

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to thank Mr Wuttig and his team for inviting me to give this key-note address. I feel honoured having been asked to speak to this distinguished audience, although as a musician I am usually more inclined to describe my opinions and feelings in sound rather than in words.

I would like to start with making a confession. When Alexandra approached me some while ago with the invitation to speak about 'Intensive Programmes and the Bologna Process', at first I indicated to her I might not be her ideal speaker, but for some reason she insisted. There are two reasons for my initial hesitation:

1. Firstly, when I speak, I always speak about music. Possibly you could call this a professional deformation, but that's my expertise. **(slide)** This can also be explained when you see the information on the association I work for on the screen: as you can see, it is a European association in higher education with a highly discipline-specific focus. 'Bologna and Music', 'ERASMUS activities in music', etc are the kind of topics I feel comfortable with. It is clear that the theme of today goes beyond my own limitations, but I can't help it to approach even today's topic from the perspective of my discipline and passion, which is music **(music sample: Smetana track 3 until 0:00:27)**.
2. Secondly, when preparing my speech, I did not find the topic easy either. OK: 'Joint Programmes and Bologna', 'Student Mobility and Bologna' or 'Curriculum Development and Bologna', that's all easy, but 'Intensive Programmes and Bologna'? Hhhmmm, that's a challenge!

To make things even worse, when my wife asked me what I was thinking about when she noticed I was being rather absent-minded, I told her that I was invited to give a key-note address. She then asked me "what is a key-note address?" and I found that a difficult question to answer as well. So here I am, lacking the right expertise for the topic, not knowing what to do, but still 15 minutes or more to go.

When one is faced with a situation like this, the only thing you can do is to collect information and to retrieve some essential points from your own past experiences. Therefore, I decided to summarize my experiences with IPs and with the Bologna Process.

Firstly, what do I know about Intensive Programmes? **(slide)**

Behind me on the screen you can see the various Intensive Programmes I have been involved with. My involvement has ranged from the implementation and coordination of IPs to projects in which I participated in other ways, for example by sharing expertise. By the way, I saw on the programme of this conference that one of these projects, 'We Make Opera', will be presented tomorrow: go see that one, because that is certainly one of the best IPs in music I have so far encountered.

Secondly, what do I know about the Bologna process? **(slide)**

It may surprise you, but music as a discipline has been unusually active in relation to the Bologna process. Let me give you some examples:

1. We built a trilingual website called www.bologna-and-music.org, which to my knowledge is the only website that addresses the Bologna process from the perspective of a particular discipline so far
2. We have developed a sectoral qualifications framework for higher music education with learning outcomes and competences as reference points for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycles in music study. This was done in the ERASMUS Thematic Network for Music 'Polifonia', which was chosen as an 'ERASMUS Success Story' by the European Commission several months ago.
3. We have developed a subject-specific and European level approach to quality assurance and accreditation for higher music education
4. We have an ERASMUS MUNDUS project called 'Mundus Musicalis' on the enhancement of attractiveness of European higher music education
5. We also developed a website 'DoReMiFaSOCRATES' to promote mobility in our sector with web logs and personal stories of students on exchange, FAQs for students and teachers, and a large section with practical information for ERASMUS coordinators
6. Finally, we published many handbooks on 'Bologna' and other European themes, such as the use of credit points, internal quality assurance, curriculum design, how to set up an ERASMUS exchange, employability and much more.

So, as a discipline we have taken a pro-active approach to Bologna.

The next step would then be to look for connections between these two experiences, so that I could bring you a perspective you could take back from my key-note address. Ah, yes: key-note address – what was that again?

As I said before, being a musician I am always inclined to take the musical meaning of words as a first starting point. Many of you will have received music education at some point in your lives, so you will know the musical meaning of the words 'key' and 'note'. Very crudely said, when one wants to write down a musical composition, one has to use musical notation, which comprises of many different tools: notes, dynamics, harmony, rhythm, etc. These are all tools to make music readable and therefore understandable to others. The 'key' is another example of these tools, but one that is slightly more intangible and complicated, because a key is being used by composers to express a certain mood. For example: from the bright and open mood of the key of A-major (**music sample: Mendelssohn track 7, start to fade out at 0:00:20**) to the dark and mysterious mood of e-flat minor (**music sample: Janáček track 22 until 0:01:34**).

By now, you will think: why is this guy giving this lecture in music theory? Well, aren't there similarities to what we are trying to achieve in the Bologna process? Here it is: the European Higher Education Area as the main composition, with the 3-cycle system, credit points, diploma supplement, quality assurance and so on as the tools to make things readable and therefore understandable to others. But in which 'key' are we doing all this to set the mood of the whole process? Is it A-

major or e-flat minor? And what have ERASMUS Intensive Programmes to do with it? Do they belong to the 'Bologna' tools, do they contribute to setting the 'key' of the process, or are they something else?

So let's have a look at how 'Bologna-compatible' the Intensive Programmes really are (*slide*). I have listed the Bologna principles on the screen and with this audience there is no need to go through them in detail. As you can see, I have underlined the main issues and then some conclusions can easily be drawn:

- Yes, Intensive Programmes are about promoting mobility
- Yes, Intensive Programmes are recognized through the use of ECTS when organized properly
- Yes, Intensive Programmes can also be quality assured, again when organized properly
- Yes, Intensive Programmes can work in a 3-cycle structure, although the connection to the 3-cycle structure is not a condition for a successful IP
- And yes, Intensive Programmes can contribute to the enhancement of attractiveness of European higher education, as often they are academic and artistic events of high quality and therefore interesting at an international level.

But how about the European dimension? Let's stop here for a minute.

The European dimension of the Intensive Programmes can be viewed from various angles (*slide*). Firstly, let's take the subject-specific approach. One of the things I really like about Intensive Programmes is the fact that they can increase European cooperation within a certain discipline. They are interesting from an academic point of view, as they give students and teachers from various European countries the possibility to talk in-depth about their subject. Representing a discipline-specific organisation, this is what I find an enormous plus.

Secondly, as said before, when taking the perspective from the mobility angle, Intensive Programmes are also important tools to promote and support mobility. This is especially the case for those students that for whatever reason are unable to go for longer ERASMUS study periods. IPs can also be a powerful tool for any policy institutions may have for "Internationalization at Home".

So, all these points are all certainly pointing into the direction of the key of A-major: bright, open and wonderful. But why am I not totally convinced this is the only truth? Is there maybe also an undercurrent in the key of e-flat minor at the same time?

In order to discuss this I would like to mention a few somewhat provocative statements – I know this is dangerous in a hall filled with IP experts, so please do not take this personally, but I do this also to make a gentle upbeat to the panel discussion following my speech:

The first one is: ARE INTENSIVE PROGRAMMES REALLY THAT EUROPEAN?
(slide)

Back to the European Dimension and let's look at the project selection. Isn't it strange that we are promoting Intensive Programmes as a European activity, but have organised the selection procedure purely on the national level? Institutions can write an application in their own language, which is subsequently (as far as I understand) assessed by a team of national experts. Now, I have no doubt that these experts are experienced in European project development, but the truth is that the European perspective is limited in the selection, apart from some very broadly defined priorities from the Commission. Is this issue being discussed by the National Agencies, for example is an exchange of experts at the European level being considered? I have even understood that the contracts for the IPs are sent to the coordinators in their own national language, which will undoubtedly create problems for the coordinators in their negotiations with partners.

The second one is: ARE INTENSIVE PROGRAMMES AT ALL INNOVATIVE?
(slide)

A strong European dimension factor in the IPs is that we are bringing students and teachers from various countries together for a short period of time. But is that something new? Talking from the perspective of my own discipline, and I am sure other disciplines as well, short courses doing exactly that and often taking place as summer academies have existed for many years without any support from ERASMUS. And then the mobility-argument I mentioned before – IPs are important for students that are unable to go on longer study periods: aren't young people travelling a lot nowadays within or outside the framework of their studies and do we really need IPs to provide them with this experience?

I do not know the answers to these questions; I am just throwing these questions at you as points for consideration.

The third statement is: INTENSIVE PROGRAMMES ARE TOO INCIDENTAL AND THEREFORE A WASTE OF TIME AND MONEY. **(slide)**

I guess this one is addressing the impact of the Intensive Programmes. We know it is very well possible to participate in or even organise an IP and see very little effects in the way the institutions organise their teaching and learning. Sometimes IPs are the results of a small group of or even one enthusiastic individual, working in splendid isolation in the institution and even approached with some suspicion by colleagues for yet another wonderful example of 'academic tourism' this person is organising for him- or herself. Of course, the rector of the institution has to sign the application, but does this signature mean a full backing of the institution or is it an 'it's-fine-but-just-make-sure-it-will-not-cost-us-any-money-and-effort'-signature? And this brings me to what I see as the crucial point in relation to the Intensive Programmes and in fact to any European activity in higher education, which is the embedding of such activities into the institutional policies.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have been active in the European scene now for more than 10 years. This has given me enormous inspiration and satisfaction. However, I can't help it starting to feel slightly worried in the key of e-flat minor. Let me explain.

Just recently we did a survey throughout the Association to assess the true impact of the European activities taking place. We found one very positive point, which was a substantial increase of institutions engaged in ERASMUS exchanges compared to some years ago, as well as an considerable growth of mobility numbers of student and especially staff. However, we also found that there are still, even in this year when ERASMUS celebrated its 20th anniversary, serious problems with the recognition of the exchange periods, mainly due to inflexible attitudes of institutions, and administrative and teaching staff.

In addition, we looked into the connection between the European activities and the institutional strategies of individual institutions. We found this connection was hardly there. Of course, student mobility has now been broadly embedded into the institutional activities and this is being supported by institutional strategic policies. But is mobility mainly being used to move around students for their own benefit or is it also being used as a tool in the institutional strategies, for example as a tool for curriculum development or, in the case of staff mobility, for continuing professional development? And when we have a look at the ERASMUS projects, is the situation much different? We know institutions exist that apply for IPs or curriculum development projects as part of their institutional strategy to set up strategic alliances with other institutions in other European countries, for example for curriculum development, joint programmes or international benchmarking, but are these exceptions or typical cases? And even in these cases, how has the impact really been: has it really changed approaches to curricula, teaching and learning or has the effect just been sporadic?

What I am talking about is European collaboration in terms of sustainable content development and not just the mechanics for mobility, as being implemented by the Bologna process. I am convinced that at one point we will have to go much further beyond just moving around students and teachers. Yes, I know much is happening (*music starts playing here: ERASMUS Chamber Orchestra track 6 until end without applause*) already, but I do believe this type of European cooperation is lagging behind the apparent success of the structural reforms of the Bologna process. And it is with this in mind that the Intensive Programmes, but also the curriculum development projects and the ERASMUS Networks have much work to do. These projects have to fill the cooperation structure being implemented by Bologna with actual content; they are not just add-ons or personal hobbies of individuals. And it is therefore so important to stress the role of you, the IP coordinators, as important pioneers in this process. Strangely enough, not even the Commission itself seems to be convinced about this fact: at the Lifelong Learning Programme and ERASMUS Conferences in Berlin and Lisbon earlier this year, hardly any attention was given to the projects; mainly

student mobility was highlighted, probably as this is the component of ERASMUS with the highest political visibility.

Ladies and gentlemen, the fact you are hearing music in the background does not mean there is a technical malfunction. It means we are nearing the end of my presentation, so it is time for some final reflections.

Are ERASMUS Intensive Programmes important for the Bologna process? Yes, although I do personally think that the curriculum development projects and the ERASMUS Networks are even more important. **(slide)** In any case, with your help let us ensure the Intensive Programmes are one of the tools that will move the Bologna process, which is no more than an empty shell right now, into a more subject-specific direction, otherwise it will never come alive. Let us ensure that they can be used by academics as a tool for creative and scientific development by taking an open and inclusive approach by breaking down bureaucracy and EU-babble (you know: "Valorisation Conference"). But above all, let us ensure that the IPs will give students an important academic, artistic but especially personal experience.

The music you are hearing now is a recording recently made during a music IP called the ERASMUS Chamber Orchestra consisting of students from 17 different European countries, which celebrated the 20th Anniversary of ERASMUS with a special concert in Brussels. One of the pieces the students played was called "Angeli" by the Italian composer Giovanni Sollima. **(slide)** During this concert, the audience was clearly moved by witnessing how European cooperation in an IP can lead to exceptionally high levels of quality, efficient intercultural dialogue and cooperation, and extraordinary inspiration. I suggest we listen until the end of this movement just to give us some time to reflect and relax before the conference continues. Enjoy...

Martin Prchal, December 2007