

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP  
LJUBLJANA, 16 JANUARY 2008**

**Draft Minutes**

**Participants**

Slovenian Presidency	Darinka Vrečko (Chair
Slovenian Presidency	Andrej Kotnik
Benelux (Luxembourg)	Germain Dondelinger (Vice-Chair)
Benelux (Belgium/French Community)	Kevin Guillaume
France	Hélène Lagier
Portugal	Ana Christina Jacinto Silva
Hungary	Janos Csirik
Spain	Guillermo Bernabeu
Sweden	Myrna Smitt
European Commission	Peter van der Hijden
Council of Europe	Sjur Bergan
EUA	Lesley Wilson
EURASHE	Stefan Delplace
ESU	Bruno Carapinha
Bologna Secretariat	Marlies Leegwater (Head of Secretariat)
Bologna Secretariat	Marie-Anne Persoons
Bologna Secretariat	Cornelia Racké
Bologna Secretariat	Françoise Bourdon

**Welcome and introduction to the meeting**

Darinka Vrečko, Slovenian Chair of the BFUG, welcomed the participants.

**1. Adoption of the agenda**

Documents: BFUGBoard (SI) 16\_1a [draft agenda]  
BFUGBoard (SI) 16\_1b [draft annotated agenda]

The agenda was adopted with a change of order: item 4 (agenda of BFUG meeting of 13-14 March 2008) will be taken after item 7.

**2. Minutes of the last Board meeting, Lisbon, 30-31 August 2007**

Documents: BFUG (PT) 12\_2b [Board 15 minutes]

The minutes were adopted.

**3. Information by the Slovenian Presidency**

The Chair presented the priorities and planned activities of the Slovenian Presidency.

**Priorities in the field of higher education**

- realisation of the modernisation agenda of universities with an emphasis on new models of governance and leadership of higher education institutions;
- the role of higher education in Lifelong Learning
- creation of a vision of the European Higher Education Area after 2010

At the EU Education Council, the only higher education item on the agenda is the Erasmus Mundus II programme, on which the Slovenian Presidency hopes to achieve a political agreement at the May Council.

Other important dossiers in the field of education and training which are coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Sports are the Joint interim report on "Education and training 2010" and key messages from the EU Education Council to the Spring EU Council, EQF and ECVET, Lisbon Strategy and intercultural dialogue.

**Key events planned by the Slovenian Presidency:**

- Conference "Universities and LLL", Ljubljana, 10-11 March 2008
- Meeting of Bologna Follow-up Group, Ljubljana, 13-14 March 2008
- Meeting of Directors General for Higher Education, Ljubljana, 12-13 June 2008

**Accompanying events:**

- 15th European Student Convention, Ljubljana, 13-17 March 2008
- Presentation of Eurostudent Report III, Ljubljana, 28-30 April 2008
- Meeting of rectors and founding members of the Euro-Mediterranean University, organised by the University Centre for Euro-Mediterranean Studies, Portorož, May 2008

The idea of a Euro-Mediterranean University was first mentioned at the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly in Cairo in 2005. The University Centre for Euro-Mediterranean Studies, hosted by Slovenia, is charged with the preparations and the aim is to accredit the Euro-Mediterranean University according to Slovenian higher education law in 1-2 years. Universities in several countries have expressed their interest and are already involved in concrete activities, such as workshops and a summer school. They will start with 2-3 study programmes in the autumn, offered by the participating universities. Once established, the label of the Euro-Mediterranean University will be added. Joint study programmes and scholarships for students from Arab countries are envisaged. Slovenia will give 20-30 scholarships and provide the premises. More detailed information will be available after the meeting in May.

**Priorities in the field of education and training**

- Strengthening the role of education and training in the revised Lisbon strategy
- Promoting creativity and innovation
- Promoting intercultural dialogue and multilingualism

A detailed calendar of events can be found at the Presidency website [www.eu2008.si](http://www.eu2008.si).

**5. Bologna work programme 2007-2009: written updates**

Documents:           Calendar2007-2009\_08jan08  
                          Data\_WG\_09nov07\_minutes  
                          Empl\_WG\_31oct07\_minutes  
                          Global\_WG\_22nov07\_minutes  
                          Global\_WG\_11jan08\_update – *still to come*  
                          Stock\_WG\_08nov07\_minutes  
                          Mobility\_CG\_23nov07\_minutes  
                          QF\_report\_19dec07  
                          Social\_CG\_draftToR  
                          StudSup\_02oct07\_minutes  
                          EQAR\_BFUGBoard\_note\_04jan08  
                          EQAR\_founding\_assembly\_draft\_04jan08  
                          EQAR\_infodoc\_04jan08  
                          Recognition\_NAPs\_update\_Dec07  
                          ECTS\_consultationresults\_05nov07  
                          BolognaExperts\_grants\_spent\_2004-2006

- Calendar

There is a congestion of events in Autumn 2008.

Events to be added :

15-17 June : ENIC-NARIC annual meeting

EUA has been asked by the French Prime Minister F. Fillon and the Minister for Higher Education V. Pécresse to write a charter on lifelong learning in higher education for the Bordeaux informal EU ministerial meeting under French Presidency.

- Information will be provided by EUA in writing.

- Data collection

The issue of the funding of Eurostudent is not solved yet. EUA asks for minutes of the meeting on data collection in general, that took place in the morning of 9 November 2008 and was chaired by the European Commission. This meeting took place on the same day as the Bologna working group meeting in the afternoon.

- EC will provide the minutes as soon as possible.

- Employability

A change of Chair of the working group is expected after the departure of Keith Andrews.

At its first meeting the working group decided to focus on the employability of bachelors.

Luxembourg announces that it will organise a conference on 7 November 2008, based on the findings of the working group. Employers will be involved in the discussion, special attention will be given to good representation of big as well as smaller companies and public employers.

The Presidency draws the attention to the fact that the European Commission will organise a Business-University Forum, 28-29 February in Brussels.

EUA offers support to the employability action line through the findings of a project financed by DG Research funded for tracking of doctoral graduates

CoE recalls the importance of the issue of public sector employment. Luxembourg announces that its Ministère de la fonction publique has carried out a survey across Europe on this topic.

- Luxembourg expects the BFUG to provide the coordinates of employers that could be invited to the seminar.

- EHEA in global setting

CoE mentions the question of a more permanent domain (web address) for the future, no matter of what will be decided for the post-2010 arrangements.

Presidency suggests to mention global seminars on the Bologna website calendar under related events.

- Stocktaking

ESU asks a question on the minutes of the working group meeting of November 8, 2007. Why did the working group not decide on the compulsory involvement of rectors conferences and student associations in drawing up the national reports ? EUA would like to take this issue up at BFUG level because of the comprehensiveness of the national reports.

The Presidency has doubts whether this mode of operation can be made compulsory. What about the fact that governments are not consulted for Trends and Bologna with Student Eyes ? The issue should be taken up in the Stocktaking working group at the first

place and they should clarify how the national reports should be drafted. ESU could give the opportunity to have their report checked on factual information on legislation etc. In any case the organisation that publishes the respective report holds the final responsibility for the content.

The stocktaking on global dimension should not be limited to the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education, but focus rather on the Bologna strategy for the global dimension.

Concerning the Guidelines, CoE suggests the stocktaking working group to make use of the existing report from UNESCO on the implementation of the Guidelines in several countries.

- Mobility

ESU announces that the mobility campaign in cooperation with EI is launched. The official start is foreseen for March 2008.

- Qualifications framework

The Council of Europe plans to set up a website where national information can be linked.

Sweden asks who will own the website. CoE replies that it will be managed by CoE but for the benefit of the Bologna Process and linked to the Bologna website.

The Coordination group suggested that each country nominate a national correspondent for the implementation of the qualifications framework, to provide a link to the work done at national level and to ensure that updated information be available.

- Request for this nomination will be sent out by the Secretariat.

Relation EHEA qualifications framework and EQF : There is intensive cooperation between the Council of Europe and the European Commission on this issue. CoE is a member of the advisory Board for EQF, which will meet March 3-4, Brussels, while the EC is a member of the coordination group for the overarching qualifications framework for the EHEA.

- Social dimension

The coordination group, chaired by Cyprus, is only recently established.

The first task of the group will consist in giving input to the stocktaking working group concerning the template of the national action plan.

- The Presidency suggests that the coordination group would convene as soon as possible.

- Student support

- Reporting needs to be updated.

- European Quality Assurance Register .

EUA reports that there is agreement on the draft statutes and on the financing arrangements for governments and E4. The founding assembly is planned for March 4. Presidency expects that the financing issue might be raised at the BFUG meeting. It has, however, to be observed that the letter of CEE to ENQA, with copy to the BFUG, is an ENQA issue and is not to be solved by BFUG.

The full membership of ENQA will still be the *prima facie* evidence for an agency to meet the European Standards and Guidelines, which explains that ENQA members will pay less for entering the register.

The Vice-Chair and CoE recall that the decision on membership fees is at the competence of the general assembly of the association.

- E4 is requested to provide more information to the BFUG on further procedures and on the fact that the founding assembly on 4 March 2008 is

open for EQAR association members only and that membership implies the commitment to pay the membership fee.

- ECTS consultation

The results of the consultation of the BFUG on the updating of the key features of ECTS has been communicated to the European Commission.

The EC announces 4 training seminars for national teams of Bologna experts.

A new round for the Bologna expert action will start in June. The action will be extended to TEMPUS countries (Central Asia, North Africa). A consortium of UNICA-ACA-Educational services Brussels is designated for the coordination.

On national level the coordination is entrusted to the Erasmus National Agencies or TEMPUS offices for those countries that don't participate in Erasmus, while the Ministries keep the responsibility on the content and the national BFUG member will take part in the team.

- The ENIC/NARIC network has started its work on the analysis of the national action plans for recognition. Only very few countries provided a document that could be considered a real action plan.

- General conclusion of agenda point on the Work programme

In preparation of next BFUG meeting, the Chairs of the working/coordination groups will be asked to make a short summary paper of 1-2 pages, including an indication of the points where discussion/decision by BFUG is necessary. Further documentation can be added, but only in annex.

No oral reports will be made at BFUG meeting. The BFUG discussion will concentrate on the topics for which a formal decision is needed.

## **6. Terms of reference for the independent assessment of the Bologna Process**

Documents: BFUGBoard (SI) 16\_6 [draft ToR indep. assessment]

The Presidency introduces the document prepared by the Presidency and the Secretariat with the correction that under the tasks for tenders to respond to the future EC call (3) and (4) should be dropped for the sake of timing.

The discussion concentrated mainly on 4 issues : mandate of the independent assessment, eligibility criteria for tenders, the "independent" nature of the exercise and the role of the consultative members and BFUG as a whole. Furthermore the process of cooperation with the European Commission was clarified.

### (1) Mandate

EUA and ESU questioned the list of strategic goals and operational objectives mentioned and the selection of excerpts from the Communiqués in the annex. In particular, the qualifications framework, recognition, stocktaking and the involvement of higher education institutions and students are lacking. ESU would like to see employability as a separate point , rather than taking it together with access under the heading of social dimension.

The CoE suggests that the independent assessment should also look at the dynamics and development of the process.

For the Board, the comments on the parts extracted from the communiqués prove that any attempt of summarising the Bologna objectives implies choices on which BFUG will never reach consensus. In order to guarantee that the researchers can carry out their research without being biased from the start, we should rather take the full texts of the Communiqués as the guiding documents for the independent assessment of the Bologna Process.

Nevertheless, the European Commission sees merit in adding a non exhaustive list of main issues, mentioning degree structure (to include qualifications framework), quality Assurance and recognition as broad themes, and furthermore : social dimension (with the aspects of both access and employability), global dimension and the dynamics of the process (involvement of stakeholders, ...)

Point 3 will not be completely dropped but should be rephrased into : should have a critical look at *the management of the Bologna Process*.

#### (2) Eligibility of tenders

The Board expresses concern that the criteria should be as clear as possible to facilitate the use of these criteria in the concrete selection. In any case, the usual criteria mentioned in all EC calls, like proved experience in evaluation matters, solvability of the tender, etc., should be respected. The tender should also be able to provide the report at least in English.

Textual changes :

- first bullet point : ... full members and consultative members and partners to the *Bologna Follow-up Group* are not eligible.
- second bullet point. Sentence starting with "Should have relevant experience in international law..." to delete.

#### (3) Independent nature of the assessment

The interpretation of "independent" as intended by the Slovenian proposal at the London Ministerial Conference: independent from BFUG, not Bologna process. Members of the BFUG and BFUG partners cannot apply to join the research consortium that will carry out the independent assessment; actors like university research institutes/centres, former BFUG actors or national student associations should not be excluded if interested. Independent does not necessarily mean that European or Europe-based consortia cannot apply, but any consortium should have a diverse international composition (comprising partners from different parts of Europe and possibly involving a partner from another part of the world) in order to avoid national or regional bias.

#### (4) Involvement of consultative members and BFUG

EUA and ESU refer to the sentence in the London Communiqué where it is mentioned that the report for 2010 – and which includes the independent assessment - should be drawn up in cooperation with the consultative members. Although the Communiqué could be read as if the consultative members should cooperate in the independent assessment itself, this is not a logical interpretation as assessed parties should not take part in their own assessment. Furthermore it was not the intention of the decision in London that was aimed at an assessment without the involvement of BFUG. The overall report due for 2010 will, however, seek for the cooperation of all, full members and consultative members.

For the selection of the tender, the European Commission will follow the usual procedures for EC calls but is ready to establish a small selection committee which will include BFUG actors.

At the BFUG the arrangements for involvement of the BFUG in the follow-up of the independent assessment should be also addressed.

#### ➤ Conclusion

The paper should be redrafted and presented to the BFUG in the format close to an EC call, taking on board the remarks formulated. In addition a document will be prepared on the practical arrangements for the cooperation between the BFUG and the EC on the monitoring of the project.

The Secretariat and European Commission will prepare the new text in cooperation with the Presidency for the Board by mid February for quick comments.

The final draft for approval at next BFUG meeting should be ready by March 1.

#### **7. Preparation of the Bologna Beyond 2010 BFUG discussion (timeline and methodology for report for 2009 Ministerial Conference)**

Documents: BFUGBoard (SI) 16\_7 [Bologna 2020]

Vice-Chair introduces the non-paper, which was intended to give a rough outline of the possible chapters of the BFUG report due for the Ministerial meeting of 2009. The corpus of this report will contain 3 main parts. Part 1 will relate to the initial Bologna objectives that will need further attention after 2010. Part 2 will deal with new challenges for the next decade. Part 3 will flesh out the future arrangements for the management of the process. The issues mentioned in this non-paper under the different paragraphs are not exhaustive but just examples of the kind of topics that could be addressed.

In any case the first draft report will rely on the input of different events, including the Ghent conference of 19-20 May, the CoE flagship programme "Higher education between Humanism and the Market" and other consultations of main stakeholders.

The Presidency announces that an extraordinary meeting of the BFUG on the Beyond 2010 issue will be organised in Sarajevo in June (provisional dates : 24-25 June 2008). The EUA meeting on the same issue will be held July 4, 2008.

- The Secretariat is asked to rewrite the document, adding an explanatory note with the purpose of the document and the procedures and steps to take in the context of the Beyond 2010 issue until the Ministerial conference of 2009. This document should be available by March 1.

#### **4. Provisional agenda of BFUG meeting on 13-14 March 2008**

Documents: BFUGBoard (SI) 16\_4 [provisional BFUG agenda]

The Secretariat will draw up a draft agenda with a separate point on the template for national reports, an indication that point 7 only concerns a decision on the 2010 Ministerial meeting and an adjustment of the dates for the next period of Board mandates under point 8.

- Expressions of interest of eligible countries interested to join the Board should be communicated to the Secretariat as soon as possible.

#### **8. State of affairs of applications to the Bologna process**

Documents: BFUG (PT) 12\_10a [Euroscience, cover letter]  
BFUG (PT) 12\_10b [Euroscience, application]  
BFUG (PT) 12\_10c [Euroscience, annex\_1]  
BFUG (PT) 12\_10d [Euroscience, annex\_2]  
BFUG5 6 [New Consultative Members and BFUG Partners]

Considering the wideness of the criteria for acceptance of Bologna partners in the BFUG (as drawn up by the Norwegian Bologna Secretariat), it might be difficult to judge the application of Euroscience on the basis of these criteria. It is possible to appraise the possible added value of the partnership with Euroscience on the basis of the material they have submitted.

In the context of the management of the process after 2009, the whole issue of Bologna partnership will be revisited anyway.

- Secretariat will formulate a proposal for next BFUG meeting.

The Presidency recently had a contact with North Cypriote academics and with the Cypriote colleagues of the BFUG. In any case, the issue should be solved in international diplomatic fora first before the education gremia, like the Bologna Process, can respond to a possible new situation. It appears that the political situation has not changed since the Ministerial decision in London not to grant access.

The Israeli Minister of Education has announced that his country plans to reapply to the Bologna Process.

#### **9. Answers to the questionnaire on the format and timing of BFUG meetings and Ministerial meetings**

Document: BFUGBoard (SI) 16\_9 [questionnaire results]

Expressions of interest for the organisation of a 2010 Ministerial celebration meeting should be sent to the Bologna Secretariat by February 15.

Austria and Hungary have already announced a joint proposal for hosting such event in March 2010 in cooperation with EUA and ESU.

- The Secretariat will send out a message to the BFUG in the coming days.

#### **10. Date and place of next Board meeting**

The next Board meeting will take place on 9 June 2008 in Bled.

#### **11. Any other business**

None.