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// CED RESOLUTION

# THE BOLOGNA PROCESS AND DENTAL TRAINING

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COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN DENTISTS (formerly EU Dental Liaison Committee)

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The CED is composed of 29 national dental associations, representing, in their respective country of the European Union and beyond, the professional and scientific interests of dentists, in accordance with the definitions of professional title in Article 1 of Directive 78/686/EEC (to be replaced as of 20 October 2007 by Annex 5.3.2 of Directive 2005/36/EC).

The CED has as its object to act as a professional organisation, which from an independent position, but supported by its Members, develops and executes a policy and a strategy in order to:

- Promote the interests of the dental profession in the EU;
- Promote high standards of oral health;
- Promote high standards of dentistry and dental care;
- Contribute to safeguarding the protection of public health;
- Monitor, analyse and follow up on all the political and legal developments and documents of the EU that involve dentists, dental care and oral health;
- Actively lobby the European Institutions and Parliament, in order to serve the legal and political interests of dentists, including consumer protection issues

Taking into account the above, the CED welcomes the agreement signed by the Ministers for Education of 44 European countries to establish a European Higher Education Area by 2010 and believes that the general principles of the Bologna Declaration are, on the whole, appropriate and reasonable. They improve the impact of EU mobility actions and they facilitate at the same time the recognition of qualifications and free movement of people in EU.

However, the CED believes that the adoption of a system essentially based on the splitting of the curriculum into two main cycles – undergraduate (Bachelor) and graduate (Master) – would have negative consequences for the dental profession and it is inappropriate for dentistry.

In light of the above, and as a contribution to the ongoing developments relevant to the restructuring of the curricula in dental training taking place in many EU countries as a response to the Bologna Process,

- The Council of European Dentists calls for the unity of the dental training cycle to be maintained. The principles and the guarantees set by Directives 78/686 and 78/687/EEC (to be replaced as of 20 October 2007 by Annex 5.3.2 of Directive 2005/36/EC), ensuring a high quality of training and free movement of dentists, should not in any way be jeopardized nor weakened.
- The Council of European Dentists strongly opposes the implementation of the two-cycle structure (Bachelor/Master) for the dental profession and calls on academicians and politicians responsible for education and health, for the protection of the dental profession and the public, to exclude dentistry from the two cycles completely, refusing to transform their curricula into the two-tier degrees system.

**Adopted at the General meeting of the CED on 29 November, 2005.**

## // WHY THE CED OPPOSES THE TWO-CYCLE STRUCTURE OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS IN DENTISTRY

The CED believes that the adoption of a system essentially based on the splitting of the curriculum into two main cycles – undergraduate (Bachelor) and graduate (Master) – threatens our profession and may create a number of problems in the future.

The enforcement of two autonomous cycles of study might be reasonable and feasible for most theoretical disciplines and market-oriented universities but it is inappropriate and impossible to be implemented in Dentistry for the following reasons:

The implementation of a two-cycle structure in dental education whereby a degree is awarded after the first cycle, giving access to the labor market would create an artificial qualification without a defined role in the dental profession.

The introduction of the first cycle is guided by economic reasons (as quick and large-scale production of ready-to-use degrees), and could lead to serious problems in the primary oral health care of people since the bachelor-graduates with a purely theoretical and inadequate clinical training might compromise patient safety.

According to the Dental Directives, persons wishing to pursue the professional activity of a dental practitioner must hold a qualification attesting to a complete period of dental training, which “shall comprise at least a five-year full-time course of theoretical and practical instruction given in a university, etc...” (Directive 78/687/EEC, Art. 2).

A Bachelor's degree in dentistry that follows the model of the Bologna process: direct access to work independently in the mouth as a result of the principle of free movement and automatic recognition will lead to the development of a new dental para-profession with all the consequences resulting from:

- The inability of the CED to control such a profession and to impose the regulations and restrictions derived from the implementation of the Dental Directives.
- The inability of many countries to impose and control the exact range of dental treatments performed by these graduates, and
- The fact that dentistry cannot tolerate being split into three segments:
  - a) One part for the dental para-professionals,
  - b) One part for the general dentist, and
  - c) One part for the specialist dentist.