

## **Grußwort GS (ca. 10 Minuten)**

13th European Students Convention  
**Students Taking Stock**  
16-19 March 2006, Berlin

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Students,

Let me, first of all, thank ESIB and fzs for organizing this important European Students Convention on the Bologna Process and for inviting me to address the conference participants.

I welcome all of you on behalf of the German Academic Exchange Service, better known as DAAD. We are a member organisation of more than 200 universities and other Higher Education institutions. Among our members are also 130 student bodies. Students are also represented on our decision-making boards. The DAAD promotes the international relations of its members in its more than 200 funding schemes and programmes. Within these programmes the DAAD awards grants to 55.000 international and German students, graduates, doctoral candidates and researchers per year. In addition, the DAAD acts as National Agency for EU programmes. In our capacity as National Agency, we distributed over 29.000 part-cost scholarships to German students and teachers in the academic year 2005/6; most of them in the ERASMUS programme. In the framework of ERASMUS we also run the so-called "Promoting Bologna" project which aims at supporting German higher education institutions when implementing the Bologna reforms.

The DAAD has played an active role in supporting the Bologna Process within the scope of its activities since the very beginning. We are contributing substantially to the achievement of the Bologna goals with our mobility programmes, our support for international programmes leading to Bachelor's and Master's degrees as well as our worldwide marketing activities.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Sie haben sich hier in Berlin getroffen, einer Stadt, die viele gute und manche schlechte Assoziationen weckt. Zu den guten gehört das Erbe der Gebrüder Alexander und Wilhelm von Humboldt, der eine ein weltberühmter Naturforscher und mutiger Entdecker Lateinamerikas, der andere, Wilhelm, ein kluger Politiker und Begründer einer Universitätsreform, die von hier aus einen Siegeszug durch die Welt angetreten hat. Seine Schlagworte, Botschaften und Missionen waren „Einheit von Forschung und Lehre“, „Gemeinschaft und Lehrenden und*

*Lernenden“, , „Einsamkeit und Freiheit“, „Bildung durch Wissenschaft“ und ein Erziehungsauftrag der Universität, der nicht auf Fachexperten, sondern auf Persönlichkeiten gerichtet war.*

*Ich habe mich vor allem in jüngerer Zeit oft gefragt, wie die Humboldt-Brüder reagieren würden, wenn sie mit am Tisch der Bologna-Ministerkonferenzen säßen. Ich fürchte, dass ihnen die oftmals blutleeren technokratischen Texte wenig gefallen würden, dass ihnen viels längst zu bürokratisch vorkäme und dass sie wohl still den Raum verliessen, rechtzeitig bevor das fröhliche Gruppenfoto der zufriedenen Signatar-Minister auf der Tagesordnung stünde. Nur einmal hätten sich ihre Mienen bei den Beratungen gewiß aufgehellt. Nämlich immer dann, wenn von mehr grenzüberschreitender Mobilität die Rede wäre. Denn international mobil, unter viel viel schwierigeren Bedingungen als heute, waren sie beide und von Alexander ist der schöne Satz überliefert: „Gefährlich ist (nur) die Weltanschauung derjenigen, die die Welt nie angeschaut haben.“*

Whatever divergent the opinions on the Bologna Process may be, one success is undeniable: Bologna has stimulated a debate on the quality and convergence of higher education systems in meanwhile 45 European countries and on the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area. Bologna seems to have effortlessly broken the harmonisation taboo which had been fiercely defended by the member states against any “attempts at interference” from Brussels. The dynamism of the process and the speed, with which new content was added and new members were taken in, have surprised even optimistic supporters of European Integration and practically left universities short of breath.

Meanwhile the Bologna Process is a daily business for our universities and has become a catalyst for many national discussions on higher education reform and related topics. In Germany, for example, the Bologna Process had an impact on the question of autonomy and excellence of universities as well as on the latest revision of the BAföG scheme for students from financially disadvantaged families.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

it was certainly wise to organize a conference on taking stock of what has been achieved so far in the framework of Bologna. It is important to analyse where we are with the reforms and what remains to be done to reach the Bologna goals by 2010. The time of the conference is well chosen to allow to feeding the results into the London meeting of the Ministers. But if you want to be heard and if you even aim at influencing

the already well-prepared conference Communiqué, you will have to make very clear, understandable and realistic recommendations.

Having said this, I will propose some recommendations from my perspective which you might use if you wish so. Representing the DAAD, you will not be surprised that my recommendations will focus on the international aspects of the Bologna Process and especially on student mobility.

1. Student mobility should become the centre of interest again. It was in the beginning a core element of the Bologna declaration but has lost its importance in favour of other topics such as quality assurance and qualification frameworks. Furthermore, the “good will” declarations of the Ministers are vague and not binding and do not set any quantitative goal.

2. The Ministers should define a binding 10 per cent mobility rate of incoming and outgoing students for all Bologna countries. Some countries could have even more ambitious goals. Germany, for example, aims at sending 20 per cent of their students for a substantial period abroad. The DAAD even would like to see 50 per cent of the German students going once in their “student life-time” for a stay abroad, be it for studies, for internships or for substantial foreign language training.

3. Higher education institutions should be obliged to implement “windows of mobility” in the curricula (e.g. in the 5<sup>th</sup> semester) and to also enable a one-year study period abroad. At the same time, higher education institutions will have to shoulder an increased responsibility for organized mobility. Otherwise we run the risk that mobility within the very intensive short Bachelor courses will decrease below the actual standard.

4. More encouragement for study abroad is needed through generous academic recognition especially when the study achievements abroad differ from those at home. This difference in content and methods should not be regarded as a problem that has to be eliminated but rather as the essential benefit of study abroad. It is not the similarity but the difference that makes study abroad a worthwhile experience. And it is mostly not the additional academic qualification that counts but rather the impact for the personal development and identity.

5. Financial support for study abroad has to be strengthened by:

- a) full portability of grants and loans
- b) covering the costs for transnational mobility by offering scholarships or bank credits to all students

c) increasing the ERASMUS grant up to 200 EUR per month

6. The ERASMUS Programme should be open to all Bologna signatory countries to make sure that all countries of the European Higher Education Area have comparable opportunities to further develop student mobility.

7. More student halls of residence are needed if we would like to significantly increase the number of mobile students as intended by the Bologna Process and the ERASMUS programme.

8. The support services for students (e.g. assistance and guidance) have to be improved. The National Agencies for ERASMUS, for example, should take care not only for outgoing students, but also for incomings.

9. In order to have better knowledge of the mobility flows in Europe, the Ministers should commission an "Atlas of European mobility" to be updated at regular intervals. Such a database including all Bologna signatory countries would enable the Ministers to define quantitative mobility goals and to monitor the progress in the field of mobility in the EHEA.

10. The same applies as regards the funding of student mobility, where we know very little about the number and size of national programmes. I, therefore, suggest a study on national funding schemes with regular updates. This will reveal that most Bologna Countries have no explicit policy of promoting and funding study abroad of their own students. More transparency of these deficits might trigger off a useful competition for improvement.

Let me conclude by wishing you every success for your conference.