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# **The role of employers in the Bologna Process**

by Michel ZIGONE

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# The implementation of the Bachelor, Master, PhD (BMP) system

## What is it ?

Europe has taken the decision to create 3 common levels or common diplomas in the higher education area, in order to be used as indicators in terms of competences and of knowledge

## What for ?

To make the mobility and employability of students easier. To do so, **we need to define the competences and the knowledge** of the diploma-holders accurately



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# What are the competences for an employer ?

- A diploma-holder, must be able to use his own language (spoken and written) properly,
  - He must have some notions about economics,
  - He must prove his competency in business English,
- **It is rather easy for the teachers to evaluate some of these competences, and according to the results of the evaluation reconsider their pedagogy**

# What are the competences for an employer ?

- To have the general attitude required,
  - To have an inquiring mind,
  - To be capable of autonomy and able to face and solve new problems,
  - To be responsible and able to take decisions,
  - To be able to debate and convince,
  - To be capable of managing men and teams,
- **Some of these competences are difficult to define and evaluate**

# The implementation of the BMP system in France

In France, the implementation of the BMP system has been realized without clearly defining the competences in terms of employability and mobility. The employers have been consulted in the matter only very recently.

- The knowledge of diploma-holders is evaluated but not their competences.
- The method of teaching has never been modified by taking into account the evaluations.
- The supplements to French diplomas have not yet included the real competences as they should be.



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# The implementation of the BMP system in France

- The BMP has often been understood as simple delineated sequences of time, and not as a long term pedagogical project.
- Only a « mere façade » of the BMP system has been set up.

# The implementation of the BMP system in France

## Is the implementation of the BMP system in France a failure ?

- Not really, because some universities have managed to realize the complete implementation,
- Some other universities have already started to elaborate project strategies under the pressure of the 4-years contracts with the ministry of education : They have started up dialogues between different disciplines, various curricula and the different universities on the same site, but also with numerous foreigner universities in Europe

# The ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) in France

## What is it ? :

- It allows to define the competences and knowledge that a student has already acquired to be able to follow a given training successfull
- and those which he will acquire at the end of the given training

# The ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) in France

## What is it ? :

- The European universities have to agree on the definition of the amount of work (in terms of working days, for instance) which is necessary to an average student to succeed
- This amount of work should be the same for a student in Warsaw, Madrid or Bristol, in order to acquire the same competences. It can only be relevant if the time to achieve the new level is sufficiently long, at least from from several months to one year.

# The ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) in France

## The implementation in France :

- Many universities have directly linked ECTS credits to the number of hours the students attend the teachers' courses.

**This is a negation of the ECTS system, because it affirms that students are able to learn only in the presence of the teachers.**

# The ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) in France

## The implementation in France :

- This is due to the fact that the service of a teacher only takes into account the amount of time he spends in front of the students.
- The quality of the teacher's performance is not evaluated
- The time ratio dedicated to the teaching assignment is not defined neither.

# The ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) in France

## The implementation in France :

The system adopted so far gathers all the following drawbacks:

- It imposes **the semester system** in the curricula of the universities whereas the functioning of our society is based on a year system (the French preparatory classes, engineer schools, competitive examinations, IUT) and the student life is also scheduled on a year basis (inscription, grants, social security).
- At present, **a system of compensation** allows a student to study at the semester  $n$ , even if he has failed the exams of the semester  $(n-1)$ , which is supposed to give him the necessary knowledge for the semester  $n$  !

# The ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) in France

## The implementation in France :

In that particular case, it is a negation of the ECTS credits and even of the BMP system, as the compensation system no longer allows to guarantee the competences required for the diploma-holder.

# The « Tetragone » of partners in the Bologna process

## What should be done then ?

4 partners are **crucial** for a successful construction of the European Area of Education :

- Universities : professors, administrators
- Students
- Employers
- Government Offices : representatives of the Ministry of Education and of science and of the Ministry of Industry

**These partners have to cooperate intensively**

# What should be the role of Employers ?

They should :

- be involved, together with universities, government offices and students, in the creation of diplomas which correspond to real qualifications and competences
- adopt an organization of the curricula on 3 levels : bachelor, master, PhD degrees
- accept the use of ECTS for an international comparison of teaching contents and for the recognition of studying abroad



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# What should be the role of Employers ?



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And most of all they should

- recognize these diplomas, qualifications and competences
- participate to processes of internal evaluation, systems of accreditation and external evaluation



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# What are the rights of Employers ?

They can

- explain what they want as regards competences, define the needs of their entreprises, and their requirements
- argue and debate with all the other partners
- take part in the teaching process, if they want to. In France, 30% of the teaching is done by the entreprises and is recognized in professional curricula, especially at the master level



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# What are the rights of Employers ?

➤ **The role of employers is essential in the Lifelong Learning** : For the time being they contribute to 27% of the resources of the lifelong learning in French universities, whereas private individuals contribute to 27% and 38% comes from public funds.

**They can be more involved in the Lifelong learning: it has been developed also for wage-earners.**

# What are the rights of Employers ?

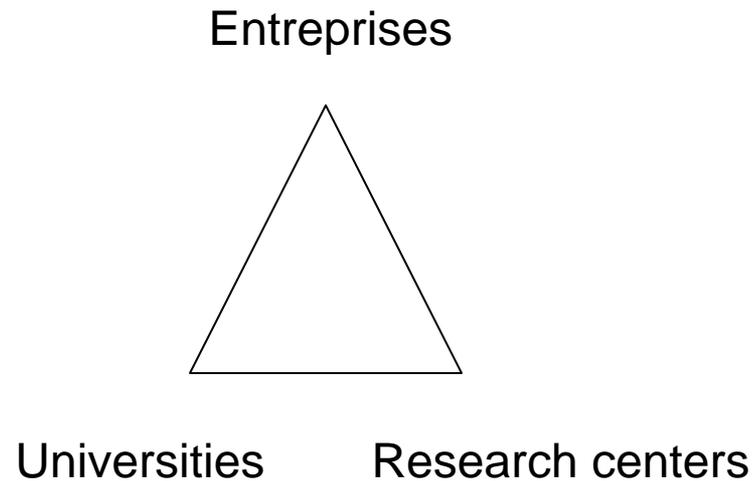
They can :

- participate to all the process of diplomas evaluation
- become finally a full partner of universities

These implications at all levels **is a major key for success** in the cooperation between employers and universities



In France, we promote now the idea of developing  
the triangle :



on one unique site



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