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Federal Department of Economic Affairs,
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10 September 2018

Dear Bologna Follow-Up Group members and consultative members,

We thank you very much for responding to our invitation to fill in an electronic survey indicating the interest of your country or organisation in participating in the peer groups on completing implementation of the EHEA's three key commitments. A total of 45 of the 48 Bologna countries have already replied as have almost all the consultative members of the BFUG. The few missing countries are expected to send their responses soon.

Preliminary results of the analysis of the responses to the survey

We hereby wish to share in Annex 01 an overview of the responses by each country and organization with respect to the groups they wish to join. Below you will also find the further suggestions about specific issues and sub-themes related to full implementation, based on the interests indicated by the countries.

Peer Group A on Key Commitment 1 (a three-cycle system compatible with the overarching Qualifications Framework of the EHEA and first and second cycle degrees scaled by ECTS): **25** countries and organisations have expressed their wish to participate. Specific thematic indications included topics such as:

- self-certification of the national qualification frameworks the overarching Qualifications Framework of the EHEA,
- complete implementation of the ECTS User's Guide,
- short cycle higher education,
- multiple purposes and use of the qualifications frameworks by the stakeholders,
- study programmes outside of the Bologna three-cycle structure,
- relationship between the qualifications frameworks and quality assurance.

Peer Group B on Key Commitment 2 (national legislation and procedures compliant with the Lisbon Recognition Convention [LRC]): **37** countries and

organisations wish to participate. Specific thematic orientations indicated include the topics such as:

- establishing the legal framework to allow the implementation of the LRC,
- establishing the distribution of work and responsibilities among the competent institutions that have the right knowledge and capacity to carry out recognition procedures,
- achieving automatic recognition,
- recognition of alternative pathways,
- qualifications held by refugees,
- optimising the potential of digital technology for the recognition agenda and the Diploma Supplement.

Peer Group C on Key Commitment 3 (Quality Assurance in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area): **39** countries and organisations expressed their interest to participate. Specific thematic orientations include the topics such as:

- legislative framework in line with the ESG (introducing changes),
- ensuring effectiveness of internal quality assurance arrangements, including the use of QA results in the decision making process and quality culture as well as links to learning and teaching,
- the role and engagement of stakeholders in internal and external QA (students, teachers, employers) and
- Cross-border QA and European Approach to accreditation of joint programmes.

However, the list of topics is not exhaustive and the BICG has decided to leave it to the peer groups themselves, once they have been established, to organise their approach to their peer activities and possible sub-grouping. It is however envisaged that the entire peer support groups, because of their size, will meet only a few times during the current Bologna cycle, and more specific sub-themes will be addressed in thematic sub-groups.

Invitation to submit a proposal for project to support the peer group work

We are very happy, furthermore, to be able to include as an Annex 02 to this letter the Invitation to submit a proposal EACEA/35/2018 through which the European Commission wishes to support our work. It has just been sent to the National Authorities for Education in the Erasmus+ (“Programme”) countries. Those

countries can make proposals for projects including both EU and non EU countries and organizations belonging to the EHEA. We strongly encourage the Erasmus+ “Programme Countries” to consider this opportunity creatively and proactively, and to build meaningful projects with “Partner Countries” and organisations to address common implementation concerns. The deadline for submitting proposals is 23 October.

Projects under the strand 1 of the above-mentioned Erasmus+ call can cover:

(a) Activities of sub-groups within the three Bologna peer groups formed by 3-6 countries and relevant consultative members. Peer support, in particular peer counselling or peer review, is usually more efficient if it involves such a smaller set of partners. Outcomes of the activities of these sub-groups must feed into the work of one of the three Bologna peer groups.

(b) Larger activities involving all members of one of the three Bologna peer groups (for example, for larger peer learning events or seminars, involving one of the three Bologna peer groups with all its members).

To facilitate networking of the Peer Groups and to help their members find appropriate partners for the ERASMUS+ projects that support the EHEA reforms, we propose designating a time slot during the upcoming BFUG meeting in Vienna.

We look forward to seeing you in Vienna, and to beginning what we are sure will be very interesting and fruitful Peer Activities.

On behalf of the three BICG Co-chairs,



Helga Posset

BICG Co-chair (Austria)



Ana Tecilazić Goršić

BICG Co-chair (Croatia)

LIST OF ANNEXES:

- 01 - Table of the expression of interest by the countries and organisations to participate in the peer groups
- 02 - Invitation to submit a proposal - EACEA/35/2018 - Support to the implementation of European Higher Education Area (EHEA) reforms