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education
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***Higher Education Governance between
democratic culture, academic aspirations and
market forces***

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Learning and living
democratically

Introduction to the conference

Jürgen Kohler
Chair of the Working Party

I. Purpose of the Conference

1. Higher Education Governance: Significance of the Issue and Confusion of Words and Emotions

Higher education governance is an issue permeating almost all matters of higher education dealt with both by higher education and research institutions, but no less by state authorities involved in higher education and research. Catchwords such as optimising institutional structures, internal and external participation and communication, democratic, legal and monetary steering mechanisms, public responsibility and autonomy, ensuring quality while minimizing cost, to name just a few of the hotly discussed topics concerning higher education governance, determine much of the current debate in higher education and research. This indicates that higher education governance is indeed seen as being crucially important both at institutional and at systems level.

However, issues of higher education governance are not necessarily explicitly and coherently debated under this very headline and name. Instead, in many a case there is a piecemeal approach to addressing issues of higher education governance which, in order to enhance full comprehension of the structural and procedural overlaps, should rather be viewed under a common headline which denotes the interdependence of all the issues mentioned. There are several reasons for this observation of a significant shortcoming: the term itself, or an equivalent, may not even exist in a number of languages, and so the entire concept seems strangely outlandish. The notion of higher education governance appears to be hard to understand. It is seen as being complex and abstract. Rightly so; and yet, as mentioned, it shows itself in very concrete forms and modes of cultures and techniques to be found with regard to autonomy and external stewardship, to internal leadership and steering, to communication and inclusion, to collectivism, stratification and individualism, be it in relation to political setup, administration, decision-making, implementation, and monitoring of higher education institutions and their activities.

There may be a deeper reason for not fully addressing the issue of higher education governance as such which reaches beyond sheer linguistic non-existence of the concept and intellectual capitulation in view of complexity. Arguably there is also an emotional barrier to take up the term unequivocally in the context of higher education since it smacks of belonging to the realm of politics and business management. For many an academic, governance in higher education may be seen as an intrusion of a different world into the sanctity of academia. The term seems to hail the arrival of entrepreneurial outlook on universities, and of the intervention of non-initiated stakeholders in matters of academic expertise. So, possibly approaches to higher education governance under this very name, particularly when identified or confused with “higher education management” only, could be seen as a threat to traditional values and cherished styles of collegialism or individualism rather than a positive challenge.

Bearing in mind the significance of higher education governance issue on the one hand, but also on the other hand both the vagueness and the implicit cultural challenges of notions which go along with the term and subject matter, this conference is intended to shed light on the ever-present yet not necessarily fully understood or even fully appreciated notion of higher education governance.

2. Multiple Purposes: a Survey

What does this rather general statement encompass in more concrete terms? In short, the answer is: this conference is to address a number of purposes behind, and related to, the notion and the value of higher education governance, and it is about clarifying the concept of higher education governance with the view to promoting what could be considered to be “good” governance.

Subsequently, and this may be called the overriding purpose, the conference is about formulating visions of good governance in view of our understanding of the mission, cultures and even, if one may say so, “mechanics” in three aspects: of higher education and research per se, of higher education and research from the viewpoint of the institutions dedicated to them, and of the – local, regional, national, and international – political systems within which they operate and which expect them to serve, i.e. to be “useful” in as many ways as possible. Obviously this endeavour encompasses the need to first of all lay open our preconceived notions of the concept, of which there will be a number of different kinds due to differences of national traditions and political creeds.

These purposes, and with them expected outcomes of the conference, could roughly be summarized and specified under the following three main categories:

- One set of purposes behind scrutinizing the issue of higher education governance relates to the need to identify the link of this issue to both current and to permanent political contexts, agendas, cultures, traditions, or perhaps mere trends or even fashions. A suitable headline to summarize this aspect could be “contextuality”.
- Furthermore, a major driving force and purpose behind investigating the notion of higher education governance is the need to explore the practical “hands-on” elements of the issue and its long term effect, such as understanding the characteristic substance of “good” higher education governance as well as the qualitative and procedural challenges of implementing adequate higher education governance in a given environment. If there were to be a summative line for this facet, it may be “understanding and implementing ‘good’ governance”.
- Last but not least, dealing with higher education governance is intended to answer pressing practical issues of policy design with regard to sharing roles and responsibilities between higher education institutions and national governments, between central institutional steering and decentralisation, and between higher education institutions and their members and stakeholders; in the end, the basic understanding of the role of higher education and the principles steering higher education institutions is essentially at stake here. This aspect, finally, might succinctly be summarized under the caption “job sharing between state, institution, sub-institutional structures, and the individual”.

All these aspects, if not more, appear to be essential when dealing with higher education governance. They should, therefore, be scrutinized more closely, while the sequence they are dealt with hereafter does not indicate any kind of priority in importance.

3. Purpose I – Proper Sharing of Roles and Responsibilities: Identification of Demands, Choices, and their Challenges

a) Understanding the Core of the Issue

To start with the latter aspect: the question of proper job sharing is about investigating the buzz-words of legal, political or economic gravity fields shaping higher education policy debates. In that respect there are a number of archetypal questions and choices on the table which makes dealing with higher education governance a burning issue. In essence, they are centred around models of institutional steering, and these are largely concerned with different ways of attributing responsibilities inside a complex system of tasks. Debates on “autonomy” and “public responsibility”, “overall institutional orientation” and the “principle of subsidiarity”, the role of “central planning” and of “individual freedom of research, teaching, and learning” fuel the debate here at the level of traditional terminology.

The overarching issues behind all these items of formal structuring of responsibilities and rights are, in terms of substance, the perennial questions of “regulation” versus “independent choice”, between “competence” versus “representativity”, between “efficiency” versus “legitimacy and consensus”. This may be said at this stage irrespective of whatever these notions may really mean. However, it may even at this stage be fair to assume that the term “versus” between these buzz-words should rather be replaced by the word “and” in the course of any substantial debate on the governance issue, and that the quest for a fitness-for-purpose approach towards a properly blended balance of these concepts of would-be extremes should appear to be the actual job to be done.

b) Multi-tier Differentiation of Roles and Their (Traditional and New) Institutionalisation

When considering these buzz words – at the latest at this stage – it becomes obvious that the entire governance debate needs to address the issue from a multi-tier approach laid out along the line of types and purposes of major actors in the field. There are at least two traditional and perhaps two more recent tiers which must be identified as such for purposes of understanding the issue, although the real challenge lies in bringing them together by moving from a fragmented understanding of duties and rights to an integrative concept of facing a joint responsibility and effort:

Traditionally, and hence first of all, the debate needs to differentiate between higher education governance issues and viewpoints related to steering higher education and research institutions at their individual level, and to those related to steering entire higher education and research systems. Both worlds may consider the challenges more or less differently, and findings of relevance to one level may not necessarily translate into relevance to the other. That is why this differentiation of institutional and system levels will have to be borne in mind throughout the governance debate, as well as the need to define the interfaces in order to avoid confrontational attitudes and to proceed to fruitful cooperation.

Moreover, there certainly is another tier structure underlying this traditional set-up, and it applies to both the system and the institutional levels. The emergence of the so-called civil society – stakeholders of various kinds – must be considered here, not just as a

menacing challenge but also from the view of the potential gained from integrating the civil society and its representatives into higher education governance; the issue of addressing the role of boards and private funding of activities fits into this category. Last but not least, inclusion of internal partners is at stake and still a challenge in various ways across Europe; the issue of student participation is the major, but not necessarily the only item to consider here.

Bearing this stratification of roles and viewpoints in mind, the following sketch of choices to consider may be useful to operationalize the proceedings of the conference debate along concrete models and challenges:

c) Typology: Traditional Archetypology – and More Choices?

From a more organizational viewpoint, but essentially reflecting the issues behind this terminology, Burton Clark's taxonomy comes to mind first when labelling types of governance along the line of basic choices, and the balance of choices within his well-known triangle may well become a focal point of the ensuing debate. In essence, the questions thus raised are: Is there a preference for the "entrepreneurial university" versus the "collegial" type versus the "externally, state-run bureaucratic" higher education institution? In fact, what do these terms as such, as opposites or in a reality of various cross-overs, really mean, what are the pros and cons, what could be a wise and workable amalgam of these different types – if there is any choice left? Why, in fact, do these questions of choice arise?

More radically, and with a view to having more choices, or at least to finding more models in reality: Are these questions really a true picture of fact, or should there be a closer look at the role of the individual vis-à-vis the institution, in as much as to say that there is a fourth type of higher education institution hiding behind the so-called "collegial" type? Such a possible fourth type might be the anarchic agglomeration of individuals gathered in "freedom and solitude", as Wilhelm von Humboldt used to put it, and bound together not by a sense of institutional ownership and institutional responsibility of "true republicanism" but merely, as has been said jokingly, by a common heating system? And will this type of higher education institution survive, despite of or because of the prevalence of individual freedom and the absence of joint policies and institutional governance?

Finally, what about a fifth type of higher education institution, which might be called a university of stakeholders or a civil society university, superseding the traditional role-sharing between institutions and governments? The speedy arrival of boards in universities also outside the Anglo-American universities in very recent times heralds a type of higher education institution which might either be welcomed as a sign of new openness to society or condemned as falling prey to partisan interest groups ready to make use of higher education institutions for their individual benefits only.

4. Purpose II – Correlating the Governance Issue to its Political Context

Challenging traditional role models of higher education institutions as such and of the actors therein takes the debate back to identifying the first purpose of the conference on higher education governance mentioned above, which is: connecting the debate on higher education governance with the current political context. There are substantive and perhaps more procedural answers to that aspect of the governance topic.

a) Elements of the Council of Europe Agenda

The procedural aspect of this conference on higher education governance, i.e. its linkage to overriding general themes of policy, is the easier one. The issue of higher education governance blends into Council of Europe policy fields and action lines. This is obviously true for the present Council of Europe project “Year of Democratic Citizenship through Education”, resuming the previous Council of Europe analysis of universities as sites of democratic citizenship.¹ More basically, matters of higher education governance are strongly connected to the Council of Europe’s key missions, i.e. to protect and enhance human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, it can relate to the Council of Europe’s activities in the Legislative Reform Programme,² and it links on to the previous Council of Europe exploration of the issue of higher education being a public good and a public responsibility.³ Last but not least, and probably most importantly so, it may be fair to say that in effect higher education governance should contribute to meeting the objectives of higher education in general, which the Council of Europe has formulated so poignantly in four items as maintaining and advancing a solid knowledge base, as being relevant to society at large, including making provision for employability, as contributing to personal development and to active citizenship in democratic societies, and that ultimately matching these objectives is the proper yardstick for what could be called “good” governance.

b) Exploring the Concept and Implementation of Democratic Citizenship

However, despite all these links, why is there a “Year of Democratic Citizenship through Education” in the first place, and why link the issue of higher education governance to it? Trying to answer this question necessarily takes the debate back to the substantive political issues, of which there are at least the following three items: democratic citizenship as an educational issue in general and institutional participation in particular; facets of the Bologna process; general political paradigm shifts and evolution of circumstantial challenges such as mass education, the advent of the knowledge society, development strategies and funding.

The most obvious political issue connecting higher education governance to democratic citizenship is participation of university members – students in particular, but not only them – as “university citizens” in governing “their” institutions. This is a long-standing

¹ Reference is made in particular to articles in: *The university as res publica, Higher education governance, student participation and the university as a site for citizenship* (Council of Europe higher education series No. 1, Sjur Bergan [editor]), Council of Europe Publishing, November 2004.

² The Legislative Reform Programme was a project conducted by the Council of Europe from 1991 to 2000. It provided support for reform of higher education legislation in countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

³ Reference is made in particular to articles in: *The public responsibility for higher education and research* (Council of Europe higher education series No. 2, Luc Weber and Sjur Bergan [editors]), Council of Europe Publishing, April 2005.

debate, a lot has been said and achieved, be it on paper or in reality, and yet there may be need for more to come in a number of countries. The specific question of integrating minorities actively into university life would be an additional facet to that debate.

At a more subtle level, however, safeguarding “democratic citizenship” and preparing for active citizenship in democratic societies should be considered a major objective of higher education itself. The Council of Europe has been advocating this educational purpose for years, and it is now explicitly recognized in the Bergen Communiqué, too, when stating that each level of the three cycles serves to prepare, inter alia, for “active citizenship”. This approach to specific learning outcome turns the challenge as to how to integrate preparation for joining and steering social processes, i.e. politics and policy making in the realms of administration and government as much as of governance in a wider sense, into a meaningful learning experience of higher education. Here the quality issue of higher education as such overlaps with the governance topic.

The political context relating to higher education governance is also present in the discussions pertaining to the Bologna process even as it stood before the Bergen conference, which addresses another substantive point of the current higher education debate. Although the term has not yet been covered extensively as such in the Bologna documents,⁴ it is an underlying theme of all aspects of the Bologna process – namely of the issues of participation and the social dimension, but no less of quality and quality assurance –,⁵ and it may require to be addressed more explicitly and coherently in the Bologna process in the future.⁶ In essence and above all, governance issues are inseparably intertwined with the Bologna process due to the fact that the Bologna process, whatever objectives and tools it entails in detail, is about change – hopefully, in the sense of improvement – and hence about change culture and change management, both of which undoubtedly are an essential part of governance.

In addition, the notion of higher education being a public good and a public responsibility has been highlighted explicitly again and again in the Bologna documents at least since Prague,⁷ and there is no denying that this topic is closely linked to higher education governance, at least in that matching the demands which public responsibility makes on higher education provides an indispensable yardstick for identifying “good” governance.

⁴ Governance issues have, however, been dealt with in the Bologna seminar on “Exploring the Social Dimensions of the European Higher Education Area” in Athens early in 2003, and in the Bologna seminar on “Student participation in governance in higher education” organized by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research in mid-2003.

⁵ As for the participatory element of the governance issue, the Prague Communiqué states that ministers affirm that “students should participate in and influence the organisation and content of education at universities and other higher education institutions”, which the Berlin Communiqué seconds by stating that students are full partners in higher education governance. – With regard to the issue of quality assurance, the Berlin Communiqué recognizes that quality assurance is the prime responsibility of institutions, thus making the establishment of elements and procedures of quality and quality assurance cultures and mechanisms a governance issue at institutional level.

⁶ There may be a starting point in the Berlin Communiqué which states that “ministers accept that institutions need to be empowered to take decision on the internal organisation and administration”.

⁷ The Prague Communiqué of 2001 states that “higher education should be considered a public good and is and will remain a public responsibility”. The Berlin Communiqué of 2003 underlined this once again by stating that “the need to increase competitiveness must be balanced with the objective of improving the social characteristics of the European Higher Education Area, aiming at strengthening social cohesion and reducing social and gender inequalities both at national and at European level. In that context, Ministers reaffirm their position that higher education is a public good and a public responsibility.”

c) General Paradigm Shifts in the Public Sector

Finally, the most blatant political impulse to the debate on higher education governance brought about by real political context is the intertwining of paradigm shifts pertaining to the entire public sector with new demands on higher education and research as such.

As for embeddedness of the higher education world in the public sector, it must be noted that the entire sector as a whole has been undergoing a rearrangement – or at least a debate – under the heading “New Public Management”. In essence, it may be said that this approach is characterised by a switch from traditionally legalistic steering mechanisms of top-down implementation of normative formulae to a more economically driven steering system based on contractual consent on objectives to be achieved. Autonomy, as seen from the perspective of this approach, can be understood as part of a management concept of freedom to negotiate which, however, needs to be correlated to a strict understanding of accountability in all its facets, not in the least economically. Despite leaving aside the question as to where the roots of this development can be found, whether it is a workable and fruitful concept, and what happens in reality, it may be fair to assume that this undercurrent is shaping the more specific area of higher education governance, and probably justifiably so since a more consensus based steering mechanism which leaves room for local adaptation of devices is more in tune with modern understanding of democratic state operations, with the trend towards decentralisation, and with enhancing motivation at grass root level.

This undercurrent blends into specific new challenges to higher education and research which give rise to reconsidering adequate governance at institutional level and at national, or even European, systems level. One of these challenges is funding, which is brought about both by the advent of an “open access” policy and subsequent mass education paralleled by enhanced demand on quality and by research expenses, while funding has not been going along adequately. “Doing more with less” has become a significant slogan steering the higher education governance debate from the viewpoint of effectiveness and efficiency, the idea being that new approaches to governance may be the answer to matching funding deficiencies and added tasks at the same time. Looking at the case from this angle, governance is seen as creating a “money machine” or at least a savings bank, which is also a way of interpreting the notion of entrepreneurship in higher education. Internationalising higher education and putting higher education into a widely open unprotected market place of services, namely known under the term “commodification” newly coined in the context of including higher education in GATS, lends extra drive to a competitive-oriented outlook on higher education operations where “output” may be more important than “outcome”, efficiency more important than quality in absolute terms, and speed of innovation rather than extensive deliberation on quality may be a new essential.

The same basically economic motivation and objective, i.e. the drive for effectiveness and efficiency, may be at the root of readdressing governance issues with a view towards turning higher education institutions into “job machines”, which could yet be another way of understanding the term “entrepreneurial university”. Modern emphasis on the human capital factor, the notion of the knowledge based society, awareness of total competitiveness around the globe, makes the general public and governments in particular expect miracles from higher education institutions, thus turning the governance issue into a centre-stage affair of affluence and social peace which requires higher education governance either to adjust or else to be adjusted in order to “deliver”.

d) Malfunctioning, Misunderstanding, Distrust?

At the same time there is many a place in Europe where the aspiration of higher education institutions to gain substantial autonomy, the preparedness to identify challenges and the ambition to meet these effectively and efficiently do not match the actual ability to “deliver”, while the question is open as to whether this is in fact true or merely false perception. On the other hand and in return, in a number of cases higher education institutions feel that the interventionist role of external public or private institutions, mainly executed via financial constraints and ethical demands which may at times be seen as executing mere “political correctness”, is on the increase, despite all rhetoric endorsement of the notion of autonomy. So there is a certain element of distrust or of misunderstanding or doubt at least, between actors. Mutual frustration in view of growing demands may be diagnosed, with ever-increasing expectations on conflicting objectives such as quality, cost effectiveness, open access, democratic participation, instant reaction to new requirements nourishing the debate.

So a debate on the governance issue may be advisable to prevent distrust and frustration by finding out how to solve any such problems by means of wise, or wiser, governance at all levels concerned. This may be one of the major purposes of a multi-level debate on governance issues in higher education. In that respect, the Council of Europe’s composition, which provides a forum both for the state and the higher education sector, is the best forum for the debate indeed.

e) A Word of Caution: Do Concepts of Governance Really Have an Impact on Higher Education Institutions?

Eventually, however, when correlating the issue of higher education governance to its political context – and when understanding “political” in a wider sense of national, institutional and personal cultures, traditions, and habits – there is reason to ask to what extent a conceptional approach to governance will actually work in higher education institutions. Institutions of higher education, but in many a case no less ministries of education, show a tremendous amount of inertia, tend to be at least mentally fragmented organisations with a high degree of anarchy, working on what looks like the principles of fuzzy logic, if any logic. That is why planning and “constructivism”, which tend to be the traditional approaches to issues of governance, have failed more often than they succeeded in matters of higher education. Higher education institutions have seen many a governance philosophy or management scheme come and go. In fact it may be argued that the element of disorganisation characteristic for higher education institutions is part of their talent for survival in view of many an ill-conceived, wrongly politicised and hence short-lived concept of governance.

Bearing this in mind, the essence of the message is the twofold. First, that there is reason to be humble as for any belief in swift and lasting change by means of external introduction of governance concepts. And finally, and no less, that the reality of governance in higher education institutions and in systems will only be seen when thinking in at least two distinct layers: the outer organizational structure and operations, and the meta-level, or perhaps rather the undercurrent, of live attitudes and patterns of behaviour which tend to survive, resist, and prevail.

5. Purpose III – Exploring the Concrete Issues of Higher Education Governance: a Survey

Beyond these political contextualities, implications and aspirations, and bearing the notion of cautious self-constraint of success expectations in mind while nevertheless not abandoning a “constructivist” approach to the issue of higher education governance, there is a wide array of permanent and substantive debates on the notion and contents of higher education governance. This is, so to say, the expert level of the issue which is bothered with the small print of the nitty-gritty questions of what might be called “doing – good – governance”. In essence, this debate is centred around the following, which admittedly is a brave attempt to summarize a complex issue into one question around one formula:

a) An Approximate Definition – A Basic Question

If – good – higher education governance may be roughly defined as

- that institutional set-up and those processes at strategic level of both higher education and research institutions and of national and international systems
- which are concerned with the identification, validation, and realisation of those prerequisites and consequences and of that culture and those steering devices which pertain to institutional autonomy and individual freedom in their contexts with public responsibility of the institution to be governed,
- and which must be described and developed for the sake of maintaining and enhancing benefits
- with regard to the well-being of individuals and society, traditional academic values and objectives, quality and quality assurance, institutional positioning, effectiveness and efficiency of mass higher education and advanced research in democratic societies
- based on expert competence, on inclusion and participation, on the rule of law, on the freedom of ethically responsible individuals, and on mutual respect,
- and – to add the notion of “good” governance to the definition of governance of higher education as such – serves these objectives best and at least to an optimum of compromise between conflicting aims and devices:

what does this mean in concrete terms, and how can answering this question and implementing the answer be operationalised? And while asking these questions, what are, and how do we define in due process, the aforementioned operational objectives of societal and individual benefit which should provide the qualitative yardstick for judging the “fitness for purpose” of good higher education governance set-ups and devices?

b) Itemizing a Few Concrete Questions

The full span of both basic and concrete issues unfolding from this summary view on higher education governance is impressive, and dealing with it certainly is unmanageable within the constraints of a single conference, thus leaving enough to be done later. To name just the main items which appeared in the course of debate when preparing this conference:

- Locating and defining higher education governance as a term and as a substantive concept of culture, actors, institutions, structures, processes in relation to notions such as devising and implementing “policy”, employing “strategy”, making use of “management” and “administration”, all these items both with regard to

differences and to overlap. This task is particularly difficult but also necessary due to the fact that many European languages do not provide fitting parallels to the English words “governance” and “policy” and possibly even “management”.

- Understanding the essence and notion of – “good” – governance by clarifying the purpose of higher education governance beyond maintaining social harmony and cohesion inside and outside the institution through identifying and matching the institution’s mission, vision and role vis-à-vis educational, research, services, knowledge transfer or dissemination and other individual or social objectives of higher education in general, such as regional development, and the given institution in particular, doing all this effectively and efficiently. Exploring this encompasses taking the fact into consideration that there are different aspects and value systems of various parties – stakeholders – concerned.
- Assessing, selecting, and developing the type(s) of structures, responsibilities, personal competencies, and processes which best contribute to identifying and achieving valid, mission-related objectives and opportunities, bearing in mind that there may be numerous answers due to, among others, mission, size, environment, cultures and funding structures of a given system and a given higher education institution.
 - In doing so, the point of view may need to be shifted from the rather traditional focus on institutional layout towards a “perspective of process and interaction” and proper definition and sharing of roles, both inside the institution and between governmental agents or representatives of civil society, which covers all aspects related to steering processes such as defining tasks and responsibilities, setting timetables and milestones, signalling a sense of direction, organizing input of expertise, summarizing and arriving at decisions.
- Following from that and in particular, addressing the issues which arise from the stratification of participants and institutional structures by ensuring not only proper sharing but also proper interface structures by optimal intertwining of legal, economic, and political tasks and responsibilities, which means striking a balance between “unitary”, “federalist” and “individualist” approaches, including the aspects of institutional leadership and the principles of subsidiarity and collegiality.
 - This encompasses considering who the relevant units and stakeholders are or might preferably be – e.g., institution and government, government and society, national and international level, “internal externals” such as boards or trustees, but also donors and contract partners in research projects or in teaching, vis-à-vis the university, in addition university and departments/faculties either in a traditional interpretation or seen as “cost centres”, and finally institution, groups, and individuals of various kinds, what their roles, perspectives, interests and conflicts – as well as modes of solving these – are, and in what capacity and to what extent they are supposed to participate in higher education governance, and how perspectives, interests and functions of various units and stakeholders at different levels relate to each other.
 - This analysis should contribute to solving conflicts between aspirations at overarching state and institutional and sub-institutional entity – namely faculty/department – levels, and aspirations of specific groups, namely students but also others, and of individual members which are noticeable problems in a number of systems.
 - This item also raises the question of due balance between democratic “lay” participation, weighing partisan interests, and developing and employing

professionalism required to steer higher education systems and institutions; these questions can only be answered with respect to identifying choices between various modes of participation ranging from information via consultation to decision-making in a fair and workable overall system.

- Also in particular: the place of the individual in a collective system which as such is bound to define and realize institutional mission, vision, and policies, needs to be identified with regard to individual academic freedom and to the protection of minorities, including non-mainstream thinking, in various circumstances. It must be borne in mind that protecting the individual's academic freedom is to be seen both as a value in its own right and a prerequisite for true creativity in the sense of "enabling to disclose the unexpected and unplanned", and that there may be clashes with institutional policy and the notion of "leadership" which should be resolved.
- Assessing governance matters from the viewpoint of ownership and inclusion; which pertains to questions such as the connection of different members and stakeholders at different levels, how coherent strategies, policies and convictions between top-down or bottom-up approaches and external influence are developed, and how transparency, communication and, if necessary, mediation are organized and safeguarded in at least both a bilateral bottom-up and top-down mode or preferably in a multilateral way.
- Contextualizing higher education institution governance with external factors, namely regional, national, European, global policy issues in general and in education and research in particular, but also incentives or constraints caused by economic factors, by location, by size, and by elements of culture and prevalent value sets in general.
- Exploring and validating modern trends of multi-tier institutionalisation, either internally when considering substructures such as the position and role of spin-offs, clinics, technology parks etc., or externally with a view to networking brought about by joint programmes in research and teaching which develops into institutional intertwining and formation of "partnerships", "trusts" or "concerns" as known from the world of business.
- Assessing tools useful for designing, validating and monitoring policies and their implementation as instrumental facets of effective governance in its overlap with management. Here the role of law – be it top-down regulative or based on the notion of contract management –, of economic devices – be it market-oriented and success-driven formulation of funding or input-based funding –, but also of cultures and in a wider and at the same time essential sense of trust and of ensuring conviction and a sense of ownership enter into the arena of governance considerations.
 - The question may be raised as to what extent there is a shift towards the "entrepreneurial university" as contrasted to a traditional collegial type, and what the reasons as well as the pros and cons of such a development may be.
- Finally, assessing the validity and success of governance objectives, strategies, and outcomes, thus including the role of quality assurance and quality enhancement for higher education governance.

II. Programme

The wide array of purposes illustrated here makes it imperative to be selective. In no way can all aspects be covered, and any attempt would be a futile overburdening of this conference and the scope that can possibly be covered within less than two full days.

1. Emphasis on Workshops

The working party, therefore, decided to follow a programmatic approach which centres the investigation at this conference around a pathway leading from the macrocosm of context and systems level to the microcosm of the institution and of the actors therein. Thus, as for the workshops the programme is structured as follows:

- The mission of higher education in the changed societal context and its implications for governance;
- The governance of higher education systems;
- The governance of higher education institutions;
- The actors of higher education governance.

These four items may be reflected upon in the light of the substantive issues mentioned by the keynote speaker and here above, as well as in the light of the literature survey to follow. Another itemisation that may prove to be useful could be the following:

- Mission and stakeholders: considering more and more diversified missions of higher education institutions, and how this reflects governance models and involvement of different stakeholders in the decision-making process.
- Governance of higher education systems: looking into governance of “complete” systems of higher education, i.e. the national – or even European and global – level, including identification of current practices and best practices.
- Autonomy and external participation: autonomy of an institution and the role of society, state, and other “external” stakeholders in governance.
- Internal participation and levels of governance and management: concepts of governance within a higher education institution and practical implementation.
- Interdependence between culture, management and governance: influence of the overall cultural setting on higher education governance, different notions of governance between the strategic policy level and the technocratic management approach, also related to the discussion on legitimacy of representatives in governing bodies and the call for professionalism.
- Stimulating stakeholder participation: from making legal provisions for stakeholder – namely student – participation to ensuring widespread acceptance of opportunities to participate in democratic governance structures.
- Collectivism in governance and safeguarding academic freedom in research, teaching, and learning: considering the limits of governance and institutional policies vis-à-vis the individual person.
- The role of higher education governance for fostering democratic culture of tolerance and inclusion: design and examples of positive influence of higher education governance on the wider community, especially in conflict areas

The choice and structure of the four workshops, while admittedly not being extravagant, should allow to achieve a number of things. First, the topics chosen may be evolved with a view to interpreting and solving their specific topical challenges in the light of all the concrete aspects of the governance issue mentioned above. Second, proceeding from the macro- to the microlevel should help to reflect and make use of the specific advantage of the set-up which characterises the Council of Europe higher education sector, i.e. to integrate both the governmental and the academic sides, but also stakeholders represented, such as namely students, in fruitful debate relevant to all concerned. Third, since the issue is rather complex it promises to be easiest for participants to address the debate from the angle of archetypal questions which as such are easily understood since they are basic in structure and in political debate.

The second guiding principle of conference programme design, apart from having to be selective and basically transparent in approach, is to try and give participants as much a voice as possible. It is for this reason that the allotment of time for workshops has been extended to the utmost, bearing in mind the request to do so by those who attended last year's conference on higher education as a public good and a public responsibility. This lead organisational idea made the Council of Europe working party integrate the subject-related input into the respective workshops rather than present the general substantive remarks in the plenary at the onset of the conference, which might have turned out to be too overburdening.

2. Input and Winding up

However, in order to facilitate the debate in general the keynote presentation just heard may serve as an overarching, possibly even provocative, introduction to the challenges of the higher education governance issues at all levels, i.e. at systems, at institutional, at group, and at individual levels. The exposition of political context and of concrete questions provided in the previous section of this presentation may serve the same purpose, especially in order to identify the catchwords and their correlations as challenges to higher education governance. The subsequent literary review will eventually cast light on what has already been thought about and worked out in substance, showing the fields of research but also the white stretches of land of the unknown waiting to be discovered – hopefully in part by this conference.

In order to facilitate this success, the panel debate planned for the second day should integrate findings in the workshops and help to bring about a coherent picture to the issue. A non-European perspective could help here as well. Hopefully the result of the entire conference will eventually be valid and validated, clear and preferably “hands-on” yet not “blueprint-type” answers to concrete challenges summarized in the general report and recommendations.

III. Expectations

What outcome then, by and large, can be expected from this conference?

1. The Conference per se

Certainly the conference is expected to have results per se. It offers a forum for exploring the topic and for debate which will help to bring the issue forward by raising awareness of challenges, choices, and solutions. Of course, beyond the live experience which participants share there is value in the survey and documentation of research material available on higher education governance. Finally, there will be a Council of Europe publication which preserves and disseminates the presentations, the essence of debates in workshops and in the plenary, and the conclusions drawn from these. The Council of Europe would also like to take the matter further by means of adequate follow-ups, such as workshops on concrete issues.

2. Political Programmes, namely of the Council of Europe

Recommendations formulated at the end of the conference hopefully influence real political decision-making on governance issues at European, national, institutional, and stakeholder group levels. So the conference promises to have an impact on the future work of the Council of Europe in its operations in the field of higher education. The conference certainly is of ad-hoc significance to Council of Europe activities in a wider sense in as much as it contributes to the “European Year of Citizenship through Education” by advocating that higher education governance is required to ensure participation of stakeholders and partners adequately, i. e. namely of students but also of others such as young researchers aspiring for doctorates, and that higher education institutions should provide space for experiencing social inclusion and for learning democratic self-organisation.

3. The Bologna Process – the Link to Quality and Quality Assurance

Beyond reflecting on the Council of Europe’s institutional and core missions as such, in the medium term perspective also the Bologna process may incorporate the issue of higher education governance more strongly and incorporate the findings of this conference. This is to be expected and due since steering institutions properly with regard to defining and actually “living” educational and research missions, be it at systems or institutional level, has a profound impact on all issues of teaching and research quality and quality assurance. The very debate on addressing quality assurance matters either at the level of programmes or at the level of higher education institutions and their internal quality processes indicates the profound significance of the governance issue for matters of quality and its certification on the backdrop of the presence or absence of trust in the quality of proceedings in autonomous higher education institutions. Contributing to matters of the Bologna process could therefore be another valuable outcome.

4. Outlook on Follow-ups

There is an obvious warning of caution at the end of these introductory remarks. The topic of this conference is an enormously vast one. And since not only “ars longa” is a striking truth but also “vita brevis” – or for that matter, this conference brief – no miracles can be expected as to exhausting the topic. There will be a few findings, hopefully, and in addition there will be a number of open questions. In as much as the conference succeeds in clearly formulating these questions it will have fulfilled its purpose to initiate a political debate of which there is, and must be, more to come.