

ELFA Resolution on Governance, Autonomy and Finance of Universities and Law Faculties

*The European Law Faculties Association (ELFA),
uniting over two hundred law faculties from Europe,
assembled at its Annual General Meeting in Warsaw
on the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth of February 2011,*

- considering that the economic crisis is affecting proper functioning of higher education and law faculties,
- asserting its conviction that the European Governments as well as the European Union will take proper steps to ameliorate the present situation,
- reaffirming its commitment to serve as a forum for the expression of opinions of European law faculties at the European level and thus providing its assistance to all European institutions in charge of the dissemination of the knowledge of law and its contribution to society,

has adopted the following Resolution:

1. ELFA expresses its concern with the budgetary cuts on education and on higher education spending in many countries. A desirable improvement of education is the most important factor for the future of our Continent. ELFA expects that the European governments, as well as the European Union will share this conviction and will discontinue the budgetary reductions in these areas. The present situation in which members of law faculties in some countries receive reduced salaries and public grants for universities are being limited must cause a decline in the level of instruction and hinder the research. Thus the objectives of the Bologna Process aiming at teaching quality assurance and enhancement cannot be met.
2. ELFA believes that the system of the higher education financing needs to be reformed: a better distribution of financial means and changes in university management should be encouraged. Particularly, it should be avoided that the increase of number of students will result in deterioration of the level of teaching.
3. ELFA notices that in many countries there are attempts to limit the autonomy of higher education institutions. Rectors and Deans should be appointed in a democratic way.
4. ELFA recognizes the positive role of private law schools meeting high quality standards. The existence of such schools in some countries may trigger beneficial changes in the management and teaching quality at the law faculties of state universities. It may also create better employment opportunities for the academic teachers and offer more competition for the students.
5. Taking into consideration the student protests brought about by the increase of study costs, ELFA trusts that proper steps will be taken to cope with the situation. Tuition fees should remain, if possible, unaltered in the face of the economic crisis. There has to be joint effort to improve the welfare of students.
6. Finally, ELFA strongly believes that the process of the creation the European Higher Education Area cannot be petrified. The EHEA needs further implementation through thorough reforms of the system of higher education in many countries.

*Adopted at the General Meeting of ELFA
Warsaw, on the Twenty-Sixth of February 2011*