Ad Hoc Group on the application of San Marino to join the EHEA

Progress report to the BFUG

The existing criteria for admission of new members to the European Higher Education Area were set in the 2003 Berlin Communiqué. Countries have to be party to the European Cultural Convention and to demonstrate commitment to implementation of the agreed goals and principles of the Bologna Process. The application process includes a National Report by the applicant country that outlines how these principles and commitments have been or will be implemented.

The BFUG, at its meeting in Helsinki in 2019, took note of San Marino's Preliminary National Report and established an *ad hoc* Group to prepare a recommendation to the EHEA Ministers on whether and how to admit San Marino to the EHEA. The *ad hoc* group is composed by Andorra, BFUG Vice-Chair, Council of Europe, Finland, Holy See, Turkey and a WG1 member. Furthermore, the BFUG decided that San Marino could revise the National Report by 10 January 2020.

The revised National Report of San Marino does not give enough information for the *ad hoc* Group to prepare a recommendation on San Marino's admission to the EHEA at present. Important information, especially concerning the key commitments and fundamental values, is missing or incomplete. The report also lacks an analysis and self-assessment of where the San Marino public authorities responsible for higher education believe the system stands with a regard of EHEA commitments and goals. A clear future implementation plan with a timetable should also be included in the report.

The *ad hoc* Group met with San Marino representatives on 19 February in Rome. The meeting enabled a very open and positive discussion between the *ad hoc* Group members and San Marino representatives. San Marino assured political commitment for necessary reforms. San Marino also showed willingness to cooperate with the *ad hoc* Group and the BFUG in order to develop an improved National Report. To further support San Marino, the *ad hoc* Group decided to prepare a tentative template that shows more explicitly what type of information the National Report is expected to cover (see Annex). A template would also serve other possible applicants in the future. The *ad hoc* Group and San Marino representatives agreed that San Marino should work to further improve and clarify the National Report and submits the final version of it by **24 March 2020.**

In view of the fact that San Marino might be joining the European Higher Education Area 21 years after the launch of the Bologna Process and 10 years after the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was officially established, the option of an admission with a Roadmap was also discussed

between Sammarinese authorities and the *ad hoc* Group. San Marino expressed willingness to accept an accession accompanied by a Roadmap for 2020-2023.

Proposed timetable for next steps

The *ad hoc* Group proposes the following **roadmap for the application process** of San Marino to join the EHEA:

What	When	Who
Discussion on update on the progress of the application process of San Marino	4-5 March 2020 in Kyiv	BFUG
Deadline for submission of updated (final) National Report	24 March 2020	San Marino
Review of San Marino's National Report and preparation of a possible roadmap and recommendation to BFUG	1 April 2020 in Lviv	*Ad hoc* Group meeting
Exchange of views on preliminary conclusions	2 April 2020 in Lviv	BFUG Board
Decision on recommendation to the Ministers	4-5 May in Split	BFUG
Decision on the application of San Marino to join the EHEA	24-25 June 2020 in Rome	EHEA Ministers

Indicative Template for National Reports

1. **Introduction**
   - *Basic information about the education system and education policy including the size of the higher education system e.g. number of HEis, students and staff (faculty, administrative, technical; permanent and temporary)*
   - *Recent reforms and stage of their implementation (including stakeholder involvement in planning and implementing)*
   - *Stakeholder involvement in the preparation of National Report*

2. **Degrees and Qualifications Frameworks**
   - *Access requirements*
   - *Share of students in different cycles*
   - *ECTS workload of degrees*

2.1. Short cycle programmes and qualifications (if any)

2.2. First cycle programmes

2.3. Second cycle programmes

2.4. Third cycle

2.5. Programmes outside the Bologna-degree structure (if any)
   - *Integrated long programmes*
   - *Intermediate programmes between first- and second-cycle studies, i.e. programmes requiring a first-cycle degree for entry, but not leading to a second-cycle qualification (for example various short specialisations studies after first cycle)*
   - *Intermediate programmes within the second cycle, i.e. programmes requiring a first-cycle degree for entry, leading to a second-cycle qualification, which, however, generally does not give access to the third cycle;*
   - *Intermediate programmes between second- and third-cycle studies, i.e. programmes requiring a second-cycle degree for entry, but not leading to a third-cycle qualification; or*
   - other programmes outside the Bologna-degree structure

2.6. Credits and learning outcomes
   - *Description of credit system used for the accumulation and transfer of credits*
   - *Extent to which credits are linked with learning outcomes in higher education programmes*
   - *Stage of implementation of the 2015 edition of the ECTS Users Guide*

2.7. Diploma Supplement
   - *Stage of implementation of the Diploma Supplement*
   - *Issuing the DS to graduates: to every graduate in all cycles, automatically, in a widely spoken European language, free of charge*

2.8. National Qualification Framework
   - *Progress in development of NQF or plans to develop a NQF*
   - *Estimated timetable for the development of NQF, with reference to the steps outlined in the QF-EHEA, cf. http://www.ehea.info/cid102844/national-qualifications-frameworks-2009.html.*

3. **Quality Assurance**
    - *Description of your system of Internal and external quality assurance (legislation, practices)*
    - *Level of compliance of QA system with ESG and plans to achieve the full compliance*
    - *Student participation in QA processes and governance (in governance structures, external review teams, self-evaluation, decision making for external reviews, in follow-up procedures)*
    - *Particular challenges of the system of the country and how they are tackled (e.g. challenges of a small system, decentralized system, system with diversity of languages of instruction etc.)*

4. **Recognition**
    - *Description of recognition practices*
    - *Ratification and implementation of Lisbon Recognition Convention*
    - *Are all LRC principles specified in national legislation? (applicants have right to fair assessment; there is recognition if no substantial differences can be proven; legislation or guidelines encourage comparing of learning outcomes rather than programme contents; in case of negative decision the competent recognition authority demonstrates the existence of substantial difference; applicant's right to appeal of the recognition decision)*

5. **Values and Governance**
    - *Academic freedom and integrity*
    - *Institutional autonomy*
    - *Governance of HEIs, composition of governing bodies (including participation of students and staff in higher education governance)*
    - *Public responsibility of and for higher education*

6. **Social Dimension, Lifelong Learning and Employability**
    - *Student financial support*
    - *Supporting non-traditional learners*
    - *Policies for improving completion*
    - *Flexible learning paths (second chance routes to higher education)*
    - *Recognition of prior learning*
    - *Policies and practice for enhancing graduates' employability (e.g. graduate tracking, labour-market and skills forecasting, work placements for students etc.)*

7. **Internationalisation of Higher Education**
    - International strategy or policies
    - *Mobility of staff and students*
    - *Portability of grants and loans*
    - *Supporting the mobility of students from disadvantaged groups (policy measures, monitoring)*

8. **Summary and Timetable for Reforms Planned to Implement EHEA Commitments**