produce high-skilled human resources which not only bring about positive changes and beneficial impacts to societies but also to facilitate and enhance regional connectivity (people-to-people) which will in the end contribute to economic growth at national and regional level. The current number of higher education institutions constantly on the rise, and currently at approximately 7,400 higher education institutions[2] which is a result of the demand for higher education due to rapid economic growth in ASEAN. In this regard, it is clear that the education situation systems and status among 10 Member States are different in terms of level of development and system depending on its cluster of economic status. The education policy of each cluster is highlighted in Table 1.

Table 1: Higher education policy focus of ASEAN Member States based on the classification of economic status[3]

Economic Status	ASEAN Member State	Higher Education Policy Focus
Low/Low Middle Income Country	Cambodia Lao PDR Myanmar Viet Nam	• Policy reform & system expansion • Increasing student enrollment • Enhancing infrastructure development • Quality Assurance (QA) development and implementation
Middle Income Country	Indonesia Malaysia Philippines Thailand	• Quality improvement • Research collaboration • Internationalization
High Income Country	Brunei Singapore	• **Brunei** 　▪ Increasing international recognition 　▪ Diversifying global partnerships

		• **Singapore** ▪ International quality excellence ▪ Cutting-edge research and innovation oriented

Then, the current situation of higher education in ASEAN is still diverse due to different levels of economic development, education foundation system, etc., that shows in Table 2.

Table 2: Current situation of higher education in ASEAN[3,4]

Economic status	Countries	Current situations
Lower income Low-middle income	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Viet Nam	• High enrollment demand • Threaten of education quality • Less access on higher education • Lack of resource support • Limited qualified faculty & staff • More opportunity for private HEIs • Emphasis more on teaching for skill improvement
Middle-income	Indonesia Malaysia Philippines Thailand	• High enrollment demand • Emphasis on education quality improvement • Less public expenditure by shifting cost to students • Emphasis more on research-oriented policy • Controlled/limited oversea branch campuses
High-income	Brunei	• Increase public expenditure • More international academic cooperation
	Singapore	• Emphasis more on cutting-edge R&D and innovation • Emphasis on international profile & partnerships • Hosting oversea branch campuses (13)

WHAT'S NEXT?

Interestingly, globalization is playing a significant role in higher education development, as the UNESCO has announced in "The Post-2015 Trend in Higher Education"[5] that highlights the issues of education for sustainable development, global citizenship, etc. With reference to this report, there are five components that will be guiding the direction of higher education policy and development including 1) Internationalization/Globalization, 2) Quality Assurance, 3) ICT for higher education, 4) Diversification of financial and resource support, and 5) Massification on higher education. In order to cope with the dynamic trend of post-2015, it is necessary for higher education institutions to enable an adaptive reform or restructure their policies

and strategic management to meet the expectation of stakeholders in terms of quality and competency of graduates as high-qualified human resources.

Since the process of ASEAN integration is accelerated for 2015 to 2025, it also creates a dynamic of change in all sectors and particularly in the sector of higher education. By having such pressure on regional integration as the way to create regionalization in ASEAN, the higher education changes will be greatly impacted in order to achieve the expected goal of regionalization. It is clear that the external pressure on regionalization or ASEAN integration will cause diversity of demand and supply on higher education as shown in Table 3. In this connection, the higher education institutions must be well-prepared for such challenges.

Table 3: Effects of ASEAN integration on higher education[3,4]

Effects of ASEAN Integration on Higher Education?
• Raising the enrollment demand in higher education
• Increasing cross-border education flux/mobility
• Increasing pressure from society on higher education quality
• Expanding the diversification of higher education providers
• Widening gap of the inequality of accessibility in higher education
• Opening up a potential investment on higher education
• Accelerating regional academic cooperation/networking for uplifting academic excellence
• Enhancing possible regional brain circulation through academic exchange/cooperation
• Accelerating the harmonization of higher education systems for regional recognition
• Shifting the cost of higher education from public funding to students

With this in mind, the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) has intentionally foreseen the important roles of higher education to support the AEC integration efforts. Particularly in terms of human resource development some reports[5,6] already indicate the seven overarching challenges to be considered as followed;

1) Maintaining and improving education quality
2) Improving the relevance of curriculum and instruction
3) Increasing and better utilizing the financial resources available
4) Increasing of private HEI and balancing the continued expansion of access
5) Catering to the knowledge and skills development through informal education
6) Minimizing Corruption and Politicization of Education

7) Interdependence of national policy capabilities, in finance, migration, government revenues, and education

Nevertheless, at the 27th ASEAN Summit in November 2015, the leaders already endorsed the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Higher Education[7] that emphasizes on nine aspects and is possibly summarized into 1) quality education, 2) intra-ASEAN mobility of students and scholars, 3) University-Government-Industry-Community cooperation (Triple Helix Plus Cooperation), and 4) diversity of higher education for innovation-driven ASEAN community. Furthermore, the ASEAN Ministers Meeting (ASED) will approve the ASEAN 5-year Work Plan on Education (2015-2020) that will be guiding higher education institutions to have closed cooperation to successfully achieve the community building goals. Undoubtedly, it is essential that the higher education harmonization will be one of key mechanisms to enhance higher education quality and raise recognition of degrees within and across region. When the higher education quality can continually improve and meet the international standard, ASEAN graduates will be highly competitive not only at national or regional labour markets but also on global level.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, in order to achieve regionalization, higher education institutions (HEIs) must change themselves from traditional policy and management to be institutions with proactive policies and adaptive and cooperative management through promoting academic mobility and cooperation from bilateral to multi-lateral cooperation within the ASEAN region and beyond. Moreover, there are not only many challenges in ASEAN Community post-2015 but also new demands in higher education caused by fast economic development, high population growth, widening social-economic status with a growing middle class, networking or closer cooperation, multi-cultural environment, high diversity, fast ICT development, etc. In this regard, it is important to have an ongoing discussion and prepare to change the roles of HEIs to also serve these new global trends based on sustainable development goals (SDGs) and others such as Education for All, Education for Sustainable Development, global citizenship, etc.

In conclusion, it is necessary to upgrade the roles of higher education which is not only to involve education systems, mechanisms and quality towards a balanced discipline

base to meet the real national and regional demands, but also to improve fair accessibility, diversify modes of study and enhance good citizenships. Thus, the future ASEAN community will have highly qualified human resources by which the higher education institutions will play a significant role to shape our youths equipped with *"Good Head"* (analytical, critical, creative, decisive skills), *"Big Heart"* (ethical and moral minded), and *"Skillful Hands"* (technical skills).

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The Mekong River Basin: Comprehensive Water Governance; Ecological rationalities of the traditional home garden system in the Chao Phraya Basin, Thailand; and Impacts of aquaculture on population dynamics of razor Clam (Solen regularis Dunker) at Mae Klong estuary, Thailand are examples of her other researches.

The Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area from Consolidation to the Search of a New Impetus

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INTRODUCTION

The Bologna process is a European voluntary intergovernmental process, that aims to create an European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Informally launched by four countries at La Sorbonne in Paris in 1998, it has been structured progressively and was officially established in 2010. Today it represents the main framework for reforms in higher education in the Grand Europe[1] of 48 countries.

The EHEA is based on the assumption that policies and goals agreed at European level will be implemented nationally and within Higher Education Institutions with a strong commitment of all the stakeholders including students. In following such development, the Bologna process is viewed as an example of a successful policy coordination of national policies and regional cooperation, beyond the European Union. Moreover, it has been able to build bridges with other regions of the world.

However, the context is changing and the European Higher Education Area is faced with new challenges. According to the last Communiqué signed in Yerevan in May 2015, two main issues will be discussed to prepare for the next conference in Paris in 2018: the implementation and the consequences of non-implementation of the agreed commitments as well as the definition of new goals to lead to a new vision for the EHEA beyond 2020.

This paper aims to examine the roots of the Bologna Process to explain its main principles and action lines since 1998. This historical overview will lead result in questioning the main challenges that will be faced by policy makers from 2015 to 2018.

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[1] The reference of the Grand Europe of nations comes from the perimeter of the Council of Europe (www.coe.int).

The analysis is based on official Bologna documents and on the experience of the author through her commitment to the internationalisation of higher education and the Bologna Process development[2].

AT THE ORIGINS OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS
In a first step, the following will return to the origins of the Bologna process and its early beginning 20 years ago.

The core role of the European Union (EU) policies
The European Economic Community, created in 1957[3], followed by the European Union in 1992[4], aims at creating an internal market of goods, people, services and capital. As part of the new enhanced cooperation in the 1992 treaty research became a new competence, nevertheless higher education still remain national competence for the 28 members of the European Union. However, according to the subsidiarity principle, different initiatives have contributed to develop a feeling of belonging to a same European academic community: above all, through student and staff mobility across Europe. The first European framework for research was implemented in 1984 but my emphasize will be on Erasmus, a very progressive programme in higher education.

The Erasmus Programme, launched in 1987 by the European Commission has been a success story with a strong involvement of faculty staff and students from the very beginning. As a matter of fact, student mobility was conceived as a way to develop primarily European citizenship. At the time of its tenth's anniversary in 1997, it can be considered that Erasmus is playing a crucial role in stimulating a European way of cooperating in higher education, impacting not only higher education institutions but the European society itself. Moreover, it strongly contributed in the 90's to the design of uniquely European tools, such as ECTS and joint curricula.

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[2] The author has been Vice President for the international development of Université Paris 12 Val de Marne (2000-2008) and the Pole of Research and Higher Education, Université Paris-Est (2008-2011). She has coordinated the French Bologna expert team (2006-2011). Since July 2015, she is the Vice-Chair of the Bologna Follow up Group (BFUG), France being the host country of the next Ministerial Conference in 2018.
[3] Treaty of Rome, 25 March 1957.
[4] The European Union has been established through the Treaty of Maastricht, 7 February 1992.

The importance of the institutional level

In 1988, during the ninth century anniversary of the University of Bologna, 388 rectors from European universities signed the *Bologna Charta Universitatum.* This text has become the reference for the Universities viewed as an international Community sharing the same values and purposes. Academic freedom, institutional autonomy and inseparable teaching and research, as *represented by the European University for the last millenium*[5], are the main pillars of what makes a University a reality. Moreover, the Charta aimed at reminding the international society of the increasing role of universities in society: […] *looking forward to far-reaching cooperation between all European nations and believing that People and States should become aware of the part that universities will be called upon to play in a changing and increasingly international society.* By 2015 it was signed by 776 universities from 81 countries. The core values are the foundations of the Bologna process and still provide strong elements for the debate all along the ministerial conferences.

The Lisbon convention of recognition of qualifications

Launched by the European Council and UNESCO in 1997, the Lisbon convention of recognition of qualifications was a strong incentive as well to encourage comparison in Higher Education and mobility of students. The issue of recognition will be an important part of the Bologna process to achieve the EHEA.

If the Erasmus and the Lisbon convention have been European institutions initiatives (European Commission and Council of Europe), the La Sorbonne declaration will initiate a new process of coordination of national higher education policies.

An intergovernmental initiative: La Sorbonne Declaration

Europe is not only that of the Euro, of the banks, of the economy: it must be a Europe of knowledge as well [6]; as it was stated in May 1998 during the La Sorbonne Declaration in Paris.

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[5] Charta, M. (1988). The Magna Charta Universitatum. Rectors of European Universities. Retrieved from http://www.magna-charta.org/magna-charta-universitatum/the-magna-charta-1/the-magna-charta.

[6] Declaration, S. J. (1998). Joint declaration on harmonisation of the architecture of the European higher education system. By the four ministers in charge for France, Germany,

Based on the initiative of the French Minister of Higher Education, Claude Allegre, the Ministers of Germany, Italy and United Kingdom, signed the La Sorbonne Declaration announcing a European Higher Education Area, where comparability of degrees within a two-cycle structure (under-graduate / graduate) will be the main pillar.

This initiative from the French Minister, relied on the vision that universities should play a crucial role in developing cultural dimensions and contribute to the competitiveness of Europe. It was prepared based on a report that aimed to propose recommendations for a reform of the French higher education system. The Attali report, *For a European model for Higher Education in Europe*[7] states that if national universities in Europe want to be stronger and more competitive, in particular in comparison to the United States, they need to modernize at a European level. This issue was particularly relevant in the French context where the system of higher education is structured in a binary way since the French revolution. On the one hand, what is called, *Grandes écoles:* very selective, very specialized, producing the French elite for more than 200 years. On the other hand, universities, non-selective at entrance, and obliged to accept the very important increase in the demand of higher education that started in the 1960's[8]. Claude Allègre knew very well that to reform the French system will not be possible without European dynamics. He needs to be considered a visionary, as all the reforms proposed in the Attali report were implemented progressively over the last 20 years in France and are all much in line with the EHEA principles. Also if we consider that the Bologna Process will involve 48 countries 20 years later.

This initiative started by four major European governments was opened to all European countries. After the La Sorbonne Declaration, a *Sorbonne FollowUp Group*

Italy and the United Kingdom. Paris. Retrieved from
http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/Declarations/SORBONNE_DECLARATION1.pdf

[7] Attali, J. (1998). *Pour un modèle européen d'enseignement supérieur*. Paris: Stock.

[8] For a brief description of the French system, see Patricia Pol. "*Towards new forms of institutional cooperation, the story of a pole of research and higher education (PRES) at the East of Paris",* Handbook for Leadership and Governance, D-7-2, 2012, www.lg.handbook.info

was created to prepare the next conference in Bologna, Italy, where 29 countries signed the Bologna declaration[9] in May 1999.

The Construction of the European Higher Education Area

The Bologna declaration confirms that the 29 Ministers of Education share the same vision to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010. Around core values and common tools, they aim that through cooperation their own national systems will become more European and comparable. It is envisioned that the EHEA as a whole will be more attractive and competitive on a global level. This voluntarily chosen intergovernmental convergence builds upon three main pillars.

Common values, principles and tools

Officially, any signatory country of the Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe can ask to be a member of the EHEA. Nevertheless, it needs to be noted as Zgaga underlined in 2012[10], it is not so easy to agree on a common definition of what we call the Bologna principles. However the foundations of the whole process rely on a conception of Higher Education based on democratic societies where academic freedom, institutional autonomy, staff and students participation are core values to be shared by all the stakeholders. Moreover, the importance of public responsibility for investing in higher education is stressed in all Ministerial communiqués, and even despite the economic crisis. The discussions around accepting Belarus in the last Yerevan Conference in May 2015 could reveal a turning point. As a matter of fact, the Ministers have agreed on a roadmap for Belarus[11] to follow up the core reforms to be done by the country to adapt its higher education system to the Bologna principles and tools.

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[9] Declaration, B. (1999). The Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999. Joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education. Retrieved from
http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/Declarations/BOLOGNA_DECLARATION1.pdf
[10] Zgaga, P. (2012). Reconsidering the EHEA Principles: Is There a "Bologna Philosophy"?.
In *European Higher Education at the Crossroads* (pp. 17-38). Springer Netherlands.
[11] See www.ehea.info/documents/ Yerevean Conference.

Beyond the general principles, the architecture of the whole system is based upon:

- the three cycle degree structure (Bachelor, Master, Doctorate), reflected in the
- an overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA.
- a common credit system (ECTS),
- common principles for the development of student-centred learning,
- the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG),
- a common Register of Quality Assurance Agencies (EQAR),
- a common approach to recognition,
- a common body of methodologies and sustainable achievements produced by European Higher Education institutions, such as joint degree.

To support this architecture, a number of common tools were implemented: the ECTS User's Guide, the diploma supplement and the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Both the core values, the common framework and tools have unquestionably defined the shared features of the EHEA and made it visible to other regions of the world. They elaborated all along those years through a very collaborative and voluntary approach.

A soft governance

From the beginning, Ministers knew that the success of the process will be based on trust and coordination of national policies same as it will depend on the level of involvement of each country and its willingness to build a common area. Therefore, they decided to meet every two years and to create the Bologna Follow Up group (BFUG) which is in charge to define a working plan and prepare the communiqués for the next Ministerial Conference. The BFUG is supported by a rotating Secretariat managed by the host country of the Ministerial Conference. In 2010, it was decided, that the BFUG will be chaired by two co-chairs changing every six months (one representing the countries under the Presidency of the European Union, and the second one non-EU members) and by a Vice-Chair nominated by the host country for the whole period between two conferences. This Chairmanship, together with a rotating secretariat is a way to involve many European Union and non-EU countries and to assure a leading role in the process by the host country.

The BFUG is a soft European structure led by full members, representing the Ministers and the European Commission and by consultative members. As a matter of fact, respecting the principle of institutional autonomy and academic freedom, the Ministers decided to give a central place to the main European stakeholders of Higher Education:

- the E4 group composed of the students represented by ESU (European Student Union), the institutions represented by the European Universities association (EUA and EURASHE[12]) and the quality assurance agencies represented by ENQA.
- The Council of Europe
- The staff union (International Education)
- the employer's association: Business Europe

However they are not full members of the BFUG but consultative members[13], their commitment to build the EHEA has been extremely important and contributed to the originality of the main process.

A monitored coordination of national policies

If the first years of the Bologna process allowed to put in place the foundation (principles) and the first floor (tools) of the 'House of Europe for higher education to use Zgaga,s metaphor (2012), it was important in a second stage, to be able to follow up the way the tools were implemented. This trend is much influenced by the impact of the Lisbon strategy led in 2000 and aiming to make Europe *the most competitive knowledge economy in the world for 2010*. As a matter of fact, higher education and research became strong sectors to be reformed in order to contribute strongly to reach this goal and adapt to competition. The modernization agenda of the European Commission fully supported this orientation. The Bologna tools became then a way to promote national reforms in all EHEA countries and European Ministers *felt*

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[12] EUA, European university associations, www.eua.be, EURASHE, European association of institutions in higher education (more dedicated to short cycles and professional programmes), www.eurashe.eu.

[13] The difference being that only the full members can vote but the reality of the history shows that almost all the decisions are taken at the unanimity of the members, whatever their status.

increasingly bound to their Bologna commitment. In an article written in 2008, Pauline Ravinet wonders why and how it has happened (Ravinet[14], 2008).

At the beginning of the process, each country had to produce a national report but without any standardisation, it was impossible to have a consolidated overview of the evolution of the implementation of the process. The stakeholders produced their own reports (such as *Trends* from EUA and *Bologna with students eyes* from ESIB and then ESU) based on the perception of a sample of institutions and students.

As it became necessary to be able to compare the different national data. The choice made by the BFUG, validated by the Ministers in 2005 is to elaborate a benchmark methodology with a common set of indicators, to help the countries stand where they are rather than binding assessment procedures. The first stocktaking reports followed by the implementation reports[15] are developed from a national collection of data centralized by the BFUG representatives of each country and since 2010, consolidated by the European Commission's Eurydice network. Scorecards and EHEA mapping around the three pillars of the Bologna process became a very useful dashboard at national and EHEA levels.

Next Challenges

Arriving at the last step before the 20th anniversary of La Sorbonne Declaration, it needs to be asked what are the main challenges for the next conference planned in Paris in May 2018? Following the main outlines of the 2015 Yerevan Communiqué, the work plan 2015-2018 is clearly based on three main issues: implementation, new goals and international cooperation.

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[14] Ravinet, P. (2008). From Voluntary Participation to Monitored Coordination: why European countries feel increasingly bound by their commitment to the Bologna Process. *European Journal of Education*, *43*(3), 353-367.
[15] As an example, see the *"2015 implementation report"*, www.ehea.info/ Yerevan Conference

Implementation versus non-implementation

All along this paper, it was stressed upon the fact that to be member of the EHEA is a voluntary process. It is based on a the trust that as soon as one country becomes part of EHEA, you, as Minister, will promote the necessary reforms to comply with the EHEA principles and tools. However, on one hand, the last 2015 implementation report shows that if progress was made in almost all the countries, there is still a lot to do for some of them. This is not a new discovery if considered that during the 10 years of production of stocktaking indicators (2005-2015), the implementation of the tools still identified different stages among the members. In each conference, the Ministers were asked for more compliance and ensured that they will do better before the next conference. However, what seems to be a new step is that in the Yerevan Communiqué, it is clearly mentionned that *implementing agreed structural reforms is a prerequisite for the consolidation of the EHEA and, in the long run, **for its success**…* daring to say that… *Non-implementation in some countries undermines the functioning and credibility of the whole EHEA*. Questions to ask therefore are; will the next 2018 Conference propose more binding solutions to deal with non-implementation? Will some countries be targeted more than others? Will the Belarus roadmap, mentioned before, be a new tool? If it is too early to answer this question, it is very interesting to see that it took almost 10 years to set out such an issue and contests of what can be done through a voluntary process.

The Bologna process revisited

During its co-chairing from July to December 2014, Italy and the Holy See took the initiative to launch a discussion about the future of EHEA. The paper "The Bologna process revisited"[16] that came out of this brainstorming calls for the necessity to take into account the main EHEA goals, and the new challenges Europe has to face. If quality, mobility and employability have been the main drivers of the existing tools, and are still important, new goals are necessary to give a new political impetus to the process. This has been one of the main messages the French Minister of Education, Higher Education and Research, gave during its presentation in Yerevan, for the next

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[16] *The Bologna process revisited : the future of the European Higher Education Area*, Yerevan Conference, May 2015, www.ehea.info, background documents.

2018 Ministerial conference in Paris: "The French willingness is not only to prepare the 20th anniversary of La Sorbonne declaration and even less the end of a process that has to go on beyond 2020 […] the EHEA Paris Ministerial conference's stake and the three preparation years that will begin in July, is to give EHEA new and ambitious orientations able to answer the new challenges our continent faces".

Digitalization of a knowledge society, radicalization of behaviours, unemployment of graduates, political conflicts, and growing migration flows, increase the necessity for European Higher Education and Research institutions to find the right balance between economic and societal rationales and to be more innovative and inclusive players than ever.

In this context, what should be the main action lines for EHEA beyond 2020? Is there the need for new tools or to go on to consolidate the existing ones? Should new models of governance that more connected with civil society, business, and representatives of staff and students be defined? How to deal with convergence and diversity in a community of 48 countries? Is 20 years enough to create convergence? A specific working group dedicated to new goals was set up and will aim to work as a think tank to develop new ideas for EHEA beyond 2020.

EHEA beyond Europe

After 8 years of a necessary intra-European approach to build the relevant integrative tools, the London Conference in 2007 brought up the necessity to handle the Europan Higher Education area in a global setting and design a strategy for the external dimension of the Bologna Process[17]. On the one hand, the 46 European countries are the first host region for mobile students, and EHEA is very keen on increasing its attractiveness. On the other hand, the Bologna process is inspiring different regions of the world and it is viewed as a powerful process for convergence and competitiveness. The BFUG was asked to prepare a Bologna Policy Forum for the conference that

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[17] Zgaga, P. (2006). External Dimension" of the Bologna process: First report of the Working Group on the External Dimension of the Bologna Process. See Pavel Zgaga's report on the Exernal dimension of the Bologna Process (Oslo 2006), and the policy paper *Process, B. (2015). European higher education in a global setting. A strategy for the external dimension of the Bologna process.* London.

followed in Leuven in 2009. Gathering around 25 non-EHEA countries for its first edition, and following two ones (Vienna 2010 and Bucharest 2012). The Ministers stated the benefits of cooperation to enhance quality, mobility, cross-border higher education and recognition. However, beyond those policy statements, no specific follow-up was implemented between EHEA and the other regions or countries.

In the last Yerevan conference, where the BFUG decided to focus on one region, Middle East and Mediterranean countries, it was very difficult to attract enough participants to engage in a real policy dialogue. Those Bologna Policy Fora might have been conceived in a rather unilateral way, from Europe to the rest of the world in order to facilitate the internationalisation of EHEA. Aware that there is a need to tackle global challenges, the BFUG has arrived to the conclusion that a change is needed.

This question is, if parallel conferences should be continued or reconsider their rationale and organisation? Is there a need to focus on one region? Would it be better to first design an international cooperation policy with voluntary potential partners and engage inter-regional policy dialogues on specific topics of common interest and mutual benefit? The advisory group, dedicated to EHEA international cooperation, will try to propose concrete actions in the next two years to prepare a more global approach beyond 2020.

CONCLUSION

Born in the context of the end of the 1990's, the Bologna process can be identified as a success story. In 15 years, the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) has become a reality around a common architecture based on the three-cycle structure (Bachelor, Master, Doctorate), compatible and comparable qualification frameworks and ECTS credit system, quality assurance guidelines and European register for quality assurance agencies. Bologna is a worldwide reference and can be considered as revolutionary in the sector of Higher Education, where nation-states are very keen on mastering their national competences.

By deciding to cooperate beyond the boundaries of the European Union, 48 very diverse countries have succeeded to engage in a strong cooperative political dialogue

able to implement action lines at national, institutional and European level. With more than 37 million students, 5 000 higher education institutions and 44% of the world's mobile students population, the *Europe of Higher Education* is working and still believing in its contribution to European idea. Through soft governance, this Europe is able to question its strengths and weaknesses. That's why, preparing the end of the 2010-2020 cycle, the EHEA stakeholders know that EHEA is not an end in itself and has to demonstrate its real added value now and beyond 2020.

Based on non-negotiable principles for democratic and knowledge societies, minimum levels of convergence have to be reached when a Common Regional Area is at stake. Europe can rely on the cooperative know-how of its Higher Education stakeholders and this collective learning outcome should help to face the new European and global challenges. However, it can be learnt from history that no regional construction is taken for granted. If the stakeholders are now used to work together beyond their national and institutional borders, political dialogues at the highest levels and permanent support are still crucial to give new impetus and even ambitious dreams, all the more needed for our youth in the current turbulent context.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Patricia Pol

Graduate of a French 'grande école', ESSEC Business School in 1980, Patricia Pol has worked in the private sector of multinational corporations before entering the academic sector at the end of the 80s and becoming Vice President for international development of her university in 2000. She obtained her Doctor in Management Sciences in 1996, and is professor at the University Paris Est-Créteil. Her teaching concerns international and intercultural management and human resource development. She is co-director of a master's course in 'Development and Management of universities. Her research centres on internationalization of organizations (firms and universities) and more particularly, international mobility. She has written various articles and reports about the higher education system in France and the internationalization of French universities. In charge of international development at Université Paris XII since 1991, she is currently Vice-President of the Université Paris-Est. During the last 15 years, she has coordinated several international and European projects in various fields in Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa. Expert for the French National evaluation agency (AERES) and the Swiss agency (OAQ), she has participated in the evaluation of French universities. She has also contributed to numerous studies related to the Erasmus programme, the international grant system of the French government, and the 'CampusFrance' agency. Since September 2004, Patricia Pol has been coordinating the French 'expert Bologna team' and is strongly committed to creating a European higher education area and implementing the main references and action lines at a national level within the institutions, their conferences and the National authorities. She has been participating in many conferences on the Bologna process all over the world

Higher Education as a Community Builder in the United States

James Hoopes

The recent establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community raises profound questions for higher education in the member nations. For example, economic integration would surely be aided by developing and/or enhancing common cultural elements within the ASEAN nations. Should educators in the ASEAN nations therefore aim to create a cultural community to support the economic community? If so, what common cultural elements should they aim to achieve?

The larger the attempt to create common cultural elements in ASEAN, the greater the challenge for disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, and liberal arts. A cultural agenda might also cause domestic political resistance to ASEAN integration within the member nations. Should higher education in ASEAN nations therefore mainly be integrated within technical disciplines where scientific method serves as a common culture, where economic advantage may be most immediate, and where the political fallout would likely be smallest?

It would be presumptuous for this paper, written by an American, to attempt to answer how common a culture the ASEAN nations should have. This paper proceeds on the assumption that while economic integration also implies some cultural integration, the extent of integration will be decided by the ASEAN nations themselves. But whether ASEAN cultural integration will be large or small, it may be useful to consider the example of higher education in building a cultural community in the United States.

The early United States bore a stronger resemblance to the ASEAN economic community than one might at first suspect. An obvious difference is that the United States had a common language. But contrary to its name the United States was not united. Not only were there sectional divisions, but it was doubtful whether the newly established national government would be able to overcome those divisions.

THE LACK OF COMMUNITY IN THE EARLY AMERICAN NATION STATE

After the US Constitution was ratified in 1788, the national government was small and untested. Whether it would last was an open question. The staff of the early American Presidents consisted of one or two personal assistants to handle correspondence. The country was protected from Europe by the Atlantic Ocean, so the army and navy were mostly disbanded. Among the government's routine duties, delivering the mail may have been the most important function.

The United States was bound together as much as anything by the "interstate commerce clause" of the Constitution. State governments were denied the ability to charge duties on imports from other states. In other words, the United States was as much as anything a free trade association.

Substantial cultural differences divided the northern and southern states. The north was committed to small scale agriculture by free white farmers, to interregional and international trade, to household manufactures, and eventually factory manufacturing. Free trade ideology was strong, along with "low church" Protestantism involving simple rituals and little hierarchy among religious clergy.

The southern states were dominated by relatively large scale tobacco and cotton plantations, worked by slave laborers from Africa. Although the plantation owners were only a small portion of the population, they dominated society culturally and politically. Racism and somewhat feudal notions of honor further united non-slave owning whites with the planter class. Religion tended toward high church Episcopal rituals and clerical hierarchy.

Many feared that these diverse states could not be held together while maintaining their commitment to the ideal of freedom. The American founders were deeply interested in the history of the Roman Republic. They were well aware that Rome had lapsed from republicanism into imperialism with a corresponding loss of freedom. If the early Americans wanted a more recent example they could look at 17th century experience in England with republicanism which had lapsed into Cromwell's

dictatorship. And the French Revolution which followed soon after the American Revolution had also passed speedily from republicanism to imperialism and terror.

Adding to the fear that the United States could not remain united and free was the absence of any national institutions and culture such as European nations enjoyed. The great American novelist Henry James lamented the nation's cultural poverty: "No State, in the European sense of the word…No sovereign, no court, no personal loyalty, no aristocracy, no church, no clergy, no army, no diplomatic service, no country gentlemen, no palaces, no castles…; no cathedrals, nor abbeys, nor little Norman churches; no great Universities nor public schools--no Oxford, nor Eton, nor Harrow; no literature, no novels, no museums […] !"[1]

A strong educational establishment was the only national institution which seemed to be forming in the United States. Very early in the northern states and eventually in all, local governments provided free public education, partly to facilitate the Protestant religious tradition that all should be able to read the Bible for themselves. Thanks to the plethora of free public schools, 19th century America became the most literate country in the world, with a very high percentage of the population able to read and write.

This high literacy rate added not only to a sense of community but also to a sense of disunity. Newspapers were numerous, widely read, and usually associated with a political party. Popular political discourse was nasty and rough. It is fashionable in the United States today to lament the low level of civility in politics, but it was far worse two centuries ago. Partisan political divisions seemed to threaten national unity on which, in turn, freedom was thought to depend.

American colleges and universities were therefore committed to preserving ancient Greek and Roman notions of education as preparation for living in freedom. The irony was often noted, as the English writer Samuel Johnson put it, that "we hear the loudest

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[1] James, H. (1967). Hawthorne. 1879. New York: St. Martins..Reprint, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 35.

yelps for liberty among the drivers of negroes"[2]. But in fact there was no irony. Free people living in a slave society were constantly reminded of how valuable freedom was.

So among the small colleges and early universities of the new American republic there was a common emphasis on liberal arts such as music, mathematics, logic, and rhetoric which had been emphasized in ancient Rome and Greece. Later, the European Renaissance added history, ethics, language and literature to the liberal arts. These disciplines became fundamental to the education of social elites in Europe and then in early America. They served as the educational foundation for clergy, government administrators, doctors, and lawyers.

In American higher education the liberal arts retained something of the meaning it had had in slave societies in ancient times. That is, liberal arts education was appropriate for people who aspired to live in freedom. Knowledge of rhetoric, history, and ethics qualified men to participate in public discourse and government. Only a small percentage of the early American population received higher education, but they were the social elite. Different as were the cultures of some of the states and especially their ideas about slavery, the educated elite of every state were committed to freedom for at least some of their people.

But education proved too weak a cultural element to solve the problem of national unity. The question of whether the United States would regard freedom as a universal human right was settled by military power. It took force – i.e. the American Civil War from 1861 to 1865 – to abolish slavery.

But the victorious North had fought the Civil War more to preserve the union than to free the slaves. After the war, the national government did almost nothing to assist the freed slaves, who ended up in a condition of virtual peonage, especially in the southern states. There, blacks were denied political rights. Their "freedom" gave them little more than the right to work for the white elite under hideously unequal and abusive

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[2] Johnson, S. (1977). Taxation no Tyranny (1775). Samuel Johnson: Political Writings, 401-455.

conditions. The United States had become administratively unified under a strong central government. But the nation remained culturally and racially divided.

Gradually, conditions developed in which higher education could begin to serve as a community builder. In the late 19th century, the American economy developed in the direction of heavy industry. Scientific and technical skills increased in importance. Enrollments grew as colleges and universities put more emphasis on technical subjects. Yet the new attention to science and technology was balanced by a continuing emphasis on liberal arts as the educational element which would preserve a free society. By the start of the 20th century, the system of American higher education was ready to provide some common cultural elements to help unify not just the economy but the community.

With American entry into the First World War in 1917, there was a desperate sense that the "United" States was not united enough for war. Some of this sentiment led to despicable oppression of dissenting ideas and to the dismissal of supposedly unpatriotic faculty from colleges and universities. Still, many faculty used their teaching to support the war effort and in doing so helped reinforce a sense of national identity. It became common at the end of lectures to reserve some time for student discussion of the war effort. The First World War was the genesis of the American emphasis on class participation and an active role for students rather than simply listening to lectures.

Officer training programs were established on university campuses so students could both attend regular classes and prepare to be shipped overseas to fight. The officer corps and the military in general became a national educational experience. Officers and men from North, South, East, and West fought side by side and came to know each other. American soldiers and especially university-educated officers learned that they had more in common with each other – no matter what state they came from – than they did with citizens of other countries. They were all committed to a general ideology of freedom fostered by liberal education, regardless of the particular regional slant they might give to that ideology.

After a relatively brief interlude of peace in the 1920s and '30s, the United States entered a long period of strong military influence in all aspects of national life. In rapid succession, the United States entered the Second World War, the Cold War, the Korean War, and the Viet Nam War. At most universities, officer training was a prominent part of the educational experience with hundreds or even thousands of students attending class in uniform on specified days. Throughout the middle third of the twentieth century national identity continued to be built through an informal alliance of military and educational institutions.

The extraordinarily foolish and misguided American adventure in Viet Nam in the 1960s provoked student outrage which finally shattered the informal military-university alliance. Yet that rupture amounted to a redirection, not an end, to higher education's role in shaping national identity. It was a step forward for American democracy when it became part of the identity of university educated youth to question rather than blindly support military action.

The American Peace Corps, established in 1961, was both an advance on, and an alternative to the militarization of American national identity. As with the officer training programs at universities, the Peace Corps also was composed mainly of young graduates. But instead of going abroad to fight, they were sent to serve as teachers, health workers, coordinators of community development projects, and so on. They were meant to be good will ambassadors rather than soldiers, but the effect on their identities was the same. Working with other young Americans in foreign countries, they developed a stronger sense of themselves as members of their own national community.

The Case for the Peace Corps

The example of the Peace Corps raises the first of the two specific suggestions this paper has to offer for how higher education could contribute to ASEAN community building. Would it be useful for ASEAN to send teams of its university students to other regions of the world to work on social projects? An Indonesian university student, a Singaporean, a Thai, and a Malaysian might be made into a team to work on social issues in some very different foreign culture. For example, such a team could work for

a semester to help improve the teaching of mathematics at an underperforming school in the United States where, despite the continuing fine quality of American higher education, the state of elementary education in many districts amounts nearly to a national crisis.

Working together even for a single term in the United States or in some other foreign culture would give the ASEAN students an understanding not only of differences but of some cultural commonality among Southeast Asian nations. And the experience might be very useful in these students' later careers. As the ASEAN economic community develops, there will be more opportunities and more need for people from different ASEAN nations to work together. Having worked on integrated ASEAN teams as students in a foreign culture, they should be able to work together better in maturity in their own region.

The Role of Liberal Arts

The First and Second World Wars, which brought the end of Western colonialism, or at least the rise of new nations in Asia and Africa, brought renewed attention to the issue of racial injustice in the United States. With Communists gaining influence in new nations thanks in no small part to their commitment to racial equality, it was difficult for the United States to claim that Asian and African nations should adopt some variant of American "freedom" when Americans of color remained so basically unfree. The movement for national independence in Asia and Africa was an important cause of the receptivity of the 20th century American political establishment to the cause of racial justice.

So began the mid-20th century civil rights movement in the United States in which university students, white and black, played a decisive role. The emphasis on liberal arts in American higher education played a vital role in social reform. No matter how conservative their family and social backgrounds, many students found it hard to brook racial injustice once they had studied history and sociology, politics and moral philosophy. Liberal arts courses, which almost all American students had to take, helped to give the United States a new social conscience.

Since the time of the civil rights movement, the liberal arts have played a key role in the furthering of human rights within the United States. The liberal arts have helped to furnish the moral arguments and to create the social conscience which has broadened the rights not only of people of color but of women and gays. A majority of Americans who might once have opposed such developments now believe they are positive changes.

Some of the American teaching in liberal arts is unfortunately polemical and aimed solely at justifying social reform. But much of the most powerful teaching and scholarship in liberal arts is done by fair minded scholars pursuing truth for its own sake. They are the teachers most difficult to answer by the opponents of social justice, and they contribute the most to building an integrated community and culture, consistent with an integrated economy.

The Case for Teaching Liberal Arts

This paper's second suggestion for ASEAN cultural integration is for member countries to make increased commitment to liberal arts education. It is understandable that developing nations emphasize the practical benefits of scientific and technical education which offer the most direct benefits for the economy. But where there is not also support for serious scholarship in liberal arts, it will be difficult to encourage the cultural integration that facilitates economic integration.

While many of the ASEAN nations are committed to teaching tolerance and inclusion and require students to take a course or two in this area, there is not deep support for the liberal arts from which will come the best teachers of cultural integration. Liberal arts teachers not as deeply supported and engaged in original scholarship as their colleagues in technical disciplines are at a large disadvantage. Such teachers of cultural integration can easily become preachers of self-righteous moralism which students rightly resist. In short, such teaching can have all the shortcomings of "politically correct" liberal arts education in the United States.

American universities have kept to a minimum weak teaching in liberal arts by support for teaching and scholarship which attracts strong people to these disciplines.

Because the potential contributions of cultural elements to economic integration are more difficult to see, let alone achieve, it is all the more important to have a strong faculty moved by the scholarly impulse to create and teach new knowledge. Integration of disparate cultural elements within, as well as between, ASEAN nations requires talented, committed, and well supported faculty.

CONCLUSION

This paper has described the process of cultural integration in the United States so that ASEAN readers can decide for themselves whether the American example is useful. Or not. Whether the cultural integration implied by the ASEAN Economic Community turns out to be small or large, ASEAN will have lessons not just to learn but to teach. America needs to acquire knowledge from the rest of the world, not just the rest of the world from America. May ASEAN economic integration be part of the process of recognizing that important contributions to human culture are to be expected from all peoples.

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