



Sveučilište u Zagrebu

University Second Cycle Qualifications: Lessons Learned and Future Challenges

Prof. Blaženka Divjak
Vice-rector for students and study programmes
University of Zagreb
Republic of Croatia



Goals of this presentation

- ▶ “Issues to be raised here relate to examination of **learning outcomes** based study programmes as a way of recognizing quality differences in terms of demonstrable competences acquired after obtaining various second cycle qualifications.
- ▶ On the other hand **entrance requirements** in terms of competences required to enroll into a study programme need to be discussed together with good examples of sustainable and flexible solutions.
- ▶ Furthermore, in the context of **binary systems** distinguishing between university-based programmes and professional programmes...” [From the Programme of this Seminar](#)
- ▶ [Provoke discussion](#)

The Second Cycle?

- ▶ Not many analysis available
 - ▶ Cycle in the middle – complex to study
 - ▶ “Incoming” competences - based on the first cycle
 - ▶ “Outgoing” competences - relevant to the employability but also for research career
 - ▶ Opportunities for development – far from exhausted
- Very short cycle but with big expectations:
- ▶ employability
 - ▶ building research capacity

Bologna requirements and implementation

- ▶ The 180+120 ECTS credits ("3+2") model is the most widespread
- ▶ The Bologna Declaration emphasises that the first-cycle degree is a requirement for access to the second cycle.
- ▶ Second cycle degrees give access to doctoral studies

Challenges

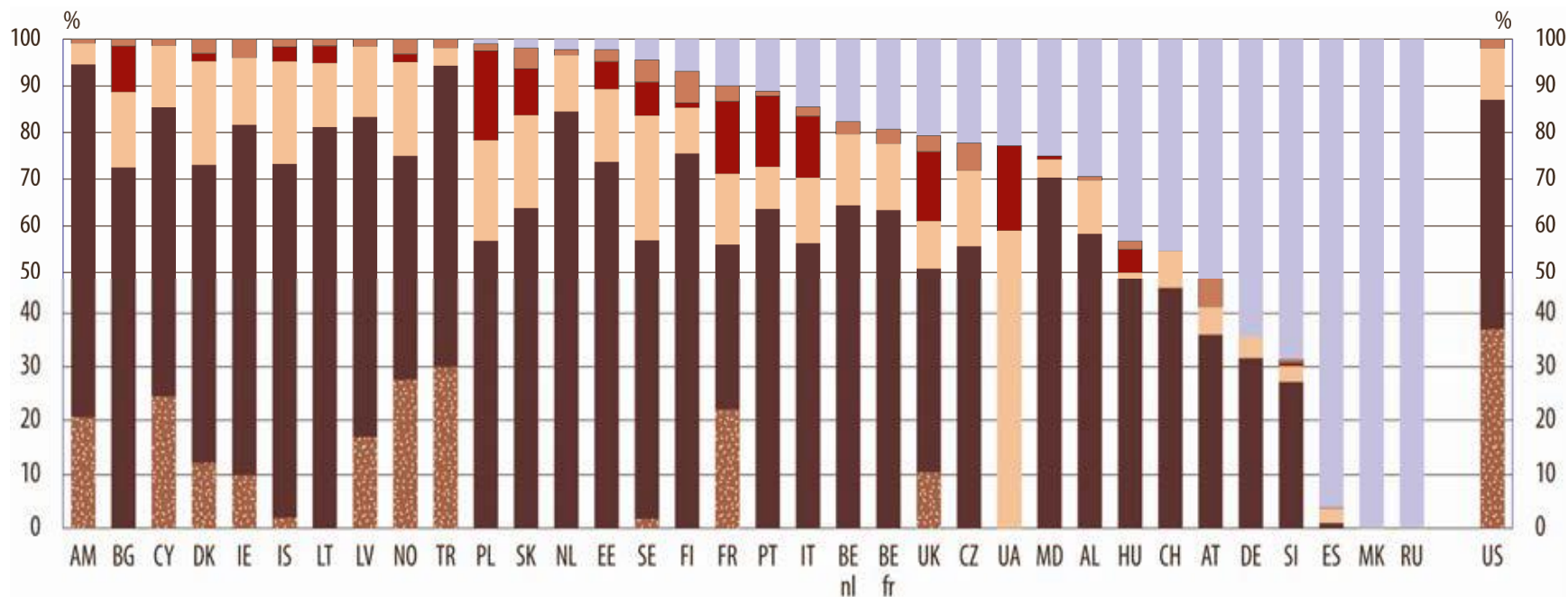
- ▶ Goals of second cycle (learning outcomes!)
- ▶ Access to second cycle
- ▶ Retention; completion rates
- ▶ Delivery modes
- ▶ Quality assurance
- ▶ Employability vs research competences
 - ▶ qualifications and labour market demand (how to interpret this?)

State of the art

- ▶ Three cycles - implemented in 47 “Bologna” countries
- ▶ According to EHEA in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice>:
- ▶ In 26 countries - 90% students studying in Bologna two-cycle system
- ▶ In 13 other countries - 70-89 % of students study in the Bologna system
- ▶ Share of bachelors that continue in the second cycle – differences
- ▶ In the majority of countries 10-24 % continue their studies, in 13 systems the share is between 75-100 %.
- ▶ In some systems first cycle is not yet recognized at labour market.
- ▶ Completion data available for 22 countries: around 3 in 4 higher education entrants complete their studies with graduation.

Structure of student population

<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice>

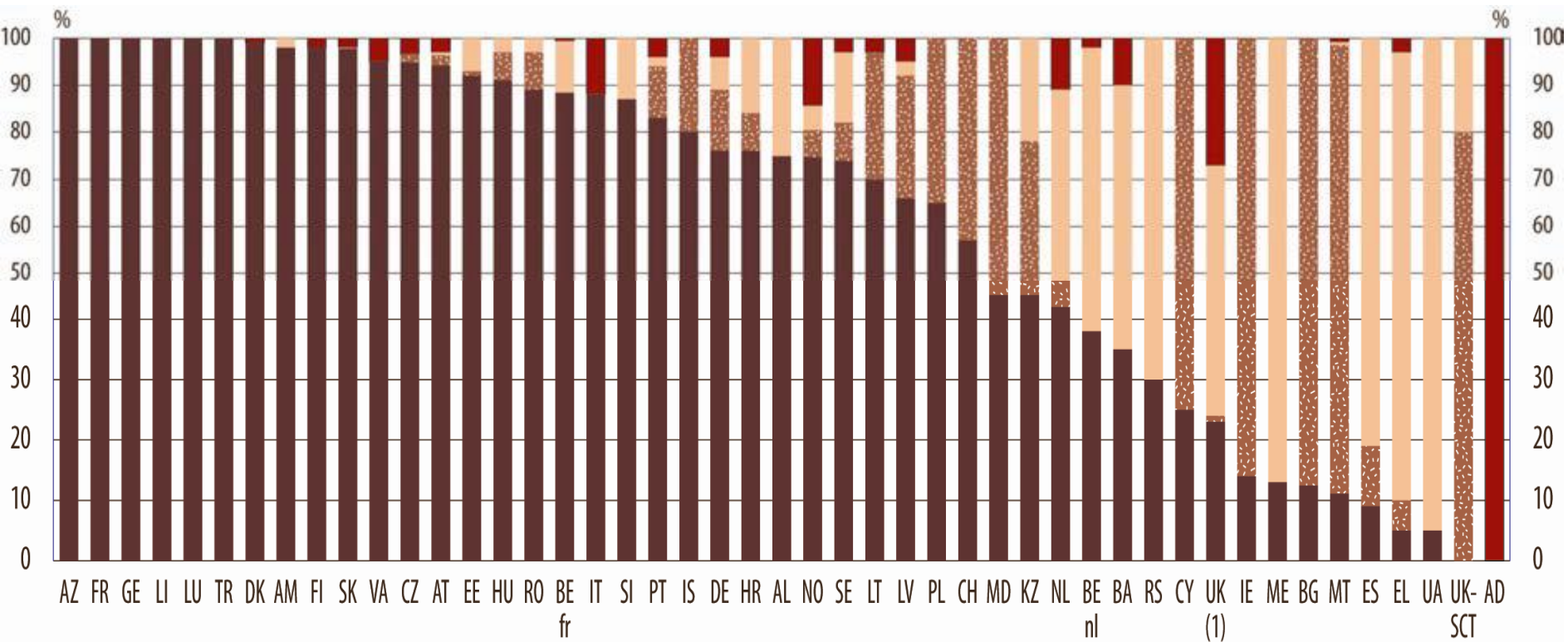


Master

Bachelor

Credit range of ECTS in second cycle

<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice>



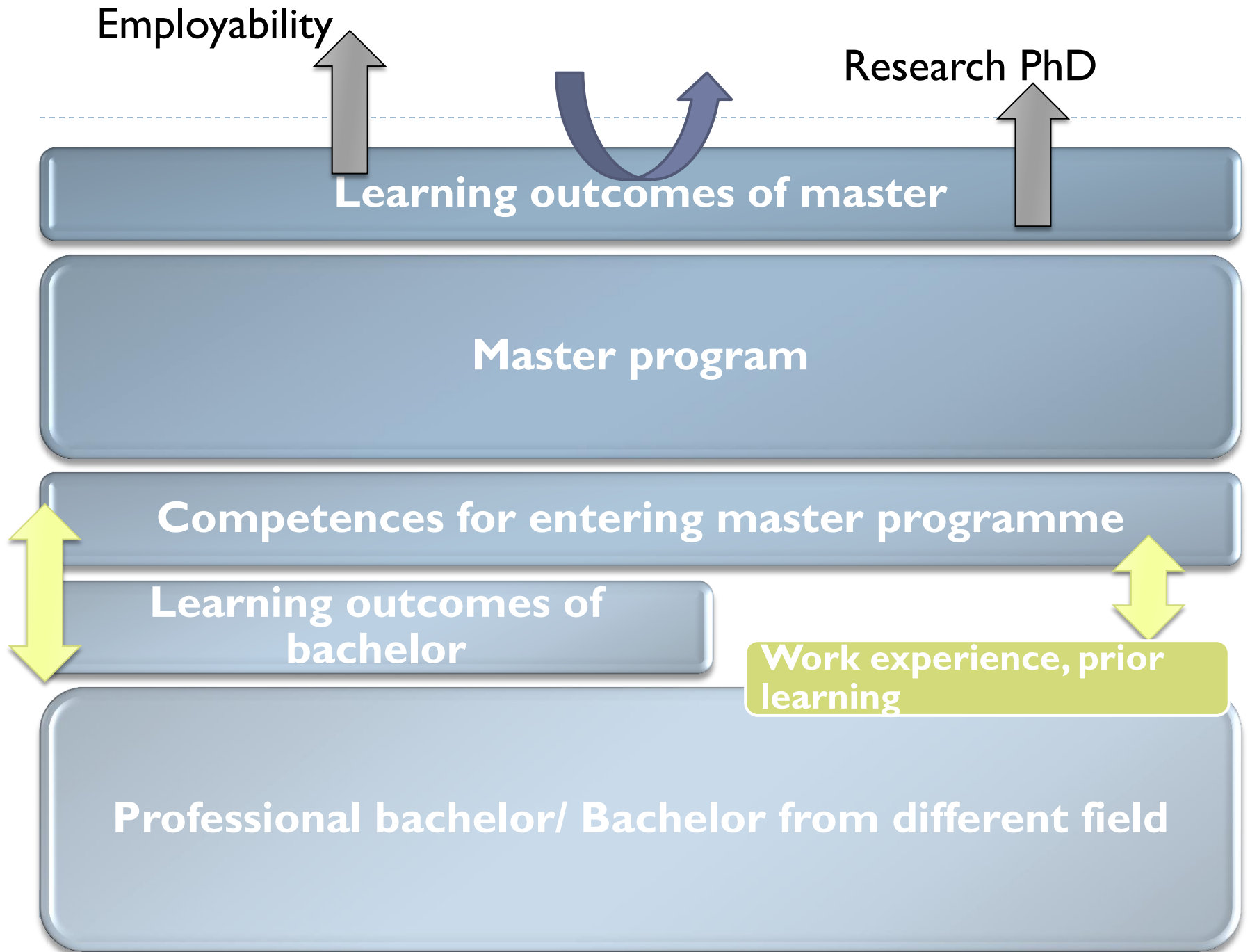
120 ECTS credits

Access to the second-cycle programmes

- ▶ Definition in the Lisbon Recognition Convention: Access to the next cycle is defined as the right of **qualified candidates** to apply and **to be considered** for admission
- ▶ Reasons why not all first-cycle programmes give direct access to the second-cycle, and this is often related to a binary differentiation between "academic" and "professional" programmes
- ▶ Requirement that holders of professional first-cycle degrees or students coming from different fields are required to follow **bridging** programmes
 - ▶ Requirement to take additional examinations or courses
 - ▶ Recognition of prior learning
- ▶ Requirement to have work experience

Access for professional bachelors

- Requirement to take additional examinations or courses as widening access to further studies for holders of professional bachelors or obstacle for access
- ▶ In general the learning outcomes of the professional first-cycle degrees may not be suitable for a second-cycle programme
 - ▶ Lack in fundamental theoretical knowledge; for example mathematics
- ▶ Usage of learning outcomes to decide on admission
 - ▶ Problem: level of implementation, specially assessment of students' learning outcomes



Challenges for Higher Education Institutions

- ▶ Flexible learning pathways for talented undergraduates
 - ▶ Re-thing progression between cycles
- ▶ Clarify pathways to career development – Centre for career development
- ▶ Enhance mobility during study period
- ▶ Include internships and project-based activities
- ▶ Provide research experience for students
- ▶ “Implementing quality higher education, connected with research and lifelong learning and promoting employability”; ministers, at Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve in 2009,
- ▶ To satisfy demand for
 - ▶ Strong professional master
 - ▶ Research-oriented master
 - ▶ Master as a part of LLL
- ▶ Imperative: Use of learning outcomes and Diploma Supplement

Challenges for employers

- ▶ Get familiar with three cycle system
- ▶ Use Diploma Supplement
- ▶ Clarify prerequisites for entering job position
- ▶ Use master study for further development of your employees
- ▶ Cooperate with HEI in defining learning outcomes (competences) of graduates
- ▶ Offer internships and scholarships

Challenges for policy makers

- ▶ Availability of HE
- ▶ Remove barrier for mobility of students and joint masters
- ▶ Provide support for study
- ▶ Recognition of national masters on international scene (not easy readable now across borders)
 - ▶ EQF & NQF vs ISCED classification

Challenges for students

- ▶ Consider different career paths that include period of studying and periods of working
 - ▶ Active career development during study period
- ▶ Take into account that master programmes differ, not only in field of study and content, but also in orientation (professional, research) and provision of learning outcomes
- ▶ Mature student; LLL...

SWOT on the Second Cycle (university perspective)

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rather short cycle and therefore flexible• Strategically recognized from universities• Good students able to achieve learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning outcome based approach not fully implemented• Intentions to integrate the first and the second cycle again• New teaching methods ?• Hermetic approach to enrolment
<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Threats</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Joint master degrees;• Internationalization• Models of delivery and partners in industry• Employability and building research capacity• LLL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of public financing• Global competitiveness• Pressure to work exclusively on employability• Binary differentiation not recognized as opportunity• ..



Sveučilište u Zagrebu

Thank you
Discussion and questions

Prof. Blaženka Divjak
University of Zagreb, Republic of Croatia