

**THE NEW SPANISH UNIVERSITY SYSTEM AND THE POSSIBILITY
OF A COMPULSORY SUBJECT ENTITLED EUROPE**

Jose Somoza Medina

Department of Geography and Geology. University of León (Spain)

somoza@unileon.es

- 1.- The “Bologna process” and the European Higher Education Area
- 2.- The Spanish University reforms
- 3.- The university system and the Geography degree in Spain
- 4.- Challenges for a geographic compulsory subject
- 5.- Conclusions

The E.H.E.A.

- The 1998 Sorbonne Declaration and the 1999 Bologna Declaration
- From “harmonisation” to “comparability and compatibility”
- The implementation of the E.H.E.A. and the aims of national governments
- 2010 ?

The Spanish University reforms

- 1.- 2001-2004. The ANECA and their “White books”
- 2.- 2004-2005. General common rules and general specific rules
- 3.- 2005- . The Knowledge Areas and the basic subjects

2001-2004

- University Ordinance Law
- A.N.E.C.A.
- White books
- The White Book for the Studies of Geography and Regional Planning

The **White Book** for the Studies of Geography and Regional

Planning defined in 2004 five professional profiles:

- Geo-information technologies
- Environment
- Planning
- Knowledge Society
- Socio-economic and spatial development

2004-2005

The technical government proposal for the Studies in Geography



Documento Acrobat

2005-2007

The new university reform Decree.

- Five Knowledge Areas: Arts and Humanities, Sciences, Social and Law Sciences, Health Sciences and Architecture and Engineering
- Common subjects + Discipline subjects + Other subjects = 180 ECTS, plus external practices and a Minor Thesis = 240 ECTS
- First proposal of common subjects by Knowledge Area. Geography in Arts and Humanities and in Sciences.
- Final Proposal?. Geography only in Arts and Humanities

Arts and Humanities	Sciences	Social and Law Sciences	Health Sciences	Architecture and Engineering
Anthropology	Biology	Anthropology	Anatomy	Communications
History of Art	Biochemistry	Politics	Biology	Economy
Economy	Statistics	Media	Biochemistry	Electronic
Ethics	Physics	Law	Pharmacology	Statistics
Artistic Expression	Physiology	Didactics	Physiology	Graphic Expression
Philosophy	Geography	Information	Histology	Physics
Geography	Geology	Economy	Computer Sc	Geology
History	History	Education	Microbiology	Computer Sc.
Modern Language	Computers Sc.	Business	Nutritionism	Mathematics
Latin	Mathematics	Statistics	Psychology	Materials
Spanish	Environment	History	Chemistry	Mechanics
Linguistics	Chemistry	Mathematics	Public Health	Environment
Literature		Psychology	Toxicology	Continuous M.
Sociology		Sociology		Chemistry
				Networks
				Thermodynamics

Arts and Humanities	Sciences	Social and Law Sciences	Health Sciences	Architecture and Engineering
Anthropology	Biology	Politics	Human Anatomy	Physics
History of Art	Physics	Law	Animal Anatomy	Mathematics
Ethics	Geology	Economy	Biology	Computer Sc.
Artistic Expression	Mathematics	Statistics	Biochemistry	Business
Philosophy	Chemistry	History	Physiology	Graphic Expression
<i>Geography</i>		Sociology	Psychology	Chemistry
History		Education	Physics	
Modern Language		Psychology	Statistics	
Spanish Language				
Classical Language				
Linguistic				
Literature				
Sociology				

Evolution of Geography in Spanish Universities

-Before 80's, Geography in Spanish universities was just a specialization of the general degree in Arts (Filosofía y Letras. Especialidad en Geografía) with 3-4 geography related subjects.

-During the 80's Geographers studied just two years of geography subjects (4º and 5º) and the three previous (1º, 2º and 3º) mainly with historic matters (just 3 ge's subjects out of 15). The University degree was "Geography and History (Geography section)".

Evolution of Geography in Spanish Universities

- “Geography” in Spain is an university degree since 1993 and the first students with this graduation left the faculties in Barcelona and León in 1996. During the 90’s 25 of 26 universities that offer those studies changed their syllabus at least once. (The “oldest” one was established in 1994-1995 and in 17 universities the new syllabus started after 2000).
- The syllabus include the usual traditional Geography subjects, but also more professionally-oriented courses on topics such as Geographic Information Systems, Urban Planning, Local Development, Regional Policies, Geography of Natural Risks, or Environmental Impact Analysis

“Europe” as a basic subject

- Nowadays there are other geographic subjects in different university degrees like Education, History, Tourism, Rural Engineering, Modern Language, etc. There is no doubt about the difficulties to maintain these subjects in the new degrees.

-

-- The new Decree about the Spanish University Reform says that 60 ECTS in every degree should be basic subjects, at least 60% of the Knowledge Area of the degree (so 36 ECTS from the previous list), but the other 24 ECTS could be basic subjects from other Knowledge Areas or different subjects that could be considered as fundamental for the students and transdisciplinary between the Knowledge Areas.

“Europe” as a basic subject

- The general knowledge about Europe is quite scarce among students in high schools, and null in some academic orientations.
- One of the EHEA aims is “the promotion of the necessary European dimension in higher education”
- The European dimension should be an aim addressed to the faculty, universities, administrators and students. The Erasmus-Socrates programme has been an excellent opportunity to spread that European dimension but the students that go abroad are just a few (1,6% in 2005-2006).

“Europe” as a basic subject

- A subject about the geographic aspects of Europe (from physical structures to demographic characteristics or the urban systems) combined with the specific situation of the particular market of postgraduates in that degree, could be a solution to maintain and reinforce the position of Geography in the Spanish university system and also to spread the European dimension to all the students.

Final Remarks

-The Bologna Declaration was a voluntary intergovernmental initiative with the main aim of creating a coherent and cohesive European Higher Education Area

-Nevertheless, some governments have used the adoption of the Bologna commitments as a “smoke-screen” to their own productivity reforms

- Since 2001 in Spain have been carried out three different reform models. The last one, characterized by the Knowledge Areas, seems to be a crude differentiation between degrees and something like a tomb for the Humanities

Final Remarks

- Geography, in spite of its recent evolution as a university degree between natural sciences and social sciences and the position of geographers in the professional market have been listed as a component of Humanities
- A challenge of the new Decree about the university degrees reform could be a “fundamental subject”, compulsory for every student, entitled Europe