

Empirical results of the last student survey in Rhône-Alpes: some effects of the Bologna process ?

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The Bologna Process as a Challenge for the students

V. International Workshop at the University of Konstanz

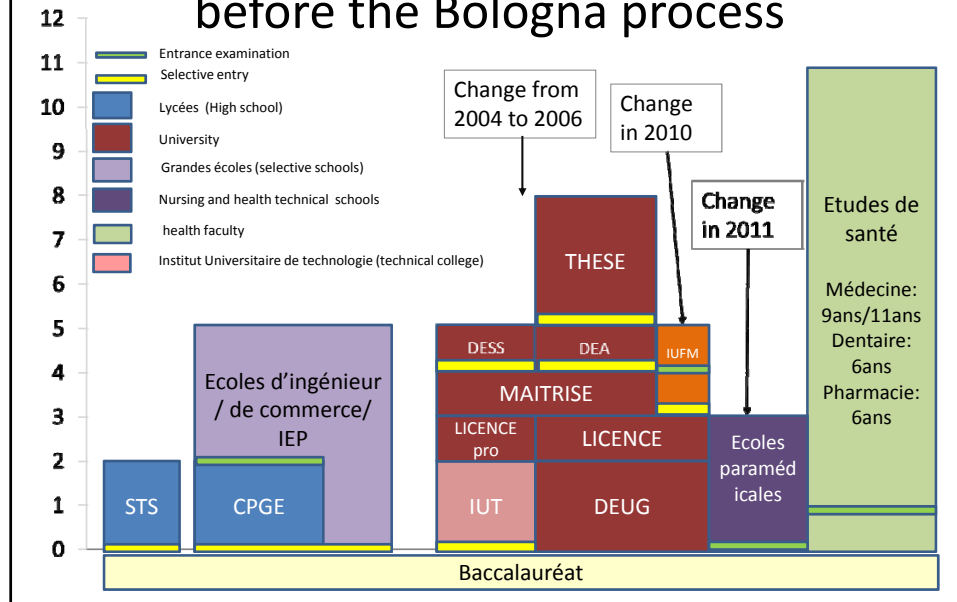
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the Bologna process in France

- After the implementation of the BMD in the French higher education system, the structure of this system as been simplified
- But less is known about :
 - the effects of this implementation on students perceptions of the quality of higher education
 - the links between the bologna process goals and the effects perceived by the students

Higher Education structure in France before the Bologna process

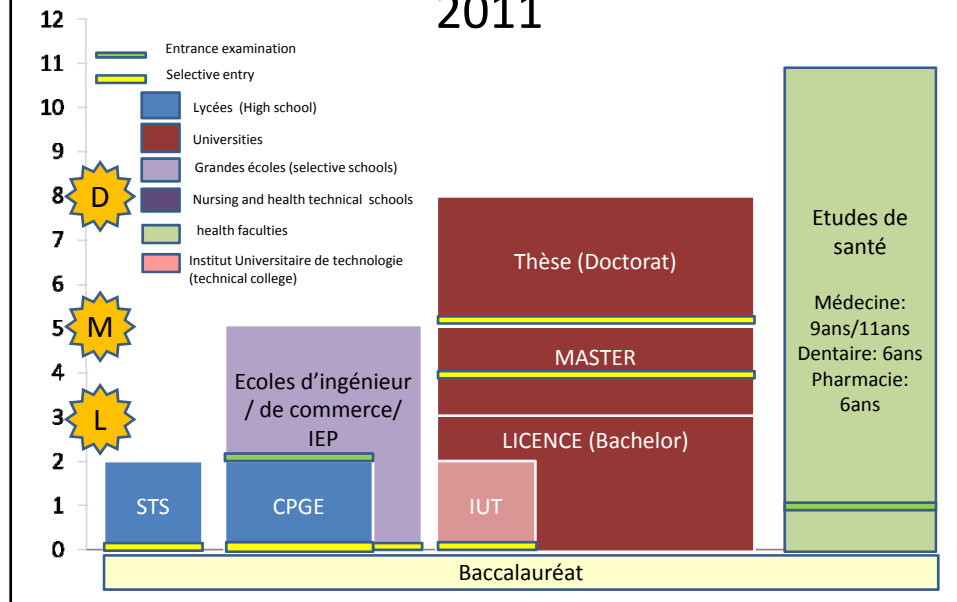


Note:

Before the implementation of the BMD structure (from 2003-2004), the French higher education system defined itself by two main characteristics:

- An opposition between a not selective main university path, considered as little professionally oriented and the other numerous institutions, part of the university or not, selecting their students in the entrance, considered as professionally oriented, for some ("grandes écoles", studies of health) more prestigious than the main university path.
- Within the main university path, a succession of diplomas which can be acquired in 2 years for the first one, then in 1 year for the following ones with the exception of the doctorate which was of at least three years.

Higher Education structure in France in 2011



Note:

Today, the main university path has totally adopted the system in three levels BMD and a part of the selective institutions adopted this system too (paramedical schools, training of the teachers).

On the other hand, the most prestigious path, the "grandes écoles" or health studies, did not join it still totally, preferring to preserve the specificities which made them the institutions for the French elites.

Taking students into account to evaluate the Bologna process implementation

- From the conference of Berlin 2005, it is stated that students should be involved in the process of the improvement of quality in higher education.
- But, in France less is done to promote this involvement of students
- However, it's possible to ask students about the way they evaluate what their university is providing

Data

- Same survey (based on the international version of the Konstanz survey) in 2002-2003 and 2008-2009 :
 - before and after the implementation of the Bologna process in French universities
- 1230 third year students in 2003 (8 universities)
- 1466 third year students in 2009 (6 universities and 2 "grandes écoles")
- A randomly chosen sample of 620 students in 2003 and 620 students in 2009 similar on the criteria of the university and of the field of study

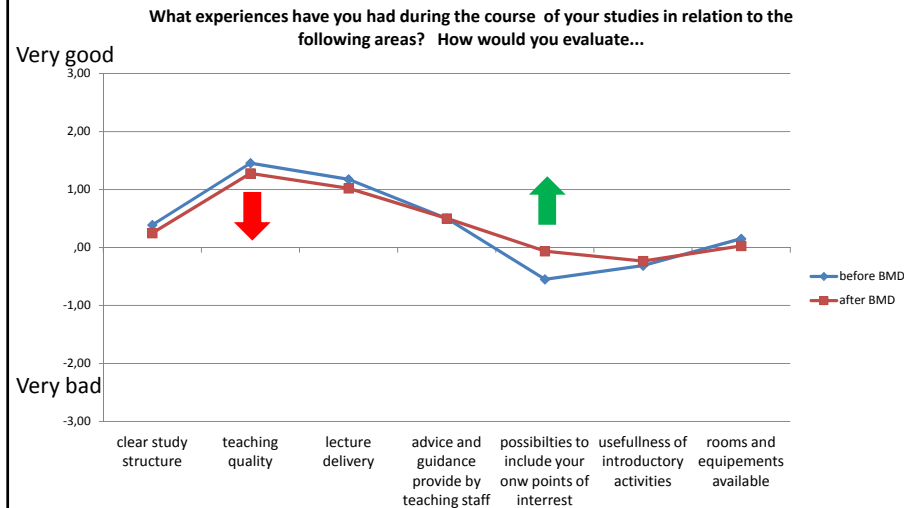
Some expectations of the Bologna process (Leuven 2009)

- “We ask the higher education institutions to pay particular attention to improving the teaching quality of their study programs at all levels.”
- “Student-centred Learning requires empowering individual learners, new approaches to teaching and learning, effective support and guidance structures and a curriculum focused more clearly on the learner in all three cycles.”
- “Higher education should be based at all levels on state of the art research and development”

Note:

The text of the Leuven declaration in 2009, proposed some statements about teaching quality in higher education emphasizing the necessity of a more student centered and research oriented teaching .

Is there some modification in the teaching/learning process ?

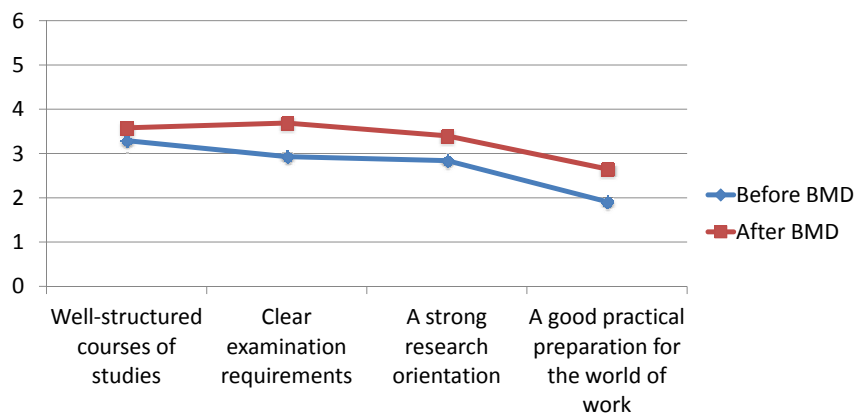


Note:

We observe that the implementation of the Bachelor-Master-Doctorat structure slightly affects students' judgments about their study's conditions. However it seems that, even if it is positively estimated, the quality of teaching significantly degraded ($F(1, 1222) 3.935; p=0.048$) while on the contrary, the students judge that they have more possibilities to include their own centers of interest in their program ($F(1, 1217) 19.235; p < 0.001$). We can certainly attribute this increase to the implementation of a curriculum system allowing the students to choose a part of their courses in other disciplines. If it seems that training is more centered on students by allowing them to include their own centers of interest in their studies, it does not seem connected to a more positive perception of the quality of teaching,

Aspects of the teaching process linked to the bologna process goals

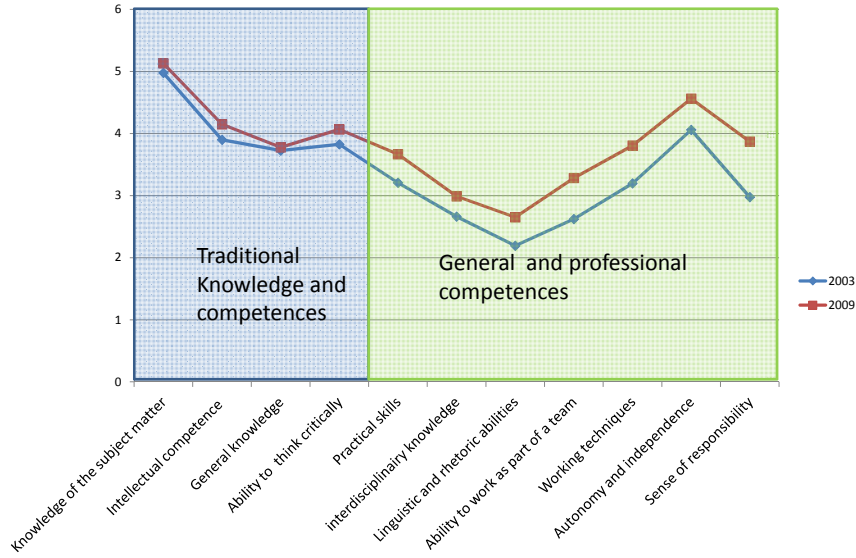
To what extent is your major subject characterised by....



Note:

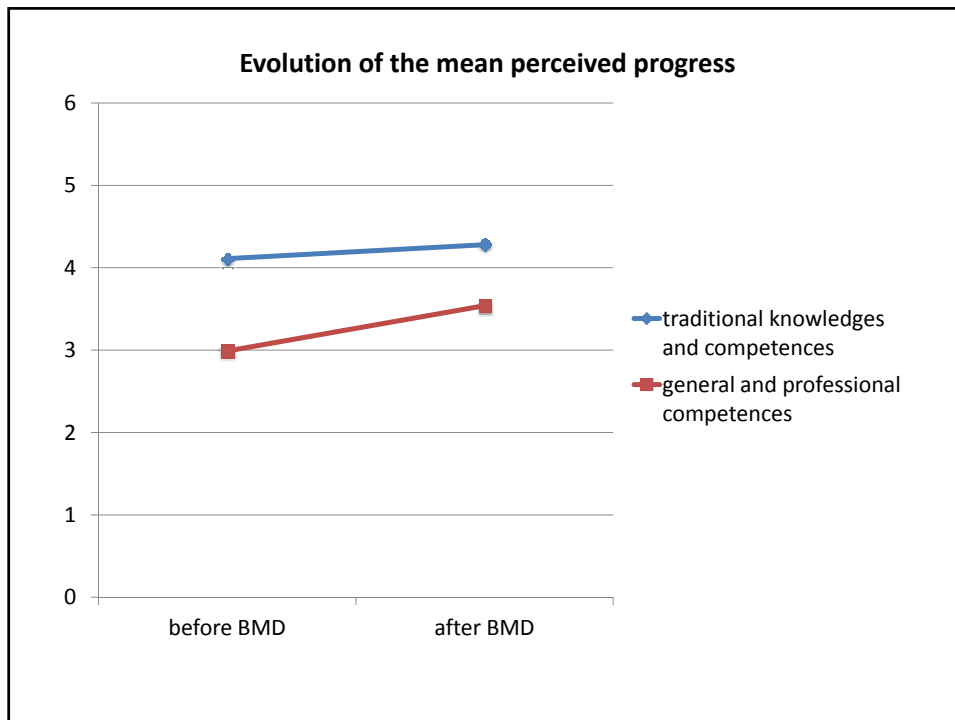
- After the passage in the BMD (BACHELOR-MASTER-DOCTORAT) structure, the students judge more positively than before that the studies are well-structured (in 3.58/3.29) and what they know clearly what is expected for the exams (2.93 / 3.69).
- It also seems that the link between teaching and research improves because while it was slightly judged under average in 2003, it is sharply above in 2009 (m=2,84 2003, m=3,84 in 2009). Finally, if the students still have a negative evaluation of the preparation for the profession, their judgment improved however significantly (with an average of 2,65 in 2009 against only 1,91 in 2003 on a scale from 0 to 6).

In what ways do you feel your studies have helped you to develop? (0=have not helped at all, 6=have helped greatly)



Note:

If student perceived more development in the knowledge and competences that are the traditional heart of higher education than in general or professional competences, we observe significant progress in all domains, expect progress in general knowledge which stay at the same level



Note:

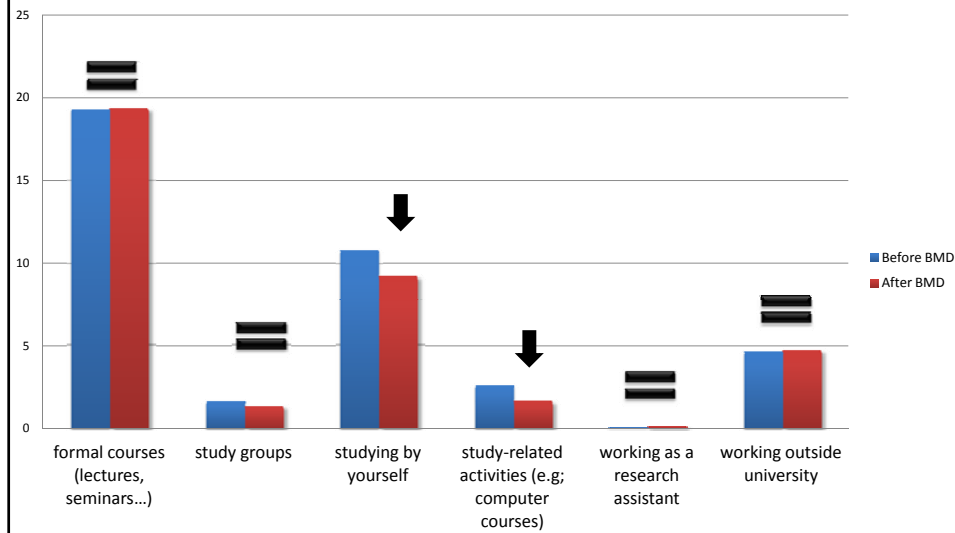
If we calculate an average score for the progress perceived in the domains of the knowledge and skills traditionally aimed by university and also for the general and professional skills which the process of Bologna tries to promote, we notice

- 1 - that the students perceive more important progress in the traditional domains
- 2 - but that the increase observed between 2002 and 2009 are mainly situated in the field of the general and professional skills.

If universities continue to make their students progress in domains which were considered as their missions (disciplinary knowledge, general knowledge, critical thinking and intellectual abilities), it seems that an effort has begun to develop the teaching of general and professional competences.

Impact on study time

This term, how many hours per week have you been spending on the following activities



Note:

Another way of studying the educational modifications is to look at various times of studies. Indeed, a pedagogy more student centered should give more place to the group works and to autonomous work and less place for lectures. However, we observe the opposite with an autonomous working time which decreases while the others times do not modify.

Cours 2002 = 18h53min; 2009 = 20h08min

Travail autonome 2002 = 10h46min; 2009 = 9h14min

Autres activités d'études 2002 = 2h37min; 2009 = 1h36min

Expectation about mobility (Leuven 2009)

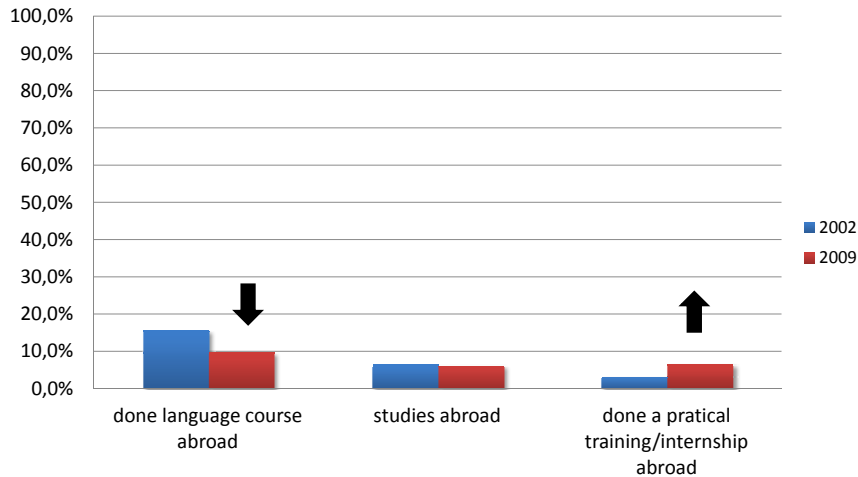
- Geographic:
 - “We call upon each country to increase mobility, to ensure its high quality and to diversify its types and scope. In 2020, at least 20% of those graduating in the European Higher Education Area should have had a study or training period abroad.”
 - “Within each of the three cycles, opportunities for mobility shall be created in the structure of degree programs.”
- Social
 - Access into higher education should be widened by fostering the potential of students from underrepresented groups and by providing adequate conditions for the completion of their studies. This involves improving the learning environment, removing all barriers to study, and creating the appropriate economic conditions for students to be able to benefit from the study opportunities at all levels.

Note:

The text of the Leuven declaration in 2009, proposed some expectations about students' mobility seen as international mobility or as social mobility.

Increasing of students' mobility?

Have you, during the course of your studies...



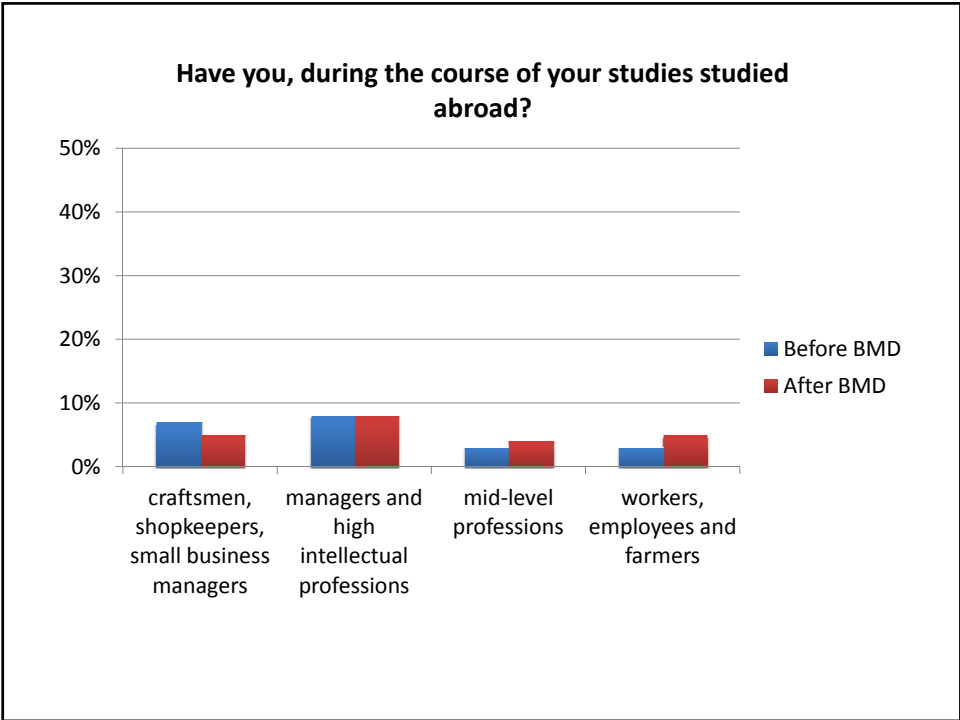
Note:

In spite of the goal of increasing student mobility, in the third year, less than 7 % of the students has already studied abroad without any increase after the passage in the BMD structure.

Contrary to what was expected, we observe even a significant decrease of the proportion of students having followed language courses abroad.

Only the proportion of students having made a training course abroad increases significantly although this proportion remains weak.

If there is increase of student mobility this increase seems more connected to the aim of students' employability than to the aim of students' academic development.



Note:

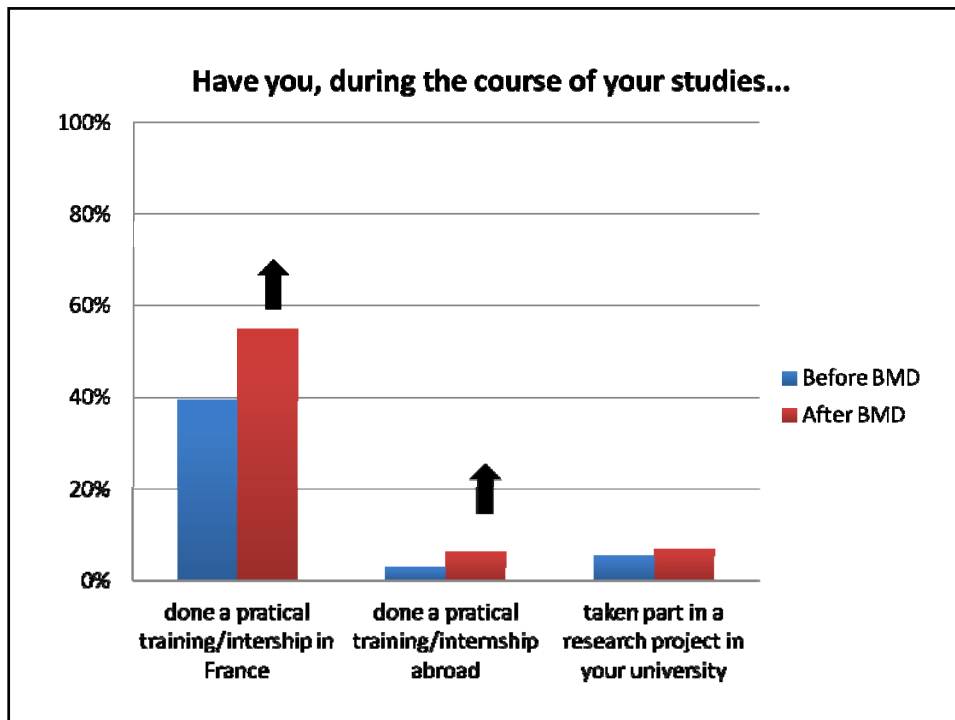
There are no clear modifications in the link between social category and studies abroad, the students of the highest social category still being proportionally twice as numerous to study abroad (8 %) that those the other social categories (4 %)

Expectations about employability (Leuven 2009)

- “higher education should equip students with the advanced knowledge, skills and competences they need throughout their professional lives.”
- “We encourage work placements embedded in study programs as well as on-the-job learning.”

Note:

The Leuven declaration also included some expectations about the improvement of students employability.



Note:

We saw that it is the progress in the field of professional competences that are the most important.

We also notice that there was, during this period, a very strong increase of the rate of training course made by the students (15 %), increase which can be connected with a goal of professionalization of the level Bachelor's degree.

Expectations about students' information (Leuven 2009)

- "the Bologna Process has promoted the Diploma Supplement and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System to further increase transparency and recognition."

Note:

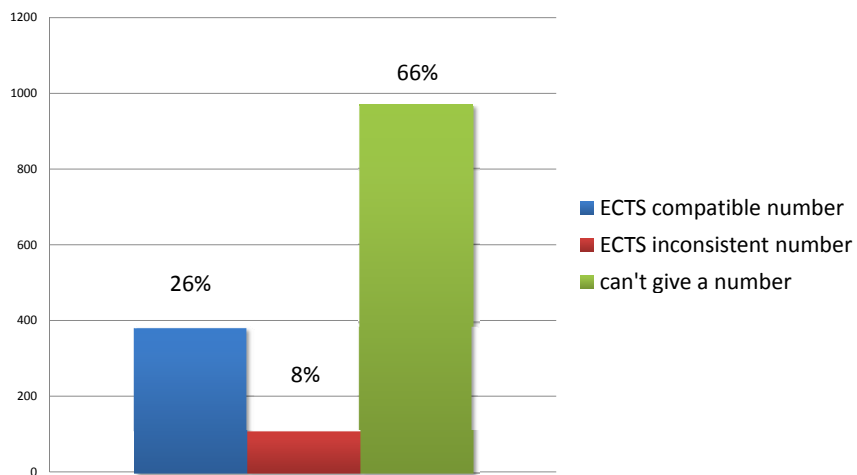
La déclaration de Louvain rappelle le rôle des ECTS dans la reconnaissance internationale des diplômes mais aussi dans la transparence des structures de formation.

On peut y voir un rappel du besoin d'information sur le processus de Bologne et ses implications des différents acteurs dont les étudiants ainsi que de leur participation à l'évaluation de ce processus qui était affirmé dès la conférence de Berlin (2003).

The Leuven declaration reminds the role of the ECTS in the international recognition of diplomas but also in the transparency of the structures of training. We can see it as a reminder of the need of information about the Bologna process and its implications on the various actors there among whom the students, as well as of their participation in the evaluation of this process which was asserted from the conference of Berlin (2003).

Information about European Credit Transfer system

Please state the number of ECTS you have already received



Note:

It is possible to have some information on the way students are informed about the new structure of study through the answers which they gave to the survey. One of the questions asked to the students to indicate the number of credits which they had already acquired.

The students know badly the system of the ECTS because more than 66 % of them do not know how many credits they have already acquired during their studies, To these 66% it is necessary to add 8 % of students who indicate impossible values. Only 1 student on 4 is capable of indicating the number of credits that he acquired.

It indicates that even for an information which concerns them directly and for a central aspect of the new structure of studies, the students suffer from a deficit of information.

conclusions

- Referring to the expectations defined in the Bologna process, it is possible to identify some problematic areas through students responses
 - Mobility of students
 - Social inequalities
 - Student-centred teaching
 - Information about ECTS and, in general, new structures of studies
- But also some progress: studies seems more employability oriented than before
- It is difficult to know what part of these progress could be attributed to the Bologna process itself

