
STUDENTS SPEAK

Internationalization of the university system and the future of Forlì

On the 4th of May, 2011 a round table on "Internationalization of the university system and the future of Forlì" was moderated by **Roland Schenkel** of the Swiss newspaper *Neuer Züricher Zeitung*. Participants of the round-table were professor Stefano Bianchini, Erasmus students, Master degree students, Ph.D. students, postdoc research fellows together with other researchers and professors. The round-table main issues that we had to face were:

- What are some of the central ideas behind, and challenges facing the EU driven mobility schemes?
- What are the main assets gained through mobility, and how can the University further support the development of these assets?
- What are other countries doing to promote mobility?
- What is the experience of international Students in Forlì?
- How does the Forlì / UNIBO experience compare with other countries?
- Who represents international students to the University?
- How are some ways that the University and Forlì can support students beyond their degree?
- How are the international students looked after? What is missing? Which aspects can be improved?
- Can countries like China and India compete with European Countries?
- Can there be more done for studies like engineering?
- How attractive is Switzerland for an exchange?

I personally tend to divide approaches to all these questions into human-centered and state-centered approaches. For example, we all know that the Erasmus has been functioning for more than 30 years, under which the EU students have to be sent for studies in other EU country for 1/2 terms with a scholarship ranging from 300-900 euro.

However, if we start contemplating on human-centered approach, then we have to focus on those particular moments and difficulties that were discussed during the round-table. As a result, we managed to find out those problems which are crucial for a student who comes to study in Italy:

- Italians don't speak English a lot. In such case, it is highly necessary to introduce orientation weeks for Erasmus students including "Italian for survivals". So far, Italian language is a real problem for international students, because when coming to Italy one doesn't know, for example, what "caparra" is and other nuances. All these things might turn to a serious problem.

- Besides, lectures of **Italian language** provided by language center of the University (CLIRO) are not correlated with other lectures on other Forlì faculties. This hinders students' integration a lot.

- Also, there are Universities, for example, in the Russian University of Peoples' Friendship where credits that students received in Italy are not counted. It means that on their way back home they have to pass a great number of disciplines.

- If we start speaking about Faculty of engineering, we face deeper problems here. Thus, for example, there is no IT-park, as well as a minimum number of internships are held, though, Emilia-Romagna and Emilia in particular is an industrial region, with a great number of various car plants.

In conclusion, I would like to mention, that critique of the educational system of Italy was constructive, moreover, the round-table was very vivid, interesting, international, and useful both for University managers as well as for students. All the participants agreed to repeat such round-tables annually.

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