

## ELFA RESOLUTION ON THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

The European Law Faculties Association (ELFA),

Convening at its Annual General Meeting in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 25-28 February 2010,

(1) Noting that ten years have passed since the Sorbonne-Bologna declaration had been signed, launching what is now termed the Bologna process of creating a European higher education area,

(2) Reaffirming its belief that the commonalities of legal education in Europe warrant the coordination of the general principles of legal education for a European legal profession as well as **for a wider professional context**,

(3) Confirming its commitment to serving as a forum enabling the joint opinions of European law faculties to be represented at the European level thus providing its assistance to all European institutions dealing with the contribution of legal education to society,

(4) Whereas ten years after the launch of the reform process is an appropriate time to review the progress in achieving its stated aims,

Adopts the following resolution on the status and development of the Bologna process:

1. ELFA supports the efforts to provide for a European framework of higher education, *increase the comparability of education and transferability of degrees obtained*, and welcomes the beneficial aspects of the Bologna process in this regard as having a noticeable positive impact thereon.

2. While ELFA welcomes the aim of increasing the employability of the students as well as – where appropriate – shortening the duration of studies, the realities of the reform fall far short of this aim. In many countries, the creation of new first-cycle and fragmented degrees has *decreased rather than increased the employability of graduates* and the duration of studies *for individual students* has remained the same.

3. Noting the above, it is of greatest importance to ELFA that the quantitative goals of the Bologna process are not achieved at the expense of the quality of legal education. It is a firm belief of ELFA that the vocation of the higher legal education is to educate balanced intellectuals with a solid understanding of the general tenets of the legal profession, which is also the best, if not the only, guarantee of their employability in substantive rather than merely formal terms. The drive to shorten the duration of studies should not result in the lowering of standards. In this regard, ELFA calls upon the law faculties and national education authorities to consider introducing systems of admission examination and selection where not yet applicable.

4. While ELFA welcomes in their entirety the increasing levels of exchange programmes, additional attention could be given to the peculiarities of legal education which is partly conditioned by the demands of a particular legal order. This feature of the curricula, which may be a potential barrier to international exchange, is particularly present in the final years of the studies, the very same years traditionally envisioned for exchange. Accordingly, ELFA would support an attempt to try and resolve this discrepancy.

5. While ELFA agrees with the student-centred approach to legal education inspiring the Bologna process, it stresses the need for respect of appropriate time allowances for scientific research for law professors, which is aimed at maintaining and improving the quality of the same student-centred approach.

6. ELFA stresses the importance of general subjects, e. g. legal history, Roman law, legal theory and philosophy of law, as well as other non-legal subjects, e. g. economics, sociology, as valuable fields of legal education.

7. Finally, ELFA strongly believes that the creation of the European Higher Education Area should be implemented in the spirit of academic freedom and university autonomy.