



Working Group on Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process

Fifth meeting, Brussels (Hybrid*)

27 October 2022
10.30 - 16.00 (CET)

Minutes of meeting

List of participants

Country/Organization	First Name	Last Name
Austria	Helga	Posset
EQAR	Melinda	Szabo
European Commission/ Eurydice (Co-Chair)	David	Crosier
ESU	Katrina	Sproge
EUA	Gohar	Hovhannisyan
EACEA	Daniela	Kocanova
France	Mathieu	Musquin
Germany	Maria	Hochstaedter
The Netherlands	Robert	Wagenaar
Norway (Co-Chair)	Tone Flood	Strøm
Romania	Camelia	Mircea-Sturza
BFUG Secretariat	Xhesika	Lulaj
BFUG Secretariat	Patrik	Bardhi

*Note: The meeting was held in hybrid format.

Albania, Czech Republic, EI-ETUCE, Eurostudent, Italy, Kazakhstan and Moldova did not attend the meeting. Cyprus, Malta and United Kingdom sent regrets.

1. Welcome by the Co-Chairs of the WG

The Co-Chairs welcomed everybody to the fifth meeting of the 2021-2024 work period. David Crosier (Co-Chair) underlined the purpose of this meeting to have the proposal for the Bologna Process Implementation Report (BPIR) in place, to be presented at the upcoming BFUG meeting LXXXII¹. Mr. Crosier informed that the BFUG Working Groups (WG) have organized several meetings to gather and finalize recommendations and proposals for input to the WG on Monitoring for the BPIR. In order to determine what ought to be included in the BPIR, the input from the WGs will be reviewed. The agenda of the meeting was adopted without changes.

For more detailed information, please see: [WG Monitoring CZ KZ 5 Agenda](#)

¹ Eighty-second Bologna Follow-Up Group meeting, hosted by Czech Republic (Brno), 7-8 November 2022.

2. Updates on BFUG meetings: BICG, Working Groups on Fundamental Values, Social Dimension, Learning and Teaching

2.1. BFUG Board Meeting LXXXI (4 October 2022)

Mathieu Musquin (France) provided a brief overview of the discussions held in the BFUG Board meeting in Astana, Kazakhstan, highlighting a discussion of the draft agenda for the upcoming BFUG Meeting LXXXII on 7-8 November 2022. Moreover, the finalization of pending changes of the Rules of Procedures (RoP) and the discussion of the creation of a Task Force for the revision of the RoP document was discussed. Mr. Musquin also mentioned that it was agreed by the Board to organize a thematic block on learning and teaching with breakout sessions at the upcoming BFUG meeting. Finally, he mentioned the discussion of the Roadmap towards the Ministerial Conference and Global Policy Forum 2024 document that would serve as a basis for the preparation of the Ministerial Conference in Tirana in 2024.

2.2. Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG)

Helga Posset (BICG Co-Chair) provided an update on the results of the most recent meeting, which was conducted online on October 25, 2022. She highlighted the delivery of a report on the BFUG Board meeting as well as a report from the TPGs, which provided information on upcoming meetings and Peer Learning Activities (PLAs) planned as well as the activities of corresponding working groups established within each TPG. It was added that the working groups focus on key areas, as well as innovative topics (i.e., micro-credentials). A challenge was noted, specifically in TPG A, that there was low participation of countries in meetings. Lack of information regarding national authorities' follow-up measures and how they use the knowledge and information acquired through these meetings and PLAs at the national level, was presented as another issue. Coordination among representatives in a country's TPGs was mentioned as a recurring challenge and it was advised that these representatives find mechanisms to coordinate, interact, and share information.

2.3. WG on Fundamental Values

Tone Flood Strom (Co-Chair) provided an overview of the progress made by the WG on Fundamental Values (FV) and provided feedback on the most recent meeting (20 October 2022), where she reported that the WG is currently working with experts to develop statements for the remaining Fundamental Values. She also informed that out of four values initially, the group has so far identified six values². Ms. Strom emphasized that the indicators are strongly related to the statements, and as the statements have not yet been finalized and adopted, the need to establish indicators for the BPIR 2024 may result in indicators that differ from the system being developed for the future monitoring of the fundamental values.

Ms. Strom also informed that both the *de jure* and *de facto* aspect of indicators ought to be identified. For the *de jure* aspect, data will be gathered from the BFUG country members, whereas for the *de facto* dimension it was noted that other sources will be used to gather the information required. On this, she noted that there are challenges due to the lack of *de facto* sources for some values, as well as lack of sources corresponding fully to the other values. There was a discussion with members on this issue, and it was agreed to, rather than leave out this aspect completely, to

² Academic freedom and academic integrity are now two separate values; Public responsibility for and of higher education are now two separate values.

use the existing sources despite not being fully in line with the indicators. As a result, it was acknowledged that we are in a transition phase for the 2024 BPIR as the statements are not yet adopted while some monitoring of the values is needed. Nonetheless, following a discussion with the members, it was decided to use the existing sources even though they did not entirely comply with the indicators rather than altogether omit this component.

2.4. WG on Learning and Teaching

Gohar Hovhannisyan (EUA) provided an update on the work of the WG on Learning & Teaching (L&T), where she informed that the group has agreed on the indicators that will be used for the BPIR 2024. She also added that there were three sub-groups formed to work on the identification of the essence of topics, where 1. student-centred learning; 2. innovation in education; and 3. teaching enhancement were determined. Following this, the group has planned to organize three Peer-Learning-Activities (PLA) surrounding these themes. Ms. Hovhannisyan informed that the first PLA is being held on the topic of staff development in Paris, on 26-27 October 2022, where the skills for teachers in higher education, teaching and digitalisation, as well as teaching support and careers will be discussed. Two upcoming PLAs are planned on the topics of student-centred learning and innovative learning and teaching in 2023. She also informed that, as an outcome for this cycle, the WG is planning to have a report that includes practices and guidance on how country members can implement the recommendations that were produced in the previous Bologna Process cycle. On this, Ms. Hovhannisyan mentioned that the WG will develop a template to invite country members to provide contributions and good practices on how the recommendations on learning and teaching are being implemented.

2.5. WG on Social Dimension

Gohar Hovhannisyan (EUA) informed on the progress of the WG on Social Dimension (SD), noting that in the last meeting, they were having detailed discussion on the indicators, where they were developing explanatory descriptors for each indicator to serve as guiding points on how to best fulfil the indicators. During this two-day meeting, the WG had agreed on the indicators and had finalized them. She also noted that the WG will soon have a PLA in November, with thematic focus on the development a system of monitoring for the implementation of the Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA.

3. Preparation of the 2024 Bologna Process Implementation Report

David Crosier (Co-Chair) explained that as some countries are members of EUROSTAT and some are not, data for the latter must be collected separately. As a result, a subcontractor recruited and managed by the Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) will be contracted to collect data from these countries using the same indicators that the Working Group on Monitoring will identify. The selection process for such an agency has begun and is on track, according to Mr. Crosier. The contract must be issued in January 2023, he continued, but the proposal-submission procedure has already started.

3.1. State of play of chapter preparations

- Chapter 2 Fundamental Values

David Crosier (Co-Chair) reemphasized on the previous reporting of the WG on FV that the WG members have decided to make use of the existing resources on the *de facto* dimension (i.e., Academic Freedom Index AFI) regardless of not being fully in line with the statements. A suggestion by European Student Union (ESU) was provided to include an indicator based upon the

'Scholars at Risk' work on incidents of violation of academic freedom, and any incidents related to academic freedom in EHEA countries should be published.

The *de jure* component would be gathered by the national authorities, who would report on the legal protection of academic freedom, examine how it is defined in national legislation, and compare it to the Rome Communiqué statement. Additionally, they would examine administrative measures for academic freedom and requirements (if any) for external QA agencies to evaluate whether academic freedom is properly exercised in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

The other aspect that would be taken into account on the BPIR is the report structure, specifically that the chapters should be concise (about 30 pages long). The WGs have been informed of this so that they are aware of the restrictions of the indicators when delivering the final output. Next steps include sending the questionnaire to the BFUG for the *de jure* component. Additionally, the sources used for the *de facto* component would include the Academic Freedom Index (AFI) and Scholars at Risk.

It was emphasized that it is possible to use additional sources that do not cover all EHEA members (like EUROSTUDENT), and that this is well within the bounds established by BFUG, in response to an inquiry about the utilization of sources other than governmental ones. It was determined, especially in the FV chapter, that the WG would go beyond the governmental sources to portray the *de facto* component.

Another remark included whether the WG on FV would deliver a report as part of the final WG output. The intention is to prepare a report, in addition to the statements, but the WG has not yet addressed a specific proposal for such a report.

The representation and portrayal of other external sources in the BPIR was reviewed. It was made clear that the information provided by outside sources, like the AFI, will not be reported as the group's information but rather as the AFI's understanding of academic freedom in the EHEA countries. It will also be clarified that such sources are distinct, as well as how they are constructed. While not entirely in line with the conceptual definition, Mr. Crosier stated that it is still possible to use it globally and noted that this also holds true for all other external sources.

In addition, it was mentioned that for the 'Academic Freedom' value, in the chapter document section titled "Indicators based on data to be gathered from the BFUG" the second bullet point³, specifically the part "*to verify alignment with the Rome Communiqué definition and statement,*" would be too onerous for all EHEA countries to adopt a national standard. Furthermore, it was pointed out that it is not apparent as to how such alignments are verified. Regarding this, it was noted that there may not be enough clarity regarding some issues, such as the provisions of ministries to protect academic freedom, if there are any institutional measures to protect academic freedom and more, as suggested by the WG. However, it was made clear that the specifics of the questions' wording would be discussed following agreement on the topics that would be covered.

As QA was mentioned in relation to collecting data on academic freedom, it was suggested to use the QA-FIT survey that is addressed to ministries, governmental agencies and all types of HEIs. The results may feed into the aspects related to the fundamental values, maybe not to the extent written in the statement, but the results may be beneficial to look at. The questionnaire to the

³ Definitions of academic freedom in national legislation (to verify alignment with the Rome Communiqué definition and statement).

BFUG is expected to be sent out in February 2023, with a 2-month completion period for countries, and analysis is expected to commence in June 2023.

The main source to consult for "Institutional Autonomy" was the EUA Autonomy Scorecard. In March 2023, the upgraded Scorecard will be made public as part of the EUA initiative. Decisions about which of the many indicators in the scorecard will be utilized should be decided when the 2023 edition is published. The key questions that will be asked in the BFUG questionnaire aims on the public authorities' power to hire and dismiss HEI staff and other stakeholders, the public authorities' input into the selection of new HE programs, and the external QA needed to determine whether institutional autonomy is appropriate and effectively used.

The next discussion focused on "Participation of students and staff in higher education governance." In order to determine the needs for student and staff representatives at three different levels—during the drafting of national higher education policies, during the formulation of the policies, during participation in HE governing bodies, and within the actual institutions—questions were to be directed at the BFUG. Despite a bit of overlap between chapters, some indicators that were covered in earlier chapters would not be repeated in the questionnaire. Regarding the amount of faculty and staff participation in the governing bodies, it was advised against emphasizing percentages.

The next point brought up was the public responsibility for HE. One of the areas of governmental responsibility for HE would be the legal framework, which addresses the following issues: Qualifications Framework (QF), Quality Assurance (QA), Framework for Funding, Framework for Recognition, and Social Dimension. The WG on FV recommended that the EUA's Funding Observatory be explored in order to assess funding figures, particularly information on whether public investment in HE has increased, decreased, or maintained at the same level. However, it was acknowledged that without posing numerous in-depth questions, constructing any typology would be challenging.

There were remarks regarding the WG on FV's hesitation to bring up the issue of funding due to the issues mentioned and the fact that there is information already in the first chapter. Everyone agreed that funding is a crucial aspect of public responsibility, and that the main funding models should be explored. It was suggested that QA should apply to both public and private HEIs; this raises the question of whether all HEIs are subject to governmental regulations. The responsibility for ensuring the licensing of private HEIs falls directly on the remit of the public authority. These are the key areas of public responsibility that will be covered in the "Key Commitments" chapter.

Stakeholder involvement in community engagement and HEI responsibility in general society was one of the components of HE's public responsibility highlighted. It was noted that this statement will be used to monitor the areas that need to be studied in the future.

- Chapter 4 Learning and Teaching

The set of indicators that were developed with the WG on L&T in the Chapter 'Learning and Teaching' were presented. The indicators were revised at the most recent meeting following fruitful discussions with the WG on L&T to emphasize a more concrete emphasis on student-centred learning, professional training and development, academic staff working conditions and careers. Since there was no reliable source of comparative information and no HEI education survey on this topic, it will be discussed in the broader context. It was decided during the discussion with the WG on L&T that these indicators should be presented in a neutral manner rather than a prescriptive scorecard format because public authorities may support institutions in a variety of ways.

The set of indicators, in general, included the following: 1. development of strategies/policies for L&T by public authorities and monitored, primarily through QA; if policy implementation is supported by institutions and agencies; 3. information on student-centered learning in various national contexts and elements of legislative regulations that might in some ways limit student-centred learning; the criterion for promotions and career advancement, as well as the parity of respect between research and teaching; professional development, with a focus on digital tools and their use in education.

about the idea of not using a normative framework to interpret these indicators was discussed as well. Other topics of discussion included the notion that the BFUG should ask more questions to the EHEA country members to map out how various L&T agencies approach these concerns. Additionally, the limited role of the public authority (PA) in identifying innovative L&T techniques that must come from the institutions themselves and are unrestricted by a regulatory framework was emphasized. The various methodologies used by public bodies have given the WG on L&T the opportunity to develop its own peer learning activities (PLA) on the relevant topics and report on additional excellent practice that can be advised.

- Chapter 5 Social Dimension

The main takeaways from the previous SD WG meeting were summarized, and it was made clear that the group's attention would be focused on putting into practice the Principles and Guidelines (PAGs) that were approved in the Rome Communiqué and monitor their implementation. In order to create scorecard indicators for each of the PAGs, a pilot project on equity and inclusion on higher education was created, and the project's outcomes were discussed within the WG.

Mr. Crosier argued that the main indicators are adequate and that the large number of sub-indicators, regardless of their value at the national level, would increase the report's level of complexity and result in sizable sections. The SD Co-Chairs suggested that in the implementation report they mostly use updated information based on the indicators from the pilot project.

The topic of the recognition of prior learning came up again throughout the discussion, and from the proposals the Quality Assurance Agencies (QAAs) should not be obligated to look into it. The members provided a variety of examples from their own countries to demonstrate the degree to which QAAs are involved in the recognition of prior learning.

- Chapter 1: Key data

Mr. Crosier went on to the next document, which summarized some of the statistical data that will be used as indicators. The members also pointed out that a useful indicator for the report would be the number of joint programs. It was mentioned that since EQAR does not have the whole list of joint programs, collecting such an indicator would be difficult. From a national perspective, establishing a survey and attempting to collect reliable information would be challenging due to the technical competence needed for collection and the requirement for frequent updating. Graduation rates were proposed and accepted for inclusion in the document as an indicator.

- Chapter 3 Key Commitments

Mr. Crosier then discussed the addition of the scorecard indicator on the European Approach to QA as one of the new indicators among other QA indicators in Chapter 3 of the Key Commitments document. He also discussed micro credentials, the openness to cross-border QA, and the short cycle qualifications in the national qualification's framework. It was also disclosed that an

assessment of the application of the recommendation for automatic recognition in the context of the European Economic Area (EEA) was being conducted by the European Commission. In the review, he continued, there might be a method to conceptualize automated recognition and establish a clear system-level conclusion on it. The indicator for automatic recognition that will be used in the BPIR may be updated as a result. The extent of participation in TPG activities was examined, and it was suggested that the BPIR include an indicator that lists the number of countries taking part as well as the total extent of participation.

Concern was expressed about the potential responses that might be made in the BFUG meeting on the connection between EQAR registration and European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) compliance. Moreover, the lack of a scorecard indicator for cross-border HE quality was examined, as well as whether or not it should be added to the list of indicators. According to Mr. Crosier, they are relying on EQAR and QA projects to supply the information on this issue.

The survey also only included one QA question, which asked whether there were policies in place to ensure that external QA covered the transnational probation that the higher education institutions of the countries offered abroad.

Further, the phrasing of the "color scales" in the annexes under review was discussed by the members in order to improve reader comprehension and remove any potential ambiguity.

The focus was on the short cycle thematic shifts following the 2018 Paris Communiqué and whether or not they should be regarded as a part of the first cycle. The participants agreed that this issue requires future attention.

The indicator for student involvement in internal QA was also considered, and it was decided to improve it even more by including metrics for student involvement in external QA.

- Chapter 6 Internationalisation

It was pointed out that regarding internationalisation, the data for 2020 will be anomalous compared to the other years, taking into account the pandemic situation at the time. It was proposed to not include anything new regarding this topic and keep the amount of data included manageable.

- Ukraine indicators

Mr. Crosier mentioned the government of Ukraine's appeal for the EHEA to respond to the requirements of Ukrainian academics and students. He also mentioned that Eurydice had written a brief report on the subject and that EUA was working on a survey on the subject. The issue of how this data should be organized in the monitoring report arose. It was suggested that it be added as an annex or a brief chapter in the report.

4. Next steps: Planning of BFUG Meeting LXXXII

It was decided that the WG would create a document listing all indicators, including those pertaining to Ukraine, for the BFUG Meeting in Brno, with a focus on those indicators that are new and will be asked about in the questionnaire. The Co-Chairs thanked the members for their contributions and input to the meeting. No other business was brought forward, thus the fifth WG meeting was successfully concluded.