



## Working Group to Support the Implementation of the Roadmap for San Marino's Accession to the EHEA

Third Meeting, Hosted by Andorra, Online\*  
Monday, 21 March 2022  
14:00-16:00 (CET)

### Minutes

#### List of Participants

Country	Name	Last Name
Andorra (Co-Chair)	Jordi	Llombart
Council of Europe	Sjur	Bergan
EUA	Maria	Kelo
Finland (Co-Chair)	Maija	Innola
Holy See	Melanie	Rosenbaum
Italy	Paola	Castellucci
Italy	Vera	Lucke
Liechtenstein	Daniel	Miescher
San Marino	Maria Elena	D'Amelio
San Marino	Remo	Massari
San Marino	Paula	M. Cenci
BFUG Secretariat	Kristina	Metallari
BFUG Secretariat	Vahidije	Kadiu

#### Welcome and information by the Co-Chairs

The Co-Chairs welcomed everyone to the third meeting of the Working Group (WG) to support the implementation of the Roadmap for San Marino's accession to the EHEA, emphasizing the importance of this meeting as an opportunity for members and stakeholders to exchange information and for this WG to assist in the implementation of the roadmap and San Marino's accession to the EHEA.

Jordi Llombart (Co-Chair) gave a summary of the second WG meeting, highlighting key takeaways such as the University of San Marino's strategy and quality assessment dimensions; an exchange of views with university staff and students; NQF and QA presentations with case studies from Andorra, the Holy See and Liechtenstein; and a progress report on the Implementation Roadmap.

Maija Innola (Co-Chair) provided an update of the BFUG Board 79 meeting<sup>1</sup>, which focused primarily on regular updating on the BFUG working structures, as well as the Extraordinary Board meeting<sup>2</sup>, which focused on the current situation with the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

For more detailed information, please see: [Minutes of the second meeting Board Meeting 79 Minutes of meeting Extraordinary BFUG Board meeting](#)

### **Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda of the meeting was approved with no revisions.

For more information, please see: [Agenda of the meeting](#)

### **Update about quality assurance session held on 28 February 2022**

Maria Kelo (EUA) gave an overview of the quality assurance (QA) session held on February 28, 2022, which was structured as an exploratory meeting with the purpose of learning more about San Marino's current state of play, as well as the actual challenges and opportunities in its QA system.

The QA system of the University of San Marino was emphasized as focusing on links between labor market needs, course attractiveness, student advancement and satisfaction, as well as integration into the job market. It was described as inclusive and systematic, with the utilization of numerous approaches and a vast amount of data. The use of focus groups, which consisted of discussions with students and internal stakeholders on various QA improvement strategies, was highlighted as a good practice. Staff satisfaction and support, on the other hand, were less visible due to a lack of clarity and integration of the temporary teaching staff. Thus, teachers' involvement in the institution's mission, vision and quality culture was discussed as an issue to be addressed in the QA processes.

There was a significant shift from an informal to a more formalized QA system as a result of its systematic, data-centered and consistent nature, which was critical in light of an external evaluation. It was suggested that the university conduct an internal mock review to critically examine all of the QA criteria and identify any inadequacies. After such a review has been done and needs for future development have been identified, a peer learning activity (PLA) on QA could be organized.

As a consequence of the debate at the BFUG Meeting LXXVIII, the matter of fully ESG compliant QA agencies was rediscussed. It was emphasized that, while using an EQAR-registered agency is recommended by the BFUG, country members are not obliged to do so. Instead, they must employ an agency that conforms with the ESG. As a result, when there is a clear, analytical proposal about the QA entity to be chosen, it was proposed to include it in the San Marino reporting.

Furthermore, it was suggested that San Marino adopt a national quality assurance system, not just on an institutional level, which should be included in the national legal framework (e.g., the duration and reoccurrence of external reviews; the types of standards to include - ESG or country-specific standards) to demonstrate that students' interests are protected by the legal framework.

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<sup>1</sup> 79<sup>th</sup> Bologna Follow-Up Group Board meeting, online, hosted by Azerbaijan, 9 February 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Extraordinary Bologna Follow-Up Group Board meeting, online, hosted by France, 18 March 2022.

## **Current state of play of the implementation of San Marino roadmap**

### 4.1. Qualifications framework

Maria Elena D'Amelio (San Marino) provided an overview of the NQF's progress, including its present structure and timeframe. The first draft of the NQF was created using the EQF and the QF-EHEA, with the goal of incorporating, not only higher education, but all levels of education in San Marino. The involvement of foreign experts was explored in accordance with the BFUG's recommendation. Ms. D'Amelio stated that the Ministry had proposed two experts, one from Italy and the other from the United Kingdom, both with expertise of San Marino's educational system. To ensure greater insight and support while evaluating the NQF, it was recommended that the second expert not have intimate knowledge of the Sammarinese education system, as the expert would then more easily identify questions that may seem obvious to those with inside knowledge of the system, but which may be asked by those reading the self-certification report as outsiders. Furthermore, two experts were judged sufficient, if the aforementioned requirement applies to the second expert; otherwise, an additional expert may be advisable.

### 4.2. Recognition of qualifications

The Degree Course Council<sup>3</sup> of University of San Marino was highlighted as the competent authority for the recognition of diplomas on the basis of the ECTS credit system in various types of qualifications (i.e., English language, apprenticeships, workshops, contests). Focus is currently placed in broadening recognition of qualifications through the recognition of credits for specific skills or professional activities (i.e., sports; digital and communication skills; social and artistic skills; sustainability and security) that a student may have acquired prior to enrolling at the university. Future steps included organization of working sessions with Italian partner universities, as well as the Degree Council and University Governance, to discuss and compare possible solutions for a more effective recognition process.

The main objective is to explore alternative pathways and not be restricted to an academic university pathway, whilst both validating non-formal and informal qualifications, as well as recognizing prior learning within the NQF. It was advised that the **alternative pathways** be clearly specified within the NQF. Information and best practice examples of other countries on this matter would be provided after the meeting. Furthermore, the issue of exploring *alternative learning paths for entrance to higher education* was recommended to be addressed in a PLA, as there is currently no existing structure on this subject in the San Marino education system.

### 4.3. Higher education governance

Remo Massari (San Marino) presented a summary of higher education governance in San Marino, indicating the adoption of the new law<sup>4</sup> by 1 November 2023. The main features of the new law include transparency of the governance through hiring academic staff via public competitions, as well as having all university acts public. San Marino has made progress with regard to the autonomy of university governance, and is working to create equal opportunities for students through the provision of scholarships for students with learning difficulties and flexible pathways for working students, as well as expand its

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<sup>3</sup> The University Council is the administrative governing body, and it is responsible, in agreement with the Academic Senate, for identifying strategic development plans, approval of the financial planning and monitoring of the achievement of the University's objectives.

<sup>4</sup> The new law, previously covering higher education and the University of San Marino, is now divided into two laws, one governing higher education and the other governing the University of San Marino.

activities in research. It was also proposed that there would be greater engagement of students and staff in the governing body, as well as a majority of the University board made up of university internal staff. The first draft of the legislation would be presented to the majority commission of the parliament in the coming weeks, with a first reading to take place in autumn 2022. During this time, it was recommended to have a PLA on governance, if possible.

#### 4.4. Lifelong learning / social dimension of higher education

Paula Cenci (San Marino) provided an overview of the aspect of lifelong learning in San Marino, indicating that it currently offers the possibility of attending individual courses not only for students but also for non-students. In cooperation with various institutions, San Marino organizes professional courses tailored to their needs. Lifelong learning and the recognition of qualifications are seen as crucial for promoting and strengthening the social dimension of higher education. In this sense, the education system in San Marino promotes an inclusive environment by offering benefits to all students. There are many facilities from which students can benefit, ranging from individualized study programs for workers, flexible programs, program extensions, information on the enrolment process in a special center at the Faculty of Human Sciences, available tuition fee subsidies, opportunities to collaborate with academic staff, as well as to connect students with local businesses and institutions.

The aim is to strengthen the social dimension through recognition of qualifications, gathering of reliable data to widen the participation to all underrepresented groups towards the higher education system and defining guidelines to ensure a systematic approach in implementing social dimension policies.

#### **Report to the BFUG**

Maija Innola (Co-Chair) informed the group that the reporting in the upcoming BFUG meeting, to be held in Strasbourg on 11-12 April 2022, will consist of one Co-Chair who will present updates from the WG on the San Marino Roadmap, followed by a San Marino representative who will give an update on San Marino's progress on the national implementation.

#### **Date of the next meeting**

The WG on San Marino Roadmap's next meeting was suggested to be held in-person in San Marino, on 26 - 27 September 2022.

No other business was brought forward, therefore, the third meeting of the WG on San Marino Roadmap was concluded.