



Chemistry goes Bologna!

The Bologna process, which is intended to lead by 2010 to the creation of an open European Higher Education Area, linked with the European Research Area, has two important components to stimulate and to coordinate the implementation in the national higher education systems. One is the biannual meetings of the ministers of education, the last in Berlin in September 2003 and the next in Bergen/Norway in May 2005. The second is the series of Bologna seminars which take place under the auspices of the Bologna Follow-Up Group.

Until now these seminars have all dealt with general aspects of the process such as the awarding of joint degrees, quality assurance or the social dimension. However, on June 14th and 15th 2004 however the first subject-based seminar was held in Dresden, Germany, under the title "Chemistry Studies in the European Higher Education Area".

The seminar, which was supported by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, BMBF, and the Dresden University of Technology was organised by the German Chemical Society, GDCh. It was sponsored by the Federation of European Chemical Societies FECS and the European Chemistry Thematic Network ECTN as well as by the Fachinformationszentrum FIZ Chemie Berlin.

Almost 200 participants from 25 countries gathered in Dresden for two days of intensive deliberation. Opening speeches were made by Henning Hopf, President of the GDCh, and Gábor Náray-Szabó, President of the FECS, and the Keynote Lecture was given by Christoph Ehrenberg, Director General in the BMBF.

A series of plenary lectures then prepared the way for detailed discussion in the seminar workshops. Terry Mitchell (Dortmund, Germany) presented the "chemistry Eurobachelor" framework devised by ECTN, while Arne van der Gen (Leiden, the Netherlands) provided important background information on ECTS, Modularisation and the Diploma Supplement. Dieter Jahn (BASF, Ludwigshafen, Germany) dealt with the employment perspectives for Bachelors and Masters in chemistry in globalized job markets, and finally Alfred Maelicke (Mainz, Germany) described the results of an important German initiative on e-learning in chemistry.

The following workshop discussions dealt with the themes: Employment Perspectives for BSc and MSc (chair: Richard Whewell, Glasgow, UK), Multimedia Support (chair: Antonio Laganà, Perugia, Italy), the Transition from BSc to MSc (chair: Tony Smith, Lyon, France), ECTS – Modularization and Student Workload Measurement (chair: Arne van der Gen, Leiden, the Netherlands), eChem Tests (applications of computers in assessment, chair: Haggga Schmalz, Köln, Germany) and Scientific Careers in Chemistry: the PhD (chair: Terry Mitchell). At the end of Day One, the participants relaxed during a boat cruise on the River Elbe, enjoying a fine meal and a wonderful sunset.

The Workshops continued on Day Two and the results and recommendations were presented at the final plenary session, which also discussed the conclusions of the seminar. These

consist of 5 general recommendations to the Bologna Follow-up Group to be considered for the next communiqué of the ministers' conference in Bergen and of more specific items which should be of high interest for the community of chemists and neighbouring disciplines..

After final discussions in the Scientific Committee (chaired by Reiner Salzer from the TU Dresden), the recommendations will be made available to the chemical community, so that they can be made good use of in the reform process which is gaining momentum in the run-up to 2010.

The conference recommendations and reports can be found on the Internet under <http://www.gdch.de/taetigkeiten/ausbildung/bologna.htm>