



Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue

Draft Final Report

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1. Executive summary

The Coordination Group (CG) on Global Policy Dialogue was instituted by the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG) at the Vienna meeting in fall 2018 on the basis of a proposal elaborated by the BFUG Vice-Chair about how to follow the indications provided in the Paris Ministerial Communiqué and the Statement from the 2018 Paris Bologna Policy Forum. It was proposed to create a small and agile ‘coordination’ group of 4 to 6 members in order to work quickly, in view of the short time until the planned June 2020 Rome EHEA Ministerial Conference, and to develop further and put into practice the ideas proposed by the BFUG Advisory Group 1 on International Cooperation from the 2015-2018 work period.

In the event, many countries and partners wanted to participate, and so the final composition of the CG comprised 11 country members and five organizations.

The remit of the Group was twofold: on the one hand to organize the Global Policy Forum (GPF), including the Statement), and on the other hand to look at how to strengthen the EHEA’s capacity for on-going dialogue (Global Policy Dialogue), attempting to overcome the intermittent character that has characterized it until now.

In order to accomplish these objectives the CG held a number of meetings and on-line consultations, and created subgroups in order to elaborate the relevant documents and proposals. It also organized an event for cultural attachés of the numerous Embassies based in Rome, and, with the Italian Ministry of Universities, Education and Research, a soirée for the Ambassadors themselves. These events were geared to building awareness about the ambitious plans for the Rome Ministerial Conference and to gather ideas about the themes that would be of greatest interest to the countries and macro-regions involved in the Global Policy Dialogue.

The CG members subsequently created a number of smaller working groups: first two “subgroups” were formed, each comprising roughly half of the CG members: one responsible for elaborating the GPF Statement; the other tasked with creating the lists of countries and organizations to be invited to the Rome Forum. Later the CG members also formed smaller ‘subgroups’, one for each of the 6 topics which it had elaborated for the planned parallel sessions to be held during the Forum in Rome.

Unfortunately the COVID-19 pandemic overwhelmed all plans. The Ministerial Conference itself, and the Global Policy Forum were postponed to November 2020, and at present it has not been definitively decided whether the GPF can take place, even in virtual form, at that time. Even if a token virtual meeting with non-EHEA countries and international organizations can be organized, it is increasing unlikely that the six topics can be addressed in virtual form in the brief timeslot that may prove feasible for insertion in the Ministerial Conference. Other options have been discussed, including moving the entire Global Policy Forum to 2021, possibly integrated or back-to-back to a planned Global Summit, perhaps to be held in late spring 2021. The prevalent idea at present appears to be to hold a larger meeting if possible in 2021 and use the time slot in November to hold a brief Forum, to recognize the importance of global engagement, spread knowledge about accomplishments and plans, and agree upon or gather further input for the Statement.

In sum, the CG prepared the ground carefully in order to hold an important and meaningful GPF, but this now will require drastic changes in plans.

2. Introduction

a. Mandate and Aims

The overarching aim of the Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue was to develop, as mandated in the 2018 Paris Communiqué, regular ‘dialogue’ with ‘other regions and international organizations’ on matters of common concern and relevance for higher education with respect to which cooperation and sharing of ideas and policies can be beneficial, and to prepare and conduct the Global Policy Forum in June 2020. The CG has also formulated a Draft GPF Statement, under the aegis of the Drafting Committee for the Rome 2020 Conference.

b. Objectives

The objectives of the group were broad. First, the group had to build on what had already been accomplished by BFUG Advisory Group 1 in the preparation of the 2018 Paris Ministerial meeting, rapidly to further develop dialogue with other regions and organizations on matters relevant for Higher Education, as mandated by the Ministers in Paris. Furthermore the group had to respond positively to the desire expressed by the Paris Bologna Policy Forum for more constant and meaningful “interregional dialogue” and to propose and promote the organization of international and interregional events or, when appropriate, the designation of events already planned, as contributing to ‘Global Policy Dialogue (GPD)’.

The group also had to prepare and support the organization of a successful ‘Global Policy Forum (GPF)’, to be held on the occasion of the 2020 Ministerial Conference in Rome, laying the foundations for continuation in the post 2020 period.

c. Context

The mandate of the CG is linked to the references in the Paris Communiqué:

“We commit to developing the role of higher education in securing a sustainable future for our planet and our societies and to finding ways in which we, as EHEA Ministers, can contribute to meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals at global, European and national levels.”

“As a follow-up to the Bologna Policy Forum, we mandate the BFUG to enter into a global policy dialogue to improve regular cooperation with other regions and international organisations. This dialogue should focus on promoting mutual learning and joint initiatives on issues of common interest, such as social inclusion and the wider role of higher education.”

Furthermore, the CG is also linked to references in the Bologna Policy Forum Statement, adopted during the Paris meeting:

“We, the Ministers, commit to supporting this ongoing, successful interregional dialogue on issues of common concern amongst policy makers, stakeholder organisations, students, staff and higher education institutions. We propose the establishment of a Global Working Group in the next 2018 -

2020 Bologna work programme to take this agenda forward and we invite countries to express their interest to hold high level workshops on a yearly basis to continue the dialogue on social inclusion and the wider role of higher education.”

d. Methodology & organisation

The Coordination Group was intended to be a very small operational group, not a broad ‘advisory group’. However, 16 members expressed interest in joining. They were all committed, expert and prepared to collaborate proactively in the CG.

The CG had 5 meetings between its setup and June 2020. Because of the postponement of the ministerial conference, some further meetings will need to take place in autumn 2020 in order to develop new plans according to the decisions of the BFUG on the format and timing of the possible Forum.

To address its objectives during the timeframe initially foreseen, the CG created two subgroups: one to identify countries and organizations with which to collaborate, eventually to be invited to Rome; the other to draft the Global Policy Statement to be agreed upon in Rome, in collaboration with the BFUG Drafting Committee that was preparing the draft for the future Ministerial Communiqué.

Minutes of the Coordination Group meetings and updates on its activities have been made available online by the BFUG Secretariat on the EHEA website. The CG co-chairs have also regularly reported to the BFUG board and the BFUG at each BFUG-meeting.

3. Activities, findings, results

The remit of the Coordination Group (CG) was to promote more constant dialogue with other parts of the world (countries, macro-regions, organizations) on matters of common interest and concern relating to higher education. To accomplish this, the CG attempted to reestablish contact with all the countries invited to the Paris Bologna Policy Forum, whether or not they attended, and with all other countries, as potentially interested and willing to share ideas about their interests and priorities. Letters to ministers were sent around the world, informing about the plans and ambitions for dialogue and for the Rome Forum.

The CG found that the most useful links could be achieved with regional and world organizations, and focusing on countries that have a relevant role in the macro-regions. The CG proposed sending a regular newsletter on what is happening in the Bologna Process (BP), designed in such a way as to be appropriate both for the EHEA and for the world higher education community in general. This would be useful, not only for international partners, but also for use in the countries within the EHEA, in order to create more awareness among all stakeholders (especially within the HEIs) on the state of play within ‘Bologna’, as many persons do not link current developments in HE to the BP anymore. The CG was informed by the BFUG Secretariat that for such a newsletter to be implemented a specific action plan should be proposed by the BFUG. This proposal could help to implement the request for the post 2020 work period, in line with the current draft Rome Communiqué: to organize

and carry out various initiatives and events in order to strengthen dialogue, visibility and the spread of information about the EHEA in its member countries and beyond.

A concrete initiative in order to raise the visibility of the EHEA and its plans for the Global Policy Forum was undertaken in Rome during the week of the 'Festival of Diplomacy' (16 to 25 October 2019). On 22 October, the CG, in collaboration with the EU Representation in Rome, and the Italian Ministry of Education Universities and Research, organised a meeting for the technical (culture and education) attachés of all the embassies present in Rome (139), and a 'soirée' for the Ambassadors, to present and discuss the Global Policy Forum, and identify the topics the Forum might most usefully address.

A flyer on the Bologna Process and the Global Policy Dialogue was distributed during both events. In addition to the CG members, about 30 persons from 25 other countries attended the meeting with the technical attachés. Several international organizations including the International Association of Universities were also represented. A general evaluation indicated that the intention and plan, as well as the presentations and the panel were useful: in fact the discussion yielded a number of good ideas about the points to focus on in the GPF. It proved however difficult to attract the number of people we expected during the diplomacy week, because there turned out to be many other significant activities organised during the same days and even during the same time slot. About 100 persons, however, were present at the soirée. There were numerous individual contacts between the co-chairs of the CG and representatives of many significant non-EHEA countries.

During the events in October 2019 in Rome, ideas and proposals were gathered and some topics formulated for the GPF. These were further discussed and elaborated by the members of the CG, proposed to and accepted by the BFUG.

As an umbrella topic the focus was planned to be on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Some keynote speeches would also focus on this umbrella topic. Under this general framework, the CG proposed 6 parallel sessions, in which to discuss and present good practices from non-EHEA countries:

- Innovation, new skills and their link to employability
- New (digital) ways of learning and teaching in a lifelong learning context
- Mobility of persons, minds and knowledge
- Untapped talent: opening up higher education and career opportunities to refugees
- Inclusion as a driver for excellence
- Building trust in a global context

In order to organize the sessions, the Group decided to form six new CG1 subgroups, one for each parallel session, and asked each of them to propose ideas and formats for the organization of their session, prepare an introductory abstract or concept note for their topic, and suggest 4 or 5 questions to animate the discussion. They were also to propose possible speakers and moderators able to inspire the audience and to generate and moderate a real debate. A clear roadmap towards June 2020 was set up to achieve these goals.

The CG also suggested items that should be included in the Ministerial Communiqué and the GPF Statement:

These were:

- Confirmation of the **vital role of HE in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals**, and the necessity of **global collaboration** to do so effectively;
- Confirmation of the necessity of reinforcing constant dialogue at global level, and of the **EHEA's responsibility to endow itself with the necessary means** of coordination to foster and participate in this dialogue;
- Confirmation of the emphasis placed in the Paris BPF Statement on the 'Social Dimension', but understood in a broad sense, as the Universities taking up their **societal role with new vigor**. Greater attention should be paid to creating links with **schools and communities**, including those of non-typical learners, in order to prepare them and include them in learning experiences at higher education level;
- Confirmation that focus on **inclusion** should not only be placed at the time of access to HE, but also in the phase of **retention, success and employability**;
- Confirmation that **mobility** is one of the most important keys to global understanding and to excellence in higher education;
- Shared awareness of the importance of putting into contact and reciprocally referencing the **several Qualifications Frameworks and Qualifications Reference frameworks** now functioning or being prepared
- Shared awareness of the importance of **SCL and its implications** regarding the usefulness of credit systems or reference systems based on Learning Outcomes and student time.

In addition to working to achieve existing commitments and aims more fully, the CG underlined the need to ensure **trust** in the increasingly globalized context of higher education. The CG also emphasized the importance of **digitalization** to enable innovation in teaching and learning as well as greater transparency, better communication and more flexibility, as will be required in the future.

4. Conclusions and recommendations for the Rome Communiqué and the future

The work carried out, the sessions planned, and the contacts established have all been put on hold first because of the postponement of the Rome Ministerial Conference and the planned Global Policy Forum, and then because of the gradual realization, due to the increasing intensity of the pandemic and the uncertainties surrounding the coming months, that the Conference in Rome will be held in entirely virtual form. Thanks to the large spaces originally foreseen for the in-person conference, it would have been possible to invite fairly large delegations from almost all world countries. At present, those plans must be radically revised.

At the same time, the impact of COVID-19 has also made very clear two of the premises for the CG's work: higher education -- higher education institutions and policy -- are vital for world well-being, and their cooperation is essential to addressing the Sustainable Development Goals and other challenges, including the worldwide pandemic and its impact. The hope of the CG, and one of its guiding principles, was that the global higher education community could participate actively and proactively in a multidirectional dialogue with the EHEA. **The EHEA is no longer alone** as a macro-region working effectively towards greater compatibility and closer cooperation within its own geographical space. The development of other broad areas of cooperation and coordination in higher education suggests that the opportunity for and usefulness of discussion and a search for compatibility among the world's macroregions has come of age.

Recent data show that the impact of the pandemic on education systems has been dramatic in many countries and continents, most of all in Africa, where the infrastructure has not allowed a large-scale

emergency transfer to on-line learning and teaching. This scenario shows once again how important it is for countries and macro-regions to work together.

Under these circumstances, the work already done by the CG should not be lost. It has been interrupted, but it becomes even more important for it to be reorganised and redeployed in the coming months. Global Policy Dialogue may have become more difficult, but it has not become less important.

During the discussion in the BFUG-meeting in June 2020, most BFUG members expressed their preference for the postponement of the Global Policy Forum, although some felt that it should be maintained, to the extent possible, in conjunction with the Ministerial Conference. The Secretariat proposed postponing the entire Forum to 2021, when it could be held with the “Global Summit”. The combined Global Policy Forum/Global Summit in that case would (pandemic permitting) allow all ‘relevant stakeholders’ (the EHEA ministers and the CG’s planned invitees, ministers and representatives of international organizations) to meet physically in Italy, probably Rome. In this case, the activities proposed by the CG (plenary and parallel sessions) could be implemented at that time.

With this in mind, there could be nonetheless a ‘mini’ Global Policy Forum during the 2020 Rome Ministerial Conference. This could be a fairly brief virtual slot in the Conference in which there might be a short keynote, virtual pre-recorded interventions by Ministers and significant international and regional organizations, and where the CG could present the Draft Statement and propose plans for closer collaboration in the months leading up to the Global Summit, or Policy Forum. This slot could be organized around the middle of the day, when Ministers around the world would be most likely to be able to attend virtually (considering time zones).

This proposal would have two advantages: first, it would show that the EHEA considers Global Policy Dialogue to be very important, not least during a global emergency; and second, that the EHEA wishes to elaborate the Statement with Ministers from the rest of the world, rather than presenting it as a *fait accompli* as in the past. In this way, some positive effects could emerge from the disarray created by the pandemic.

5. ToR 2018-2020

Terms of Reference

of the Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue (CG 1)

Name of the Coordination Group Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue
Contact persons (Co-chairs) Ann Katherine Isaacs – Italy (k.isaacs@unipi.it) Magalie Soenen – Belgium Flemish Community (magalie.soenen@ond.vlaanderen.be)
Composition

Azerbaijan, Belgium Flemish Community, Belgium French Community, Bulgaria, EI-IE, European Commission, ENQA, EUA, France, Germany, Holy See, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, UNESCO, United Kingdom.

Overarching Aim

The overarching aim is to develop, as mandated in the Paris Communiqué, regular ‘dialogue’ with ‘other regions and international organizations’ on matters of common concern and relevance for higher education with respect to which cooperation and sharing of ideas and policies can be beneficial, and to prepare and conduct the Global Policy Forum in June 2020.

Objectives

- Building on what has already been accomplished by Advisory Group 1 in the preparation of the Paris Ministerial meeting, rapidly to further develop dialogue with other regions and organizations on matters relevant for Higher Education, as mandated by the Ministers in Paris;
- To respond positively to the desire expressed by the Paris Bologna Policy Forum for more constant and meaningful “interregional dialogue”;
- To propose and promote the organization of international and interregional events or, when appropriate, the designation of events already planned, as contributing to ‘Global Policy Dialogue (GPD)’;
- To prepare and support the organization of a successful ‘Global Policy Forum (GPF)’, to be held on the occasion of the 2020 Ministerial Conference in Rome, laying foundations for continuation in the post 2020 period.

Reference to the Paris Communiqué

“We commit to developing the role of higher education in securing a sustainable future for our planet and our societies and to finding ways in which we, as EHEA Ministers, can contribute to meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals at global, European and national levels.”

“As a follow-up to the Bologna Policy Forum, we mandate the BFUG to enter into a global policy dialogue to improve regular cooperation with other regions and international organisations. This dialogue should focus on promoting mutual learning and joint initiatives on issues of common interest, such as social inclusion and the wider role of higher education.”

Reference to the Bologna Policy Forum Statement

“We, the Ministers, commit to supporting this ongoing, successful interregional dialogue on issues of common concern amongst policy makers, stakeholder organisations, students, staff and higher education institutions. We propose the establishment of a Global Working Group in the next 2018 -2020 Bologna work programme to take this agenda forward and we invite countries to express their interest to hold high level workshops on a yearly basis to continue the dialogue on social inclusion and the wider role of higher education.”

Reporting

Minutes of coordination group meetings and updates on activities will be made available online to the BFUG by the BFUG Secretariat. The BFUG Secretariat, at the request of the CG Chairs, may circulate relevant updates to the CG members.

The BFUG shall also receive regular reports and updates from the group. To ensure good communication with the BFUG as a whole and for the necessary consultations, progress reports shall be submitted at least two weeks before each BFUG meeting.

Timeframe:

Meetings are to be electronic when possible. Smaller ad hoc groups may be delegated for specific tasks or relations with specific regions. The exact programming will be discussed by the Co-chairs and the members of the Coordination Group; however, the following constitutes an initial draft schedule:

December 2018 – January 2019:

1. Provide follow-up to the countries and regional or international organizations of HEIs or HEI stakeholders that attended the Paris Bologna Policy Forum, inquiring about interests and suggestions for the Global Policy Dialogue and the Global Policy Forum;
2. Send information on the Global Policy Dialogue and the Global Policy Forum; to the countries and regional or international organizations of HEIs or HEI stakeholders that did not attend the Paris meeting, inviting them to share views and participate;
3. Contact the other significant HE networks and international initiatives, such as those supported by the European Commission, that have created premises for macro-regional and/or national dialogue with the EHEA and the wider world, to gain their insights and evaluate their potential contribution;
4. Identify volunteers to host the 'joint meetings' as proposed in the Statement (or alternatively, or in addition, in connection with the previous point, designate as contributing to the 'Global Dialogue' appropriate initiatives already planned by countries, international HE organizations, other stakeholders).

February – March 2019:

5. Report to the Spring BFUG meeting and propose further suitable ways to address arising issues, including specific task forces or working groups if and as necessary or advisable.

In general, the plans presented to the BFUG will specify actions to be undertaken in 2019 and 2020, including:

6. Events to be organized or designated as contributing to Global Policy Dialogue
7. Support for the preparation of participation in and the agenda and programme of the Global Policy Forum to be held in Rome, June 2020.
8. Lay the way for the continuation of Global Policy Dialogue after the Rome meeting.

6. List of group meetings and participants

1. First Meeting of CG1 on Global Policy Dialogue in Brussels on 8 February 2019

[Meeting Agenda](#)

[Meeting Minutes](#)

Meeting participants:

Azerbaijan	Shanin Bayramov
Belgium Flemish Community (Co-chair)	Magalie Soenen
Belgium French Community	Caroline Hollela
ENQA	Maria Kelo
EUA	Michael Gaebel
France	Hélène Lagier
Germany	David Akrami Flores
Holy See	Melanie Rosenbaum
Ireland	Orla Lynch
Italy, BFUG Vice-chair (Co-chair)	Ann Katherine Isaacs
UNESCO	Liliana Simionescu
United Kingdom	Ella Ritchie
BFUG Secretariat	Luca Lantero
BFUG Secretariat	Filippo Benedetti
BFUG Secretariat	Edlira Adi Kahani Subashi

2. Second Meeting of CG1 on Global Policy Dialogue in Bologna on 24 June 2019

[Meeting Agenda](#)

[Meeting Minutes](#)

Meeting participants:

Belgium Flemish Community (Co-chair)	Magalie Soenen
Belgium French Community	Caroline Hollela
ENQA	Maria Kelo
EUA	Michael Gaebel
European Commission	Deirdre Lennan
France	Hélène Lagier
Germany	Anja Diek
Germany	Katrin Fohmann
Holy See	Melanie Rosenbaum
Ireland	Orla Lynch
Italy, BFUG Vice-chair (Co-chair)	Ann Katherine Isaacs
Kazakhstan	Khanat Kassenov
United Kingdom	Ella Ritchie
BFUG Secretariat	Luca Lantero
BFUG Secretariat	Giovanni Finocchietti
BFUG Secretariat	Allan Garner
BFUG Secretariat	Vera Lucke

3. Third Meeting of CG1 on Global Policy Dialogue in Rome on 22 October 2019

[Meeting Agenda](#)

[Meeting Minutes](#)

Meeting participants:

Belgium Flemish Community (Co-chair)	Magalie Soenen
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Belgium French Community	Caroline Hollela
ENQA	Maria Kelo
EI/ETUCE	Alessandro Arienzo
EUA	Michael Gaebel
France	Hélène Lagier
Germany	Katrin Fohmann
Holy See	Melanie Rosenbaum
Italy, BFUG Vice-chair (Co-chair)	Ann Katherine Isaacs
UNESCO	Liliana Simionescu
BFUG Secretariat	Edlira Adi Kahani Subashi
BFUG Secretariat	Clarissa Ioimo

4. Fourth Meeting of CG1 on Global Policy Dialogue, online, on 24 March 2020

[Meeting Agenda](#)

[Meeting Minutes](#)

Meeting participants:

Belgium Flemish Community (Co-chair)	Magalie Soenen
Belgium French Community	Caroline Hollela
ENQA	Maria Kelo
European Commission	Marlène Bartès
Germany	Katrin Fohmann
Holy See	Melanie Rosenbaum
Ireland	Orla Lynch
Italy, BFUG Vice-chair (Co-chair)	Ann Katherine Isaacs
UNESCO	Liliana Simionescu
UNESCO	Peter Wells
United Kingdom	Ella Ritchie
BFUG Secretariat	Filippo Benedetti
BFUG Secretariat	Clarissa Ioimo
BFUG Secretariat	Vera Lucke

5. Fifth Meeting of CG1 on Global Policy Dialogue online on 4 June 2020

[Meeting Agenda](#)

[Meeting Minutes](#)

Meeting participants:

Belgium Flemish Community (Co-chair)	Magalie Soenen
ENQA	Maria Kelo
EUA	Michael Gaebel
European Commission	Fiorella Perotto
France	Hélène Lagier
Holy See	Melanie Rosenbaum
Ireland	Orla Lynch
Italy, BFUG Vice-chair (Co-chair)	Ann Katherine Isaacs
Italy	Chiara Finocchietti
UNESCO	Peter Wells
United Kingdom	Ella Ritchie

BFUG Secretariat

Filippo Benedetti

BFUG Secretariat

Clarissa Ioimo

BFUG Secretariat

Vera Lucke

In addition, there have also been numerous subgroup meetings for the Statement and the Lists, and separate meetings of the groups on the parallel sessions.

7. Acronyms

BFUG = Bologna Follow Up Group

CG = Coordination Group

GPD = Global Policy Dialogue

GPF = Global Policy Forum

IAU = International Association of Universities

LRC = Lisbon Recognition Convention

MCU = Magna Charta Universitatum

SDG = Sustainable Development Goals

8. Annexes

- a. List of Countries to be invited
- b. List of international organizations to be invited
- c. Draft Statement of the Global Policy Forum