



WORKPACKAGE 7
DIPLOMA
SUPPLEMENT REPORT
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1. Introduction

The main task of AQUA-TNET for the 3-year period 2001-2003 was to attempt to adapt the proposed Diploma Supplement on a pilot scale for our partner university Aquaculture courses. At the outset of the present project, the Diploma Supplement model, the product of a joint initiative by the EU, UNESCO and the Council of Europe, was intended to be a document attached to a higher education diploma or certificate, designed to provide a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of studies carried out and successfully completed by the person named in the original qualification/certificate/ diploma. It was, and is regarded as an important tool to improve international transparency and fair academic and professional recognition of qualifications. However, since it was unveiled to the public domain in 1999, the Diploma Supplement concept was taken over by the more radical and far-reaching reforms being adopted as part of the ongoing Bologna Process, especially since the decisions taken in Prague in May 2000. The nature of the activities in the present Workpackage were modified as the pace of the Bologna reforms quickened, and as the conclusions from the ten Bologna Seminars became more and more ramified, reaching and restructuring almost every area in tertiary education.

It is worthwhile pointing out that information ABOUT the Bologna seminar programmes is usually posted on the Berlin website (www.bologna-berlin2003.de/en/links/index.htm) but that information FROM the seminars is often very late in arriving, and detailed presentations, rather than over-simplified Powerpoint presentations, are posted even later. This means that unless one has been a participant, it is very difficult to find out what has happened. Sometimes significant conclusions have been reached which will have far-reaching consequences, yet the information is almost impossible to access.

In Section 5 of this report I have therefore quoted directly from the documents that I found, to guarantee direct dissemination to the AQUATNET group. These direct quotations are shown in italics.

Had the AQUATNET group followed the original Workpackage remit, heedless of the impending changes, indeed ignorant, like so many of their fellow academics, as to what was being recommended in the closed shops of the Bologna Seminars, they



would have produced an unusable and useless deliverable – and in so doing, would have wasted student, industry and academic time on producing and testing something that was never going to be used (see paras 4.4 –4.8 below). Instead, the AQUATNET group took the initiative to discover and then disseminate to all members the very latest available information, not an easy nor a straightforward task. Each of the ten Bologna Seminars referred to the Diploma Supplement, but interpretation as to what its purpose was, or should be, changed continuously. It is therefore necessary to recount the events and place them in their chronological and political context which will exhibit the linked development of the Diploma Supplement and the parallel Bologna process. Dissemination of such detailed knowledge to those most concerned is precisely what was lacking in the whole process, according to the Trends III Report. The change in emphasis of the AQUATNET group, a member of a AFA-NET SOCTRATES Thematic Network, which is described as having an important role to play in the implementation of Bologna, is entirely justifiable.

2. Background to the AQUA-TNET Involvement

2.1 Previous track record in accreditation issues

2.1.1 AQUATT involvement

AQUATT, since its establishment in 1992 and its subsequent involvement in preparing, planning and running courses in aquaculture at the vocational and tertiary level for its members (650 at the last count), had from the outset been concerned with the lack of reliable certification and mutual accreditation awarded to certain aquaculture courses. These concerns led to its obtaining funding to address the issues in a EU programme (FORCE) which resulted in a valuable publication for the aquaculture educational sector entitled “Framework for Future Mutual Recognition of Aquaculture throughout Europe” (FORCE 1995)¹. This publication, which scrutinized the course provision, course assessment and certification of four important aquaculture industry countries in depth and in detail, highlighted the proliferation of courses and the significant differences in course content, duration of courses,

¹ “Framework for Future Mutual Recognition of Aquaculture throughout Europe” (FORCE 1995).



assessment instruments used, as well as the methods used to quantify and indicate the quality of the degree/certificate/qualification obtained.

2.1.2 *AQUA-TNET Thematic network Key Publication*

When the AQUA-TNET Thematic Network was created in 1996 (originally in tandem with the DEMETER network), one of its main purposes was to set up a higher education forum to assess, compare and analyze the current state of the aquaculture education tertiary sector in Europe. The AQUA-TNET partners were able to utilise their previous experience in the area of comparability and mutual accreditation of course work and certification. Subsequent AQUA-TNET activities enabled its previous collection of data to be expanded to all fifteen AQUA-TNET partners, and updated in previous AQUA-TNET Workpackages, resulting in another key publication “Higher Education in Aquaculture and Related Sciences - Guide to Courses within Europe”² (1998). This publication, the first of its kind in aquaculture, was based on information listing all academic aquaculture course units/modules and courses in each participating country (15), and included descriptions of the ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) where this had been undertaken by the university departments concerned. The information was presented in a comparable format according to the EURYDICE³ recommendations, and thus predated the exploratory work that was being done in UNESCO and the European Parliament in respect of the Diploma Supplement. In this publication the diversity of provision throughout Europe in aquaculture courses was highlighted.

2.1.3 *Second Key Publication*

AQUA-TNET produced another key publication⁴ (2000) intended to stimulate discussion and promote debate on issues of education and training in aquaculture with a view to addressing the long-term education and training needs of the European industry into the new millennium. Of its four sections, one was devoted to an analysis

² Higher Education in Aquaculture and Related Studies: Guide to Courses within Europe. Eds: R.Fitzgerald, M.Mercer, C.Hobbs. Dublin, 1998.

³ Key data on Education in the European Union, 2nd edition, EURYDICE, 1996.

⁴ “White Paper on Education and Training in Aquaculture for the New Millenium”. Eds. L.Owen, M.Elefteriou & R.Fitzgerald. AQUA-TNET, Dublin, 2000.



of the then current situation in European aquaculture tertiary course provision. The White Paper made formal recommendations covering the following areas:

- promotion of geographic and functional mobility
- transnational placements at various levels (post-grad and post-doc)
- exchanges of trainers between countries and organisations
- delivery of highly specialised and advanced education and training
- joint development of specific specialised courses
- accreditation and mutual recognition of qualifications

The White Paper Recommendations are very relevant to the present debate, particularly in relation to curricular content and recognition of European qualifications and mobility (Recommendations 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4), and predate the disquieting findings of the latest SOCRATES-funded Survey⁵ carried out under the auspices of the European University Association (EUA) by more than two years. The relevant White Paper Recommendations are presented as Annex 2. The Executive Summary from the Survey on Master degrees, along with the tables summarising information on use of credits and the progress of the Diploma Supplement is presented as Background Information Appendix 1.

2.2 *Parallel development of the EU Diploma Supplement*

Curriculum and assessment diversity, called by EURYDICE/CEDEFOP ⁶ in 1995 “the richness and diversity of the education systems in the European Union” seemed to be proving a source of confusion rather than richness and led to the creation of a Joint Working Party set up by the Council of Ministers, the European Commission and UNESCO in December 1996, to develop a model for a Diploma Supplement. Initially this project was not widely publicised and its results were not widely available until the summer of 1999. The aims of the Diploma Supplement Working Party were remarkably similar to the aims of AQUATT in its early work (1995) on Mutual Accreditations:

- i) to ease the problems of recognition
- ii) to promote transparency

⁵ “Survey on Master Degrees and Joint Degrees in Europe”. Christian Tauch and Andrejs Rauhvargers, EUA, SOCRATES, 20 Sept. 2002.

⁶ “Report on Education Structures in the European Union”, EURYDICE/CEDEFOP, 1995



iii) to promote the international recognition of qualifications.

The recorded motivation for the Diploma Supplement initiative as reported in the Summary of the Working Party Report⁷, reflected almost exactly AQUA-TNET's spur to action within the aquaculture sector, thus vindicating the group's innovative and ground-breaking work which anticipated the Diploma Supplement initiative. As such they can bear the weight of reiteration in the present context:

- “a) Educational systems and qualification structures are constantly changing under the impact of economic and technological change
- b) Non-recognition and under-valuing of qualifications is a global problem
- c) Mobile citizens need clear explanations of their qualifications
- d) Original qualifications alone do not provide sufficient information”.

2.3 Recapitulation of AQUA-TNET group achievements

- ✓ AQUA-TNET had anticipated the Diploma Supplement initiative: the data from each participating university had been collected and collated in a format already strongly resembling that of the Diploma Supplement.
- ✓ AQUA-TNET's first publication, with its unique database of comparative data on aquaculture course provision in higher education, had already been in the public domain for over a year.
- ✓ AQUA-TNET's second publication had kept fully abreast of all European developments in this area and continued in the activities of the new Thematic Network which combined the activities of AQUA-TNET and DEMETER under the new title AFANET.

3. AQUA-TNET Diploma Supplement group Activities in AFANET

3.1 Kuopio meeting (September 1999)

Details of the Diploma Supplement had been made public at the time of the group meeting in Kuopio at which workshop all available information was circulated to all participants, before it was made publicly available on the internet to all EU member

⁷ Joint European Commission, Council of Europe, UNESCO/CEPES Diploma Supplement. Summary of Joint Working Party, on <http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg22/recognition/dsen.pdf>



states. There it was considered whether it would be appropriate to link previous AQUA-TNET work on accreditation with the newly-announced Diploma Supplement. It was agreed that it would be useful to update the AQUA-TNET Guide to Higher Education courses in aquaculture, as it held similar information to that required for the Diploma Supplement. It was also felt that the updated version should not appear in print, but should be incorporated into a searchable online database which could be updated as and when necessary and could be freely available to all interested users. This was then a fairly expensive procedure which was duly carried out.

3.2 Brussels meeting (September 2001)

3.2.1 Production of online database

Two years later, under the restructured AFANET Thematic Network, in which the role of AQUA-TNET was severely pruned, AQUA-TNET held its only meeting in Brussels, which, because of the resulting cut in funding, was attended by a small core group. The online relational database containing updated information concerning aquaculture courses in European higher education, which had been constructed in the two-year interval, was demonstrated and tested out. Arising from the success of this activity, it was agreed that attempts should be made to expand the active members of the group, an achievable aim if adequate funding for a workshop could be made available. It was stressed that none of the participants received any funds, and all contributions were made voluntarily and in the participants' own time. Even workshop attendance could take place only at the weekend and then at a suitably central location.

3.2.2 Implications of the Bologna Process

In addition, there was a good deal of discussion about the Bologna Process, as the core group had become aware that its development was taking place very rapidly (in educational reform chronology), and that this would necessarily have an effect on the Diploma Supplement initiative, a prediction which did prove accurate.



3.2.3 *Resume of Information on the current Bologna Procedures (Sept.2001)*

Given the nature of the modifications in the European higher education area, taking place as a result of the Bologna Process, which seemed to have overtaken the more leisurely Diploma Supplement procedures, the group decided that it was worthwhile to go over the situation in detail, to determine the actual role likely to be played by the Diploma Supplement in the ongoing procedures .

The Bologna Declaration (1999) made a commitment towards establishing a Higher European Education Area by 2010, to be pursued by means of six objectives:

- i) The adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees; *also through the implementation of the Diploma Supplement* (my italics)
- ii) The adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and postgraduate studies
- iii) The establishment of a system of credits
- iv) The promotion of mobility
- v) The promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance
- vi) The promotion of the European dimension in higher education.

It was pointed out to the core group delegates that while the Diploma Supplement fits into more than one of these aims, it is specifically mentioned under Objective 1 (Establishment of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees).

3.2.4 *Resume of the Prague communique*

A further meeting of European Ministers for Higher Education was held in Prague in May 2001, to review the progress achieved towards the European Higher Education Research Area, and to set directions and priorities. In the Prague communique, Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the objectives of the Bologna Declaration and added three new and important elements of the Higher Education Area

- Lifelong learning
- Involvement of students
- Enhancing the competitiveness of European education (globalisation of education)

“Ministers emphasised that for greater flexibility in learning and qualification processes the adoption of common cornerstones of qualifications, supported by a



credit system such as the ECTS or one that is ECTS compatible, providing both transferability and accumulation functions, is necessary. Together with mutually recognised quality assurance systems such arrangements will facilitate students' access to the European labour market and enhance the compatibility, attractiveness and competitiveness of European higher education. The generalised use of such a credit system *and of the Diploma Supplement* (my emphasis) will foster progress in this direction.”(Prague Declaration, May 19, 2001)

3.3 Varese meeting September (8/09/02)

3.3.1 Agenda and minutes

All active members of the expanded group met at Varese in Italy for the one-day meeting (venue and duration allocated according to funding availability). The timetable of the workshop was therefore very tight.

3.3.2 Overview of Events related to the Bologna Process since March 2000.

Since events stemming from the Bologna and Prague statements had continued to move briskly, one presentation was devoted to an overview of all previous activities in this area, as the group has to take all these changes into consideration while working on the Supplement. This Table has now been updated to take account of all the Bologna Seminars and is found on page 24 (Table 1).

What became apparent from the overview of the changes envisaged as part of the Bologna Process, and the changes actually taking place in conformity with the process, is that the Bologna Process was acting as a catalyst and was doing far more than merely harmonising the external structure of European 1st and 2nd degrees into a 3+2 format. These changes are being driven by the newly-formed association, the European University Association (EUA) established only in March 2001 in a merger of the previous Association of European Universities (CRE) and the Confederation of European Union Rectors' Conferences. This merger has had some unforeseen knock-on effects which directly influence this particular Workpackage. One which aroused some interest from delegates was the sudden emergence of the Pilot Project on Joint Masters degrees, to be run by the EUA, as AQUATT and AQUA-NET have been investigating such a possibility for several years. The pilot project was described by



Ms Reding, EU Education and Culture Commissioner, in her opening speech on the occasion of the Final Conference of the TUNING Project, a two-year project which held its launch Conference in May 2001 and its Final Conference on 31st May 2002. By the beginning of August 2002, information about the project, including full details of the 11 selected programmes, was available on the EUA website and was used for one of the Workshop presentations. (The TUNING project is seen by the Commission as “being at the heart of the Bologna Process” (Ms Reding), was seen as very successful and TUNING 2 is now well under way, with very significant consequences for the Diploma Supplement format.

3.3.3 Tardy and Patchy Dissemination on Diploma Supplement implementation

Some of the uncertainties voiced by some of the AQUA-TNET delegates, particularly in respect of the seeming overlapping of aspects of the Bologna Process and the implementation of the Diploma Supplement, are directly attributable to the lack of widely disseminated information concerning the latter course of events. To take but one example: in Greece, neither a top-ranking Professor (whose courses will be directly affected by the 3+2 system) nor a young enthusiastic university staff member had been given any information at all about the introduction of the Diploma Supplement. This despite the official statement that “it has been greeted with enthusiasm in Greece”. This situation has now been remedied. Other delegates gave accounts of conflicting sets of information, some of it anecdotal, being circulated through the system. All were more or less actively involved in Bologna procedures, though none of them had up-to-date knowledge of the latest crucial developments. For instance, none of the group were aware of the CRE Project Report, “The promotion and Implementation of the Diploma Supplement”. Although this is internally dated June 2001, it contained information which at that time was being circulated on the official EU website as indicating the latest situation. The impression of disarray was not alleviated by the fact that the Report, carried out by the Confederation of European Rectors’ Conferences, is found on the previous CRE website, though it cannot have appeared earlier than June 2001, no less than three months after the organisation had disappeared. The Project Report is given as Background Information Appendix No 2 in order to ensure wide dissemination among AQUA-NET members. Its Recommendations are given immediately after those of the AQUA-TNET group,



3.3.4 *Diversity of Aquaculture 1st and 2nd degree courses in line with overall picture*

The proposed changes in the two-cycle degree structure are also having an effect on the content and even the nature of many of these courses, including aquaculture. From the lively round table discussions, it became clear that the information obtained by the AQUA-TNET group about aquaculture courses showed that there had indeed been massive changes since the previous update of September 2001, as some countries were pushing hard to conform to the principles of the Bologna Process.

It was also clear from the discussion that there was still a good deal of diversity in the structure of first degrees and even more importantly, of second degrees, where there was little change from the situation as first reported by AQUATT in 1995. The continuing diversity in first degree structure has been confirmed by the Survey on Master Degrees and Joint Degrees in Europe (20 Sept 2002), carried out by the European University Association as a SOCRATES-funded study⁷. The information contained in this latest survey (not published until two weeks after the Varese meeting) confirms that the situation as described by AQUATT in 1995 for first and second degrees with an aquaculture component remains very diverse. The situation with regard to second degrees, i.e., Master degrees, has since then been subjected to more changes which have been formalised and “ensconced” in certain national educational structures. The differences between what are termed in the 2002 Survey the “professional” Master and the “academic” Master, not to mention the taught and the research Master variety (used by the UK and Ireland) are further emphasised by the extreme differences in the credits which are necessary to obtain these different kinds of Masters degrees (see Background Information Appendix 1).

3.3.5 *Relevance of the Diploma Supplement*

The question may well be posed “what does this have to do with the introduction of the Diploma Supplement?” An answer is given in Paragraph 7 of the Executive Summary of this latest survey which states roundly

⁷ “Survey on Master Degrees and Joint Degrees in Europe”. Christian Tauch and Andrejs Rauhvargers, EUA, SOCRATES, 20 Sept. 2002.



*“In all countries where long (270-300 ECTS credits) and short (60-120 ECTS credits) Master programmes exist in parallel, their academic value is considered to be the same. Therefore, in many countries, little (sic) attempts are made to differentiate between the two in terms of nomenclature. **One rather relies on the Diploma Supplement to explain the exact nature of the Programme.**”*

The Supplement is still seen from within the Bologna Process as an extremely relevant, indeed integral component, being mentioned in almost every formal communication, whether from the EU, the European Parliament and the European University Association. Its indispensability is attested by the final sentence of the above statement, the latest and perhaps the most significant of all the references. Nevertheless the context in which it is being placed is undergoing a continuous process of change and adaptation. It was agreed that all delegates should be completely clear as to the current position before proceeding with the proposed aquaculture Diploma Supplement.

3.3.6 Updating National Information on Diploma Supplement State of Readiness

Another task which the group carried out was to ascertain the latest state of national Diploma Supplement activity, in relation to aquaculture courses. Delegates therefore came prepared with their information concerning the latest state of national preparation for the Diploma Supplement initiative. As can be seen from Annex 4 (latest situation shown in italics), their information sometimes varied considerably from the official position as reported on the official website. It was very useful for all delegates to get a grasp of the overall European situation which was, as will be seen, fairly disconcerting. At the roundtable national presentations, there was again lively discussion concerning the probable fate of the Supplement. As compliance is considered to be voluntary, in the present climate of continuing budget cuts, there were indications that it was likely to remain so.

4. AQUA-TNET Conclusions

4.1

The high number of attendees representing most European countries brought to light the underlying diversity of structure, content and progress of the Diploma



Supplement. The intensively informative nature of the presentations and the ensuing frank and full discussions confirmed a need to continue to work within an aquaculture framework on the Supplement, though with a change of emphasis.

4.2

The most important conclusion was that work should continue on the construction of a common structure and guidelines for the Diploma Supplement with particular relevance to aquaculture needs.

4.3

It was stated that in the light of the disclosures concerning the nature and the speed of the changes imposed by adherence to the Bologna process and the reluctance of some member states either to fully implement the Diploma Supplement, or to impose a common structure, it was important for the needs of the aquaculture sector to have access to good quality information. Such information would certainly be necessary for any department wishing to become involved in the proposed European Masters' Programmes.

4.4

Relevant information should cover the following areas: what proportion of the course was given to laboratory work, to field work, to practical work; how much time was set aside for lectures or theoretical work; whether independent research in the form of dissertations or mini-theses were required; types of assessment were also seen as important, continuous assessment, coursework, final rank order or grading also being seen as important (this latter does not form part of the proposed Diploma Supplement template). It was also felt that work experience and acquisition of professional skills should figure.

4.5

As a first step, each delegate should send the Diploma Supplement used in the University or Department (by the end of November, except for those countries which don't yet have a recommended Diploma Supplement, format, i.e. Greece). Each



delegate should supply this along with a short commentary on its usefulness. What is needed are those Diploma Supplements that are actually being used.

4.6

From these examples, a common best practice format will be drawn up, before the end of February, by a small core group. The resulting best practice format will be given to each delegate to evaluate with four of his or her students which will entail individual discussion with each student to confirm whether this type of information is seen to be of value for them. A separate Supplement will be completed by the teacher for a fictitious student (end of April). The four sets of comments will then be compared with the completed version and sent to the leader of the core group by the middle of May. If possible the latest student graduates should form the test sample.

4.7

Results should be collated by the same core group and written up by the end of June in order to allow dissemination well before the final Bologna meeting in Berlin in September.

5. Scale and pace of Bologna events since the Varese meeting

Since September 8th, there has been at least one and sometimes two, major events every month. These events are major in that they are either:

- ✓ official Bologna seminars (whose dates and venues have sometimes been changed from the original postings) (See Table 1)
- ✓ official documents from the EU itself giving vital new information or more new decisions (See Appendix 1)
- ✓ papers from meetings (ie, EUA) that are also posted on the Bologna site and are at least semi-official (See Appendix 1, 2)

All of these communications serve to:

- push the Bologna Process itself further
- or else shed new light or give new insights into either the process itself (as in the official pronouncements by EU officials from M.Busquin and Ms Reding)
- or delineate the increasingly radical role to be played by universities.



At the time of writing, these all seem to have culminated in the EUA meeting in Graz at the beginning of June, a very important meeting when the official body of European Universities gave their draft response and recommendations concerning the Bologna Process, to be submitted to Berlin in September.

6. Bologna events influencing the Diploma Supplement

The role, the usefulness and even the structure of the Diploma Supplement fluctuated from month to month and Seminar to Seminar. For an up-to-date chronological list of events, see Table 1. Below follows, in chronological order, a short description of each event as it impinges on the Diploma Supplement, which shall be highlighted for ease of reference. Please bear in mind that many other aspects were also considered on these occasions.

October 2002

The Zurich Seminar in October 2002, one month after the Varese meeting, concerned the use of credits, with one presentation from S.Adams dealing specifically with ECTS and the Diploma Supplement, the title being “Complementary tools for recognition and transparency”. The powerpoint presentation¹ available from January 2003 onwards put forward the thesis that the final ECTS transcript should be integrated into the DS. The final recommendations in which the role of the **Diploma Supplement** is limited reduced to the title of the above presentation, can be found on the Conference website (www.ects-conference.ethz.ch/index.asp)

November 2002

The **Bruges/Copenhagen Declaration on enhanced co-operation in Vocational Training**² (europa.eu.int/comm/education/copenhagen/index_en.html) took place on 29/30 November, during which Mrs Reding made the following announcements:

- I.** there would be an attempt to create a single framework for transparency of competences and qualifications
- II.** there would be an attempt to bring together in a single user –friendly format, the certificate supplements and **diploma supplements** and
- III.** there would be an attempt to develop an ECTS system for vocational training.

¹ www.ects-conference.ethz.ch/index.asp?file=documents.htm



January 2003

10th January saw the publication of the communication from the Commission entitled “*Investing efficiently in education and training: an imperative for Europe*³⁴”. This is a hard-headed and remarkably frank paper which explains the rationale behind “the new investment paradigm in education and training” and sets out the main components and success factors to achieve this.

On page 23 of the 26-page communication, reference is made to the **Diploma Supplement** in the following context.

- “ *The achievement of greater efficiency of educational investment and the completion of a European labour market call for a step change in the recognition of qualifications and competencies acquired anywhere in the EU.*
- *In various instruments that were introduced to support these policies(.....Diploma Supplement)progress has been much slower than anticipated.....*
- *No European knowledge area and no European labour market can exist without a transparent, user-friendly and predictable system for the recognition of degrees and qualifications across internal borders. The cumbersome and tardy recognition processes remain the biggest single obstacle to a fluid and effective European labour market....”*

February 2003

On 5th February came the DG Research consultation paper “*The role of the universities in the knowledge society*”⁵, deadline for comments 31st May, from which there will emerge a further Communication at the Berlin/Bologna Summit. There is no doubt that this communication achieved its purpose “to start a debate on the role of universities within the knowledge society”. It actually caused waves of shock and consternation in about equal measures.

The universities are seen as firmly set within the framework of the global market place, and their role as that of managers and providers of knowledge as a product, with students and business as consumers and clients. The Communication also places

² Council Resolution on the promotion of enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training (VET), Document 14343-2002 and “Copenhagen Declaration” of the European Ministers in charge of VET and the European Commission of 30th November 2002.

³ “Investing efficiently in education and training: an imperative for Europe”.COM (2002) 779 final, European Commission, January 2003



considerably increased research funding (3% of GDP, two-thirds to come from the private sector) in the hands of the universities, but with certain provisos, one of which is full acceptance of the greatly speeded up Bologna reforms. These reforms, coming thick and fast from the official Bologna seminars and officially supported conferences, include:

- a much more comprehensive role for ECTS which will also become a transfer accumulation system
- universities to consider widening access to tertiary education by considering the creation of ECTS for Lifelong learning.
- **Diploma Supplement** is mentioned on p.20 as one of the instruments having been developed for transparency and easier mutual recognition.

The *EU Second Bologna Progress Report, From Prague to Berlin*⁶, is dated 14th February but did not appear on an open website for some time. This document sets the Bologna Process within a wider framework, which aims to integrate Action Plan Skills and Mobility, Action Plan on Mobility, e-learning, Bruges/Copenhagen process, “*all of them set within a Lifelong Learning perspective*”. Here the role of the Diploma Supplement is clearly defined on page 2.

Action Line 1. Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees

- *A wide-scale introduction of the **Diploma Supplement**, increasing substantially the understanding and recognition of degrees at all levels. Synergies with similar documents in vocational training will be sought.*
- *The wide-scale introduction of the **Diploma Supplement** will be supported (as an eligible expense) through the grants which Socrates-Erasmus National Agencies provide to universities for the Organisation of Mobility (OM) as from the academic year 2003.04.*
- *The promotion of the **Diploma Supplement** is closely linked to the successful promotion of ECTS. A joint pool of ECTS/DS Counsellors has been formed in order to help universities, which make a proper use of those instruments, prepare*

⁵ “The role of the universities in the Europe of knowledge”, European Commission, COM(2002) 58 final, Brussels, February 2003

⁶ “From Prague to Berlin: the EU Contribution. Second Progress Report”. Brussels, 14 February, 2003.



*for the ECTS label and/or the **Diploma Supplement label** (application date 1 November 2003 and subsequent years).*

However, it should be pointed out that the earlier document on which this statement is based⁷ did not include the Diploma Supplement in the ECTS label. There was merely to be ECTS/DS Counsellors. I have not been able to trace when the Diploma Supplement label entered into the game.

March 2003

In Helsinki on March 14/15, there was a Bologna Seminar on Master degrees. The ten Recommendations adopted by the participants concerning useful common denominators for a master degree in the EHEA are essential reading for any university academic.

- *Recommendation 3. All bachelor degrees should open access to master studies and all master degrees should give access to doctoral studies.*
- *Recommendation 4. Bachelor and master programmes should be described on the basis of content, quality and learning outcomes, not only according to the duration of programmes or other formal characteristics.*
- *Recommendation 6. Joint European programmes at the European level should be developed to promote intra-European cooperation.....*
- *Recommendation 7. While master degrees normally carry 90-120 ECTS credits, the minimum requirements should amount to 60 ECTS credits at master level.....*
- *Recommendation 10. In order to increase transparency, it is important that the specific orientation and profile of a given qualification is explained in the Diploma Supplement.*

Page 2 of the final recommendations states

*“All higher education establishments should make use of **the Diploma Supplement***

The Bologna Seminar on Qualifications Structures in Higher Education in Europe met on 27/28 March in Copenhagen and made 12 Recommendations .

Recommendation 10 states

⁷ SOCRATES-ERASMUS, Special measures for the promotion of ECTS, A2/PVDH, Brussels, 1 July 2002.



“ Transparency instruments such as the **Diploma Supplement** and the ECTS should be reviewed to make sure that the information provided is clearly related to the EHEA framework.”

However, one of the most **comprehensive and detailed papers** that has so far been disseminated throughout the Bologna process came from Stephen Adam of the University of Westminster, one of the organisations that had helped to develop the Diploma Supplement. His 60-page paper⁸ is entitled “Alternative Approaches for clarifying the cycles and levels in European Higher Education qualifications”. He provides a succinct yet detailed overview of the events and their defining conclusions; his description of other developments which led to some of the TUNING aims is particularly helpful at this stage. A large part of the TUNING initiative was devoted to bringing about convergence by defining accepted professional and learning outcomes and by developing professional profiles and desired learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and competencies. This is very relevant to AQUATNET’S self-imposed task.

Adams outlines the emergence of the DUBLIN DESCRIPTORS⁹ and the AMSTERDAM CONSENSUS¹⁰, both of which were produced under the Joint Quality Initiative, itself a Bologna creation.

The Dublin Descriptors produced generic BA/MA qualifications descriptors which could be combined in TUNING with subject-specific elements. The result should be a learning outcomes approach to credit awards, and that the ECTS should be refined into a pan-European credit accumulation framework based on learning outcomes. Thus, Adams goes on to show that one of the Zurich recommendations is that the specific orientation and learning outcomes of a given qualification should be included in its title and explained on the Diploma Supplement issued to the student. This development is obviously of vital importance for the development of the Diploma Supplement, especially in the light of AQUA-TNET’s work, because it changes the situation entirely.

⁸ “Qualification Structures in European Higher Education: Alternative Approaches for clarifying the cycles and levels in European Higher Education qualifications”. Stephen Adams, SOCRATES, March 3, 2003.

⁹ “Towards shared descriptors for Bachelors and Masters” Joint Quality Initiative, Informal group report, February 2003.

¹⁰ “Working on the European dimension of Quality”, Joint Quality Initiative, Amsterdam, March 2003.



Here is the final paragraph of the Executive Summary.

“Several urgent questions face European education systems. These can be summarised in the following checklist of issues for consideration: the nature of national and any over-arching European qualifications framework in the context of the Bologna 10 action-line; the role of levels, credits and Bachelor/Master descriptions; the use of qualifications descriptors, programmes profiles/specifications (DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT), learning outcomes, competencies and subject benchmark statements. Progress in these areas is central to the creation of the European Higher Education Area.”

On March 30, at an EUA meeting in Bristol UK, there was delivered a speech on behalf of Mr Busquin¹¹ concerning the role of the universities, which stated

- *“ The new mission of universities is all about enabling people to evolve in a changing world, and providing knowledge workers with the basic tools so that they adapt themselves to varying occupational needs and perform smoothly within collective units.”*
- *“Taken to its extreme one can envisage a university operating more like a commissioning agency for teaching and learning, putting together the necessary production facilities and crucially ensuring quality control.”*
- *“There is virtually nothing that is currently taking place in a university which could not, and does not, take place elsewhere. The only aspect of university activity over which universities have a monopoly is their ability to accredit courses.”*

Rather chilling in the light of the Second Progress Report dated 14th February, less than 6 weeks previously, and which had not yet had wide circulation.

April 2003

The Mantova Bologna Seminar on Integrated Curricula on 11/12th April, reiterated the conclusions of the Stockholm Seminar held in 2002, the 5th of which stated “full use should be made of the **Diploma Supplement** and ECTS in order to ensure comparability of qualifications”

May 2003

¹¹ “The role of the universities in the European Research Area”, speech delivered on behalf of DG Research Commissioner, M.Philippe Busquin, by Mr. P.Caracostas, March 28, 2003.



On May 9, **TUNING II** (odur.let.rug.nl/TuningProject/index_phase2.htm) was launched, with more partners, and new subject areas (European Studies and Nursing).

New activities include:

- To fine-tune the general methodology for measuring workload developed in TUNING 1, make it operational and test it
- To establish a link between competences and ECTS and test ECTS as a tool for
- curriculum design
- To develop reference points for common curricula on the basis of agreed
- competences, enhancing in the is way the recognition and integration of diplomas

On **May 29, the EUA Graz conference** opened with a rousing presentation by Mrs Reding, the Education Director General, when she made some trenchant comments/suggestions:

- *Bologna cannot be implemented a la carte*
- *universities will have to open their doors to non-traditional learners or close down departments*
- *universities should make their educational offer transparent through ECTS, the **Diploma Supplement***
- *Universities should put their entire course on the web.*
- *There is to be a pilot project to test a new ECTS for Life-long Learning, to help universities to award credits to non-traditional learners they decide to admit to their degree programmes.*
- *Similar action*
- *The learning behind can be made more transparent with ECTS and the use of the **Diploma Supplement**.....*
- *Another way to increase transparency is to describe the outcomes of the studies, the so-called competences; what a learner knows in theory and is able to do in practice on the labour market.*



There were two further important contributions relevant to **the Diploma Supplement: The EUA response to the EU Communication of the role of the universities**¹² and the **TRENDS III Report**¹³

Some bullet points from the EUA response

- Re-definition of the terms universities ‘institutions with full power to award doctoral degrees’ which reduces the EU estimate of 4000 such institutions to a maximum of 1000.
- Coherent European policies and implementation mechanisms allowing more co-operation, and not just increased competitiveness, need to be put in place, as a means of strengthening Europe
- Rethinking the approach to mobility and strengthening European co-operation at the doctoral and postdoctoral level. This means redoubling efforts at all levels to tackle barriers to mobility

The Trends III Report: Bologna four years after (Reichert and Tauch)

Here are some relevant bullet point conclusions;

- *The reforms have yet to reach the majority of the Higher Education grassroots who are supposed to implement them and give them concrete meaning, and that administrative staff and students seem to be even less included in the discussions.*
- *The emerging European Higher Education Area (EHEA) regards Higher Education is a public good and a public responsibility*
- *Only 20% of HEIs are fully aware of the GATS inclusion of Higher education as a global product*
- *It will be essential for HEIs to elaborate qualifications frameworks based on external reference points (qualifications descriptors, level descriptors, skills and learning outcomes)*
- *Institution-wide procedures for recognition seem to be quite under-developed*
- ***The Diploma Supplement is being introduced in a growing number of countries, but the main target group – employers – are still insufficiently aware of it. The***

¹² European University Association (EUA) Response to the EU Commission : the Role of the Universities in the Europe of Knowledge, Graz, May, 2003.

¹³ “Trends in Learning structures in European Higher Education III: Bologna four years after: Steps towards sustainable reform of higher education in Europe”. Sybille Reichert and Christian Tauch, SOCRATES, Brussels, June 2003.



introduction of a Diploma Supplement label would lead to a clear qualitative improvement in the use of the Diploma Supplement

- *Lifelong Learning is not targeted towards the Higher Education sector in most European countries. In order to position themselves in an expanding market and clarify the added value of their expertise, HEIs will have to make more of an effort to integrate Lifelong Learning into their core development processes and policies.*
- *In practically all action lines of the Bologna reforms, two potentially conflicting agendas have merged*

June 2003

The Prague Seminar on Recognition and Credit Systems in the context of LifeLong Learning 5-7 June

Only the programme of this Bologna Seminar was available at the time this report was submitted. However, a Report ¹⁴ by the General Rapporteur Sjur Bergan, Council of Europe, appeared on the Bologna site around 30th June, as did a series of Recommendations, which refer to the role of the Diploma Supplement.

The Recommendations are made to four different target audiences

- i) Higher education institutions and others**
- ii) Public authorities responsible for higher education**
- iii) International institutions and organisations**
- iv) The Berlin Higher Education Summit**

There are seven Recommendations for higher education institutions of which I quote only those relevant to our purpose

** to use the **Diploma Supplement**, ECTS credits and skills portfolios to record learning as well as to facilitate individual learning paths*

** to express all qualifications in terms of explicit reference points: qualifications descriptors, level descriptors, learning outcomes, subject related and generic competencies*

**to adopt internal policies to promote the recognition of prior formal, non-formal and informal learning for access and study exemption*



**to reconsider skills content in courses and the nature of their study programmes*

The Rapporteur in his presentation drew heavily on Stephen Adam's presentation to the Copenhagen Seminar on Qualifications Structures in European Higher Education while pointing out that *the issue of LifeLong Learning links directly with the issue of defining a Qualifications Framework. A key function of qualifications frameworks is to guide individuals and help them reach their educational goals with as few complications as possible. The traditional concepts of workload and level have been refined and are no longer expressed only in terms of years of study. Learning outcomes are also an integral part of the discussion on qualifications frameworks.*

One of the clearly very important contributions came from Scotland's Mr Andrew Cubie who presented the latest draft of the Scottish Qualifications Framework.

It is obvious that if these recommendations are accepted by the Berlin Conference, then the character of the Diploma Supplement will undergo a radical change. As will the face of European Higher Education.

GATS in European Higher Education Council of Europe June 2002

An important issue given the TRENDS III report (June 2003) stating that only 20% of Higher Education Institutions were fully aware of the GATS negotiations. Information can be found at the EU website on World Trade in Services <http://gats-info.eu.int>.

The GATS (General Agreement on Trade and Services) is a multilateral agreement under the World Trade Organisation (WTO) which came into effect in 1995. GATS applies to almost all service sectors (two exceptions) including education. The EU which is of course a signatory has included higher education in their schedule with clear limitations on all modes of trade except "consumption abroad" which usually means foreign tuition paying students.

There are two areas where GATS could have an effect on the Bologna Process:

- ✓ *the lack of opportunity to quality as a degree granting institution is designated as a "barrier to trade"*

¹⁴ Report by the General Rapporteur, Sjur Bergan, Council of Europe, on the Bologna Seminar on Recognition and Credit Systems in the Context of Lifelong Learning. Praha/Strasbourg, June 7, 2003.



- ✓ *lack of recognition of prior qualifications from other countries is also designated as a barrier to trade.*

The **Diploma Supplement** is specifically mentioned¹⁴ as an important part of the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning higher education in the European region, which will form part of the EU proposal to GATS concerning higher education.

Perhaps we should give the last word (for the moment) to the final paragraph of the Executive Summary of the TRENDS III Report.

Lastly, if the enormous potential of using the Bologna objectives as a trigger for long-needed, fundamental and sustainable reforms of higher education in Europe is not to be wasted, the voice of the academics within the institutions will need to be heard and listened to more directly in the Bologna Process.

7. Timetable of events and publication of important documents

There were 6 official subjects for Bologna Seminars, with two seminars devoted to each subject: Accreditation and Quality Assurance; Recognition issues and the use of credits; Development of joint degrees; Degrees and qualification structures; Social dimension; Lifelong learning. There were also a series of other, related events, such as the meetings held by the newly created European University Association, which was very closely involved with the TUNING project (1 and 2), with the launch of the European Masters, with Reports on European Masters and Joint Degrees, and the TRENDS II AND III reports, as well as the response of the universities to the EU consultation paper “The Role of the Universities in the Europe of Knowledge”.

TABLE 1: *Detailed timetable of events showing rapidity of progress since mid-2000*

2000	March	European Summit Lisbon: “Europe as knowledge-based economy” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Life-long learning ➤ Increased transparency of qualifications ➤ Promotion of mobility ➤ European CV
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¹⁴ Council of Europe Steering Committee Document CD-ESR-GTI (2002) 1, 3 June 2002, Strasbourg

2001	March	Salamanca Convention of Higher Education Institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Affirmation of Bologna aims ➤ Quality Assurance issues ➤ Use of ECTS, Diploma Supp. NARIC/ENIC for mobility ➤ Compatible qualifications at undergrad and graduate levels
	March	Creation of European University Association- 1st meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Merging of Association of European Universities (CRE) and Confederation of Rectors' Conference
	May	Prague communique (32 signatories) Bologna reaffirmed +3 new areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lifelong learning ➤ Involvement of students ➤ European dimension(globalisation of education)
	May 17	Brussels: Launching of TUNING Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 2-yr project (70 universities, 105 depts, 128 partic., 7 subjects) ➤ Aims: To bring about convergence in 5 main subject areas ➤ Identify common subject-based reference points, curricula content, learning outcomes, ➤ Identify methods of teaching, learning and assessment ➤ To facilitate transparency
	July 2	Brussels COM(2001) 385: Involvement of Third countries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Globalisation of European higher education ➤ ECTS ➤ Joint diplomas
	Nov.	EU Education Council of Ministers meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Rpt. On concrete objectives of education & training systems

2002	Feb.	EU Education Council of Ministers meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recommendations to Barcelona Summit concerning globalisation of EU education ➤ Recommendation for European CV
	Feb.15	Dublin: Standards/benchmarks for Bachelor and Master programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Dublin Descriptors ➤ Barcelona Summit Presidency Concl. SN 100/02 ADD 1 ➤ No 44. «To introduce instruments to ensure transparency of Diplomas and qualifications (ECTS, Diploma and certificate Supplements, European CV)»
	March 12-13	Bologna Seminar No 1. Amsterdam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Accreditation and Quality Assurance ➤ Amsterdam Consensus
	April 11-12	Bologna Seminar No 2: Lisbon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recognition issues and the use of Credits

	May 30-31	Bologna Seminar No 3: Stockholm ➤ Development of Joint Degrees
	March 14	EU Education Council of Ministers mtg: follow-up to Barcelona ➤ Transparency of qualifications, ECTS, Diploma Supplement
	April	European Parliament: Report on universities/higher Education (2002/2174(INI)) A5-0183/2002-11-19 ➤ Recommends acceleration of Bologna but not standardisation ➤ Recommends rapid, flexible recognition of diplomas/qualifications ➤ Supports proposals for European Masters
	May 31	Brussels: TUNING Final meeting Recommendations: ➤ Common approach to length of studies within Bologna two-cycle system is essential ➤ Adoption of framework based on common ECTS understanding to include grades as well as credit transfer ➤ Competences (skills) and learning outcomes (both subject-related and generic) ➤ Universities shd. have common terminology and methodologies for convergence at both disciplinary and multi-disciplinary levels
	July 17	Viviane Reding Brussels: European Masters proposal ➤ 1 st analysis of Master level and joint degrees across Europe ➤ Serious discrepancies in Master degrees: ➤ professional and academic; taught and research; ➤ Credits discrepancies ➤ Long Masters: 270 –300 ECTS. Short Masters: 60-120 ECTS ➤ Reliance on Diploma Supplement to make sense from confusion
	Oct.11-12	4th Bologna Seminar: Zurich: From Credit transfer to Credit Accumulation ➤ ECTS and Dip Supp complementary tools for transparency
	Nov.30	Bruges/Copenhagen Declaration Vocational Training • Single framework for transparency of competences, .qualifications • Single format for certificate and diploma supplements Proposal for ECTS for Vocational Training

2003	Jan. 10	The role of the universities in the Europe of knowledge Consultation paper from EU. Deadline for comment 31 st May
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	Feb. 5	2nd EU Bologna Progress Report IV. aims to set Bologna in wider framework V. Action Plans, elearning, Copenhagen, and LifeLong Learning VI. Diploma Supplement Label
	Feb. 14	5th Bologna Seminar: Athens -Social Dimension (Overview)
	March 14-15	6th Bologna Seminar Helsinki: Master Degrees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call for common framework of education qualifications • All Bachelors to open access to Masters (Rec. 3) • All Masters to give access to doctoral studies (Rec.3) • Bachelors/Masters described in Content, Quality and learning Outcomes, not only duration of programme (Rec.4) • Joint degrees shd.be developed (Rec. 6) • Min. credits for Masters to be 60 (Rec. 7)
	Mar.27-28	7th Bologna Seminar: Copenhagen: Qualification structures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop overarching European Qualifications Framework (Rec. 2) • Descriptions of workload, level, quality, learning outcomes, profile (Rec. 4) • Council Europe/UNESCO Recognition Convention to be ratified as soon as possible (Rec. 9) • Diploma Supplement/ECTS to be reviewed (Rec. 10)
	Mar. 29-30	EUA Conference Bristol: Role of the universities
	April 11-12	8th Bologna Seminar: Mantova: Integrated curricula Legal obstacles to joint degrees shd be removed Learning outcomes, competencies, + workload, crucial elements Importance of linguistic diversity
	May 9	Launch of TUNING 2 Graz: EUA Convention of Higher Education Institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Many important contributions, especially Mrs Reding's ➤ TRENDS III Report ➤ Response of EUA to Role of Universities
	June 5-7	9th Bologna Seminar: Prague: Validation of non-formal Learning Experiences Diploma Supplement to record learning outcomes
	June 12-14	10th Bologna Seminar: Oslo: Student Involvement in the Bologna Process
	Sept. 18/19	Final Conference in Berlin

TABLE 1: Detailed timetable of events showing rapidity of progress since mid-2000



8. AQUATNET group meeting, Brussels, September 6

On September 6, the AQUATNET group met in Brussels to be informed as to the latest Diploma Supplement evolution, and for discussions to formulate the group reaction. Because of the constraints of the project, the meeting had to be held before the end of September, which was regrettable since the meeting had to be held just before the Berlin Conference, the so-called culmination of the Bologna Process. Even at this late stage, not all the countries had submitted their Bologna Implementation Country Reports, the United Kingdom being one of the latecomers. Since it was obvious from the Bologna Seminars that the TUNING project was going to exert a great deal of influence on the Berlin decisions, the group were presented with a detailed list of the TUNING generic and subject competencies. These competencies were likely to be included in the anticipated revised Diploma Supplement. Comparison was made with the AQUATT White paper recommendations, which were referred to at the start of the Report. This comparison is presented as Annex 3.

It was immediately apparent that there were significant similarities. In fact, it could be said quite accurately that AQUATT had anticipated the TUNING findings by about 3 years.

This was felt to be quite reassuring by the group who felt that they would be able to cope reasonably well with whatever further Diploma Supplement changes might be decided at the Berlin Conference. It was unanimously decided that it was imperative to wait for the decision before making any decision as to how to proceed.

9. The Berlin Conference decisions

9.1 Mrs Reding's views

Mrs Reding, the Education Commissioner, gave out a press release during the `Berlin Conference itself, on September 18, well before the official communiqué was released. On page 4, she refers to it (not available until 14th October), "the commitment in our draft communiqué for all countries to have started implementing the two-cycle system by 2005 is crucial".

"The new degrees should fit into national qualifications frameworks and these would articulate against the new European qualifications framework".

These were two new departures, first, the 2005 date and second, the European Qualifications Framework.

Quality Assurance was also given a lot of emphasis, particularly with regard to Joint degrees, joint doctoral schools, etc. Quality Assurance agencies should use comparable methodologies and criteria, and this is where the learning outcomes come in.

9.2 Ministers' decision regarding the Diploma Supplement

We conclude this report with the Ministers' decision on the use of the Diploma Supplement. The press release (not the actual communiqué itself, which is rather long and deserves very careful study as some aspects are rather unanticipated) is found in Annex 4.



AQUA-TNET

“In the context of the recognition of degrees and periods of study, Ministers underlined the importance of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, which should be ratified by all countries participating in the Bologna Process as soon as possible. At a very concrete level, they set the objective that “every student graduating as from 2005 should receive the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge” and that it should be issued in a widely spoken European language.

ANNEX 1

CRE Recommendation from the Executive Summary of the Project Report on the Implementation of the Diploma Supplement

- Further ongoing national and pan-European promotional activities and support are necessary in order to embed the Supplement and ensure its widespread adoption
- The European Commission should further encourage the introduction of the Diploma supplement by including it as part of the Institutional contract
- The European Commission should support the introduction of a parallel Diploma Supplement implementation project for all non-EU/EAA participating countries for the SOCRATES programme
- A host web-site should be created to hold all the information, promotional material, Diploma Supplement examples and documentation, associated with the Diploma Supplement
- National authorities should help embed good practice in the production and use of Diploma Supplements by employing appropriate national/regional strategies and building on the good practice identified by the implementation project. The production of Diploma Supplements does put an additional financial strain on institutions with already tight budgets.
- Appropriate national mechanisms must be put in place to ensure that the national higher educational descriptions are available and updated.
- National bodies responsible for quality assurance should view the production of appropriate Diploma Supplements (conforming to the common standards and principles established) as coming under their remit. ENQUA should be encouraged to discuss and promote such a possibility.
- The electronic template produced by the project can help the production of Supplements in certain types of institutions



ANNEX 2

AQUA-TNET

White Paper on Education and Training in Aquaculture for the New Millenium (2000)

7 Recommendations (selected)

7.2. Issues directly concerning educational provision in aquaculture

a) Curricular content

In recognising, from detailed analyses of European third-level aquaculture curricular provision that:

- ◆ Higher educational institutions offering B.Sc. courses provide a wide and varied range of degree courses with some going well beyond the minimum requirements, with no need to define a single "standard" common system (fixed content, common assessment practices and credit levels) for the European aquaculture under-graduate level;
- ◆ M.Sc. degrees in aquaculture exhibit sharp differences of quality and quantity of course content, with internal as well as external differences, with variability in length from 12 to 24 months, with structure, organisation and course content also very different from country to country

The AQUA-TNET network recommends that, in terms of curricular provision:

- A degree of harmonisation and interaction of existing aquaculture course provision should lead to the adoption of the flexible, ideal format for an undergraduate course, the framework of which is set out in Section 2 (2.2.3.2), (core elements, supported by further recommended modules, and finally, optional specialised elements which could be adapted for the specific geographic conditions and species mix in each country.)
- The M.Sc.degree likewise should not be specified in terms of curricular content (length of course, detailed curriculum requirements) but should harmonise the pre-entry conditions and adopt, in general, a coherent and consistent set of pre-entry requirements, as set out in Section 2 (2.2.4.3)
- Innovative delivery methods, such as the Internet, multimedia (CD-ROM) as in some of the Methodology Series, should be utilised where suitable, to aid transparency and harmonisation of curricular content.

7.3 Accreditation & Recognition of European qualifications

In recognising, from detailed analyses of European third-level aquaculture assessment, certification and accreditation procedures that:

- ◆ The assessment practices and instruments used cover the whole available range (formal written exam, continuous assessment, laboratory exercises, oral assessment, dissertations, etc);
- ◆ The final grading schemes used in each country to record the final mark/score/grade are completely different, so that there is no easy way of establishing equivalence of standards;
- ◆ These disparities exist at both under-graduate and M.Sc. levels and do not imply differences in standards, but different methods of recording final results.
- ◆ The disparities hinder transparency to such an extent that objective comparisons cannot be made without some kind of external filtering procedure.

The AQUA-TNET network recommends that:

- All European under-graduate courses examine, with a view to using, the ECTS Accreditation system as a model, where all individual final assessment patterns can be accommodated, to provide a coherent, comprehensive and comparable standard, with credits based on student workload (lectures, practicals, laboratory work, work experience/ placements).
- Each university looks to the provision of a Diploma Supplement for its students.
- Student placements should be mutually recognised in Member States and incorporated into the curricula
- There should be continued consideration of the most effective methods to increase the transparency in order to give equal opportunity for all to take part in training throughout the EU, by looking at the EUROPASS initiative.

7.4 Mobility

In recognising that:

- ◆ Aquaculture is an important activity in Europe for socio-economic considerations and that therefore mobility procedures should be transparent, simple, efficient, and cost-effective.
- ◆ Mobility procedures need to address the needs of students, industry, the educational institutions and their administrative requirements.

The AQUA-TNET network recommends that:

VII.Obstacles and barriers to mobility should be broken down through a number of specific measures

- Recognition between Member States of the value of placements through recognised accreditation procedures
- Increased efforts should be made to encourage students and staff to take part in exchange schemes and practical training

VIII.Basic requirements to include the following:

- Clear information and promotion
- Language and cultural preparation
- Well-developed inter institutional linkages/contacts



- Forward planning in terms of European funding
- Convenient timing of the programme
- Credit/recognition of placement/exchange
- Ongoing supervision, monitoring, support
- Dissemination of results
- Sustained contacts between universities/ institutions and beneficiaries



ANNEX 3

TUNING Generic and Subject Specific Competencies compared with AQUATNET recommendations made in 1999

**All TUNING competencies as shown were ranked in a combined ranking done
by graduates & employers**

Tuning competencies which were covered in previous AQUA-TNET work are shown
in **Blue**

Tuning competencies are shown in **BOLD**

GENERIC COMPETENCIES

1. Capacity for analysis and synthesis
Capacity to learn
Problem solving
2. Capacity for applying knowledge in practice
3. **Capacity to adapt to new situation**
Concern for quality
4. Information management skills
Ability to work autonomously
5. Teamwork
6. Capacity for organisation and planning
Oral and written communication in native language
Interpersonal skills
Will to succeed
7. **Capacity for generating new ideas**
8. Elementary computer skills
9. **Decision-making**
10. **Critical and self-critical abilities**
11. Ability to work in inter-disciplinary team
Initiative
12. Basic general knowledge
Grounding in basic knowledge of profession
Ability to communicate with experts
13. **Ethical commitment**
14. **Knowledge of 2nd language**
Project design and management
15. **Research skills**
Leadership
16. **Ability to work in international context**
17. **Appreciation of diversity/multiculturalism**
18. **Understanding of other cultures.**
Discussion group skills
Simulation models



Library/Literature searches
Case studies
Presentation skills

SUBJECT-SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES

- 1. Identify a common core**
- 2. Identify a common study programme**
- 3. Identify subject areas which seem to be different but are similar**
- 4. Identify a common set of learning outcomes**

Areas where AQUA-TNET had previously addressed some of the issues for Subject Specific Competencies

- 1. Common core-** To have knowledge of the biology of farmed animals (finfish, shellfish, etc)
 - To know how to apply this knowledge in animal production
 - To be capable of
 - characterising
 - analysing
 - evaluating different forms and systems of animal production
- 2. Common study programme**
 - To indicate and prevent side effects of animal production on man & environment
- 4. Common set of learning outcomes-**

To acquire a scientific attitude, oriented towards

 - formulation of hypotheses
 - testing of hypotheses
 - designing of research protocols
 - collection of data
 - analysis of data in different fields
 - To value strategic and operational issues in the field of aquaculture sciences
 - To search for solutions through a multi-disciplinary approach
 - To be capable of reporting both orally and in writing the results of their work

ANNEX 4

Berlin Process

The Ministers in charge of Higher Education of almost all European states met in Berlin on 18 and 19 September 2003 to exchange views on the progress made in the Bologna Process and decide on where to go from there. Two preparatory groups had met several times since the Prague Conference in 2001 and drafted a Communiqué that was then discussed by the Ministers in Berlin.

The final version of the Berlin Communiqué contains a few very specific and important commitments. Ministers decided to give the Process further momentum, by committing themselves to three intermediate priorities for the next two years:

- * Quality assurance
- * Two cycles systems and
- * The recognition of degrees and periods of studies.

By 2005 they expect detailed reports on the progress achieved in each country in these three areas.

As for Quality Assurance, Ministers stressed that consistent with the principle of institutional autonomy, the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself. They agreed that by 2005 all national quality assurance systems should include:

- * A definition of the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved.
- * Evaluation of programmes or institutions, including internal assessment, external review, participation of students and the publication of results.
- * A system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures.
- * International participation, co-operation and networking.

Moreover, Ministers called upon ENQA to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance and to prepare a report for the Ministers Conference in 2005.

With regard to the introduction of Bachelors/Master, Ministers they committed themselves to having started the implementation of the two cycle system by 2005. In that context Ministers encouraged the elaboration of qualifications frameworks at national but also at European level. Such qualifications frameworks should describe qualifications in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile.

In the context of the recognition of degrees and periods of study, Ministers underlined the importance of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, which should be ratified by all countries participating in the Bologna Process as soon as possible. At a very concrete level, they set the objective that “every student graduating as from 2005 should receive the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge” and that it should be issued in a widely spoken European language.



Apart from these three intermediate priorities, Ministers considered it useful to promote closer links between the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area in a Europe of Knowledge. They therefore went beyond the present focus on two main cycles of higher education and decided to include the doctoral level as the third cycle in the Bologna Process.

Ministers decided to adapt the clause in the Prague Communiqué on applications for membership. From now on countries party to the European Cultural Convention shall be eligible for membership of the European Higher Education Area “provided that they at the same time declare their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the Bologna Process in their own systems of higher education. “ Immediately afterwards Ministers accepted the requests for membership of Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Holy See, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, and “the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”. This means that from now on the emerging European Higher Education Areas consists of 40 countries.

The overall steering of the Bologna Process and the preparation of the next ministerial meeting will be taken care of, as in the past two years, by the Bologna Follow-up Group. In Berlin it was decided that this group would from now on have one additional consultative member, i.e. UNESCO-CEPES.

A somewhat smaller Board, like the Follow-up Group to be chaired by the EU Presidency, shall oversee the work between the meetings of the Follow-up Group. Finally, the overall follow-up work will be supported by a Secretariat provided by Norway, as it will host the next Ministerial Conference: in May 2005 in Bergen.

The Berlin Communiqué contains, as the Bologna Declaration and the Prague Communiqué, references to and recommendations for all the other action lines, such as Lifelong Learning, ECTS, and the attractiveness of European Higher Education etc. However, the Communiqué is not just more of what we saw in the past: By defining three priorities for 2005 and deciding on a stocktaking exercise, Ministers increased the commitment to and the speed of the process. A process that is radiating to ever more countries, as was witnessed by the various observers from Eastern Europe and Latin America present in Berlin. Now the countdown for Bergen is running and no one active in the process will find the twenty months to the next ministerial meeting too long: Governments, institutions, quality assurance bodies and everyone else will have to work hard to meet the obligations decided upon in Berlin.

14.10.2003



Appendix 1

List of relevant publications numbered in order of appearance in text.

1. Survey on Master Degrees and Joint Degrees in Europe”. Christian Tauch and Andrejs Rausvargers, EUA, SOCRATES, Sept., 2002.
2. Council Resolution on the promotion of enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training (VET), Document 14343-2002 and “Copenhagen Declaration” of the European Ministers in charge of VET and the European Commission of 30th November 2002.
3. “Investing efficiently in education and training: an imperative for Europe”.COM (2002) 779 final, European Commission, January 2003
4. “The role of the universities in the Europe of knowledge”, European Commission, COM(2002) 58 final, Brussels, February 2003
5. “From Prague to Berlin: the EU Contribution. Second Progress Report”. Brussels, 14 February, 2003.
6. SOCRATES-ERASMUS, Special measures for the promotion of ECTS, A2/PVDH, Brussels, 1 July 2002.
7. Qualification Structures in European Higher Education: Alternative Approaches for clarifying the cycles and levels in European Higher Education qualifications”. Stephen Adams, SOCRATES, March 3, 2003.
8. “Towards shared descriptors for Bachelors and Masters” Joint Quality Initiative, Informal group report, February 2003.
9. “Working on the European dimension of Quality”, Joint Quality Initiative, Amsterdam, March 2003.
10. “The role of the universities in the European Research Area”, speech delivered on behalf of DG Research Commissioner, M.Philippe Busquin, by Mr. P.Caracostas, March 28, 2003.
11. European University Association (EUA) Response to the EU Commission : the Role of the Universities in the Europe of Knowledge, Graz, May, 2003.
12. “Trends in learning structures in European Higher Education III: Bologna four years after: Steps towards sustainable reform of higher education in Europe”. Sybille Reichert and Christian Tauch, SOCRATES, Brussels, June 2003.



AQUA-TNET

13. Council of Europe Steering Committee Document CD-ESR-GTI (2002) 1, 3 June 2002, Strasbourg

14. Report by the General Rapporteur, Sjur Bergan, Council of Europe, on the Bologna Seminar on Recognition and Credit Systems in the Context of Lifelong Learning. Praha/Strasbourg, June 7, 2003.



Appendix 2

List of useful web links.

Berlin Conference website

www.bologna-berlin2003.de/en/links/index.htm

EU activities

www.bologna-berlin2003.de/en/activities/index.htm

GATS and World Trade in Services

<http://gats-info.eu.int>

www.aic.lv/ace/gats/default.html (GATS)

Amsterdam Seminar results

www.bologna-berlin2003.de/en/bologna_seminars/index.htm

Results on Joint Quality Indicators available as a pdf

Lisbon Seminar

www.bologna-berlin2003.de/en/bologna_seminars/index.htm

Results available as a pdf

Zurich Seminar website

www.ects-conference.ethz.ch/index.asp

Adam on ECTS and the Diploma Supplement at Zurich

www.ects-conference.ethz.ch/index.asp?file=documents.htm

Bruges-Copenhagen Declaration

europa.eu.int/comm/education/copenhagen/index_en.html

europa.eu.int/comm/education/copenhagen/resolution_en.pdf

Consultations on role of universities

europa.eu.int/comm/research/consultations/list_en.html

TUNING 2 website

odur.let.rug.nl/TuningProject/index_phase2.htm

Documents for Graz. Report of Masters and joint degrees.

www.unige.ch/eua/

Guidelines for creating DS

www.aic.lv/ace/tools/leg_aca/DS_rec.htm