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**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP
Sarajevo, 31 May 2012, 09:00 – 16:00**

Draft minutes

List of participants

Country/ Organisation	Representative
Armenia	Gayane Harutyunyan
Armenia	Ani Hakobyan
Azerbaijan	<i>Apologies</i>
BFUG Secretariat	Ligia Deca
BFUG Secretariat	Irina Geanta
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Aida Durić
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Petar Marić
Council of Europe	Sjur Bergan
Council of Europe	Nedim Vrabac
Croatia	Luka Juros
Croatia	Loredana Maravić
Croatia	Jasmina Skočilić
Cyprus	Despina Martidou-Forcier
Cyprus	Christos Pougoukkas
Denmark	Helle Damgaard Nielsen
Denmark	Jacob Fuchs
ESU	Karina Ufert
EUA	<i>Apologies</i>
EURASHE	Stefan Delplace
European Commission	Adam Tyson
European Commission	Frank Petrikowski
Ireland	Laura Casey
Ireland	Christy Mannion
Romania	<i>Apologies</i>

Welcome and introduction to the meeting by Sredoje Nović, Minister of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr. Sredoje Nović, Minister of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, welcomed the participants in the meeting and outlined the main priorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the field of higher education.

1. Information by the outgoing BFUG Chairs: Denmark & Azerbaijan

Mr. Jacob Fuchs introduced the main developments since the Bucharest Ministerial Conference, as well as the main topics of discussion within the BFUG Chairs handover meeting, which took place on 30 May 2012 in Sarajevo. He also thanked the Azeri Co-Chairs and Romania as Vice-Chair for the very good cooperation in carrying out the BFUG activities for the first semester of 2012 and during the ministerial events.

The BFUG Board members took note of the information provided by the outgoing BFUG Chairs.

2. Information by the incoming BFUG Chairs: Cyprus & Bosnia-Herzegovina

Despina Martidou Forcier, the incoming Cyprus BFUG Chair, outlined the main priorities for the following period, which included amongst others: creating more favourable conditions for the provision of qualitative and more equitable education and training, promoting social cohesion through the modernisation of educational systems, literacy as a focal point in providing quality education for all, equity and excellence in Vocational Education and Training, modernisation of HE. More information is available in the .ppt below.



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32_2_Cyprus prioritie

Aida Duric, the incoming Bosnia-Herzegovina Chair, informed the participants about the BFUG Chairs Handover discussions and thanked the Danish Co-Chairs and Armenia as future Vice-Chair for their readiness to assist in the preparation of the next semester and the definition of the BFUG workplan. The discussions also touched the preparations of the upcoming Cyprus BFUG meeting.

The two international conferences organised under the BFUG Co-Chairmanship were briefly presented:

- "International Conference on European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and Synergies with the European Research Area (ERA) Focusing on Mobility", 12–13 September 2012, Sarajevo;
- "Fostering entrepreneurial learning at tertiary level: university – industry interaction", 11–12 October 2012, Banja Luka.

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

3. Adoption of the agenda

Documents: BFUGBoard_CY_BA_32_3a [Draft agenda]
BFUGBoard_CY_BA_32_3b [Draft annotated agenda]

While introducing the agenda, the BFUG Secretariat proposed two additional items for discussion, under the AOB section: the BFUG representation in the EUROSTUDENT project and ways of improving the BFUG members' attendance in the BFUG work plan and meetings.

The Council of Europe (CoE) proposed an in-depth debate on the Terms of reference and structure of the Network of QF correspondents (NQF).

The agenda of the meeting was adopted with the proposed additions.

4. Minutes of the BFUG Board meeting, Baku, 21 February 2012 and draft outcome of proceedings of the BFUG meeting, Copenhagen, 19-20 March 2012

Documents: BFUGBoard_CY_BA_32_4a [BFUG Board Baku draft minutes]
BFUGBoard_CY_BA_32_4b [BFUG Copenhagen II draft outcome of proceedings]

Concerning the minutes of the Baku BFUG Board meeting, it was suggested that they no longer provide detailed references to the various comments made on the BFUG reports and the Executive Summary of the Implementation Report, as they were only relevant for the drafters. A more succinct approach should be used in finalising the minutes.

For the Copenhagen II draft Outcome of proceedings, small suggestions for rephrasing were made by the BFUG Board members.

The BFUG Secretariat will revise the Baku meeting minutes and the Copenhagen II draft Outcome of Proceedings accordingly and circulate them to the Board members for final endorsement and information, respectively.

5. Feedback received from the Bucharest Ministerial Conference

Documents: BFUGBoard_CY_BA_32_5a [Ministerial Conference evaluation form for participants]
BFUGBoard_CY_BA_32_5b [Ministerial Conference and Bologna Policy Forum evaluation report]
BFUGBoard_CY_BA_32_5c [Feedback received from the Bucharest Ministerial Conference]



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32_5_MC and BPF ev

The BFUG Secretariat introduced the main highlights of the analysis on the feedback received on the Bucharest Ministerial Conference and Third Bologna Policy Forum:

- the questionnaire was elaborated and circulated to the participants after the two ministerial events, with a particular emphasis on the non-EHEA responses, as suggested by the International Openness WG;
- the feedback on the BPF showed positive reaction towards exchange of views on regional and thematic priorities;
- the general opinion on the two ministerial events was well above the average level of satisfaction

The BFUG Board members noted that:

- the Bucharest events were very well organised and the evaluation form reflects their success. The evaluation results should help improve the 2015 Ministerial Conference;
- the event was a real incentive for the ministers to be more committed to the EHEA consolidation, as they became more interested in HE developments in general and the Bologna Process action lines implementation in particular;
- in terms of participants' interactivity, the discussions proved that both the parallel and plenary formats used are valuable and should be maintained. The main challenge in the future is to identify the best ways of better engaging the non-EHEA participants in the discussions and to balance high-level political discussions with interactivity in an event with a large number of ministerial delegations;
- the BPF was a good opportunity to understand how non-EHEA countries perceive the Bologna Process in general and what are their priorities in terms of higher education;
- future editions of the BPF should still be organised in conjunction with the EHEA Ministerial Conferences, with high level representation from outside EHEA;
- the ministers attendance rate is declining and this issue should be addressed. Some BFUG Board representatives suggested the circulation of an anonymous survey among the BFUG members in order to understand the reasons behind it (whether the process is stalling or the ministers felt there is not involved enough in the decision making process within the Conference). The Yerevan Conference brings an additional challenge for a significant number of EHEA delegations – duration of travel, so the format could be redesigned to make the ministers more motivated to participate;
- it would be interesting to highlight the difference of views between members of delegation and heads of delegation, in terms of the general level of satisfaction. The analysis of the feedback should be revised so as to include this element.

The BFUG Board took note of the feedback received from the Bucharest Ministerial Conference. The BFUG Secretariat will also circulate the document to the BFUG. An

updated version, differentiating between responses from members/heads of delegation, will be presented in the Cyprus BFUG meeting.

6. BFUG Workplan 2012-2015

Documents: BFUGBoard_CY_BA_32_6a [Draft BFUG Workplan 2012-2015]

BFUGBoard_CY_BA_32_6b [Overview of the BFUG structures for the 2012-2015 Workplan]

The BFUG Secretariat introduced the draft 2012-2015 BFUG Workplan, the concept and rationale behind this approach, as well as the most important issues to be addressed in the Board meeting.

The discussions outlined the following ideas:

- There are three major questions requiring answers when tackling the draft Workplan:
 - *What are the major challenges according to the EHEA status-quo and the Bucharest ministerial commitments?* The challenge is no longer establishing the structures, but developing them in practice, which is a more difficult task. A structure is only coherent if implemented in a coherent manner.
 - *How to organise the follow-up work efficiently and target oriented?*
 - *How should the EHEA interact with other areas of the world and what are the main topics of interest for future policy dialogues?*
- given the latest experience, where numerous WG / Networks reports presented their recommendations for the Ministerial Communiqué, a pyramid-type structure may be more appropriate, with the BFUG only receiving inputs which were already filtered and strategic in their nature;
- the BFUG work structure should be streamlined by reducing the number of WGs, while allowing enough flexibility inside the WG to organise itself: i.e. WGs could have a number of sub-structures. It is also important that the networks are more closely linked to the WGs.
- the specific tasks, as well as the relations with the other WGs, should be clearly specified in the Terms of Reference of each WG;
- the recruited members for WGs should both be reflecting variety **and** be committed to the work of the WG;
- large scale Bologna seminars, as happened in the past, proved very successful in progressing Bologna action lines. The WGs should be encouraged to have a specific number of official seminars, in order to increase visibility and impact and to be more inclusive with national actors and stakeholders while generating the WG reports. This is subject to the availability of EU and national resources;
- the national BFUG representatives are to be the liaison between the policies at BFUG level and national level;
- large scale Bologna Seminars, at the European, national and regional levels are still required. The role of the national BFUG representatives was less discussed in the

past years, especially with regard to EHEA level policy development and national level policy making and implementation;

- the importance of a forum where countries can exchange experiences in an honest manner was emphasised. At present, this exchange of good practices takes place at the level of the BFUG networks;
- the implementation of different priorities requires a closer collaboration between governments and HEIs.

The BFUG Board members favoured the idea of four major WGs:

- *WG on Reporting on the Bologna Process implementation;*
- *WG on the interaction between qualifications frameworks, recognition, quality assurance and transparency (which can oversee the work on ESG revision and RPL);*
- *WG on social dimension and lifelong learning;*
- *WG on mobility and internationalisation/ external dimension of the EHEA.*
- *Networks and more ad-hoc working groups focusing on specific actions outlined in the Bucharest Communiqué should be established under these WGs.*

Starting from this proposal, a number of comments were received:

- financing and governance should also be included in the draft Work plan, possibly under one of the above mentioned structures. More information on this topic is required before making a definite proposal. At present, an ad-hoc working group or network can focus on collecting information and good practices, while for the long term, it may fit with the Reporting WG, providing information on financing mechanisms;
- the BFUG Board could play a stronger role – for example organising the peer learning and deciding on the themes could be a task for the Board, based on proposals from the WGs;
- for the Cyprus BFUG meeting, a paper on voluntary peer learning reviews and peer learning seminars should be prepared, in order for the BFUG to better understand how these elements would work;
- given the large size of the four WGs, one Chair of each WG should participate in the BFUG Board meetings and report to the BFUG Board/ BFUG Co-Chairs;
- the decision of setting up additional Networks should belong to the BFUG. In this case, a written online decision-making procedure would be required;
- for the proposed WGs, the BFUG Co-Chairs and the BFUG Secretariat should identify the possible WG Chairs and contact them. The WG Chairs should identify the chairs for the ad-hoc WGs and propose them to the BFUG, while ensuring a broad geographical representation. At the Cyprus BFUG meeting, the WGs' Terms of Reference should already be prepared for discussion and endorsement by the BFUG, thus facilitating that the WGs have their first meeting prior to the March 2013 BFUG meeting.

The BFUG Chair concluded on this point of the agenda, by outlining the final proposal for BFUG WGs, as agreed by the BFUG Board: WG on Reporting on the Bologna Process implementation; WG on the interaction between qualifications frameworks, recognition, quality assurance and transparency (which can oversee the work on ESG revision and RPL); WG on social dimension and lifelong learning; WG on mobility and internationalisation/ external dimension of the EHEA.

The 2012-2015 BFUG Workplan will be redrafted based on the feedback received and then circulated for endorsement. The composition of the Board should be changed, in order to include one Chair from each of the four WGs. The BFUG Board Terms of Reference should be amended accordingly.

7. Future thematic sessions (including the EIT)

The BFUG Chair introduced the topic and invited Denmark and the European Commission to provide more details on the future thematic sessions.

Denmark outlined that for the EIT meeting the intention was to bring in speakers from the EIT KICs, but given the dates of the BFUG meeting in Cyprus it is not possible to ensure their participation. Thus it was suggested that the August 2012 BFUG meeting could focus on the 2012-2015 BFUG Workplan, given its importance.

It was proposed to have the EIT thematic session coupled with the BFUG meeting in Dublin in the first semester of 2013.

The BFUG Board took note of the information provided by Denmark and the European Commission. The Chair outlined that a call for future thematic session should be sent after the Cyprus BFUG meeting, most likely at the end of 2012, and that a decision regarding whether the EIT thematic session would be held together with the Dublin 2013 BFUG meeting should also be taken then.

8. Information on the preparations for handover of the BFUG Secretariat (Yerevan, 28 June 2012)

Document: BFUGBoard_CY_BA_32_8 [Draft agenda for the BFUG Secretariat handover]

Gayane Harutyunyan, the incoming Head of the Armenian BFUG Secretariat, informed about the date of the BFUG Secretariat handover and the on-going preparations: funding for the BFUG Secretariat has been secured, the location and the number of members decided (with the staff selection process almost complete), while the Armenian Ministry is providing administrative and policy support to the Secretariat.

Ligia Deca, Head of the Romanian BFUG Secretariat, announced the intention of Romanian officials to provide further assistance for the maintenance and update of the EHEA website, EHEA Backoffice and EHEA archive, should the BFUG and the incoming Armenian BFUG Secretariat find this useful. Comprehensive handover materials will be provided and further assistance will be made available, especially since two members of the current Secretariat will continue to work on higher education related projects in the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI).

The BFUG Board took note of the information provided on the preparations for BFUG Secretariat handover.

9. Agenda of the BFUG meeting, Cyprus, 28-29 August 2012

Document: BFUGBoard_CY_BA_32_9 [Agenda of the BFUG meeting, Cyprus, 28-29 August 2012]

As host country, Cyprus briefly introduced the main topics on the draft agenda for the BFUG meeting (28-29 August).

The following points were made by the BFUG Board members:

- there should be two separate agenda points concerning the BFUG Workplan, dealing with policy first and then with specific structures;
- a background paper outlining the rationale behind the Workplan and its description should be prepared and presented together with the Workplan and the Terms of Reference in the Cyprus BFUG meeting. An overview of the peer learning future approach should also be included in the background paper and be discussed either separately or together with the other items. After feedback from the BFUG Board, the documents should be circulated to the BFUG.

The BFUG Board discussed and took note of the information provided.

10. Next BFUG Board meeting, Croatia (end 2012/ beginning 2013 – dates TBC)

Luka Juros (Croatia) introduced the new BFUG representatives and the persons that will be in charge of organising the next BFUG Board meeting. The date for the **next BFUG Board meeting was set for 15 January 2013 in Zagreb.**

Croatia presented three more events which would take place during the first semester of 2013, two of them being organised by European associations and networks:

- EURASHE Conference – 9-10 May 2013, Split (provisional topic: knowledge triangle);
- ENIC-NARIC Network meeting, June 2013;

- Conference on the structure of the second cycle (discussions with other EHEA countries for joint action).

Ireland also presented its priorities and events for the upcoming BFUG Chairmanship. The overall priorities of the Irish EU Presidency in the field of education are quality and equity and social dimension. Within this, the main theme for higher education will be the social dimension. The BFUG meeting will take place on the 14th-15th March. The DGHE meeting will focus on regional engagement of HEIs, and the broader academic community, a high level Presidency conference will be organised on the U-Multirank project. There will also be a conference organised by EIT on its role in the European Innovation Landscape.

The BFUG Board took note of the information provided by Croatia and Ireland.

11. AOB

The BFUG Secretariat introduced the two topics under this point of the agenda.

a. EUROSTUDENT

The BFUG should delegate one member for the EUROSTUDENT Steering Board (comprised of Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands, Croatia, European Commission and ESU), which could be done in the August BFUG meeting. The BFUG Secretariat will discuss with Dominic Orr about the possibility to use the BFUG meeting for that and to send an information e-mail to the BFUG members, in order for them to come prepared with a mandate, if interested.

b. Participation in the BFUG meetings

An overview of EHEA countries' participation in the BFUG meetings was presented by the BFUG Secretariat. The issue of non-participation from the side of countries was discussed, with the following ideas underlined:

- there are only some countries usually not attending the BFUG meetings;
- there is an issue of participation in the policy making via the BFUG sub-structures; more virtual interaction could be used in the future;
- for some countries, the main cause for non-participation is represented by insufficient funding;
- for the Network of NQF correspondents, the lack of participation is becoming a real issue; the BFUG members should commit to nominating representatives if the network is to function effectively;
- future WG/Network participation should be conditioned by active input; written feedback should be provided in case of non-participation;
- a call to update the list of BFUG representatives should be sent out soon, possibly to high ministry officials to ensure response;
- the issue should be addressed in the Cyprus BFUG meeting, while attempting to answer a few key questions: What is the role of the BFUG? How can the BFUG

representatives ensure the liaison between the European and the national level? How can participation in the WGs/Networks be ensured?

The BFUG Board concluded that more clarifications with EUROSTUDENT representatives are required. Both issues discussed could be addressed again in the Cyprus BFUG meeting.

The Chair closed the meeting, while thanking the hosts, the outgoing and incoming BFUG Chairs, as well as the outgoing and incoming BFUG Secretariats.