



Italian Ministry for Education,
University and Research
The Vice Minister

***Italian Presidency of
the Bologna Follow-up***

***Minutes of the Bologna Follow-up Group meeting
under the Italian Presidency
Rome, 14 November 2003***

Opening the working session, the Chair expressed the warmest welcome to the delegates attending the BFUG meeting for the first time: the representatives of the seven new Countries, Ms Marta Ferreira Lourenco of the European Commission, Ms Vera Stastna in her new capacity as representative of the Council of Europe, Mr Jan Sadlak of the UNESCO-CEPES. The Chair addressed a welcome also to the Vice Minister of Education of Norway and to the two invited speakers, Dr Christian Thune of ENQA and Prof. Pavel Zgaga, General Rapporteur of the BFUG to the Ministers in the Berlin Conference.

Item 1. Adoption of the Agenda. The Agenda proposed by the Chair was approved.

Item 2. Approval of the minutes of the BFUG meeting in Berlin the 17 September 2003. The minutes of the preceding Bologna Follow-up meeting held in Berlin the 17 September 2003 were approved.

Item 3. Short debriefing of the Berlin Conference (intervention of Prof. Pavel Zgaga, General Rapporteur to the Ministers at the Berlin Conference). Prof. Pavel Zgaga presented a short debriefing of the Berlin Conference and expressed his appreciation to all the members of the BFUG for the help and the support given in the accomplishment of his hard task. He announced that there are some technical modifications in the last version of his Report. This new version will be included into the Conference proceedings edited by the German organisers which will be ready at the end of the year.

The German delegation gave a brief presentation of a paper that was circulated as room document, "The Atmosphere in Berlin", depicting in a somehow humorous and witty way what happened during the Ministerial Conference of



Italian Ministry for Education,
University and Research
The Vice Minister

September 2003. Dr Mueller-Solger announced that the final documentation on the Berlin Conference will be ready within the end of this year.

Item 4. The ENQA work plan in view of the work to be accomplished in accordance with the objectives defined in the Berlin Communiqué (intervention of Dr Christian Thune, President of ENQA). Dr Christian Thune, President of the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), illustrated his letter to the Chair of the BFUG of 7 November 2003. This letter is in fact an official ENQA report to the Follow-up Group on ENQA's planning towards the Berlin recommendations, to be conducted in cooperation with EUA, ESIB and EURASHE. Dr Thune gave a short explanation of the aim of ENQA, its members and its several activities and projects, and underlined that two important dimensions of Quality Assurance are the bottom up approach (full involvement of all the participants) and the accurate transmission of information. The letter contains as an annex a "road map" of the meetings and of the overall work plan in order to accomplish the goals stated in the Berlin Communiqué.

The Dutch delegation drew the attention of the Group on the paper of ECA (European Consortium for Accreditation) which was circulated as room document. In this paper the ECA offers its collaboration to the ENQA for the project on Quality Assurance and to the BFUG for the project on the European Qualifications Framework. ENQA acknowledged the need to co-operate with the ECA as its work progresses.

Item 5. Communication of the European Commission "From Berlin to Bergen, the EU contribution". The European Commission illustrated its document "From Berlin to Bergen, the EU contribution", describing the Commission contribution to the implementation of the Bologna principles, through the promotion of specific Action Lines and Pilot Projects and through the financial support to a limited number of Bologna Seminars as well. Some delegations (Germany, Austria, Belgium) underlined the importance of the collaboration among ENQA and all the other quality assurance associations and networks, in order to giving voice to all the Institutions involved and to all the actors. Other delegations (Austria, Sweden) expressed their appreciation towards the initiative of the Bologna Promoters, particularly as a support to the new member countries. The Irish delegation sought clarification on the reference to the "European Register for QA Agencies", and



Italian Ministry for Education,
University and Research
The Vice Minister

its compatibility with institutional autonomy and national authority. The Swedish delegation voiced similar concern.

Answering to these and several other questions raised from the EC presentation, Mr Coyne pointed out that: the "European Register for Quality Assurance Agencies", that ENQA intends to set up, regards Agencies that already are ENQA members; the "Bologna Scoreboard" that the Commission intends to draw up as result of the stocktaking exercise will consist on a simple description of the level of the Bologna implementation in the individual countries; the "Bologna Promoters" will work in strict cooperation with the national Bologna contact points. As to the mapping of student and teacher mobility, Mr Coyne underlined the need of making use of indicators and the difficulty of having reliable statistics.

Item 6. Discussion and approval of a draft document of the Chair, concerning:

- ***responsibilities and composition of the Board***
- ***tasks of the Secretariat***
- ***priority issues for the work programme 2003-2005***
- ***deadline for submission of proposals for Bologna events***

The discussion has regarded the draft document submitted by the Chair.

Responsibilities and composition of the Board. Some delegations (Germany, European Commission, Belgium, Council of Europe) expressed themselves against too detailed a list and in favour of a more generic formulation. The need was also expressed (Belgium, Finland) to reconfirm that the BFUG is the only decision making body and that any possible decision by the Board shall be submitted electronically to the BFUG for final approval through written consultation (Sweden, Council of Europe). The Vice Chair stressed the need for the Board to take decisions on urgent matters, to be confirmed through a written round of comments by the BFUG delegations. The Irish delegation underlined the advantage of having a list of responsibilities for the Board, since it is clearly specified for all concerned the scope and remit of the Board, thus removing doubt and potential confusion. Some delegations (European Commission, Romania, Finland, Greece) recalled the possibility to delegate to the Secretariat the accomplishment of several tasks. The Latvian delegation proposed to erase the paragraph concerning the proposal to have only one representative per delegation in the Board.



Italian Ministry for Education,
University and Research
The Vice Minister

The Chair concluded that the part of the document describing the responsibilities of the Board should be reduced and should clearly describe the Board as a Body which is representative of the BFUG and has the mandate of preparing and monitoring the implementation of the work programme. Although the Board is an operational Body, the Board has to have the possibility to act in good time, if rapid decisions on specific matters have to be taken. In this case, the Board shall circulate proposals among the BFUG members by e-mail and final decisions will be taken only after such electronic consultation. The paragraph on the composition of the Board will be deleted.

Tasks of the Secretariat. The Vice Chair circulated, for information, a paper of the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, concerning the administrative unit established in the Ministry for the accomplishment of the tasks related to the Secretariat of the Bologna Follow-up Group. He expressed his conviction that the Secretariat, in its capacity as assisting Body of the BFUG and the Board, will be able to give a great contribution to the common work. He also proposed to modify the working paper of the Chair by substituting the sentence describing the tasks with the analogous sentence showed in the letter that he addressed to the BFUG members on 5 November 2003. The German delegation proposed, in addition, to include the possibility to have, among the staff of the Secretariat, seconded experts. The European Commission proposed the Secretariat to have an independent role and to act in representation of the BFUG and also as contact point for information on the Bologna Process. Several delegations (French Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg, Norway, Greece, Ireland) expressed their disagreement on having the Secretariat as an independent Body and as representative of the BFUG, while agreeing on having the Secretariat as contact point for information on Bologna. The Greek and the Irish delegations indicated that the relationship between the Secretariat and the Presidency would evolve with each Presidency and that it would be up to each Presidency to achieve an appropriate equilibrium.

The Chair explained that it was important to have at first a general description of the tasks of the Secretariat which could be helpful also after the Bergen Conference. Therefore, he concluded that the paragraph on the tasks will be substituted as proposed by the Vice Chair, with an additional bullet on the role of the Secretariat as contact point for information, while acknowledging that only the Chair and the Vice Chair have the duty of representation of



Italian Ministry for Education,
University and Research
The Vice Minister

the Bologna Process. The sentence regarding the relations of the Secretariat with the Norwegian Ministry will be added as provisional mandate of the Secretariat for the period October 2003-June 2005.

Work programme 2003-2005. A long debate concerning the priority issues took place. The delegations which took the floor identified several kinds of priority issues on which the work programme should be focussed:

- the projects on Stocktaking (with the three issues indicated in the Berlin Communiqué), Quality Assurance (ENQA) and the European Qualifications Framework;
- the 11 actions (9+2 additional actions) listed in the Berlin Communiqué;
- all the actions and themes indicated in the Berlin Communiqué.

In principle, the majority of the delegations were against the identification of a few priority issues as the basis for the next Bologna events, identifying this way of proceeding with an implementation "à la carte" of the Bologna principles (Germany, ESIB, European Commission) and as a top-down approach, not reflecting the voluntary nature of the Bologna Process (Finland). More over, some delegations (Council of Europe, Finland, ESIB) pointed out the need to include among the priority issues the social dimension and all the other themes quoted in the Berlin Communiqué, as the public responsibility (Council of Europe). Other delegations (Croatia, Norway) stressed the importance of doctoral studies. The Vice Chair proposed to delegate the Board to draw up a document summarizing the different positions on the work programme and listing the possible working methods. The Greek delegation pointed out that the three priorities quoted in the Berlin Communiqué were addressed to the Ministers and are not meant to be considered as priorities of the Bologna Process.

The Chair concluded that the work programme should be focussed on the three priorities indicated in the Berlin Communiqué for 2005 (Quality assurance, two cycle system, recognition) but leave room for a bottom-up approach to include other issues, with particular regard to the social dimension. The Board meeting of the following day will further discuss this matter and the results will be circulated among the BFUG members as part of the minutes of the meeting.

Deadline for submission of proposals. After a short debate, it was decided that the Chair will ask the



Italian Ministry for Education,
University and Research
The Vice Minister

delegations to submit further proposals to organize Bologna events within the 15 December 2003, in order to allow the Board meeting of 29 January 2004 to prepare a final decision - regarding only the Seminars to be held in the first half of 2004 - to be submitted to the BFUG approval by electronic consultation.

1. Item 7. *Deadline for submission of candidatures for the General Rapporteur to the Ministers in the Bergen Conference and for submission of candidatures for hosting the next Ministerial Conference of 2007*

Candidatures for General Rapporteur. Any discussion about the General Rapporteur was postponed to the Board meeting of the following day, since several delegations expressed some doubts about the necessity of this role for the Bergen Conference.

Candidatures for hosting the next Ministerial Conference. The Chair recommended to all the delegations to express their possible candidature within June 2004. However, the BFUG meeting to be held in the second half of 2004 will be considered as the final deadline.

Item 8. Communications of the Norwegian delegation on the next Ministerial Conference in Bergen. The Norwegian delegation communicated that the Ministerial Conference of 2005 in Bergen will take place the 19 and 20 May. Each country will be requested to have a delegation of 5 persons: 3 representatives of the Ministries, 1 representative of the Rectors Conference and 1 representative of the Student Associations.

Item 9. Next meetings of the BFUG. The Irish delegation communicated that the next BFUG meeting will take place in Dublin on the 9 March 2004. The day before, the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland will host a Conference in Dublin Castle on "Common Approaches to Vocational Training and Higher Education". The intended audience is Directors General of Higher Education and Directors General of Vocational Education and Training. Mr Mckenna underlined that Ireland attaches great importance to this Conference and will be encouraging all to participate.

Item 10. Any other business. The Bosnian delegation proposed to set up an Ad Hoc Group with the task of supporting the new countries in their first approach with the Bologna Process.



Italian Ministry for Education,
University and Research
The Vice Minister

Mr Neetens announced two following events organised by ESIB: a Seminar to be held in Madeira on the 17 November 2003, "Crossing the borders of Higher Education", and the 7th European Students Convention that will be held on 10th-13th February 2004 in Dublin, devoted to the topic of Qualification Frameworks.