

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 31 (2004)
Heft: 3

Artikel: Education : "A great deal of work"
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-906813>

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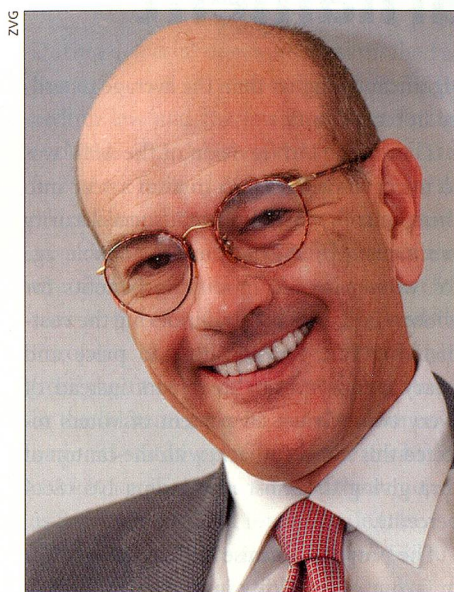
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"A great deal of work"

Jean-Marc Rapp, rector of the University of Lausanne and President of the Conference of Swiss University Rectors (CSUR) commissioned to implement the Bologna Process, is enthusiastic about developments to date. But he, too, is concerned about funding.



Convinced by the Bologna Process: CSUR President Jean-Marc Rapp.

"Swiss Review": Initially you were very critical about the Bologna Process. Now you are President of the CSUR. Why the change of heart?

Jean-Marc Rapp: Certainly I had my initial doubts, but these were allayed by the solutions proposed by CSUR and the Conference of Swiss Universities (CSU). For example, the CSU Directives clearly state that bachelor's and master's degrees correspond to the current degree or licentiate courses of study. I firmly believe that a scientific education must be completed by a master's degree and not just a bachelor's.

Is this process obligatory for universities?

The philosophy is universal. Bologna is neither a cosmetic makeover nor a formal re-christening of courses of study. Rather, it is an opportunity to rethink university education in its entirety, examine learning objectives and improve the quality of education in Switzerland and Europe.

Do you agree with Federal Councillor Couchepin's aim of unifying "university governance"?

That term can cover a multitude of sins! In my opinion, a good system must allow sufficient autonomy in terms of curriculum structures and effective, rapid strategic

planning. I am very much in favour of scientific rivalry in the field of research, but I am against competition at the teaching level. Our country is too small. Remember: the total number of students at all Swiss universities is equivalent to the number enrolled at Toulouse University in France. Our universities must work together if Switzerland is to enhance its international competitiveness. In the "Triangle d'Azur", for instance, we have merged the theological faculties of Vaud, Geneva and Neuchâtel in order to concentrate specific resources and strengths. We have also decided to implement the Bologna reforms simultaneously in the same areas. But we need sufficient funding to do so.

Bologna will cost universities an estimated 10 to 15 percent of their budget. Where is this money to come from?

Firstly, from the 4.75 percent increase in government contributions announced for the 2004-2007 period. We have recommended that most of the extra funds be assigned to human sciences faculties, which are currently too understaffed to comply with the Bologna Directives. We are impatient to see whether the funds will actually be released. I see no other difficulties: the enthusiasm and will to reform are in place. A great deal of work has already been completed, and it would be a pity if these efforts were wasted.

Students are worried about equality of treatment. What do you say to this?

Their concern about equality of treatment is a legitimate one, but it is not linked to the Bologna Process. In principle, students will benefit from the Bologna Process since it creates the preconditions for mobility, comparability of academic qualifications and improvements in curricula. Equality of treatment can be dependent on financing, students' social situations and, above all, the type of grants system to be developed. IE

Translated from German.

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