The Bologna Process & Physics Doctoral Studies in Europe

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The Bologna Process aims to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010. Students will be able to choose from a transparent range of high-quality, knowledge advanced courses and benefit from smooth recognition of their qualifications. This process was put in motion by the Bologna Declaration of 1999 signed by 46 European Ministers of Education. By this reform Europe challenges to match the performance of other systems in the US, Asia and Australia.

The three main goals of the Bologna Process are: the establishment of a three-cycle system [1st or bachelor (Ba) (min 3 years), 2nd or master (Ma) (usually 2 years) and 3rd or doctoral cycle (Doc) (usually 3 to 4 years)], quality assurance and recognition of qualifications and period of study. By 2010 the HE system would allow each student to move easily for study and employment from country to country. The system would also be attractive to students from non-European countries.

In Europe the global Higher Education reform is part of the strategy for growth and jobs (Lisbon Process) and reinforces co-operation with the Vocational Education and Training (Copenhagen Process). Of similar importance is the link with the European Research Area (ERA).

Support is given to the process by the European Commission (Lifelong Learning Programme: e.g. EUPEN), by the Ministries (Bologna Follow-up Group) and by European Organizations (e.g. EPS).

The European physics doctoral studies, organized in institutional, regional, national and multinational clusters and by networking, benefit from ‘Excellence Initiatives’. We hope that ‘The Banff Principles on Graduate Education’ will advance and improve international collaboration in doctoral education.

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