



MINISTRY
of Science and Higher Education
Republic of Poland



**MEETING OF THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP
Cracow, 13-14 October 2011**

List of participants

Country/institution/association	Name	First name
Albania	<i>Apologies</i>	
Andorra	Martinez Ramirez	Mar
Armenia	Harutyunyan	Gayane
Armenia	Melik-Bakhshyan	Mher
Austria	Bacher	Gottfried
Azerbaijan	Akhundov	Azad
Belgium / French Community	Guillaume	Kevin
Belgium / Flemish Community	Aelterman	Guy
Belgium / Flemish Community	Soenen	Magalie
BFUG Secretariat	Deca	Ligia
BFUG Secretariat	Geanta	Irina
BFUG Secretariat	Proteasa	Viorel
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Duric	Aida
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Maric	Petar
Bulgaria	<i>Apologies</i>	
BUSINESSEUROPE	Seling	Irene
Council of Europe	Bergan	Sjur
Croatia	Juroš	Luka
Cyprus	Martidou Forcier	Despina
Czech Republic	Šťastná	Věra
Denmark	Fuchs	Jacob Birger
Denmark	Mesick	Ditte Teresa
Denmark	Nielsen	Helle Damgaard
Education International (EI)	Bennett	Paul
Education International (EI)	Vraa-Jensen	Jens
ENQA	Crozier	Fiona
ENQA	Hopbach	Achim
ENQA	Kelo	Maria
EQAR	Tück	Colin
Estonia	Pöllo	Helen
European Association of Institutions in Higher Education(EURASHE)	Delplace	Stefan

European Commission	Deiss	Richard
European Commission	Kocanova	Daniela
European Commission	Tyson	Adam
European Commission	Waters	Margaret
European Students' Union (ESU)	Malnes	Magnus
European Students' Union (ESU)	Päll	Allan
European University Association (EUA)	Loukkola	Tia
European University Association (EUA)	Wilson	Lesley
EUROSTAT	Reis	Fernando
Finland	Innola	Maija
France	Gorget	François
France	Lagier	Hélène
France	Vallat	Yves
Georgia	<i>Apologies</i>	
Germany	Galler	Birgit
Germany	Greisler	Peter
Germany	Hendriks	Birger
Greece	Papazoglou	Vasileios
Holy See	Bechina	Friedrich
Hungary	Keszei	Ernő
Iceland	Hreinsson	Einar
Ireland	Casey	Laura
Italy	Foroni	Marzia
Italy	Sticchi Damiani	Maria
Kazakhstan	Balakayeva	Gulnar Tultayevna
Kazakhstan	Kassabekov	Sailau Amanzholovich
Kazakhstan	Zhakypova	Fatima Nadyrovna
Latvia	Rauhvargers	Andrejs
Latvia	Sika	Laura
Liechtenstein	Konrad	Helmut
Lithuania	Spurgienė	Jolanta
Luxembourg	Dondelinger	Germain
Malta	Dimech	Debbie Lora
Moldova	<i>Apologies</i>	
Montenegro	Misovic	Biljana
Netherlands	Leegwater-van der Linden	Marlies
Norway	Johansson	Toril
Norway	Strøm	Tone Flood
Poland	Banaszak	Bartłomiej

Poland	Bołtruszko	Maria
Poland	Chmielecka	Ewa
Poland	Frankowicz	Marek
Poland	Marciniak	Zbigniew
Poland	Ziolek	Maria
Portugal	de Lurdes Correia Fernandes	Maria
Romania	Curaj	Adrian
Romania	Nicolescu	Luminita
Russian Federation	Chistokhvalov	Victor
Serbia	Dondur	Vera
Serbia	Vesovic	Mirjana
Slovak Republic	Plavcan	Peter
Slovenia	Sorčan	Stojan
Spain	Bonete	Rafael
Spain	Delgado	Luis
Sweden	Petri	Åsa
Switzerland	Grandjean	Francois
"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	<i>Apologies</i>	
Turkey	Çalis	Şaban Halis
Turkey	Erdogan	Armagan
Ukraine	<i>Apologies</i>	
UNESCO	<i>Apologies</i>	
United Kingdom	Wilkinson	Pamela
United Kingdom	Young	Alex

Welcome and introduction to the meeting

The Chair, Zbigniew Marciniak (Deputy Minister of Science and Higher Education, Poland), opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

Apologies had been received from Moldova and UNESCO.

The Chair introduced prof. Andrzej Mania – the Vice-Rector of the Jagiellonian University, who gave an introductory speech on the challenges of the EHEA until 2020, mentioning the implementation of lifelong learning (LLL) and national qualifications frameworks, curriculum reform, learning outcomes or the social dimension of higher education.

1. Information by the Chairs (Poland & Armenia)

The Chair introduced the Polish EU Presidency's priorities in the field of higher education (HE). He highlighted diversity and mobility in the context of financing and transparency. He also emphasised the importance of looking at HE beyond the current financial crisis, while

taking note of the changes at global level. Finally, he thanked the Armenian counterparts for the good cooperation and expressed his satisfaction with the current BFUG chairing arrangement.

Gayane Harutyunyan (Armenia) informed the BFUG that on the 8-9 September 2011 the International Conference on Higher Education Financing was held in Yerevan. She outlined the main conclusion of the event: dialogue on higher education funding policies is severely underdeveloped at EHEA level. Two recommendations were put forward in the conference report: to refer to public responsibility for funding within the Bologna Process and to stimulate the creation of a European space for further dialogue on HE funding policies. She also introduced the upcoming Bologna Seminar on "Student Participation in Higher Education Governance" to be held in Yerevan on 8-9 December 2011.

The BFUG took note of the information provided by the Chairs.

2. Adoption of the agenda

Documents: BFUG_PL_AM_26_2a [draft agenda]
BFUG_PL_AM_26_2b [draft annotated agenda]

Following written feedback received from UK/ Scotland and the Council of Europe, the BFUG Secretariat put forward a proposal to make the BFUG meetings more efficient: the issues considered already discussed in previous meetings and almost final would have five minutes allotted, with a short presentation followed by immediate endorsement, thus allowing more time for the BFUG to discuss content issues. However, BFUG members can open debates on any topic, if they consider it to be necessary. The BFUG endorsed this mode of proceeding.

The Agenda was adopted with a small amendment, point 14.3 of the agenda, related to EUROSTUDENT, being moved on the first day, in connection to the Reporting on the Bologna Process implementation (point 4.6 of the agenda).

3. Minutes of the BFUG Board meeting, Yerevan, 7 September 2011 and draft outcome of proceedings of the BFUG meeting, Gödöllő, 17-18 March 2011

Documents: BFUG_PL_AM_26_3a [BFUG Board Yerevan draft minutes_ver2]
BFUG_PL_AM_26_3b [BFUG Gödöllő draft outcome of proceedings]

The BFUG endorsed the Gödöllő outcome of proceedings and took note of the minutes of the Board meeting in Yerevan.

4. 2009-2012 BFUG Work plan – reports of the BFUG WGs/networks

4.1. International Openness WG and the Information and Promotion Network

Documents: BFUG_PL_AM_26_4.1 [International Openness WG draft report]
together with the relevant annexes, including the IPN report]

The WG Chair introduced the draft report of the International Openness Working Group (IO WG), with focus on the two main outcomes, namely the preparations for the Third Bologna Policy Forum (BPF) and the Information and Promotion Network.

In regard to the Third BPF, the Chair underlined the main results so far:

- The overarching theme was complemented by the IO WG with four sub-themes: "Global academic mobility: Incentives and barriers, balances and imbalances"; "Global and regional approaches to quality enhancement of HE"; "Public responsibility for and of HE within national and regional context"; "The contribution of HE reforms to enhancing graduate employability.
- The language regime for the Third BPF will be English, French, German, Spanish and Russian plus the language of the host country (Romania) and the two languages of the BFUG Chairs (Danish and Azeri), should they express their desire in this sense;
- Following the suggestions received from the UNESCO regional offices, the Romanian Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, in consultation with the BFUG Chairs in the first semester of 2012 (Denmark and Azerbaijan) put forward a list of possible countries to be invited to the BPF (document "BFUG_PL_AM_26_13c_Annex 2 - List of countries and organizations to be invited at the Third BPF", to be discussed later on in the meeting). The IO WG members also drew a list of ten international/regional organizations to be invited to the BPF: three Higher Education Institutions organisations, three student organisations, three academic staff organisations and one global quality assurance association.
- On the issue of BPF content, the IO WG members decided to establish a link between the four sub-themes by drafting a single background paper with chapters for each sub-theme. The organisations writing the four chapters are ACA (on mobility), the E4 (on quality assurance), the Council of Europe and IAU (on public responsibility) and EURASHE (on employability). The profile for the Third BPF keynote speaker was discussed and a number of proposals were received so far.
- The first form of the BPF Statement will soon be circulated to the IO WG members.

The WG Chair noted that the IO WG Report has not yet put forward recommendations for the Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué, as this will be discussed at length in the next IO WG meeting. The Chair also asked the BFUG for concrete proposals regarding the Third BPF keynote speaker.

The WG Chair's presentation was followed by debates. The following input was received:

- Given the sub-theme on employability, BIAC¹ should be invited;

¹ The Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD

- The report should be more content focused. It was suggested that possible events taking place between the two BPFs should be mentioned as a recommendation. Such events should be focused on core Bologna Process thematic areas, allowing for inter-regional dialogue on these specific themes between policy experts.

On the programme of the Ministerial Summit and Bologna Policy Forum it was clarified that the discussion on the Bucharest Communiqué will take place on 26 April, the first day, exclusively amongst EHEA ministers, while the official adoption will be organized on 27 April, the second day, in the presence of all ministers invited to the Bologna Policy Forum.

The WG Chair thanked the BFUG for their suggestions and committed to take up the proposals in the activities of the WG that will follow, while waiting for other WG reports to ground additional recommendations in the field of internationalisation.

An update on the Information and Promotion Network (IPN) activity – annex to the IO WG report - was also given. More information can be found in the PowerPoint document below:



BFUG_PL_AM_26_4.
1_IPN Report.ppt

- The main tasks of IPN, deriving from the Terms of Reference, were briefly presented, as well as the results and recommendations for each task.
- The main conclusions of the IPN were: the primary aim of the IPN is to promote the EHEA as both a strong competitor and as an attractive partner; the primary target groups of the IPN in all its activities are non-EHEA students and young researchers; the IPN should consider promoting the messages coming from the Global Promotion Project (GPP); the IPN activity should focus on both promotion through key messages, which can complement national promotion messages and information through key data.
- One of the key recommendations of the IPN is that the BFUG members should consider committing also financially to EHEA promotion. Otherwise, the IPN has reached its organizational limits and part of its task of fostering peer learning for enabling EHEA level information/ promotion could be done in the frame of trainings.
- Wide dissemination of the IPN survey results is necessary, as well as the use of the EHEA key messages and key data in all national and institutional level information provision or promotional activities.

The BFUG took note of the information on the IO WG report and decided to endorse the document at a later stage, after being further redrafted in accordance with the suggestions put forward.

4.2. Network of Experts on Student Support in Europe (NESSIE)

Document: BFUG_PL_AM_26_4.3 [NESSIE draft report]

The BFUG discussed the written NESSIE report provided by the network. The following opinions were expressed:

- The information on the portability of loans should be made available to the wider public on the EHEA Website, not only on the restricted backoffice section;
- The recommendations should be more concrete and should have a policy focus;
- From technical point of view, the report is to be appreciated. The network should consider making them understandable for non technical audiences, too;
- The relation between NESSIE and the BFUG should be made clearer and as such, it was recommended that one of the Chairs would be present at the next BFUG meeting, to bring clarifications.
- The Network should have stayed more in line with the purpose of promoting portability of loans and grants, while acting as a support for the work of the BFUG in other areas such as mobility and social dimension.
- The information flow within the network was appreciated positively.
- It was proposed to transform the network in the future in a support sub-structure of the Mobility WG.
- It was suggested to adjust NESSIE's terms of reference in the future in order to provide the desired political output.

The Chair concluded that a revised version of the report is needed for BFUG endorsement, in line with the received input. The BFUG took note of the document and recommended NESSIE to present a revised report at the next meeting in January. It was also agreed that student support is an important topic that should not miss from the Bucharest Communiqué.

4.4 Qualifications Frameworks WG

Document: BFUG_PL_AM_26_4.4 [QF WG draft report]

The WG Chair presented the Qualifications Frameworks Working Group (QF WG) draft report, which also included the NQF report.



BFUG_PL_AM_26_4.
4_QF WG.ppt

The WG Chair brought to the attention of the BFUG members the following matters:

- There is an excellent cooperation between the QF WG and the EC. The national self-certification and validation exercise demonstrates that QF-EHEA and EQF are compatible.
- The present report did not focus on what remains to be done, but on how to use the results achieved so far in the EHEA. The document is a draft report, the WG can

incorporate more specific recommendations on how to proceed with countries that have yet to fulfil their commitments.

- The draft report comes up with too many recommendations to be all included in the Ministerial Communiqué, so the BFUG is encouraged to decide what issues should be put in the Communiqué and which to be considered as background recommendations.
- In regard to qualifications that give access to HE, the assumption is that there should be a broad agreement between EQF and QF-EHEA. It is particularly important that Ministers commit to referencing school leaving qualifications giving access to higher education at EQF level 4.
- Involvement from stakeholders and other actors is required in the implementation process. Coherent implementation will require training opportunities for practitioners at European, national and local level, with a special focus on the definition and use of learning outcomes.
- Professional regulators should be encouraged to take account of the NQF.
- A number of possible recommendations were put forward for the ministers.

The following opinions were expressed by the BFUG members:

- Recommendations need to be prioritised, not all of them can be discussed by the ministers. Some of them are too technical;
- Further understanding on the definition and use of learning outcomes is necessary. Support and training is needed in this respect;
- Greater consistency between the EQF and the QF-EHEA is needed, as they are implemented by the same bodies in EU countries;
- QF should be better linked to recognition and to quality assurance. They should become an EHEA priority and should be developed in an integrative manner. Not only QA agencies should take into account recognition, but also in recognition decisions, QA has to play a vital role;
- The HE entrance qualification and the support for implementation of learning outcomes were seen by some as priorities.

The EU directive on professional qualifications was considered an issue with great impact on QFs, therefore it was also discussed. It was suggested that the recognition of professional qualifications should include references to ECTS, not only to the length of study. BFUG members were called to focus on the professional qualifications debate within the EU and to make sure that education issues take precedence over market ones. The lack of authority of ministers responsible for HE over professional qualifications is the major reason for this situation of ambiguity. The proposal to recommend greater coherence between the “professional qualifications” directive and the Bologna Process recognition tools within the Bucharest Communiqué was voiced.

The WG Chair thanked for the input and made some additional remarks:

- QF are instruments that describe individual qualifications as well as systems, therefore the systems should be described in such a way that even those who are not informed on the topic will be able to understand.
- The second function of QF is to show learners how you can move within and in between systems (learners should be able to do this in more ways than one).
- QF should facilitate recognition.
- The WG will meet on the 2nd of December and will revise the report, aiming for a BFUG endorsement at the January BFUG meeting.

The BFUG Chair noted once more the importance of connecting the QF with recognition and QA. The Chair proposed that the QF WG further refines the report and puts forward the most important ideas for the Ministerial Communiqué in the Copenhagen BFUG meeting.

4.5. Recognition WG

Document: BFUG_PL_AM_26_4.5 [Recognition WG report]

The Chair of the Recognition WG presented the draft report. More details can be found in the PowerPoint document below.



BFUG_PL_AM_26_4.
5_Recognition WG.ppt

The main points were presented as follows:

- Most EHEA countries have amended their national legislation following the ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC), but some of the legal measures taken still reflect nostrification practices.
- The “European Area of Recognition (EAR) Manual”, which resulted from the project “Equal treatment of qualifications across the EHEA” coordinated by the Dutch ENIC-NARIC, should be endorsed as a ‘standards and guidelines’ type of document in the area of recognition.
- The recommendations outlined in the opening part of the Recognition WG report should feature in the Ministerial Communiqué.
- HEIs invoke university autonomy for not recognizing study periods or diplomas. Governments can enforce fair recognition through quality assurance.
- “Recognition between the EHEA and other parts of the world” – the EHEA countries can give a good example and treat the qualifications from outside EHEA according to the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

The comments listed below followed WG Chair’s presentation:

- EAR Manual addresses the need for information;

- The enforcement of EAR Manual in addition to the Lisbon Recognition Convention may be too prescriptive;
- The EAR Manual is in an ongoing consultation process; it has to be discussed with all the ENIC-NARIC offices before deciding whether to subject it for ministerial endorsement.
- The EAR Manual can be a valuable instrument to guide the practices in the recognition field. The ministers might not adopt the Manual, but point to it as an important tool for building good practice.

The WG Chair concluded that the final version of the EAR Manual will be discussed during the January 2012 BFUG meeting. He also pointed out that the ENIC-NARIC centres discussed it in June and they were largely happy with it.

The BFUG Chair concluded that the Recognition WG report is endorsed by the BFUG, with the change in formulation in regard to the reference to the European Area of Recognition (EAR) Manual in the Ministerial Communiqué. According to the BFUG conclusions, the document will be referred to as a tool for building good practice rather than a prescriptive instrument and the recommendation for the Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué will be thus amended with this in mind.

4.8 Transparency Tools WG

The BFUG Secretariat conveyed the apologies of the Transparency Tools Working Group (TT WG) Chair and presented the WG draft report, focusing on the following (see also the PowerPoint presentation):

- The TT WG had met two times in 2011, taking into account different developments of the transparency tools: they should provide information; there is not a single tool, but a mix of tools; transparency tools' users have diverse needs.
- The WG has developed a matrix for the transparency function of the Bologna tools, its final version should most likely be out in November.



BFUG_PL_AM_26_4.
8_Transparency Tool:

The BFUG members were kindly reminded to fill in the TT WG questionnaire by 20 October the latest.

It was concluded that **the BFUG took note of the presentation, while acknowledging that it was work in progress.**

4.6 Reporting on the Bologna Process implementation WG

Document: BFUG_PL_AM_26_4.6 [Progress on the integrated implementation report]

The WG Chair from Luxembourg gave a brief presentation on the activities and results of the Reporting WG:

- The first draft report will be available end of November – December, while the first revised version will be circulated in January 2012.
- Some countries have still not responded to the questionnaire, or responded only partially. The final deadline is Thursday, 20 October 2011. Only information received until then will be taken into consideration for the current reporting exercise.
- Data collection was a joint effort between Eurydice, EUROSTAT, EUROSTUDENT the BFUG/ EHEA countries.
- The future funding of EUROSTUDENT is uncertain; countries should support it also financially.
- The data indicates that the process is stalling. The EHEA countries should put their efforts together to advance the Bologna Process. This message should be underlined in the Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué.

The WG Chair from Latvia further presented the scorecard indicators for 2012, the PowerPoint below:



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oectaking indicators.p

- The current exercised is more detailed than the previous ones; every country would have lower scores on at least some issues.
- In nearly all indicators, the same criteria as before were used and there were more adaptations of the issues included in each indicator levels than changes. A detailed presentation of the 2012 scorecard indicator proposals was made.

After the WG Chair's presentation of the scorecard, discussions on this issue began. The main points are summarized below:

- 11 countries have not responded until the BFUG meeting to the reporting questionnaires, out of which five have not answered to any of them and others to some. Many members found disappointing that so many countries had not yet submitted the information.
- The reference to research contained within the indicator on quality assurance was taken out, as in many countries the research assessment is separate from HE.
- The report encompasses additional substantial information next to the scorecard analysis.
- In this phase, changes in the formulation of many indicators are not operable, as they would require another data collection exercise.

- Grades are not taken into account for the ECTS indicator.
- On indicator 4, the term “quality assurance systems” is meant to cover countries with federal quality assurance agencies; it refers to more than a single agency.
- Some BFUG members encouraged to distinguish between student as observers and full members of quality assurance agencies’ governing bodies in indicator 5. This will be not possible for the current exercise, due to the way in which the data was collected.
- Employability indicators, such as employment rate/ educational level etc., will still be a part of the report.
- National stakeholders’ involvement in the exercise will be outlined in the report, since the first data collection questionnaire asked for the parties involved in the national reporting exercise.
- The reference to follow-up measures was taken out of indicator 6, because other issues are considered more important.
- For indicator 6, ENQA membership was used instead of EQAR listing as it was the indicator of ESG compliance for several reporting exercises until now and there were no suggestions to change it before the data collection started.
- As a proposal for reformulation, on indicator 6, institutions / programmes could be evaluated by agencies “in addition to the national system”. However, current national legislation does not allow that for many countries.
- For indicator 8, it was suggested to take into account the fact that there is no general agreement to use ECTS for third cycle.
- On indicator 9, a clearer definition / explanation of what RPL encompasses is necessary.
- For indicator 7, there is a big gap between “all” and “some”, no intermediate level has been defined. However, the indicator did not change since the previous stocktaking.

A few BFUG members acknowledged and emphasized the importance of EUROSTUDENT as the main data source for social dimension and mobility. EUROSTUDENT did not receive any more EU funding not because of substantive reasons, but rather because of eligibility criteria such as the innovative character, as it has already been funded several times by the EU Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP). However, co-funding is possible provided that the EHEA countries share the funding responsibility. Some countries expressed their unconditioned support for EUROSTUDENT funding scheme, while others expressed support conditioned by the budget limitations.

The BFUG Chair concluded that additional recommendations for the future use of scorecard indicators can be made in writing to the WG. In regard to EUROSTUDENT, the Chair emphasised its importance and the need for country contributions.

4.7 Social Dimension WG

The WG Co-Chair from Spain gave a short oral presentation on the Social Dimension (SD) WG's latest developments, focusing on the following issues:

- The last meeting was held on 11 July 2011, while a new meeting was scheduled for 4 November.
- In the January BFUG meeting, the WG would present its report, with a focus on the Social Dimension Observatory proposal.

The following points were raised:

- In the 2009 Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve, social dimension was brought forward for the first time and currently expectations are high, therefore the link between SD and financing cannot be the only focus of the report;
- The Observatory can be the way to keep social dimension on the Bologna Process agenda. Conversely it was argued that an Observatory could overlap with the work of Eurostudent.
- Peer review on social dimension is needed.

It was agreed that the WG will formulate some recommendations for the Communiqué and that the proposal for the Observatory will be sent to the BFUG for further reflection after the WG meeting on 4 November.

4.9 RPL network

Document: BFUG_PL_AM_26_4.9[RPL network update]

UK/Scotland presented the update on the Recognition of Prior Learning Network on behalf of QAA Scotland, with emphasis on the following:

- The main outcomes of the Workshop held in June 2011 and the Steering Committee meeting in September 2011 were presented.
- The Network's ToR had been adjusted accordingly, now also giving a definition of what the RPL means.
- The network has been collecting good examples, while the Steering Group's main focus is to match those countries having expertise with those wanting expertise. The Network is more interested in engaging practitioners in that specific field rather than just BFUG members.
- Some recommendations for the Ministerial Communiqué may emerge from the Network in the future.
- Since UK/Scotland's mandate as chair will end the following year, a call for future chairs was put forward to the BFUG members

It was suggested that the RPL network cooperates with the ENIC-NARIC network, since it is also working on RPL.

It was concluded that RPL activity is work in progress and the BFUG members are encouraged to send additional feedback via e-mail.

5. 2012 Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué

Document: BFUG_PL_AM_26_6a [Main points to be included in the 2012 Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué]

BFUG_PL_AM_26_6b [Final report of the International Conference on Funding of Higher Education, Yerevan, 8-9 September 2011]

The BFUG Secretariat presented the document, noting that the first draft was done based on the recommendations of some WGs/Networks Chairs. The purpose of the discussion is to map the possible political priorities of EHEA ministers for 2012-2015.

The discussions that followed are summarized below:

- Various BFUG members outlined what they considered to be the main priorities of the Bologna Process for the upcoming period: social dimension, mobility and the link between them, QF, recognition, quality assurance, student-centred learning, employability, the societal benefits of education, effective interaction synergies between EHEA-ERA, lifelong learning, international openness.
- It was argued that the Bucharest Communiqué should also focus on integrative aspects of the Bologna Process. The following topics were mentioned: implementation, student centred learning, more open learning paths and how to make the Bologna Process tools more widely used by the public. It was argued that the Bologna Process should be seen as a whole concept, there is no need to describe every tool in detail;
- The Bucharest Communiqué should take stock of the achievements and be honest about what was not achieved, while also motivating for further action.
- It was argued that the Bucharest Communiqué should make reference to supportive environment for academic staff.
- The Ministerial Communiqué should mention the existence of the Bologna structures and how they should be made to work. It should indicate if a new deadline was necessary.
- The Bucharest Communiqué should be short and politically meaningful. References to other documents should be kept to the minimum, in order to ensure a high transparency of the document;
- More time is deemed necessary to implement properly the Bologna tools: ECTS, QA, QF, etc. Yet, the Ministerial Communiqué has to focus on political priorities not on technical details. The implementation details are not appealing for ministers.
- The results of the MapESG project could also feed into the Bucharest Communiqué;
- The Communiqué should start with why HE is important in the current context and how the EHEA can fulfil that purpose, which is not limited to employment;

- The Communiqué should reflect the shift from construing structures to their functioning in practice and the shift in balance from European to national and institutional level.
- The ministers should look beyond the crisis, as HE is a long term objective.

It was suggested that not all the priorities can enter a short, focused and politically engaging Communiqué, therefore prioritisation is needed. The following criteria can be used:

- Only new things should be included in the Communiqué, as the BFUG has already agreed on issues previously decided.
- Only objectives that are underpinned by already designed structures should be included. The implementation solutions (structures, terms of reference) should be already agreed before the ministers decide on the objectives.

The BFUG Chair suggested not explaining in detail what the Bologna Process is, but what can be done for the benefit of Europe and how the Bologna Process will multiply the potential of success, thus increasing the credibility of national systems and of the EHEA in general. He further argued that HE has to keep sight of secondary education and of employment. The policies should be evidence based, therefore the results of the reporting exercise are crucial.

The BFUG Secretariat concluded that it understood from the discussion that the Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué should be politically visionary, concrete, short and appealing. Any further input in writing should be addressed to the Secretariat until 30 October 2011.

7. Roadmap for drafting the 2012 Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué

Document: BFUG_PL_AM_26_7 [Roadmap for drafting the 2012 Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué]

The BFUG Secretariat introduced the document, pointing out that its main purpose is to have a very clear picture on the steps to be taken in drafting the Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué and those responsible, in such a way that the process is as transparent as possible. The drafting group will be made of the BFUG Chairs, the host country, in consultation with the BFUG Board. The proposal maximizes the time and opportunities of BFUG consultation.

Most of the BFUG members that spoke on the matter regarded the proposal as too complicated. A three drafts version was prepared by the Secretariat by the end of the meeting. It was suggested that ministers should be engaged as early as possible, therefore a first draft was deemed necessary as early as possible.

The second version of the document, encompassing three rounds of consultations, was presented to the BFUG on Friday, 14 October and subsequently endorsed.

13. Information on the preparations of the 2012 EHEA Bucharest Ministerial Conference and Third Bologna Policy Forum

Documents: BFUG_PL_AM_26_13a [Information on the preparations of the 2012 EHEA Bucharest Ministerial Conference and Third Bologna Policy Forum]

BFUG_PL_AM_26_13b [Annex 1 - Roadmap for drafting the Third Bologna Policy Forum Statement]

BFUG_PL_AM_26_13c [Annex 2 - List of countries and organizations to be invited at the Third BPF]

Romania gave a brief presentation on the progress of preparations for the 2012 Bucharest Ministerial Conference and the Third Bologna Policy Forum. On content issues, references to the IO WG Chair's updates were made. On the administrative issues, the BFUG was informed that the venue had been secured (the Palace of Parliament, as well as the festive dinner at the Victoria Palace, the Government's location). Necessary funds had also been allocated by the Romanian Government.

A roadmap for drafting the Third Bologna Policy Forum Statement has been elaborated by the BFUG Secretariat following the guidelines from the BFUG Board meeting in Yerevan. The list of countries and organizations to be invited has also been drafted, after consultations with UNESCO and the BFUG Chairs for the first semester of 2012, Denmark and Azerbaijan.

Most of the comments received referred to the countries to be invited:

- The logic of the countries' selection is not self-evident and thus it needs to be explained;
- Amongst the proposals there are countries in which there are reports of serious human rights breaches.
- There are also countries that have tense diplomatic relationships with EHEA countries or with the EU.
- Amongst the proposed organisations, there are both national and regional ones. It was argued that a coherent approach is needed, with a preference for regional or international organisations to be invited.
- It might not be necessary to always invite partners from all over the world, a regional focus can also be a good suggestion. For each Forum, a different setting or different priorities can be chosen.
- There are forms of cooperation (bilateral, the Tempus programme, ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention) that need to be taken into account when selecting the countries to be invited.

- Countries that were previously invited but did not attend the event should not be invited once again, unless there is a clear indication that the situation can be different for this BPF edition.
- TUAC and BIAC from the OECD Advisory Committee were suggested.

It was agreed to invite countries that participated to a previous event and countries where there is a specific interest in education related issues connected to the EHEA. The European Commission offered to provide a list of countries with which EU strategic cooperation in the field of HE already exists.

It was suggested to insist in the extended invitation that invited countries involve stakeholders in their delegations, like the EHEA delegations do.

The BFUG endorsed the Roadmap for the Third BPF Statement. The BFUG took note of the information on the preparations and the comments on the list of invited countries for the BPF. It was agreed that a new list of countries and organisations to be invited has to be developed, with clear motivation of the choice.

14.2 Supportive working environment for academic staff – proposed by EI

Document: BFUG_PL_AM_26_14.2 [Supportive working environment for academic staff – discussion paper]

EI gave a brief presentation on the topic.

The BFUG shared the concern with the importance of the topic, but expressed doubts both with their competence to deal with the matter and on the wording of the paper.

The Chair concluded that the BFUG took note of the document and that it may not be the right moment to take this issue on board. He added that another format of the proposal may also be needed in order to discuss this topic in the BFUG.

8. Language regime for Ministerial Conferences

- Documents:
- BFUG_PL_AM_26_9a [Language regime for the ministerial conferences]
 - BFUG_PL_AM_26_9b [Language regime for the ministerial conferences Annex 1]
 - BFUG_PL_AM_26_9c [Language regime for the ministerial conferences Annex 2]

The BFUG Chair asked the BFUG members to endorse the proposal that the language regime discussion should be taken off the agenda in Cracow and put on

the BFUG meeting agenda in Copenhagen (18-19 January 2012). There was a unanimous agreement on this proposal.

Friday, 14 October 2011

BFUG thematic session on Quality Assurance

The highlights of the discussion are presented as Annex 1 of the present document.

6. EHEA Mobility Strategy

Document: BFUG_PL_AM_26_5a [Mobility for Better Learning – Draft Mobility Strategy 2020 for the EHEA]
BFUG_PL_AM_26_5b [Working paper for the Draft Mobility Strategy 2020 for the EHEA]
BFUG_PL_AM_26_5c [Overview of current discussions on key mobility benchmark aspects]

The Mobility WG Chair presented the EHEA Mobility Strategy, highlighting the main ideas:

- The proposed aim was to strive for more balanced mobility.
- The 20% target decided in Leuven was easy to achieve for some countries, but difficult or even impossible for others; each country should decide what was realistic in the next years and how to make it happen.
- The report includes a recommendation to change the mobility threshold from counting all mobility experiences from the threshold of 1 ECTS credit to including in the benchmark only mobility experiences abroad of min 15 ECTS credits or three months in duration.
- The EU/EHEA benchmarks were synchronized under all aspects, except for point 8, geographical scope.
- The BFUG / countries should try to identify bilaterally solutions for the current imbalances, since the mobility flows were not fully balanced, in case the imbalance proves detrimental.
- Quality assurance tools should be used for promoting mobility in the EHEA.

For more information, the PowerPoint presentation is available.



BFUG_PL_AM_26_5_
Mobility WG Chair.ppt

The EC also gave a brief presentation on the proposal for an EU benchmark on learning mobility in higher education (see below). It emphasized the reasons for selecting the minimum threshold for the learning mobility benchmark (15 ECTS credits or three months) and for EU-EHEA benchmarks synchronisation: the threshold is a proxy for quality,

ambitious and is aimed at reducing the statistical burden on institutions, for comparability purposes.



BFUG_PL_AM_26_5_
Mobility_EC.ppt

EUROSTAT also gave a presentation on the taskforce on mobility (see presentation below).



BFUG_PL_AM_26_5_
Mobility_Eurostat.ppt

Following the request for more statistics by the BFUG, a taskforce to measure mobility was set up, with representatives of statistical authorities in the EU countries. Following the survey on national data sources on student mobility, it resulted that the information on the length of the Mobility periods is available and can be collected. The statistical offices can include this information in the data collection. Credit mobility cannot be measured for the moment, as data sources need to be created.

The three presentations were followed by intense discussions. The main opinions expressed are summarized below:

- Integral harmonization between the EHEA and EU mobility benchmarks is needed in order to secure clarity for implementation. The EU-EHEA mobility targets and associated work should be joined.
- Non-EHEA students need to feel that they are welcomed in order to find EHEA attractive; currently there are concerns with discrimination practice induced by immigration legislation reforms in several EHEA countries.
- Joint programmes should be flexibly assessed, according to commonly agreed principles.
- Being granted the right to perform assessments in EHEA is the incentive without which EQAR cannot become attractive for non-EHEA agencies.
- There are also external factors influencing mobility which cannot be controlled through EHEA policies, as they revolve around the global migration phenomena, changes in the global economy etc;
- The relation between the quality and the period of mobility is not one of direct proportionality; short term mobility should be acknowledged for its impact; conversely it was argued that a proxy is needed for statistical reasons, in spite of the absence of direct proportionality.
- Staff mobility should be encouraged through incentives and a supportive institutional culture; academic staff members need to be part of the strategy – they act as motivators and multipliers.
- It was suggested the EHEA and EU should consider, while setting a benchmark, whether to include also shorter mobility periods, e.g. two months and ten credits

- As the data provided is not conclusive, more time will be needed to define meaningful threshold and the academic staff should be more involved in the process.
- The strategy goes too much into delicate issues, so the wording for “more autonomous institutions” could be softened. Setting up a national strategy and campaigns are politically sensitive and it should be up to each country to decide on the matter.
- For point 5.3, the loan system, the BFUG needs not alter the result of negotiations, while for point 10 it wondered if that meant more academic staff positions.
- Many teachers and students cannot be mobile for more than one month. If the target is not ambitious enough to have a positive impact on mobility, then it should be raised.
- The EHEA mobility strategy is very important to keep the political momentum.
- New ways to improve the quality of mobility should be identified, not only in terms of duration but of services (pre and post-supporting services, language learning etc.)
- the EHEA Mobility Strategy is a rather technical document, therefore the BFUG should endorse it and transform it into something appropriate for the ministers.

It was recommended that the Mobility Strategy should be endorsed at the upcoming BFUG meeting. There are still issues to be clarified: the European level admission system for students, what actions to be taken for dismantling mobility obstacles, EU mobility loans, the link between social dimension and mobility; other technical details also need clarification: is it an accumulation system? Is third cycle mobility covered?; countries can express their support only after the clarifications.

The Mobility WG Chair thanked everybody for their comments and suggestions, as they raised interesting debates, while additionally mentioning the following:

- The items in brackets are still to be confirmed.
- Shorter mobility (of less than 15 ECTS/3 months) is important and the BFUG should try to report it, but not as a part of the benchmark.
- The new thresholds should include the three cycles and redrafting will make this idea clearer.
- There is a problem with attractiveness for the incoming mobility benchmark and the BFUG should provide more detailed explanations on what was desired.
- In regard to the issue of leaving the national regulations aside for joint programmes, this point can be included into the document if everyone agreed with the suggestion.
- Academic staff references are made at number 10, because the measures to incentivise staff mobility are to be taken mainly by the HEIs.
- National strategies for internationalisation and mobility are necessary and needed.

The BFUG Chair also mentioned that internationalisation involved more than one country, so a clear recommendation at the European level, such as the EHEA Mobility Strategy, is needed. Using QA and transparency tools is a pre-requisite for mobility, while the minimum ECTS level is not a measure of quality, but a measure of learning outcomes.

As a conclusion, the received feedback can and will be integrated and the Mobility Strategy and the Mobility WG report and the EHEA Mobility Strategy will be re-discussed and hopefully endorsed at the next BFUG meeting.

14.3 EUROSTUDENT – update and way forward – proposed by Germany

Document: BFUG_PL_AM_26_14.3 [Info Sheet Funding for EUROSTUDENT V]

The point was moved on the agenda on Thursday, in connection with point 4.6 and the conclusions of the discussions are to be found under this agenda point in the present document.

12. General conditions for usage of the Bologna Process and EHEA logos

Document: BFUG_PL_AM_26_12 [General conditions for usage of the Bologna Process and the EHEA logos]

The BFUG endorsed the document without further debates.

10. Procedure for the selection of the 2015 EHEA Ministerial Conference host

Documents: BFUG_PL_AM_26_10a [Proposal for the selection procedure of the 2015 Ministerial Conference host]

BFUG_PL_AM_26_10b [Annex 1 - Procedure for the selection of the 2015 MC host country]

BFUG_PL_AM_26_10c [Annex 2 - Examples of voting situations]

The BFUG Secretariat briefly presented the documents, while drawing the attention on Annex 1, where there is a slight change in the Co-Chairing countries for the first semester of 2015, with Kazakhstan entering the EHEA in 2010 and thus expected to act as a BFUG Chair for the mentioned period.

The BFUG endorsed the procedure without debates. The BFUG Secretariat will send the call for selection of the 2015 Ministerial Conference host on Monday, 17 October, with the deadline for receiving candidacies of December 15, 2011.

9. EHEA possible additional working methods

Documents: BFUG_PL_AM_26_9a [EHEA possible additional working methods matrix]

BFUG_PL_AM_26_9b [EHEA possible additional working methods feedback received - Annex1]

The BFUG Secretariat introduced the topic, noting the ongoing discussion since the Alden-Biesen meeting. Following the last call for information, the Secretariat had not received

sufficient answers for drawing a matrix. Therefore, the proposal was to upload the specific country information on the EHEA official Website, with the possibility for later additions.

The BFUG endorsed the proposal of posting country information on the EHEA Website without further debates.

11. BFUG thematic sessions

Documents: BFUG_PL_AM_26_11 [Proposal for a thematic session on QF for the January 2012 BFUG meeting]

The CoE introduced the tentative outline for the future thematic session on QF in connection with the January 2012 BFUG meeting, noting that the envisaged purpose is to have a broader discussion on how to take the QF further. The programme will be slightly adjusted from the current proposal.

The BFUG endorsed the thematic proposal without further debates.

14.1 EHEA wide higher education programmes database – proposed by Hungary

Document: BFUG_PL_AM_26.14.1 [EHEA wide higher education programmes database – background paper]

Hungary noted that the document had been revised based on the suggestions received in the BFUG Board meeting in Yerevan and asked the BFUG WGs on Mobility and Transparency tools to develop the proposal further, following an expression of interest from EUA and EURASHE on this specific initiative.

The BFUG took note of the document and of the Hungarian proposal without debates.

15. Updates from the European Commission, BFUG consultative members and EQAR (written contributions only)

Documents: BFUG_PL_AM_26_15a [CoE update]
BFUG_PL_AM_26_15b [ENQA update]
BFUG_PL_AM_26_15c [EC update]
BFUG_PL_AM_26_15d [EQAR update]
BFUG_PL_AM_26_15e [EURASHE update]
BFUG_PL_AM_26_15f [ESU update]

The BFUG took note of the written contributions presented without debates.

16. Next BFUG meeting, Copenhagen, 18-19 January 2012 and next BFUG Board meeting, Copenhagen, 30 November 2011

Jacob Fuchs introduced the updates and the future Danish EU Presidency priorities (see the PowerPoint presentation below).



BFUG_PL_AM_26_16
_Danish presentation

17. EHEA accession procedure

The BFUG endorsed the proposed procedure, mandating the BFUG Board to appoint the experts for the evaluation of any incoming EHEA applications for membership arriving by 1 December.

18. Any other business

The Polish Chair thanked the Armenian colleagues for the very good collaboration and thanked all BFUG representatives for their participation and a fruitful meeting, while wishing good luck to the next Chairing team.

End of the meeting