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Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue

Eighth meeting, Hybrid

27 September 2023

Piazzale Aldo Moro 5, Sapienza Università di Roma and online

Minutes of meeting

List of participants

Country/Organization	Name	Surname
Belgium Flemish Community (Co-Chair)	Liesbeth	Hens
Belgium French Community	Caroline	Hollela
Belgium French Community	Adriana	Gonfroid
EI – ETUCE*	Hanna	Tanskanen
ESU	Andrej	Pirjevec
EUA	Elizabeth	Colucci
France	Mathieu	Musquin
Germany	Stefanie	Engert
Holy See*	Melanie	Rosenbaum
Ireland	Orla	Lynch
Italy (Co-Chair)	Ann Katherine	Isaacs
Italy	Vera	Lucke
Italy	Teresa	Morales de la Fuente
Malta	Jon	Vercellono
Romania*	Madalina	Matei
United Kingdom*	Ella	Ritchie
IN-GLOBAL Expert*	Colin	Tück
BFUG Secretariat	Patrik	Bardhi

Albania, Austria, Cyprus, ENQA, European Commission, Kazakhstan, Montenegro, Netherlands, Spain, UNESCO did not attend the meeting.

***Note:** Online attendance.

Welcome by Prof. Elisabetta Corsi, Sapienza Università di Roma, and the Co-Chairs of CG on Global Policy Dialogue

Prof. Elisabetta Corsi welcomed everyone and expressed the importance of commitment to the improvement of the global academic community and the importance of the meeting through discussion and cooperation to share knowledge, promote partnerships and explore new horizons in higher education in dialogue with Asian countries on common expectations.

The Co-Chairs, Ann Katherine Isaacs and Liesbeth Hens, welcomed the participants and held a tour de table. The last meeting's minutes were approved and the agenda of the meeting was adopted without changes.

For more detailed information, please see [CG GPD ES GA 8 Agenda](#).

1. Update by the Co-Chairs on recent developments

Ann Katherine Isaacs (Co-Chair) emphasized the need for enhanced and continuous dialogue with various regions, countries, organizations. She highlighted the upcoming joint meeting between CG



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GPD and Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) in Rome, with a focus on refining recommendations for the ASEM Ministers of Education Meeting and working on the Global Policy Forum (GPF) statement. She pointed out that the meeting will be co-chaired by two Co-Chairs: the absence of Fiorella Perotto representing the European Commission due to her retirement, and Linda Pustina representing Albania, who has expressed regret of absence due to the workload and arrangements related to the preparation of the Ministerial Conference of Tirana.

Ms. Isaacs provided an overview of the Africa Subgroup's activities, including two conversations and the preparation of a third one. She underscored the significance of this meeting's focus on the circulated draft statement and the organization of the Bologna Policy Forum in Tirana, where contributions from all global dialogue partners are expected. Regarding the America Subgroup, she noted that they have engaged in numerous activities and received numerous invitations, making it impossible for the subgroup to address them all. She mentioned that the discussion of the report to be presented at the Board Meeting would be deferred. Additionally, the possibility of creating a small subgroup for the Middle East and Arab countries is being considered, particularly after a meeting with a UNESCO representative from Doha, expressing a desire for cooperation and a regional conference following the Regional Recognition Convention after Tirana, possibly with a preliminary meeting in early spring 2024.

1.1. Update on first results of the survey "Perceptions of Stakeholders Beyond the EHEA"

Colin Tück (Expert) presented initial findings from the questionnaire conducted between late June and early September. It received around 2,000 responses from the EHEA and 600 from outside the EHEA. Notably, 80% of respondents were from Iraq, and there were additional responses from 20-25 other countries, primarily in Africa. He emphasized the need for further analysis to address the majority of respondents from Iraq.

In terms of respondent profiles, approximately half of the respondents were students and academics. While the profile of Iraq respondents was similar, with slightly more academics than students, EHEA respondents had a different profile, with a larger proportion of students than academics. Non-EHEA respondents included more responses from higher education institution leadership, while EHEA respondents had a higher proportion of grassroots academics.

An interesting finding related to the fields of study, where non-EHEA respondents had a higher prevalence of natural sciences, engineering, and ICT, while EHEA respondents were primarily from humanities fields. Regarding knowledge about the Bologna process and related policies and tools, respondents showed general awareness of concepts such as the three-cycle structure, quality assurance, and ECTS. Notably, digital technologies ranked high, even though they were recently added as a Bologna topic. In terms of familiarity with the Bologna and EHEA logos, a significant portion of respondents were not acquainted with either logo. Additionally, non-EHEA respondents did not frequently visit the EHEA website.

Regarding the impact of the Bologna process, opinions were divided, with roughly 50% of respondents believing it had a positive impact on student mobility, qualification recognition, and the ability to conduct joint programs with EHEA partners. In response to questions about the EHEA's relevance to their higher education system, most respondents found some degree of relevance. Concerning the three EHEA goals for 2030, inclusivity was the most widely shared goal, while interconnectivity was the least shared, with no significant differences between the goals. One crucial finding was the interest in more structured cooperation with the EHEA, with about half of respondents expressing interest, though specifics on how such structured connections should work were lacking. He noted that more detailed analysis of certain questions was needed.



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Regarding the challenges of interpreting the data and its complexity, it was suggested that there should be further exploration of potential biases in the different questions, the need to conduct surveys over time, and the importance of establishing systematic communication with other macro-regions. It was emphasized that, by the spring, once the data had been thoroughly analyzed, the survey could serve as a foundation for engaging with those who would be invited to Tirana.

2. Update by the IN-GLOBAL project

Vera Lucke (Italy) presented an update on the IN-GLOBAL project, which included website enhancements to showcase project activities and event materials. There were also plans to introduce a glossary page on the website containing BFUG terminology to help users find additional information. Furthermore, she highlighted IN-GLOBAL's active presence on social media, particularly on their X (formerly Twitter) account. This presence was aimed at promoting the initiatives and work carried out within the context of the Bologna process and the European Higher Education Area. She discussed the translation of the Rome Communiqué into up-to-now 11 languages, and others in the process of being translated. Ms. Lucke highlighted that most translations were completed and published on the IN-GLOBAL and EHEA websites. Some countries, especially Northern and Central European ones, preferred the official English version instead of a translation into the national language. IN-GLOBAL also offered support for the "Perceptions of Stakeholders Beyond the EHEA" survey, plays a key role in preparing the GPF, and contributes to drafting the Global Policy Statement.

She introduced the various dialogue formats between the EHEA and other regions as part of the project. These included the Asia-Pacific format focusing on Sustainable Development in Higher Education, organized in collaboration with the ASEF and involving ten Asian policymakers. She also mentioned two EHEA-Africa Conversations that had already occurred, with plans for another meeting in the works. In the Latin American region, the Americas subgroup, supported by IN-GLOBAL, conducted an on-line Colloquium with the MERCOSUR and Andean Community countries in December 2022 and were preparing for another Colloquium in collaboration with Brazil. To support the project's initiatives, they had enlisted the help of a higher education expert who would provide information on global higher education events, opportunities for CG involvement, relevant publications, and updates to the list of stakeholder contacts in regions outside of Europe.

She described the project support for the Task Force on Enhancing Knowledge Sharing in the EHEA community on: the questionnaire of perception of Bologna Process; drafting a toolkit for Bologna events; guidelines on communication of the EHEA with different formats. Additionally, three focus groups were convened to explore effective practices for communication and knowledge sharing within the EHEA.

3. State of play of the initiatives taken by the three regional subgroups and their plans

3.1. Asia subgroup

Ann Katherine Isaacs (Co-Chair) emphasized that several discussions are scheduled for the three-day agenda (September 27-29, 2023) during the Joint Meeting of the CG on GPD and ASEF. The meeting will focus on "Higher Education Policies Working Towards the SDGs in Asia and Europe" and will feature the participation of Asian policy makers.

3.2. Africa subgroup

Mathieu Musquin (France) provided an update on recent developments within the Africa subgroup and emphasized the importance of selecting a Chair for the subgroup. He also offered an overview of the most recent conversation "Academic Recognition for Lifelong Learning Perspectives in the EHEA, Africa, and the Near East," that took place on June 6, 2023, and had nearly 120 participants.



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Interpretation into English, French, and Portuguese was provided, along with three thematic language-specific breakout sessions. The dissemination of information about this conversation to African participants was facilitated by the Belgium French Community. He mentioned the possibility of organizing a third conversation. It was proposed to collaborate with Elizabeth Colucci (EUA) on a joint event with the HAQAA initiative, to be scheduled before the end of the year or by the end of January.

Elizabeth Colucci (EUA) introduced the proposal to collaborate with the HAQAA initiative, which is funded by the EU Commission and involves EUA (as well as the University of Barcelona (lead), the AAU, ENQA and the DAAD), as an associated partner within the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). The idea was to arrange a joint meeting between the Africa subgroup and the HAQAA initiative, along with organizational partners. This collaborative effort aligns with the CG GPD's Terms of Reference for facilitating discussions on the Bologna Process. She emphasized that the HAQAA initiative would provide support for African participants. Rather than organizing a third conversation, the proposal was to host an in-person and hybrid event around the end of January. The HAQAA Initiative and its partners would handle logistical planning and support, allowing the Africa subgroup and the CG GPD to concentrate on program content. Elisabeth noted that this could also address the issue of Northern African / Arab countries by potentially holding a virtual consultation meeting on the statement before the event, which could serve to consult and raise awareness regarding the statement.

3.3. Americas subgroup

Ann Katherine Isaacs (Co-Chair) presented an overview of state of play about the Americas subgroup, and mentioned her participation in several key events, including a presentation at the Summit in Santiago de Compostela for Latin American and Caribbean countries in July. She also attended the first Assembly of the Global Recognition Convention of Qualifications in Paris, where she collaborated with Andreas Snildal to organize meetings with UNESCO representatives from Latin America. Following these fruitful discussions, there was a general consensus that the CG could play a crucial role in supporting UNESCO's efforts to have regional and global conventions signed, indicating significant potential for collaboration. She reported that she had received an invitation to attend a preparatory meeting for CRES+5, however, due to logistical constraints, she was unable to attend. She also mentioned an upcoming meeting in Havana, but the lack of funding posed challenges for in-person participation since these meetings required physical presence. She expressed her willingness to attend the final CRES+5 meeting in Brasilia and concluded that the Americas subgroup had a lot to consider and accomplish in light of these opportunities and challenges.

4. Report from Global Policy Statement Subgroup and discussion

Ann Katherine Isaacs (Co-Chair) mentioned that there had been prior discussions about the strategy for preparing the draft statement, with a consensus that it should be disseminated and reviewed by the other subgroups. The primary goal was to facilitate discussions involving various stakeholders and macro-regional organizations before the GPF in Tirana 2024. She emphasized that the third draft would serve as the foundation for these discussions. She stressed the need to continue refining it until it became a finalized product.

Several suggestions and comments were put forth in relation to the draft statement. One proposal was to distribute the statement to participants from the last Africa subgroup conversation via email, with a designated deadline for collecting their comments. It was also agreed that the statement should be shared with other partners to garner additional insights. Moreover, there was support for demonstrating to the participants of the Africa Conversation the ongoing engagement with the third



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edition of the draft statement. Additionally, the idea of circulating and sharing the draft statement during an upcoming online meeting with the Arab region was suggested, aiming to gather perspectives on the statement. It was emphasized that establishing a clear timeline and concrete plan for concluding the comment collection process before the year's end was essential. Participants also acknowledged the necessity of accomplishing most of the work before the end of January, preparing for the initial BFUG Meeting of 2024. While recognizing the benefits of engaging in discussions and receiving inputs from other regions, there was consensus on the importance of having a well-defined roadmap.

5. Planning the Global Policy Forum: Report from Subgroup and discussion

Ann Katherine Isaacs (Co-Chair) presented a draft proposal for the GPF, that aimed to optimize the GPF's organization and balance the need for sufficient Forum time with the consideration of Ministerial participants' time constraints. The idea was to implement a "sandwich model," where the GPF would be integrated within the Ministerial Conference. The GPF would commence on the second day of the event, beginning with the first plenary session attended by both EHEA Ministers and GPF invitees. This session would include welcomes from Albanian Ministers and brief welcomes from EHEA Ministers representing various geographic regions. It would provide an opportunity for global guests to introduce themselves in a roundtable discussion. The format for this roundtable depended on the number of participants, with the possibility of pre-prepared video clips for large groups. Following the roundtable, the presentation of the draft statement would occur. The draft statement would have been previously discussed in regional meetings, incorporating inputs. The estimated time allocated for this initial section was approximately one hour.

She introduced the second session, which would also include both EHEA and GPF invitees and was expected to last for approximately 1 hour. During this session, the plan was to feature a couple of presentations highlighting "good and interesting practices." These presentations would potentially come from various regions, such as CAHEA, the Western Balkans, EU-LAC, and ASEM, offering examples of regional cooperation that promote dialogue with other regions. Each presentation would have a time slot of 10 minutes, followed by a 10-minute period for questions about the tools and challenges involved in regional cooperation.

Following a brief break, the third session (1 hour) would involve smaller breakout groups, with the number of groups depending on the total number of participants, typically ranging from 4 to 6. Each group would be facilitated by 1-2 chair moderators and one rapporteur, usually from the CG members. These breakout groups would focus on relevant themes discussed in the first part of the meeting and outlined in the statement. Themes included topics like inclusion, student-centered learning, digitally enhanced learning and teaching, mobility (including branded or virtual mobility), recognition, quality enhancement and assurance, brain drain, coherence between program learning outcomes and labor market requirements, as well as civic competences and academic freedom.

The prospect of the breakout session generated considerable interest, with participants acknowledging that various regions might interpret certain topics differently, making discussions and knowledge-sharing valuable. It was suggested that a simplified and more focused set of questions would be beneficial during the breakout sessions. Following the breakout sessions, there would be a brief plenary session where rapporteurs would provide their reports, and the draft statement (potentially adjusted, if necessary, possibly during the lunch break) would be presented and approved. The GPF would then conclude, leading to the return of participants to the ministerial segment, where official decisions would be made during the Ministerial Conference. She also mentioned that Albania, as the host country for the Ministerial Meeting, had plans to organize an engaging social program to enhance the overall experience.



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5.1. Discussions regarding the format of the Forum

The consensus was generally in favor of the Sandwich model, an approach that combines the Forum with the Ministerial Conference. There was a suggestion to establish a direct link between the themes presented in the statement and the discussion groups dealing with similar subject matter. Clarity was sought regarding the specific topics of the breakout sessions and their alignment with the statement. A proposal was made to appoint a speaker to represent Africa, potentially through the HAQAA project.

It was suggested to replace the final straightforward format question with a more comprehensive one related to addressing issues at the international level within the EHEA. Questions arose about the number of breakout session groups and the criteria for their selection. An idea was proposed to consolidate the topics, as some appeared to be subtopics, for instance, considering that academic freedom could be a subset of inclusion. The number of breakout groups was agreed to be dependent on the number of attending participants. To enhance focus, there was a recommendation to utilize technology for digital presentations during the breakout sessions. A suggestion was made to transition the second macro-region session from its current format to a more interactive panel discussion.

Participants acknowledged the varying nature of the themes, recognizing that some required a more in-depth exploration but expressing hope that they could be adequately addressed in the breakout sessions. A proposal was made to include both EHEA and non-EHEA members in the second plenary session. A suggestion to consider replacing the "brain drain" topic with "balance mobility" was raised. Further discussion was proposed to refine the topics, reduce their number, and improve their alignment with the statement. Changes in the setup of the second session to involve non-EHEA members in a well-prepared panel format were discussed.

5.2. Discussions regarding the Forum's invitees

It was suggested that the regional subgroups could prepare lists of potential invitees, perhaps with a first group considered essential and the second group which could be larger and the third one with representatives of organizations. It was suggested to propose two lists of invitees, the first list of the countries to be invited and the second of the most significant organizations within each macro-region. It was proposed to begin the work using the lists from the previous Rome Ministerial, which are archived in the Google Drive of the Secretariat.

6. Preparation of the meeting with the Asian Policy Makers

Liesbeth Hens (Co-Chair) provided an outline of the agenda for the Joint Meeting with ASEM to commence after the CG meeting over the course of three days. The first day's agenda would consist of briefings on the EHEA and Asian higher education systems. These presentations would aim to offer an overview of higher education policy, highlight the top three challenges faced by both regions, and address topics related to Sustainable Development and other subjects conducive to cross-regional dialogue. The second day's agenda would revolve around the ARC9 Report on Asia-Europe Higher Education Mapping, with a particular focus on working towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Breakout groups would be established to facilitate the exchange of country-specific experiences related to the identification of ideas for policy dialogue on Sustainable Development in higher education. Participants would also generate recommendations for the ASEM Education Ministerial Meeting scheduled for January 2024. On the third day, the agenda would concentrate on the Tirana Global Policy Forum and Statement for the year 2024.



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7. Next activities

The upcoming CG on GPD meeting was set to take place in The Hague, with proposed dates spanning from November 27 to 30 or December 1 to 7. The final meeting date would be determined through a Doodle poll.

8. Update CG on GPD Report, Tbilisi BFUG Board meeting

There was an open discussion and contribution from the participants on updating the CG on GPD Report that will be presented in the Tbilisi BFUG Board meeting.