

Joint letter to Ministers of Education meeting in Prague on May 17

May 9, 2001

Dear Madame/Sir,

We are writing you on behalf of CESAER, SEFI and CLUSTER, the main organisations for universities of technology, faculties of engineering and other higher engineering education institutions in Europe.

Our organisations have given a longstanding contribution to cross-European cooperation in our field and we have actively participated in the Convention recently held in Salamanca where the attached documents were presented. These describe the complete background of our common positions regarding the Bologna process, which we strongly support.

Most of our views have been retained in the Conclusions of Salamanca. However, some important points have only been included in an implicit or general form. We have thus felt the need to provide you and all other European Ministers of Education with a more precise input from universities of technology and other engineering education institutions before the European summit in Prague on May 17-18.

CESAER, SEFI and CLUSTER fully support the following points, which we consider crucial in the creation of a European Higher Education Area as far as engineering education is concerned:

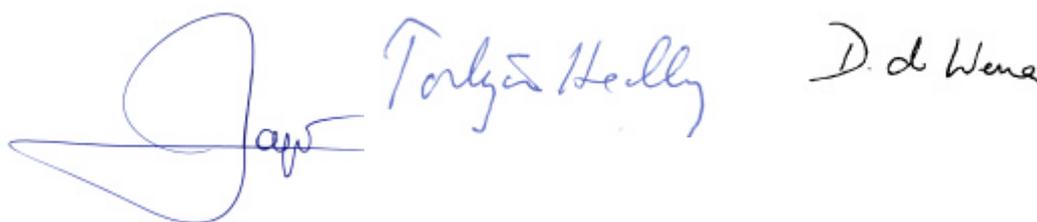
1. Highly qualified engineers, able to contribute to the technological progress through their leadership in research and development activities, are of vital importance for the economic competitiveness of Europe. Therefore scientifically oriented curricula leading to the Master's level, i.e. the 2nd Cycle level in the Bologna formulation, are necessary.
2. The society also needs graduates from application oriented engineering studies lasting three/four years. Their specific qualities should be appropriately recognised.
3. The option of 5-year integrated programmes (exceptionally 4-year) spanning the 1st and 2nd Cycles and leading straight to a Masters Degree in Engineering, without the mandatory award of an intermediate professional degree at the end of the 1st Cycle, should be maintained in addition to the two-cycle structure envisaged in the Bologna Declaration

4. The creation of new 1-2 year Masters programmes should also be encouraged.
5. The general employability should be distinguished from professional employability. The Bachelor's level does not necessarily have to qualify for professional employability.
6. The Bachelor's level should not only give employability; it should also be a pivot point for cross-European and international mobility and an entry point to the Master's level.
7. Universities should be allowed to set their own admission criteria for entry to the 2nd Cycle.
8. The organisations for engineering education and the professional engineers in Europe should play a formal role in the development of accreditation, quality assurance and recognition at a European level.

We thank you for your attention and trust that these considerations will be taken into account in the summit of the European Ministers of Education to be held in Prague.

If you have any questions or doubts about the above, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,



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Documents attached:

- Communication of CESAER on the Bologna Declaration
- SEFI's Opinion on the Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education signed in Bologna
- SEFI's Position on Engineering Education Accreditation in Europe
- Position of the CLUSTER Network on the Bologna Declaration of June 1999
- CLUSTER's Statement on Quality Assurance and Accreditation
- Joint Position of CESAER and CLUSTER on the future of Engineering Curricula