

**DEALING WITH
NON-IMPLEMENTATION
FINAL REPORT**



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Advisory Group 3

**Prepared on behalf of the BFUG
by the Advisory Group “Dealing
with non-implementation”
in close consultation with the Working
Group “Fostering implementation
of agreed key commitments”,
and with a section detailing
the current state of implementation
of three Bologna key commitments,
prepared by the Working Group
“Monitoring”.**

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Introduction

The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is a unique international collaboration on higher education, where 48 countries, with different political, cultural and academic traditions, cooperate on the basis of open dialogue, shared goals and common commitments. Although membership is voluntary, the convergence of higher education systems in all EHEA countries, and as such the entire concept of the EHEA, relies on the implementation of a common set of commitments: structural reforms and shared tools, which have been agreed to and adopted at a political level in all member countries. Furthermore, the EHEA is grounded in a number of shared fundamental values, including a commitment to academic freedom, free mobility by students and staff, institutional autonomy and the full and equal participation of higher education students and staff in institutional governance.

The EHEA is thus a wide-ranging international collaboration with the potential to bring about radical change in European higher education. It proposes to change the way the entire EHEA structures higher education with a range of shared tools, values, and a level of transparency that is not found or even attempted in many other international collaborative areas, designed to allow ready, free and fully recognised mobility across the entire EHEA.

Inside and outside Europe, the Bologna Process and the EHEA have been promoted by the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) itself and by its member countries as an example of successful internationalisation of higher education, and one that could have implications for regional collaborations elsewhere. Thus, coordinated structural reform, integration and resultant interoperability between national systems are seen as being exemplary of an integration that has, to all intents and purposes, led to a unified higher education area, the degrees and credits from which can and should be relied upon irrespective of the individual country in which the learning was obtained.

In the period leading up to the EHEA Ministerial conference in 2015, there was considerable discussion within the BFUG on how the lack of implementation was de facto obstructing the process as a whole, creating a two-tiered or even a multi-tiered European Higher Education Area, where trust and transparency may have existed between the systems of some countries, but many would question one or other aspect of higher education offered in another EHEA country. This unease is well documented in a concept note prepared for the conference entitled “The Bologna Process Revisited: The Future of the European Higher Education Area” (2015), which clearly states that the full implementation of the common framework and tools in all participating countries should be one of the priorities for the European Higher Education Area in years to come. The notion was carried forward into the Ministerial Communiqué from Yerevan in 2015 which voices the concern that “implementation of the structural reforms is uneven, and the tools are sometimes used incorrectly or in bureaucratic and superficial ways” and highlights how “non-implementation in some countries undermines the functioning and credibility of the whole EHEA.” It goes on to state that “by 2020 we [the Ministers] are determined to achieve an EHEA where our common goals are implemented in all member countries to ensure trust in each other’s higher education systems”.

As a consequence, the Work Programme for the period 2015-2018 included an advisory group (Advisory Group 3 - AG3) dedicated solely to working on non-implementation and mandated to put together a proposal for how to tackle non-implementation issues in the future to be put before the Ministers at their meeting in Paris in 2018.

This document reports on the work of AG3 in the period 2015-2018 and contains a proposal to the Ministers on how to tackle non-implementation issues, prepared by AG3 and Working Group 2 (WG2) on Implementation, with input from Working Group 1 (WG1) on Monitoring. The document is in three sections:

- The first summarises the work of AG3 during the working period 2015-2018;
- The second contains the proposal to the EHEA Ministers to be discussed at their Conference in Paris in May 2018;
- The third summarises the current state of implementation of the key Bologna commitments under focus.

I. AG3: Remit, Membership and Work 2015-2018

REMIT OF AG3

The tasks to be carried out by AG3 are derived from an explicit request to the BFUG in the Communiqué of the EHEA Ministerial Conference in Yerevan, 14/15 May 2015 to provide the Ministers at their 2018 Conference in Paris with proposals for addressing the issue of non-implementation. The remit of the group is further defined by its Terms of Reference which were approved by the BFUG on the 8/9 September 2015 during their meeting in Luxembourg, and are to be found in Appendix I.

Yerevan Communiqué

“Implementing agreed structural reforms is a prerequisite for the consolidation of the EHEA and, in the long run, for its success. A common degree structure and credit system, common quality assurance standards and guidelines, cooperation for mobility and joint programmes and degrees are the foundations of the EHEA. We will develop more effective policies for the recognition of credits gained abroad, of qualifications for academic and professional purposes, and of prior learning. Full and coherent implementation of agreed reforms at the national level requires shared ownership and commitment by policy makers and academic communities and stronger involvement of stakeholders. Non-implementation in some countries undermines the functioning and credibility of the whole EHEA. We need more precise measurement of performance as a basis for reporting from member countries. Through policy dialogue and exchange of good practice we will provide targeted support to member countries experiencing difficulties in implementing the agreed goals and enable those who wish to go further to do so.”

“... We ask the BFUG ... to submit proposals for addressing the issue of non-implementation.”

Specific Tasks by Terms of Reference (ToR)

- To develop an approach of dealing with non-implementation or incorrect implementation of the main principles and tools of the EHEA by respecting and reflecting the EHEA instruments and the EHEA culture;
- To identify key commitments concerning the non-implementation;
- To submit proposals to the BFUG for addressing the issue of non-implementation of key commitments (e.g. through peer learning, policy advice, assistance, action plans, minimum standards);
- To keep the Working Group on “Implementation – fostering implementation of agreed key commitments” informed and together put the above mentioned proposals into practice

(in order to provide targeted support to member countries experiencing difficulties in implementing the agreed goals).

COMPOSITION OF AG3

Chairs: Iceland, Liechtenstein

Members: Albania, Council of Europe, EI/ETUCE, EQAR, ESU, European Commission, EURASHE, France, Iceland, Ireland, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine

A record of attendance of individual members and their delegates is provided in Annex II.

ANNOTATED TIMELINE OF AG3 MEETINGS, DISCUSSIONS OF AG3 WORK IN BFUG, AND OTHER MILESTONES

Throughout the work of AG3 there was a strong focus on close collaboration with the BFUG, the WG1 and eventually WG2. Thus, AG3 met between consecutive BFUG meetings, and prepared documents to be presented at each one. In latter parts of the working period there was further work carried out by the chairs, revising the proposal between the BFUG Board and the BFUG meetings in order to reach a suitable compromise that could be accepted by all members of the EHEA. Thus, all the important steps of the proposal were brought for consultation to the BFUG and the proposal was refined in each of its iterations taking into account feedback from the BFUG members, the BFUG Board and chairs. In addition to the events listed below, the chairs of AG3 participated in joint meetings of chairs of all Working Groups and Advisory Groups in Brussels (17th December 2015), Berlin (14th September 2016) and Paris (29th June 2017).

14th January 2016: AG3 meeting I, Brussels

This initial meeting focused on narrowing the task set in the Terms of Reference to make it manageable within the time allotted to the group's work, and to make sure it was supported by available evidence. Although the group agreed that there were considerable problems in some member countries with the implementation of many of the EHEA tools, reforms and fundamental values of the Bologna Process, it was proposed to focus the work on three key commitments that have been monitored in the implementation report for some time. These key commitments are also central to the Bologna Process in that they allow functioning recognition and mobility across the whole EHEA. Furthermore, their correct implementation is a prerequisite to any higher education system that embraces the fundamental values of the Bologna Process. The latter part of the meeting focused on discussions of scorecard indicators for assessing implementation of the three key commitments. Following the meeting, the group put two working papers forward for discussion and endorsement at the BFUG meeting in Amsterdam.

Working Paper I ([BFUG_NL_MD_50_8a](#)) put forward a proposal for three key commitments to be the focus of the group's further work.

Working Paper II ([BFUG_NL_MD_50_8b](#)) provided the first attempt to tackle non-implementation by outlining possible ways of moving forward.

7th/8th March 2016: BFUG meeting Amsterdam

After considerable discussion the BFUG adopted the three key commitments as a focus for future work on dealing with non-implementation, it also approved the general premise of the work being proposed, with further clarification and development needed.

12th September 2016: AG3 meeting 2, Reykjavik

AG3 reflected on feedback from the BFUG in Amsterdam in March 2016, as well as an informal meeting with the chairs of WG1. WG1 had provided data for the meeting in terms of current state of implementation of the three key commitments, which also formed basis of the group's discussions. AG3 set about designing its initial formal proposal: an eight-step procedure of targeted peer support to be presented to the BFUG in Bratislava in December 2016. It also discussed possible over-seeing structures for the procedure. Following the meeting the group prepared a paper for discussion and endorsement at the BFUG meeting in Bratislava:

Working Paper III ([BFUG_SK_ME_52_7](#)): A cyclic procedure for dealing with non-implementation.

In order to get the process started most effectively, AG3 also proposed to the BFUG a change of its mandate to conduct the first three steps of the proposed procedure in the period leading up to the Ministerial Conference in Paris.

8th/9th December 2016: BFUG meeting Bratislava

The meeting in Bratislava saw extensive discussion on the proposal made by AG3, following which the group was tasked with improving the proposal in light of the comments made, and present an updated version for the next meeting in Malta. The request of change to the AG3 mandate was not accepted. At the meeting WG1 proposed to provide a stand-alone document on the implementation of the three key commitments, to be presented to the Ministers at their Conference in Paris in 2018. Following consultation with the chairs of WG1 that document now forms the latter part of this final report of the work of AG3 in 2015-2018.

19th January 2017: AG3 meeting 3, Zurich

AG3 reflected on feedback from the BFUG in Bratislava in December 2016, and the possible incentives that had been asked for. The group proceeded to work on clarifying and developing the proposed model in line with comments received at the BFUG meeting in Bratislava, and to clarify the composition and purpose of the associated coordinating committee. The model was also adapted to allow all EHEA members a role in the proposal,

thereby clarifying the collegiate and supportive nature of the model. Following the meeting the group prepared a revised version of *Working paper III* for discussion at the BFUG meeting in Malta in May 2017. It also composed sample invitation letters to countries to take part in the procedure. These too were to be presented in Malta.

24th/25th May 2017: BFUG meeting Gozo

Extensive discussions took place on the revised proposals from AG3. The minutes from the meeting ([BFUG_MT_NO_54_Minutes_final_corr2.docx](#)) state the model to have been approved and that the BFUG asked AG3 to come back to the BFUG in Tartu with full details on the committee proposed to oversee the procedure. [See also notes from the BFUG meeting in Tartu below]. No discussion took place on the sample letters.

7th June 2017: AG3 meeting 4, Strasbourg

AG3 reflected on feedback from the BFUG in Malta in May 2017 and proceeded with its work, focusing on the coordinating committee, its role, composition and tasks. It was decided to present these at the BFUG meeting in Tartu in November 2017 in the form of Terms of Reference (ToR). The group went through a list of possible scorecard indicators that had been provided by the chairs of WG1 for inclusion in the stand-alone document on the implementation of the three key commitments. Comments on these were returned to WG1.

9th/10th November 2017: BFUG meeting Tartu

Extensive discussions took place at the meeting, not only on the ToR for the coordinating committee that had been put forward by AG3 for the meeting but, although not included in the agenda for this meeting, also on the revised version of *Working Paper III* that had been discussed at the BFUG meeting in Malta in May 2017. An alternative paper was put forward by the chairs of WG2, with a focus on reverse peer-review as a procedure to improve implementation. The BFUG Co-chair from Estonia concluded that AG3 should collaborate with WG2 to come up with a revised proposal for the BFUG meeting in February 2018. The proposal should reflect the peer supported collegial ethos of the BFUG and incorporate ideas of peer groups that formed part of the proposal from WG2. Delegations were asked to send in written comments on the proposal in time for the next meeting of AG3.

7th December 2017: AG3 meeting 5, Brussels

AG3 were joined on this occasion by one of the chairs of WG1 and a chair of WG2, as well as a representative from Belgium (fl.), in place of the Belgian (fl.) chair of WG2, with the aim to follow up the recommendation made in the BFUG meeting in Tartu in November 2017, as well as written communications from Belarus and Germany. The representatives collectively worked on a new draft of both the Proposal to the Ministers and the Terms of Reference, to be finalised and submitted by the AG3 to the BFUG. Following the meeting a request came from the BFUG Co-chairs, the BFUG Vice-chair and the BFUG Secretariat to submit the papers for the Board in Belgrade, in January 2018.

24th January 2018: BFUG Board meeting Belgrade

Revised versions of the Proposal and Terms of Reference for the coordinating committee were discussed at some length at the Board, both during the Board meeting itself, and in an extraordinary meeting between the chairs of WG1, WG2, AG3, as well as the BFUG Co-chairs, the BFUG Vice-chair and the Secretariat. At the end of the Board meeting the chairs of WG2 and AG3 were mandated by the Board to prepare a joint proposal to be presented to the BFUG meeting in Sofia in February 2018. The chairs held a meeting later the same day to prepare such a proposal, which was submitted for the Sofia BFUG meeting the following month along with a proposed timeline of how to initiate the support for implementation of key Bologna Commitments being proposed.

5th/6th February 2018: BFUG meeting Sofia

Extensive discussions took place at the meeting, which concluded with the Proposal being accepted by the BFUG for submission to the Ministers at their Conference in Paris in May 2018. There was call for revision of a limited number of bullet points in the ToR of the coordinating group (Bologna Implementation Coordinating Group - BICG), with revised versions thereof to be sent to BFUG members for electronic consultation.

Revision of ToR for BICG: Electronic consultation and 14th March 2018 Paris

A revised version of the ToR for the BICG was sent to the BFUG on February 9th 2018, followed by an extensive electronic consultation with the participation of the majority of BFUG members. An overwhelming majority of those accepted the revised text, but a number wanted the changes to be officially endorsed by the BFUG at its next meeting. As part of the process to resolve outstanding issues, the AG3 chair (Iceland) met with the French BFUG member in Paris on March 14th 2018 and made some minor changes to the ToR for BICG, which were submitted to the BFUG Board Meeting in Belgrade the following day, after consultation with the chair of WG2.

15th March 2018: BFUG Board meeting Belgrade

The new ToR for BICG were debated, and the Board supported their being put before the BFUG meeting in Sofia in April 2018 for final endorsement before the Ministerial Conference, along with the final report and proposal from AG3.

24th/25th April 2018: BFUG meeting Sofia

The proposal and the new ToR for BICG were debated and endorsed by the BFUG with minimal changes.

II. Final Proposal to the Ministerial Conference in Paris in May 2018

Following its work in 2015-2018 and in fulfilment of its mandate and the explicit request of the Ministers present at the Conference in Yerevan, AG3 submits the following proposal, in close consultation with the chairs of WG2, to the EHEA Ministerial conference in Paris to address the issue of non-implementation. It focuses around a number of themed peer groups and a coordinating group, with the equal participation of all members of the EHEA, including Stakeholders. The proposal is contained in two documents that follow hereafter:

- Support for the Implementation of key Bologna commitments
- Terms of Reference for the Bologna Implementation Coordinating Group (BICG)

It is supported by two further documents:

- Key Commitments of the Bologna Process in the Working Period 2018-2020
- Guiding Notes for the Establishment, Composition and working Methods of the Peer Groups Supporting Implementation of Bologna Key Commitments.

SUPPORT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF KEY BOLOGNA COMMITMENTS

Introduction

The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is a unique international collaboration on Higher Education, where 48 countries, with different political, cultural and academic traditions cooperate on the basis of open dialogue, shared goals and common commitments. Although membership is voluntary, the convergence and reform of the higher education system in all EHEA countries, and as such the entire concept of the EHEA, relies on the implementation of a common set of commitments: structural reforms and shared tools, which have been agreed to and adopted at a political level in all member countries. Furthermore, the EHEA is grounded in a number of shared fundamental values, including a commitment to academic freedom, free mobility by students and staff, institutional autonomy and the full and equal participation of higher education students and staff in institutional governance.

The EHEA has come a long way in reforming the higher education system of its member countries. Nonetheless, implementation of the structural reforms is uneven and the tools are sometimes used incorrectly. Such problems with implementation may threaten the integrity of the Bologna Process and undermine the functioning, credibility and ultimately the existence of the EHEA.

As a result, the Ministers at their meeting in Yerevan in May 2015 asked the BFUG to submit proposals for addressing the issue of non-implementation of key commitments in time for their next meeting in Paris 2018. Advisory Group 3, dealing with non-implementation, was given the mandate to develop those proposals, and what follows is a proposed mode of support developed to aid the implementation of Bologna Commitments. The proposal was developed in collaboration with WG2 on Implementation.

Proposed support for the implementation of key Bologna commitments

Support for the implementation of key Bologna commitments¹ takes place through a programme with dedicated peer groups, which aim to improve the implementation of specific key commitments of the Bologna Process. It is based on the established reporting mechanisms of the Bologna Process and the principles of collaboration, equality, mutual learning, peer support and peer-counselling. Its main purpose is to improve full and effective implementation of key Bologna commitments throughout the EHEA.

The proposal follows the Bologna philosophy of peer- and process review which fits well with the collegiate and improvement-oriented ethos of the EHEA and aims to make implementation of key commitments more transparent.

The timeframe proposed for a single round is the period between Ministerial Conferences, thus following the normal monitoring timeframe in the EHEA. The programme will be supported by the facilitating Bologna Implementation Coordination Group, which includes but is not limited to the chairs of the peer groups involved and appointed during the Ministerial Conference. The terms of reference for this group can be found on pp. 12/13. Guiding notes for the peer groups are also submitted as a complementary document to this model of support (pp. 15/16).

¹ The three key commitments BFUG has identified as the focus for further work in the period 2018-2020 are:

- A Three-Cycle System compatible with the QF-EHEA and first and second cycle degrees scaled by ECTS: Programmes are structured according to the three cycle-system of the Bologna model and scaled by the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). Qualifications achieved in each cycle are defined in a National Qualification Framework (NQF) which is compatible with the Qualification Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA);
- Compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC): Cross-border recognition practices are in compliance with the Lisbon Recognition convention, including promoting through the national information centres or otherwise, the use of the UNESCO/Council of Europe Diploma Supplement or any other comparable document by the higher education institutions of the Parties;
- Quality Assurance in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG): Institutions granting degrees assure the quality of their programmes leading to degrees within the three-cycle system following the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015). External quality assurance (be it at programme or institutional level) is performed by Agencies that have demonstrably complied with the standards and guidelines stipulated in the current ESG. This is best ensured where only those agencies registered on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) are allowed to operate in the country.

Steps of support for implementation of key Bologna commitments



1. Survey: The level of implementation of the key commitments is surveyed based on data submitted during the BFUG's normal monitoring procedures, using the scoreboard indicators² in the Bologna Process Implementation Report. The implementation of the key commitments is addressed in a supplementary report thereon.

2. Invite: The BFUG delegates of *all* EHEA countries are formally invited³ by the BFUG Co-chairs to take part in one or more thematic peer groups⁴, each focusing on one key commitment. Based on the information surveyed and reported in step 1, countries will be asked to self-identify their needs and expertise to commit to the mode through which they can contribute to the improved implementation of key commitments of the Bologna Process in the EHEA as a whole.

(a) Countries that self-identify as having **successfully implemented a key commitment** (indicated by none of the relevant scoreboard indicators being red, and not more than one being orange) will be invited to suggest ways in which they are willing to support countries having difficulties with implementation of that key commitment, e.g. through peer-learning, reverse peer-review or other activities designed to share their examples of successful implementation and aid others in achieving the same.

(b) Countries that self-identify as **not or insufficiently having implemented** a key commitment (identified by having one or more red scoreboard indicators, and two or more that are orange) will be invited to indicate what peer support would be beneficial to aid implementation and how it aims to use that support.

Each country is expected to join at least one of the peer groups.

² See list of scorecard indicators pertaining to the three current Bologna key commitments in Section III of this report.

³ All BFUG delegates will be sent identical letters.

⁴ Guiding notes on the operation and activities of the peer groups have been provided in a separate document.

As it is possible to face implementation challenges in one or two key commitments while having implemented the other(s) successfully, countries could indicate a need for peer support in certain areas while offering peer support in others, as appropriate.

3. Response: The BFUG delegate sends a reply to the Bologna Implementation Coordination Group indicating what the country's implementation goals are when it comes to the key commitments and nominates representatives to the peer groups in those areas where the country requires support or can offer support, respectively. The representative(s) should be people with responsibility for the key commitment concerned, and BFUG delegates are strongly encouraged to involve relevant stakeholders who could offer, or be the recipients of, peer support or peer counselling in the area. In the peer groups they will be able to obtain advice on how to reach these goals.

4. Peer support: At this point peer support will start. The Bologna Implementation Coordination Group facilitates the grouping of countries offering peer support and those wishing to take advantage of such support into thematic peer groups. Each peer group will be dedicated to supporting the implementation of a single key Bologna commitment. These peer groups will include both countries that have sufficiently implemented the key commitment concerned and countries coping with challenges to be addressed for full implementation. Based on the goals identified in step 3 each peer group designs its own action plan with specified activities and impacts for each country concerned, including the expected involvement of relevant stakeholders.

5. Update: Each peer group gives an annual update to the Bologna Implementation Coordination Group on how the countries collaborating in that group have used peer support to enhance or support implementation. The Bologna Implementation Coordination Group in turn produces a summary report for the BFUG.

6. Data: All EHEA countries submit their data for the next implementation report which will mark the starting point of a new round. The supplementary report on implementation of key commitments (see step 1) will show current implementation alongside level of implementation in the previous report for all countries. Submitted plans on implementation of specific key commitments will be highlighted in the supplementary report.

Incentives for improved implementation of key commitments

The normal reporting process and the proposed support programme act by their very nature as incentives for improved implementation, in the way that the Bologna Process Implementation Report highlights levels of implementation, and the programme supports improvements through targeted peer-learning and support. In addition, it is proposed that countries that have made significant progress will be offered the opportunity to highlight their work on implementation at the Ministerial Conference.

In the event that no action has been taken by a country and no improvement in implementation can be noted from the data submitted during two rounds, the lack of improvement will be brought to the attention of the Ministerial Conference. The Ministers will be asked for recommendations on how to proceed on a case by case basis.

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE BOLOGNA IMPLEMENTATION COORDINATION GROUP

Name of the Working Group

Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG)

Contact persons

Members⁵ should be nominated before and confirmed by the BFUG immediately following the Ministerial Conference. Therefore, an invitation for countries/organisations to volunteer for membership has to be launched in time for the Ministerial Conference, and nominations discussed no later than during the last BFUG meeting prior to the Ministerial Conference.

Composition

The group will include representatives nominated by both full and consultative members of the BFUG. Countries and organisations are requested to signal which (one or several) of the thematic peer groups⁶ they may wish to coordinate. The group should initially (i.e. prior to the first meeting of the peer groups in the first round of the support procedure) be composed of ca. 5 members, who will be joined by those chairs who are not already part of the BICG once the peer groups are operational. To aid impartiality, independence and transparency the BICG chair will not be a chair of a peer group.

The choice of countries/organisations will aim to represent the geographical diversity of the EHEA and ensure a balance of expertise across all key commitments.

To ensure continuity, members should commit themselves for more than one work-period⁷. Ideally there should be a maximum overturn of 2/3 of its members between work-periods. It is up to the BFUG to decide how this group could fit in the governance of the EHEA after 2020.

Purpose and/or outcome

The purpose of the BICG is to facilitate the coordination and reporting of the peer groups that support the implementation of key Bologna commitments (see associated document on Support for implementation of key Bologna commitments), and act as a venue for exchange of experiences and best practice between co-chairs of those peer groups. It facilitates the support for the implementation of key Bologna commitments through ensuring that countries that are facing challenges in meeting the key commitments are fully supported in taking positive action to improve the situation.

The supplementary report to the Bologna Process Implementation Report, addressing the level of implementation of agreed key commitments, will be used to determine priority issues for the BFUG.

The group's work will be guided by the adopted procedure for support for the implementation of key Bologna commitments. It will:

- prepare invitations to join the peer groups, to be sent out by the BFUG Co-chairs;
- facilitate the grouping of countries offering or seeking support to peer groups;
- follow-up peer support activities by keeping an overview of the composition and activities of the different groups
- give the BFUG regular updates and an overview on the progress and effectiveness of the support for the implementation of the key Bologna commitments, based on the activities of the thematic peer groups.

⁵ Member in the context of these ToR denotes a representative nominated by a full member, or consultative member organisation of the BFUG, who may change their representation due to changes in circumstance or to better meet the needs of the group.

⁶ See the document "Guiding notes for the establishment, composition and working methods of the peer groups supporting implementation of Bologna key commitments" on pp.15-16 of this report.

⁷ A work period being the time between two consecutive EHEA Ministerial Conferences.

The group may also make recommendations:

- to improve the support for the implementation of key Bologna commitments, including possible adjustment needed to the process between work periods.
- to improve the support offered to a specific country.

If a country shows no or insufficient progress after one round of peer support activities, the group highlights that in its report, and may advise the BFUG how to provide more specific support to address the issue.

If there is no progress after a further round the BICG prepares a specific report to the BFUG, providing information that can form the basis for a decision on any further steps to be taken by the Ministerial Conference.

Reference to the Yerevan Communiqué

- “... implementation of the structural reforms is uneven and the tools are sometimes used incorrectly or in bureaucratic and superficial ways.”
- “Through policy dialogue and exchange of good practice, we will provide targeted support to member countries experiencing difficulties in implementing the agreed goals and enable those who wish to go further to do so.”
- “By 2020 we are determined to achieve an EHEA where our common goals are implemented in all member countries to ensure trust in each other’s higher education systems;”
- “Implementing agreed structural reforms is a prerequisite for the consolidation of the EHEA and, in the long run, for its success. A common degree structure and credit system, common quality assurance standards and guidelines, cooperation for mobility and joint programmes and degrees are the foundations of the EHEA.”
- “Non-implementation in some countries undermines the functioning and credibility of the whole EHEA. We need more precise measurement of performance as a basis for reporting from member countries.”
- “Full and coherent implementation of agreed reforms at the national level requires shared ownership and commitment by policy makers and academic communities and stronger involvement of stakeholders.”

Specific tasks

- Prepare letters for BFUG Co-chairs
- Facilitate the grouping of countries that offer support in implementation of key commitments with those who could benefit from such support and maintain an overview of the composition and activities of the different peer groups
- To coordinate the work of the different peer groups
- Inform and advise the BFUG on implementation of key Bologna commitments.
- Prepare analytical reports to the BFUG on the activities of the different peer groups and the support for the implementation of key commitments as a whole, including operation (what works, what doesn’t work), impact and usefulness
- Prepare recommendations for further action to improve implementation for consideration by the BFUG.

Reporting

Minimum of one yearly report to the BFUG.

Minutes of BICG meetings will be made available by the Bologna Secretariat in addition to the full reports of the individual peer groups.

Meeting schedule

To be decided

Liaison with other WGs’ and/or advisory groups’ activities

WG 1 on «Monitoring» and any other relevant BFUG structures

Additional remarks

KEY COMMITMENTS OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS IN THE WORKING PERIOD 2018-2020

On recommendation from AG3 the BFUG collectively agreed to focus its work on implementation in the period 2018-2020 on three key elements of the Bologna Process which it identified as the core of the commitments all countries signed up to when joining the EHEA. These in no way represent all EHEA tools, reforms and common values, but they are central to the Bologna Process, and as the foundations of the EHEA they allow recognition and mobility across the whole EHEA to function. Furthermore, their correct implementation is a necessary prerequisite to any higher education system that embraces the fundamental values of the Bologna Process.

The three key commitments to be the focus of work during this period are:

- A three-cycle system compatible with the overarching framework of qualifications of the EHEA and first and second cycle degrees scaled by ECTS: Programmes are structured according to the three cycle-system of the Bologna model and scaled by the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). Qualifications achieved in each cycle are defined in a National Qualification Framework (NQF) which is compatible with the Qualification Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA).
- Compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC): Cross-border recognition practices are in compliance with the Lisbon Recognition convention, including promoting through the national information centres or otherwise, the use of the UNESCO/Council of Europe Diploma Supplement or any other comparable document by the higher education institutions of the members.
- Quality Assurance in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area: Institutions granting degrees assure the quality of their programmes leading to degrees within the three-cycle system following the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015). External quality assurance (be it at programme or institutional level) is performed by agencies that have demonstrably complied with the standards and guidelines stipulated in the current ESG. This is best ensured where only those agencies registered on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) are allowed to operate in the country.

GUIDING NOTES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT, COMPOSITION AND WORKING METHODS OF THE PEER GROUPS SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION OF KEY BOLOGNA COMMITMENTS

Rationale

The success of the Bologna Process and the EHEA relies on the shared and systematic implementation of an agreed set of commitments: structural reforms and shared tools, which have been agreed to and adopted at a political level in all member countries. Only by substantially implementing the key Bologna commitments, can a country and

its higher education institutions, students and teachers fully benefit from participation in the EHEA through enhanced cooperation, ready mobility and exchange of students, teachers and researchers, through cross border partnerships, through joint study programmes and joint research projects, and with it achieve: **an enhanced quality of education and research for all students and staff, which makes a meaningful contribution to society (local, regional, national and European), while allowing the EHEA to further develop its credibility and attractiveness.**

The EHEA causal chain:

Full implementation of the key commitments → increased cooperation, mobility and exchange → enhanced quality, attractiveness and contribution of higher education to European and global society.

The aim of those guiding notes is to provide some guiding ideas for the further work of the peer groups. But it is up to each peer group to develop its own dynamics and to find the most appropriate way of progressing. The ultimate binding factor/request is that each peer group designs and shapes actions and measures to foster, improve and speed up the implementation, and reports on the progress of those actions to the BICG, and ultimately the BFUG and the EHEA Ministers.

The establishment of the peer groups

By the end of 2018, at least three (3) peer groups dedicated to the three key commitments or to a key facet of the structural reform concerned, have to have been established and operational:

- A peer group dealing with quality assurance
- A peer group dealing with qualifications frameworks including ECTS
- A peer group dealing with the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention including the Diploma Supplement.

Depending on the goals, demand and interests identified by EHEA member countries it could be possible and advantages to subdivide peer groups to best suit the specifics of the support needed.

The peer groups are formally established by the BFUG during the first meeting of the new working period, following the Ministerial Conference in Paris, and after receipt of the responses of the countries to the call launched in June 2018.

The composition of the peer groups

The peer groups will include countries (no fewer than 2 to 3) that have sufficiently implemented the key commitment concerned and countries (no fewer than 2 to 3) that need to address specific challenges for full implementation of a particular key commitment at the system and institutional level.

Countries should be represented by representatives of ministries, as well as stakeholders' representatives as appropriate: e.g. HEIs, students and other agencies or additional stakeholders.

Each peer group will be coordinated by a set of two (2) chairs, representing countries at different stages of implementation of the key commitment that is being supported. The chairing countries will be supported by the BFUG secretariat for organizing exchanges, meetings and any site visits, while financial support could be granted by the European Commission on the basis of a targeted ad hoc call.

Actions and working method of the peer groups

As outlined above, a single, or a small cluster of peer groups could be set up for each key commitment. The expectation is that each EHEA country contributes to at least one such peer group.

Each peer group offers a platform for policy dialogue among equal partners and for mutual exchanges of ideas and practices on an equal footing, including but not restricted to:

- a platform for sharing knowledge, ideas and practices;
- a platform for dialogue and mutual learning and understanding with regard to the implementation process: the context, the policy/policies adopted and the measures translating the key commitments at the national level; as such the group is also a platform for discussing factors that are affecting implementation both positively and negatively.

The peer groups should also agree on further actions aimed at fostering, improving and speeding up implementation, in particular:

- peer support / peer counselling: expert support, exchange of experts,
- targeted seminars including in particular the national public authorities and the broader academic community to build a shared ownership and commitment;
- drafting legislative documents.

The countries that have successfully implemented the key commitment under focus, or a specific part thereof, should be ready to deliver peer to peer support to other countries in their efforts to further and better implement reforms related to that commitment, and be ready to invite peers to review and comment upon their adopted policy and how it is put in practice.

The countries that have not yet fully implemented the key commitments should be ready to discuss the actions that they will undertake in order to step up and fulfil the implementation process and are ready to review the way the peers have implemented a key commitment-related reform and its impact.

A timeline of actions should be drawn up by the chairs of the peer groups, including how these will best meet the implementation goals set up by it's the countries participating in the group. Between November/December 2018 and March 2020, each peer group will meet 2/3

times, while regular updates must be provided to the BICG and to the BFUG, as stipulated in the relevant timeline and the ToR for the BICG.

In time for the next Ministerial, the chairs of each peer group should conduct an evaluation of the usefulness of the peer group activities which were carried out, and provide a feedback to the BFUG, and the EHEA Ministers on the follow-up of the agreed actions.

An overall assessment of the outcomes of the peer groups will be included in the final report from the BICG 2020.

The chairs as peer group coordinators are responsible for the coordination of the work of their peer group. The chairs will join the BICG (see terms of reference of that group).

III. Current Implementation of Key Commitments (from WG1)

The information in this section examines the state of implementation with regard to the agreed Key Commitments. It is drawn directly from the 2018 edition of the Bologna Process Implementation Report and uses the figure numbers and titles from that report for easy reference.

It should be remembered that the Scorecard Indicators that underpin this analysis are based upon qualitative information provided by BFUG national representatives. They measure the key features of these commitments, underpinned through legislation and administrative acts. These key features represent only the starting point for open and inclusive European higher education cooperation. While legislation and administrative arrangements are essential conditions for such cooperation, they also have to be implemented throughout the national system and within higher education institutions in a spirit that facilitates these objectives. Assessment of this next level of implementation is beyond the scope of these indicators.

Figure I - Overview of Key Commitments, 2016/17

Countries	Indicator 1 Degree structure implementation	Indicator 2 National Qualifications Frameworks	Indicator 3 ECTS	Indicator 4 Lisbon Recognition Convention	Indicator 5 Diploma Supplement	Indicator 6 Quality Assurance
Albania	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Orange
Andorra	Green	Orange	Green	Orange	Green	Yellow
Armenia	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Orange	Green	Green
Austria	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Azerbaijan	Green	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Red
Belarus	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Red	Red
Belgium_FR	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Belgium_NL	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Green	Yellow	Green	Orange	Green	Yellow
Bulgaria	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Croatia	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Cyprus	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange
CzechRepublik	Green	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green	Orange
Denmark	Green	Green	Orange	1	Green	Green
Estonia	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green

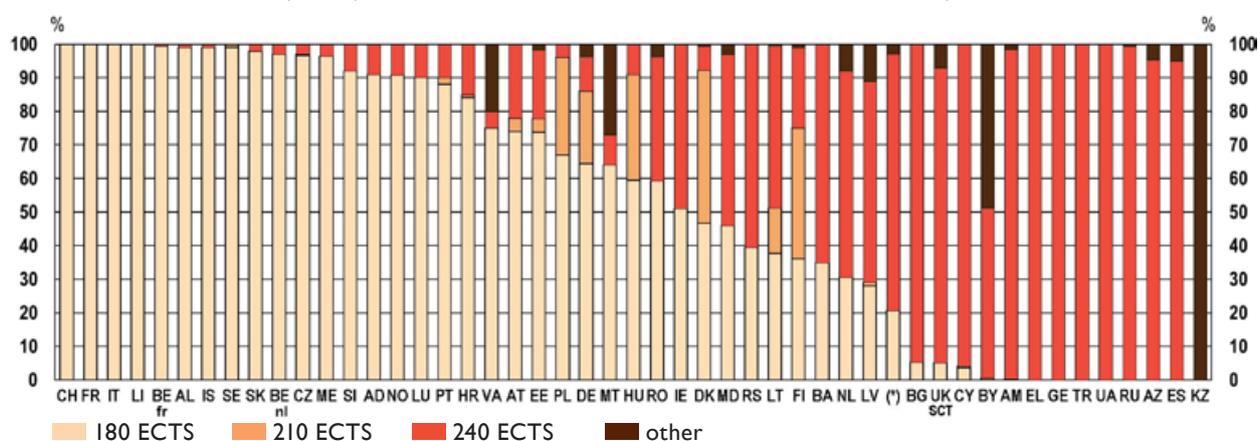
Countries	Indicator 1 Degree struc- ture imple- mentation	Indicator 2 National Qualifications Frameworks	Indicator 3 ECTS	Indicator 4 Lisbon Recognition Convention	Indicator 5 Diploma Supplement	Indicator 6 Quality Assurance
Finland	Green	Light Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green
France	Green	Green	Green	Green	Light Green	Green
FYROM	Light Green	Green	Light Green	Red	Green	Orange
Georgia	Light Green	Light Green	Green	Orange	Green	Orange
Germany	Light Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Light Green
Greece	Green	White	Orange	Orange	Light Green	Light Green
Holy See	Orange	Light Green	Green	Light Green	Light Green	Orange
Hungary	Light Green	Green	Red	Light Green	Green	Light Green
Iceland	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Light Green
Ireland	Green	Green	Orange	Orange	Green	Green
Italy	Light Green	Green	Red	Light Green	Green	Light Green
Kazakhstan	Orange	Light Green	Green	Light Green	Light Green	Green
Latvia	Red	Green	Light Green	Light Green	Green	Light Green
Liechtenstein	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Lithuania	Light Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Luxembourg	Light Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Malta	Yellow	Green	Red	Light Green	Green	Orange
Moldova	Light Green	Light Green	Green	Light Green	Green	Yellow
Montenegro	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Light Green	Orange
Netherlands	Light Green	Light Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Norway	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Poland	Green	Green	Yellow	Light Green	Green	Green
Portugal	Light Green	Green	Light Green	Light Green	Green	Green
Romania	Yellow	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Green	Green
Russian Federation	Light Green	Orange	Green	Green	Light Green	Light Green
Serbia	Green	Orange	Green	Orange	Light Green	Green
Slovakia	Green	Yellow	Orange	Green	Green	Orange
Slovenia	Green	Green	Orange	Light Green	Green	Green
Spain	Green	Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green
Sweden	Light Green	Green	Red	Light Green	Green	Light Green
Switzerland	Green	Light Green	Green	Light Green	Green	Green
Turkey	Light Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange
Ukraine	Green	Yellow	Light Green	Light Green	Green	Orange
United Kingdom EWNI	Green	Green	Red	Red	Light Green	Green
United Kingdom SCT	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE THREE CYCLE SYSTEM

The 2018 Bologna Process Implementation Report has a number of indicators that provide information on different aspects of implementation of the Bologna cycles. Five figures from the report are reproduced below:

1) The first (Figure 3.2) shows the share of first cycle programmes with a workload of 180, 210, 240 or other ECTS credits. 180, 210 and 240 ECTS all conform with Bologna commitments. Other amounts may not, and this may create problems in articulating the learning outcomes of such programmes with those of programmes in other EHEA countries.

Figure 3.2 - Share of first cycle-programmes with a workload of 180, 210, 240 or another number of ECTS credits, 2016/17



* the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

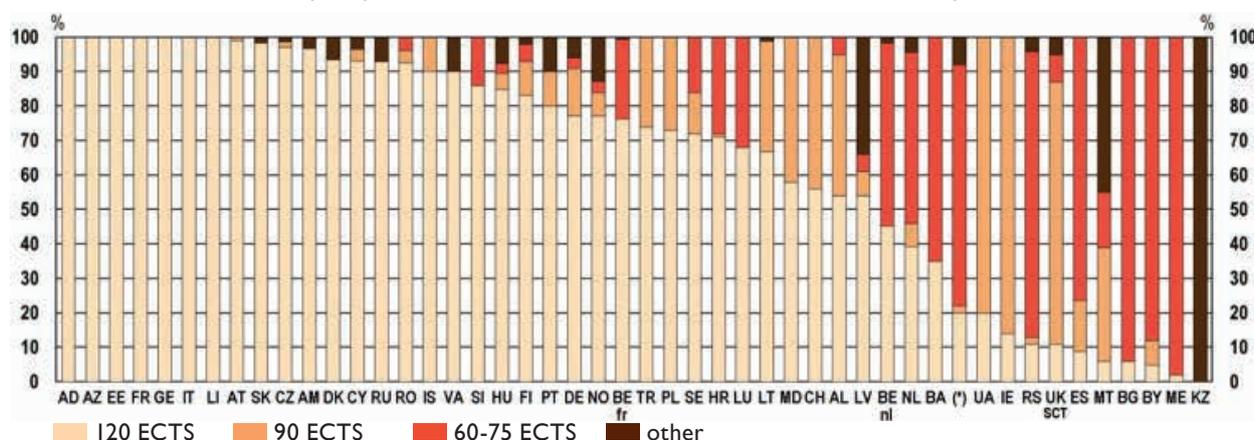
Source: BFUG data collection.

The 180 ECTS workload is the most widespread model, characterising the majority of programmes in more than half of all EHEA countries. The 240 credits model, applies to most first-cycle programmes in around one-third of all EHEA countries. Poland, Germany, Hungary, Denmark and Finland have more than 20% of all first cycle programmes applying the 210 ECTS pattern.

Other workload models are relatively uncommon. In Kazakhstan, however, all first-cycle programmes fall under this category, since their workload corresponds to at least 146 national credits, which is equal to 231 ECTS credits. In Belarus, almost half of all first-cycle programmes apply an “other” workload, mostly 300 ECTS (28%) and 270 ECTS (18%). Further systems reporting a relatively high proportion of other first-cycle workload patterns (20% or more programmes) are Malta and the Holy See.

2) The second indicator shows the share of second cycle programmes with a workload of 60-75, 90, 120 or other number of ECTS credits. These specified credit ranges conform to Bologna agreements, while other numbers of credits may imply non alignment with Bologna agreements.

Figure 3.3 - Share of second-cycle programmes with a workload of 60-75, 90, 120 or another number of ECTS credits, 2016/17



* the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
 Source: BFUG data collection.

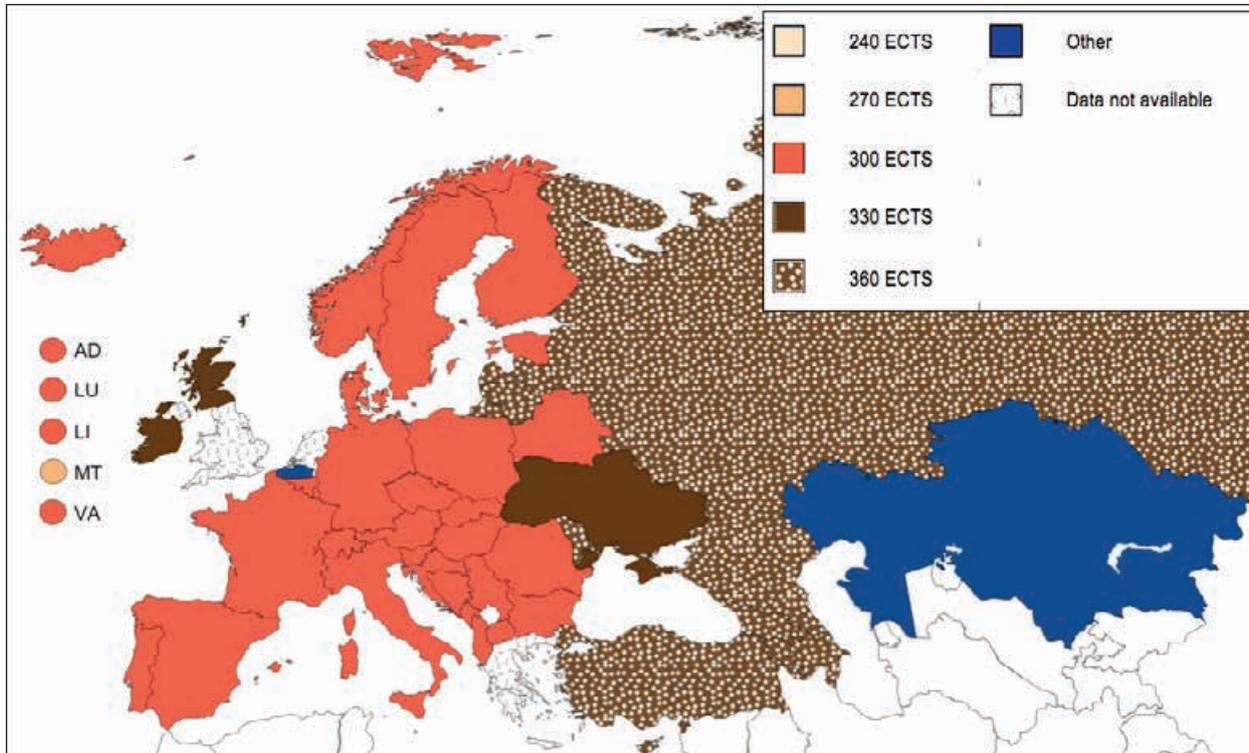
The 120 ECTS model is by far the most widespread. The 60-75 ECTS model is present in around a half of all countries, dominating in Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Flemish Community of Belgium, Montenegro, Serbia and Spain. The 90 ECTS model is less widespread, but still present in around a half of all EHEA countries, and dominating in Ireland, the United Kingdom (Scotland) and Ukraine.

The share of second-cycle programmes with a workload outside the 60-120 ECTS interval generally does not exceed 10%. In Kazakhstan, however, all second-cycle programmes fall under this category, since their workload corresponds to either 119 ECTS credits (around 60% of programmes) or 93 ECTS credits (around 40% of programmes). The share of second-cycle programmes with ‘other’ workloads is also relatively high in Malta (45%), Latvia (34%) and Norway (13%).

3) The third indicator (Figure 3.5) shows the most common total workload for the first and second cycle programmes combined. While there is no Communiqué statement specifying a total workload for the combined length of first and second cycle programmes, the spirit behind the Bologna agreements is that the total should normally not exceed 300 ECTS.

While in several countries the minimum total workload of first- and second-cycle programmes combined is set at 240 credits, no country reports this workload as the most common. In the eastern part of the EHEA, the most common workload generally corresponds to 360 ECTS, which is mainly due to a more substantial workload of first-cycle programmes.

Figure 3.5 - Most common total workload of first- and second-cycle programmes, 2016/17



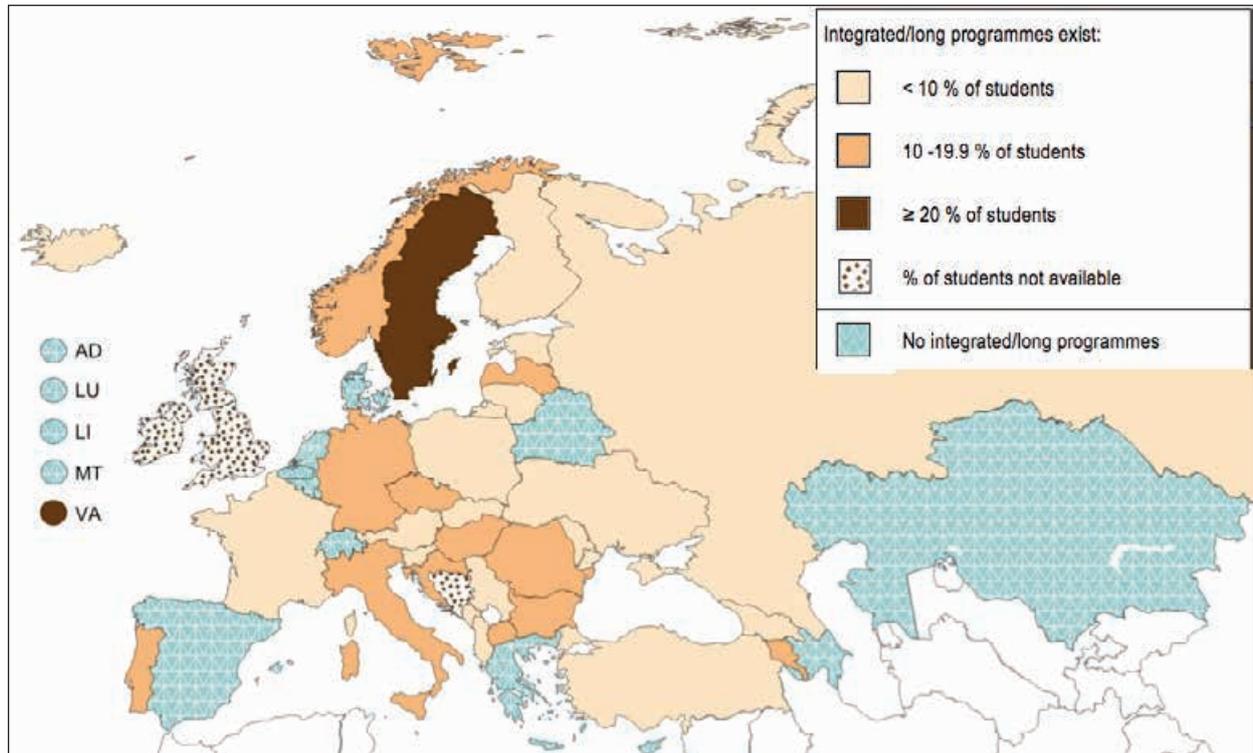
Source: BFUG data collection.

4) The fourth indicator shows the percentage of students within integrated/long programmes leading to a second cycle degree. While these programmes are most commonly found in regulated professions, (particularly medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine and architecture) they may also exist in some countries in fields where, for other EHEA countries, Bologna structures are used. Examples are teacher training, law and theology. Thus where more than 10% of students are enrolled in integrated programmes, it is likely that there reforms possible could still be made to improve the alignment of certain subject areas with the spirit of Bologna commitments.

In 2016/17, these “long” programmes exist in most EHEA systems; yet, they involve different proportions of students. In 12 systems, the proportion is situated between 10% and 19.9% while two countries have proportions above 20%.

Finally, the fifth indicator shows the existence of programmes other than integrated/long programmes that are offered outside the Bologna degree structure.

Figure 3.14 - Presence of integrated/long programmes leading to a second cycle degree and the percentage of students in these programmes, 2016/17

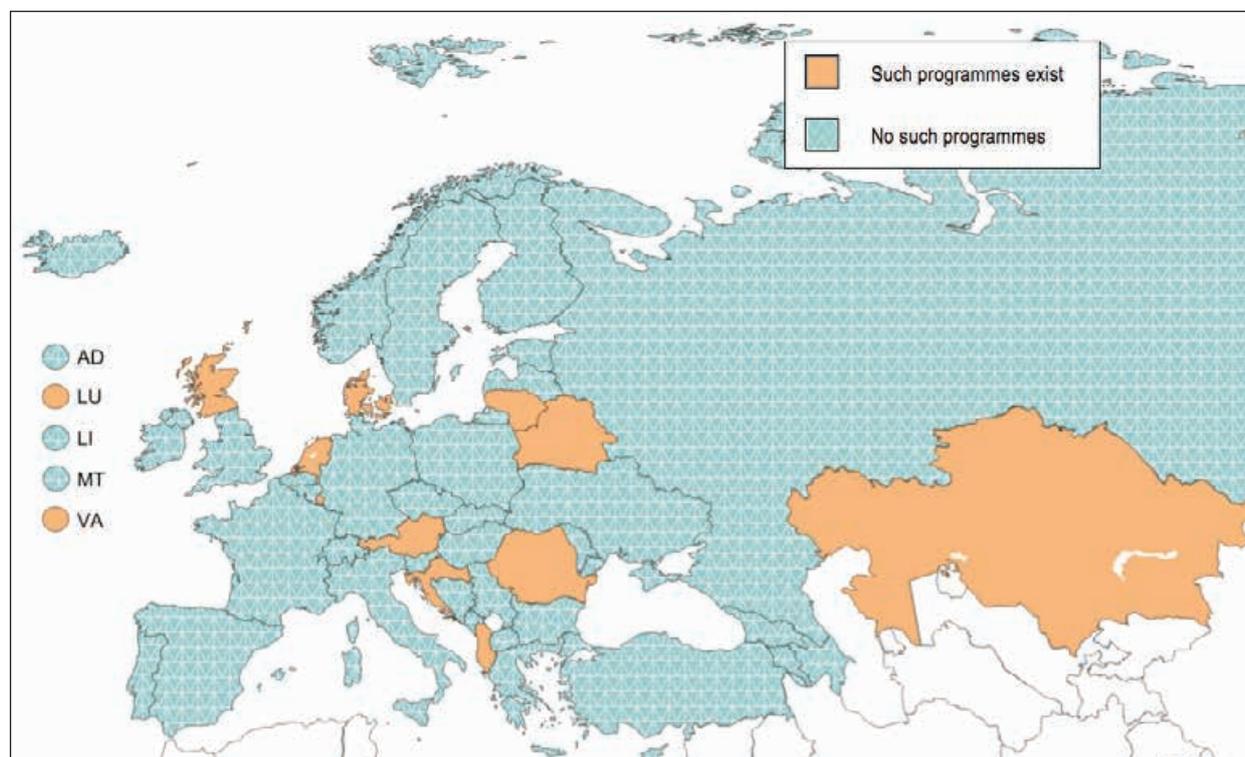


Source: BFUG data collection.

Notes: Integrated/long programmes refer to programmes including both the first and the second cycle and leading to a second-cycle qualification.

Figure 3.16 shows that in around a quarter of all EHEA systems, there are programmes outside the Bologna-degree structure other than integrated/long programmes. The nature of these programmes varies from one higher education system to another: they are linked to various degree levels, and they may, or may not, be included in national qualifications frameworks.

Figure 3.16 - Programmes outside the Bologna-degree structure (other than integrated/long programmes), 2016/17



Source: BFUG data collection.

Notes: Within the Bologna Process, ministers committed themselves to implementing the three-cycle degree system, where first-cycle degrees (awarded after completion of higher education programmes lasting a minimum of three years) should give access, in the sense of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, to second-cycle programmes. Second-cycle degrees should give access to doctoral studies (the third cycle). Within the three-cycle degree system, ministers recognised the possibility of intermediate qualifications (the short cycle) linked to the first cycle.

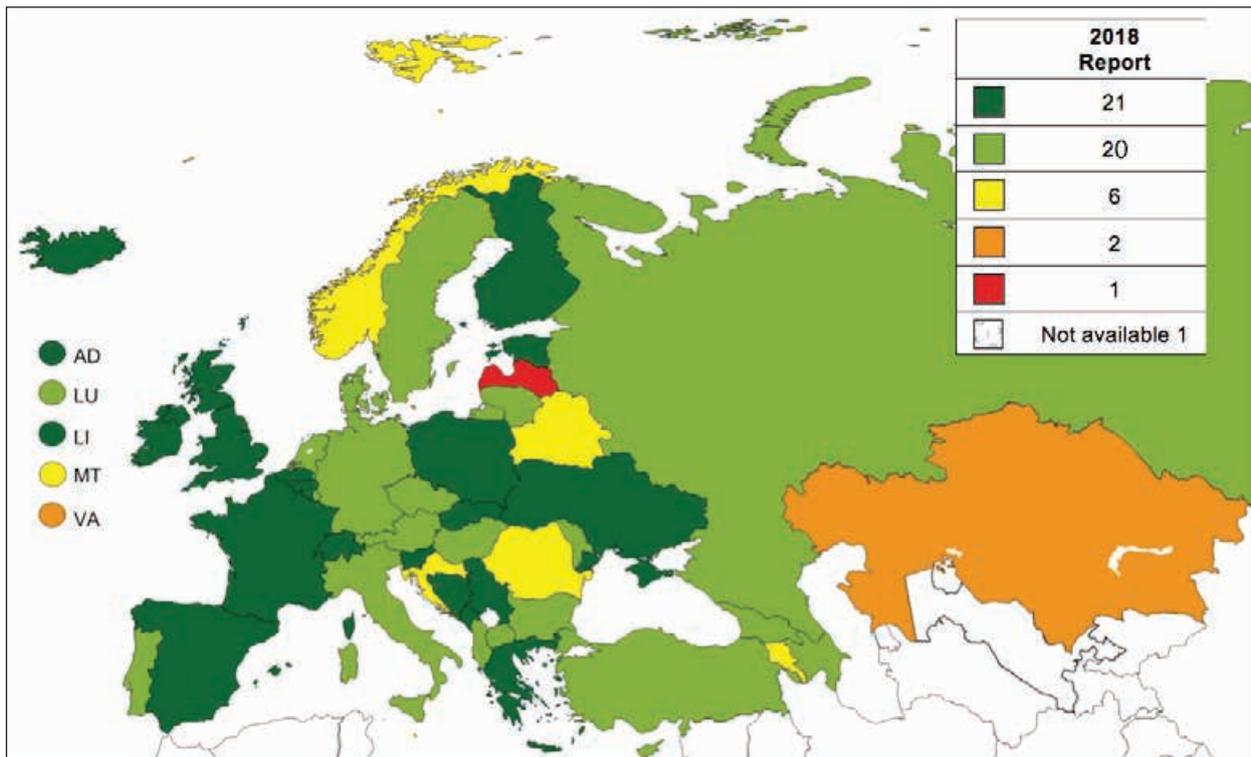
When referring to programmes outside the Bologna-degree structure, the figure refers to programmes that do not fully comply with the above ministerial engagements. Integrated/long programmes, which can also be seen as programmes outside the Bologna structure, are covered by Figure 3.14.

From the information in these five indicators it is possible to create a composite Scorecard indicator that evaluates the overall compliance of countries with Bologna agreements on degree structure implementation. The indicator considers five elements, and the fewer the number of elements present, the more the country is aligned with Bologna agreements on degree structures. The indicator is built from the following criteria:

- More than 10% of first cycle programmes do not conform with agreed ECTS workload for the first cycle (this is the case for Belarus, Holy See, Kazakhstan, Latvia and Malta);
- More than 10% of second cycle programmes do not conform with agreed ECTS workload for the second cycle (this is the case for Kazakhstan, Latvia, Malta and Norway);
- The most common total for the first and second cycle is in excess of 330 ECTS (this is the case for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, the Russian Federation and Turkey);

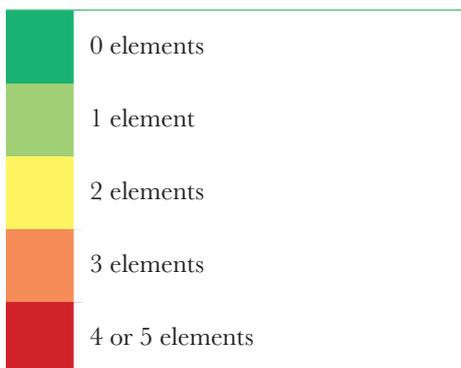
- Students enrolled in integrated programmes exceed 10% of the total population (this is the case for Armenia, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Holy See, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Norway, Portugal, Romania and Sweden);
- There are programmes other than integrated programmes, outside the agreed Bologna structures (this is the case for Albania, Austria, Belarus, Croatia, Denmark, Holy See, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Romania).

**Composite scoreboard indicator:
Compliance with Bologna Process degree structure agreements**



Source: BFUG questionnaire.

Proposal for 3 cycles

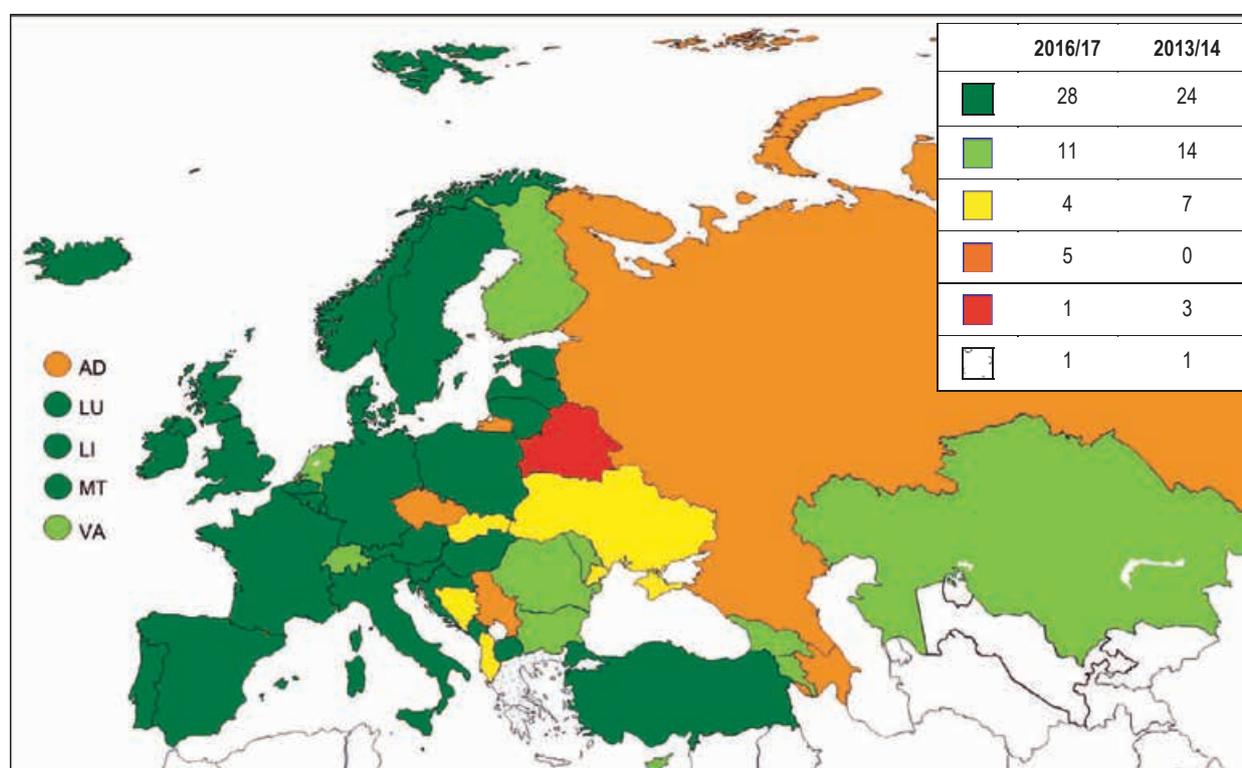


IMPLEMENTATION OF NQF

Scoreboard indicator n°3 (Figure 3.25) summarises the state of play of the development and implementation of national qualifications framework for higher education. The colours in the figure indicate that the country has completed all steps related to a specific colour. Thus a country that has completed, for example, step 5 appears in the orange colour and not in yellow – signalling the country has completed steps 1-4.

The majority of countries have established their national qualifications frameworks for higher education and self-certified them to the QF-EHEA. In addition, in these countries the NQF is used by national authorities for at least one agreed purpose.

Figure 3.25 - Scorecard indicator n°3: Implementation of national qualifications frameworks, 2016/17



Source: BFUG data collection.

Notes: The indicator is defined as the current state of the implementation of national qualifications frameworks.

The state of implementation is measured against the steps of the implementation of NQFs. The dark green category is not fully comparable with the same dark green category in the Bologna Process Implementation report 2015.

Step II is introduced in this revised Scorecard indicator and countries need to complete both steps in order to fulfil requirements for this category.

“Stakeholders” in Step II of the Scorecard indicator are understood narrowly as “national authorities” only, due to the limited scope of the data collection (BFUG data collection). Information in indicator 3.24 is taken into account. The colours in the figure indicate that the country has completed all steps related to a specific colour and all preceding steps. The red colour is an exception, countries having completed step 1 or step 2 also obtain this colour.

Scorecard categories

Steps 10-11:

- 11. Stakeholders* use the NQF (as a reference point) for at least one specific agreed purpose.
 - 10. The NQF has self-certified its compatibility with the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area.
-

Steps 7-9:

- 9. Qualifications have been included in the NQF.
 - 8. Study programmes have been re-designed on the basis of the learning outcomes included in the NQF.
 - 7. Implementation of the NQF has started with agreement on the roles and responsibilities of higher education institutions, quality assurance agency(ies) and other bodies.
-

Steps 5-6:

- 6. The NQF has been adopted in legislation or in other high level policy fora.
 - 5. Consultation/national discussion has taken place and the design of the NQF has been agreed by stakeholders.
-

Step 4: The level structure, level descriptors (learning outcomes), and credit ranges have been agreed.

Steps 1-3:

- 3. The process of developing the NQF has been set up, with stakeholders identified and committee(s) established.
 - 2. The purpose(s) of the NQF have been agreed and outlined.
 - 1. Decision to start developing the NQF has been taken by the national body responsible for higher education and/or the minister.
-

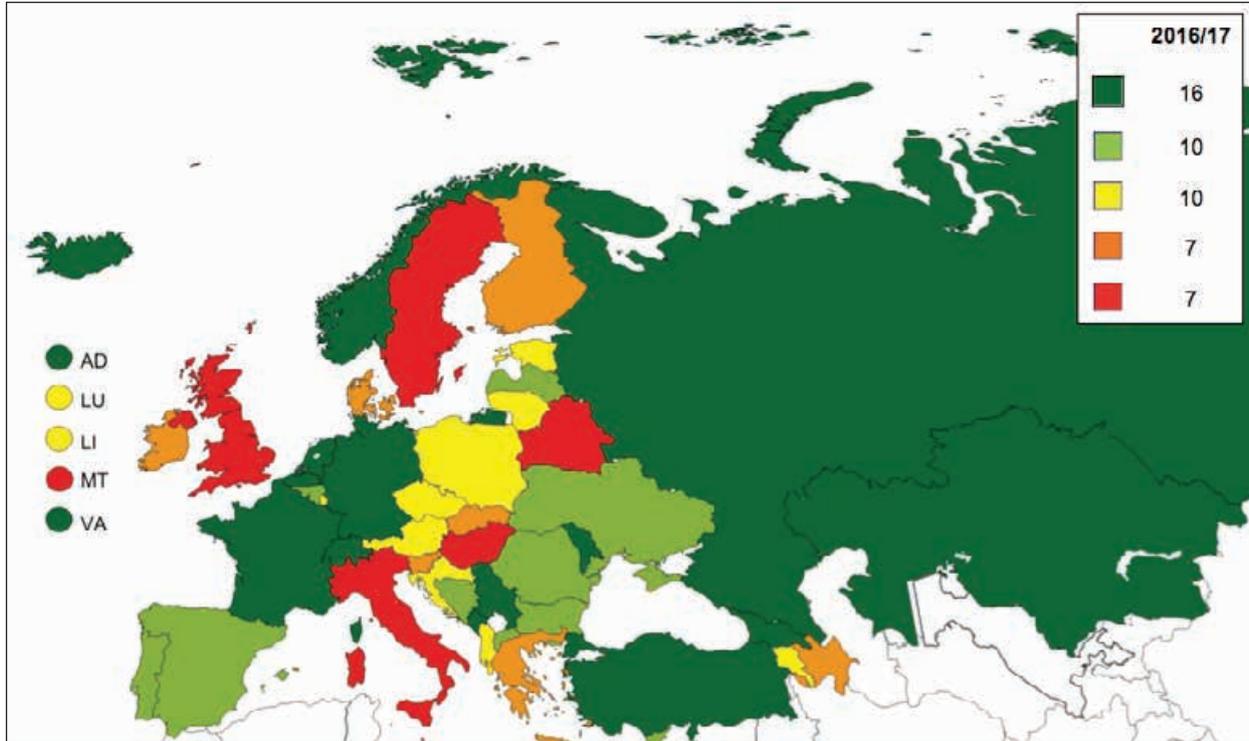
Data not available

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECTS SYSTEM

Scoreboard indicator n°1 (Figure 2.16) summarises the main elements that are required to be monitored by external quality assurance agencies in the implementation of ECTS.

It shows that the majority of countries require external quality assurance agencies to monitor at least one key aspect of the implementation of ECTS. In 16 systems, external quality assurance uses the ECTS Users' Guide 2015 principles as the basis and monitors all six issues listed in the indicator criteria. Seven systems do not require ECTS implementation to be monitored by external quality assurance, but it often happens in practice. These systems also include less prescriptive systems where formal requirements are not made; however, in practice such monitoring may take place. In seven systems, the ECTS Users' Guide principles are not required to be used by external quality assurance and are typically not used in practice. Overall, the scorecard indicator suggests that there is still much to be done to ensure the full implementation of ECTS.

Figure 2.16 - Scorecard indicator n°1: Monitoring the implementation of the ECTS system by external quality assurance, 2016/17



Source: BFUG data collection.

Scorecard categories

The ECTS Users' Guide 2015 principles are required to be used by external quality assurance as a basis to assess the implementation of ECTS in all higher education institutions.

All the following issues are monitored specifically:

- ECTS credits are allocated on the basis of learning outcomes & student workload;
- ECTS credit allocation is regularly monitored and followed up by appropriate revision if necessary;
- ECTS is used as a credit system for the accumulation of credits acquired within higher education institutions;
- ECTS is used as a credit system for the transfer of credits for student learning outcomes acquired in another institution in the country;
- ECTS is used as a credit system for the transfer of credits for periods of study abroad;
- The higher education institution has an appropriate appeals procedure to deal with problems of credit recognition.

The ECTS Users' Guide 2015 principles are required to be used by external quality assurance as a basis to assess the implementation of ECTS in all higher education institutions.

Four or five of the above issues are monitored specifically.

The ECTS Users' Guide 2015 principles are required to be used by external quality assurance agencies as a basis to assess the implementation of ECTS in all higher education institutions.

One to three of the above issues are monitored specifically.

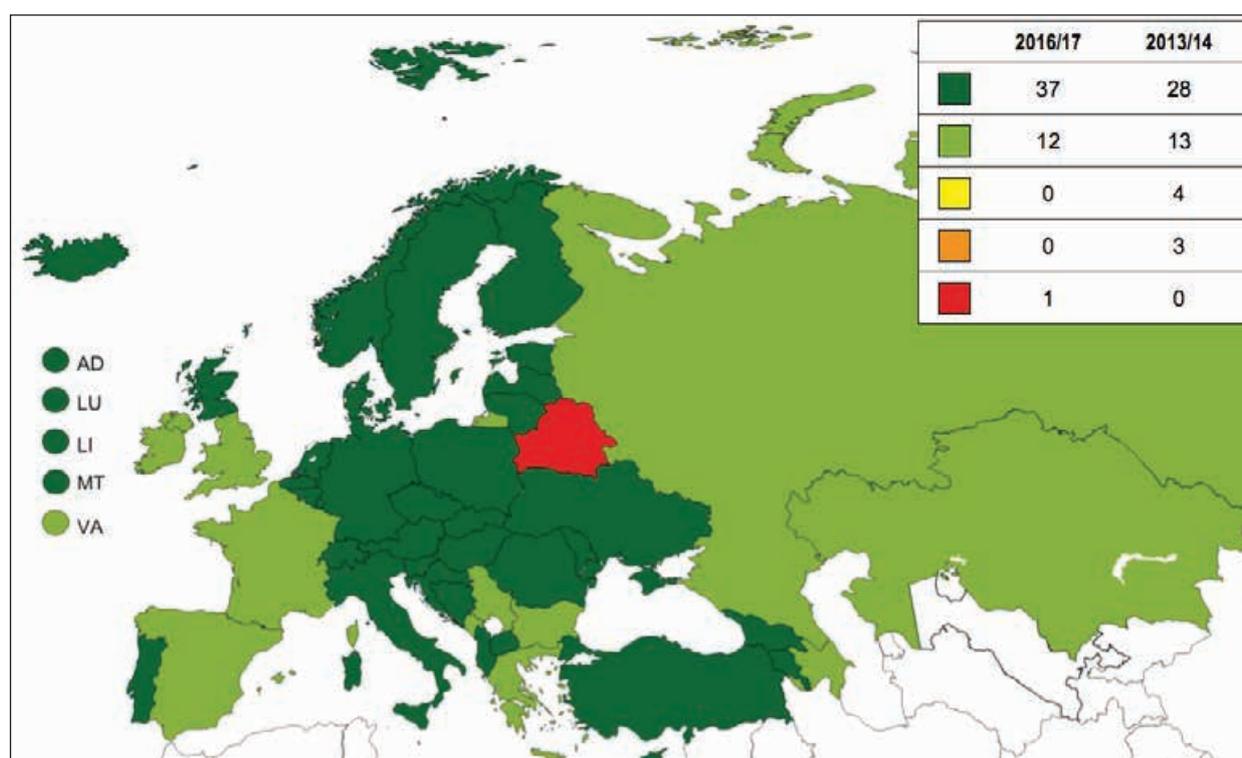
The ECTS Users' Guide 2015 principles may in some cases be used by external quality assurance as a basis to assess the implementation of ECTS.

The ECTS Users' Guide 2015 principles are not required to be used by external quality assurance agencies as a basis to assess the implementation of ECTS in higher education institutions.

IMPLEMENTATION OF DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT

The scorecard indicator on the implementation of the Diploma Supplement (Figure 3.18) shows that most EHEA countries now comply with all ministerial engagements, i.e. the Diploma Supplement is issued to all first- and second-cycle graduates, automatically, in a widely spoken European language and free of charge (dark green). 12 countries do not comply with one of these aspects (light green), whereas Belarus has not yet introduced the Diploma Supplement (red). Overall, the indicator points to progress in the implementation of the Diploma Supplement since 2015.

**Figure 3.18 - Scorecard indicator n°2:
Stage of implementation of the Diploma Supplement, 2016/17**



Source: BFUG data collection.

Scorecard categories

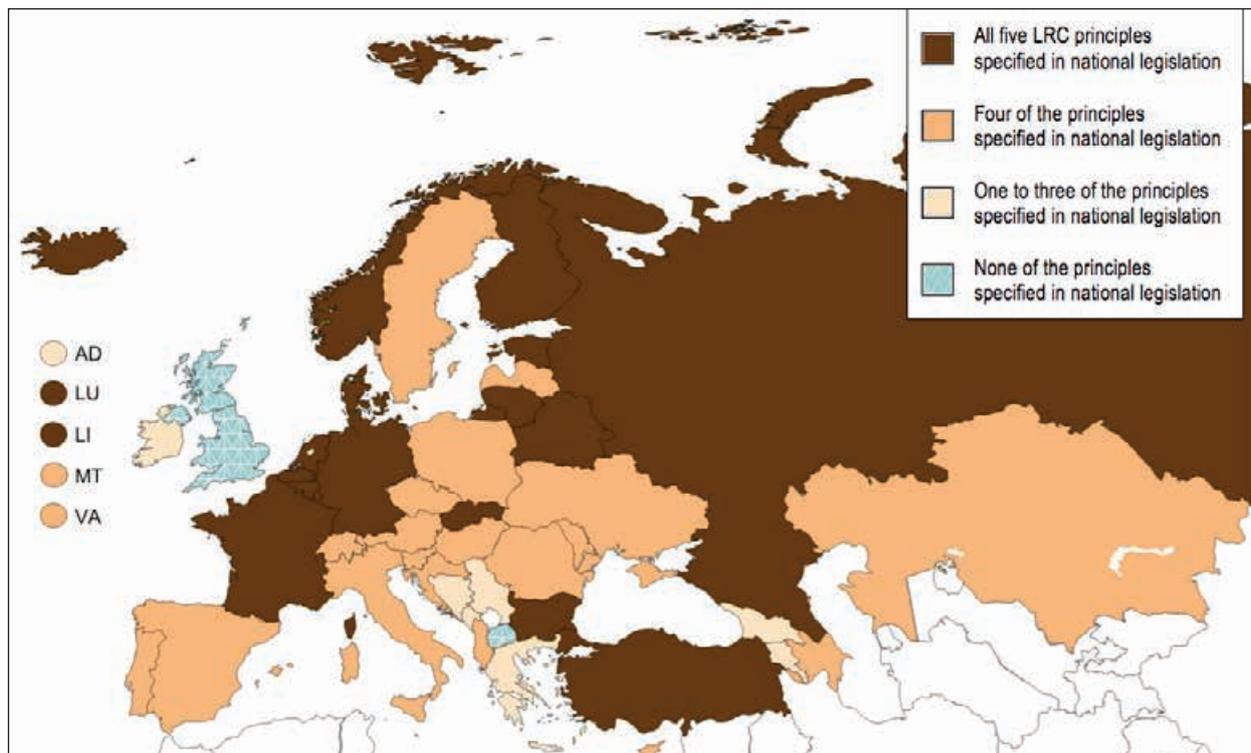
	Diploma Supplement in the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format is issued to first- and second-cycle graduates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to every graduate automatically in a widely spoken European language free of charge.
	Three of the above criteria are met.
	Two of the above criteria are met.
	Only one criterion is met.
	None of the above criteria is met.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE LISBON RECOGNITION CONVENTION (LRC)

Figure 4.13 shows the extent to which the main principles of the LRC are specified in national legislation. The principles highlighted in the indicator are that 1) applicants have right to fair assessment; 2) there is recognition if no substantial differences can be proven; 3) legislation or guidelines encourage comparing of learning outcomes rather than programme contents; 4) in cases of negative decisions the competent recognition authority demonstrates the existence of substantial difference; 5) applicant's right to appeal of the recognition decision. Implementation of these principles was identified by the Pathfinder Group as an important step towards automatic recognition.

Since the 2015 Bologna Process Implementation Report, the number of systems where all of these main principles are specified in national legislation has risen from 11 to 18. This improvement comes from systems where previously one of the principles was not specified. The improvement appears to have been made in most cases with regard to the requirement of the competent recognitions authority to demonstrate the existence of substantial difference in the case of negative decisions.

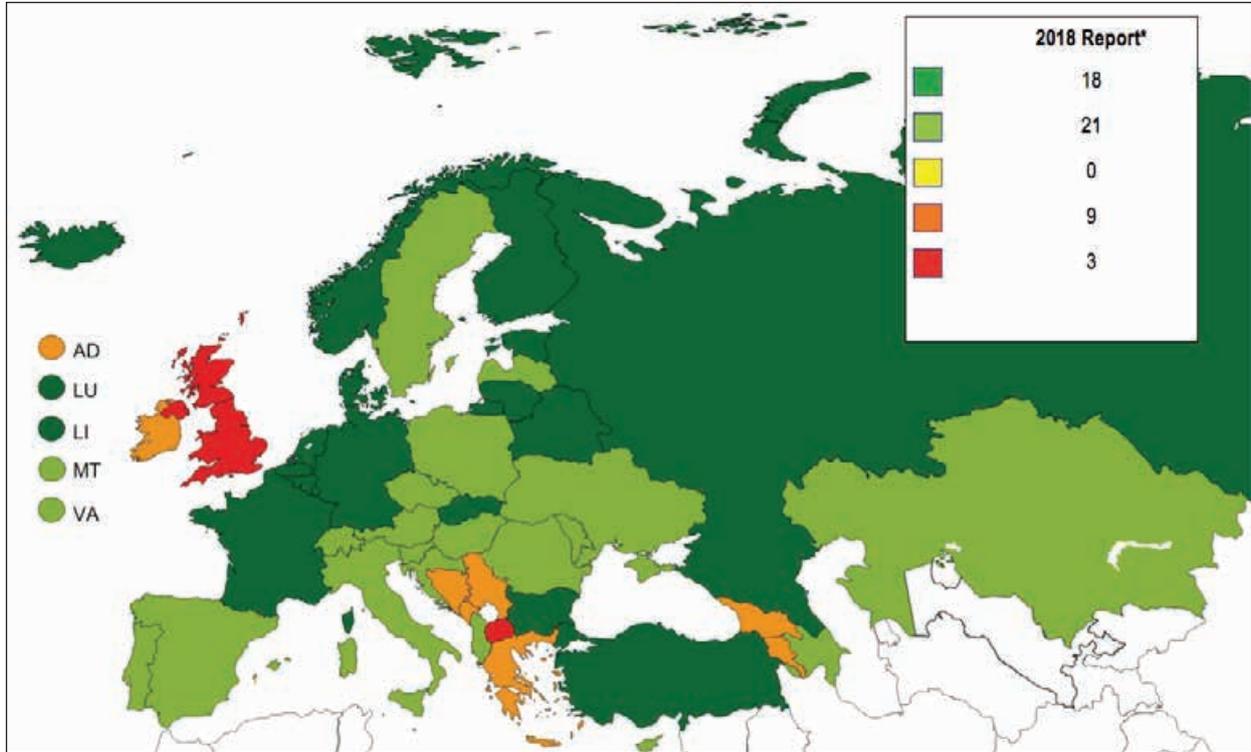
Figure 4.13 - Principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention in national legislation, 2016/17



Source: BFUG data collection.

The information in the figure above can also be represented as a scorecard indicator:

**Principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention
in national legislation, 2016/17: ad hoc scorecard indicator**



Source: BFUG questionnaire.

Scorecard categories

	All 5 principles are specified in national legislation
	4 of the principles specified in national legislation
	3 of the principles specified in national legislation
	1-2 of the principles specified in national legislation
	None of the principles specified in national legislation

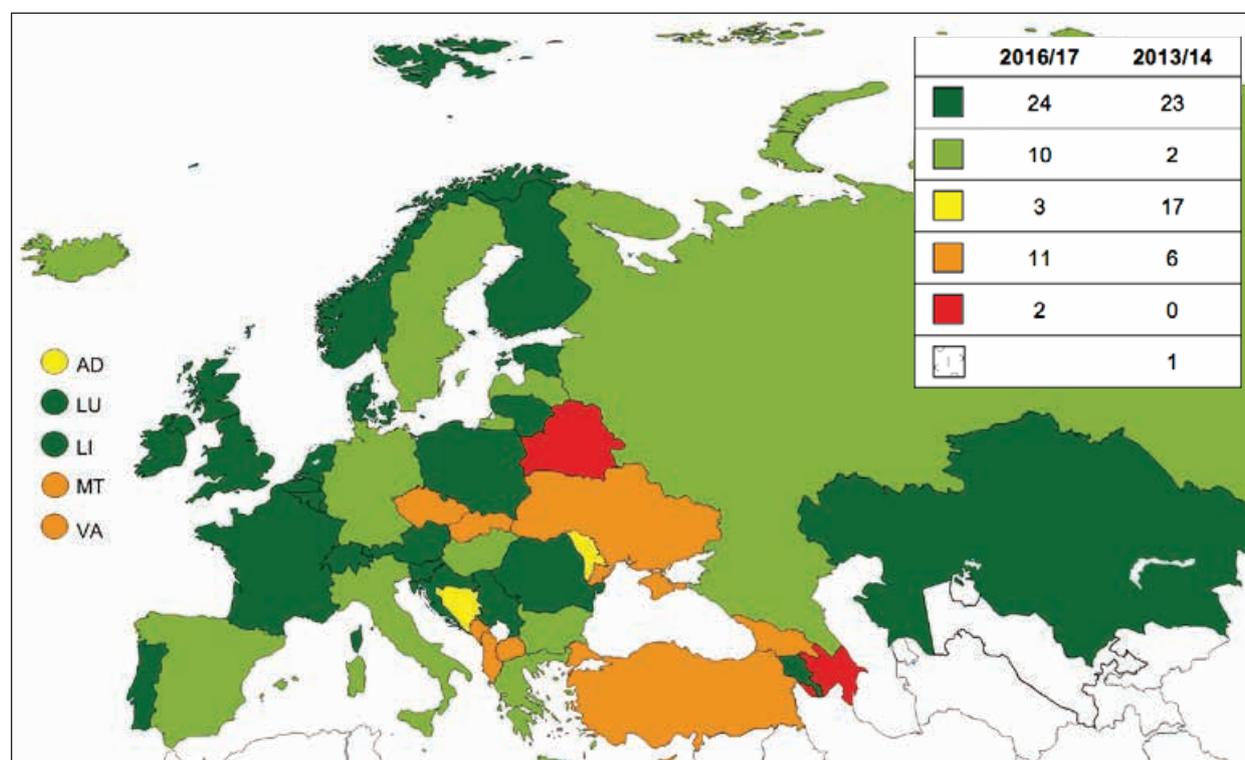
QUALITY ASSURANCE IN CONFORMITY WITH STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA (ESG)

Figure 4.10 (Scorecard indicator 6) shows how far quality assurance systems have developed in alignment with agreed Bologna commitments. Systems in the dark green category are working with quality assurance agencies that have been evaluated to show that they are working in accordance with the ESG, and this is demonstrably proven through registration on EQAR. Light green countries also operate a system with quality assurance agencies evaluated to ensure that they comply with the ESG. However, in this case they have not taken the step of registering on EQAR. The countries in yellow have only some higher education institutions required to undertake regular quality assurance with an agency that works in compliance with the ESG. For those countries in orange the quality assurance system has undergone no external evaluation to ensure compliance with the ESG.

Countries in red have produced no evidence of a quality assurance system.

The findings for this indicator confirm the trend to strengthen external quality assurance that has continued throughout the Bologna Process. Thirty-four systems are in the dark or light green categories. In the other 16 systems there remains work to be done to develop a quality assurance system that is compliant with the ESG.

Figure 4.10 - Scorecard indicator n°6: Stage of development of external quality assurance system, 2016/17



Source: BFUG data collection.

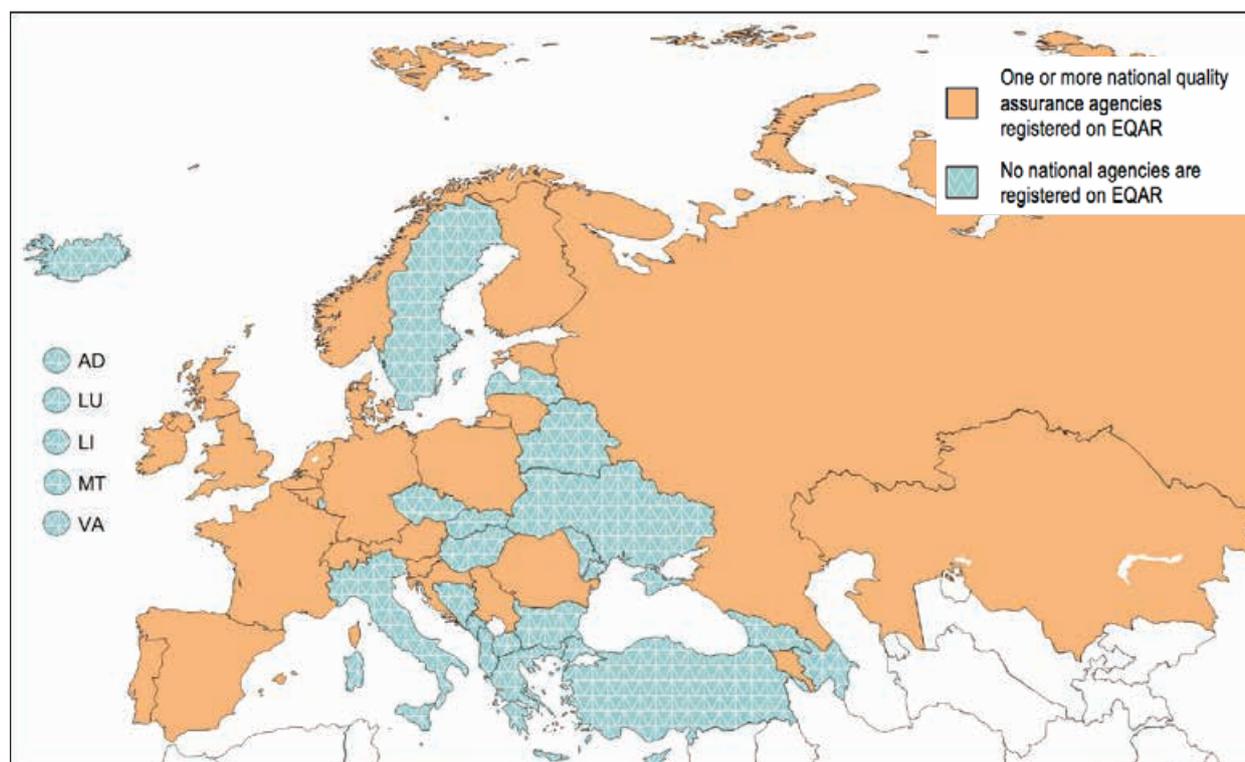
Scorecard categories

	A fully functioning quality assurance system is in operation nationwide, in which all higher education institutions are subject to regular external quality assurance by an agency that has successfully demonstrated compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG) through registration on EQAR.
	A quality assurance system is in operation nationwide and is aligned to the ESG, but the agency/ies performing external quality assurance are not registered in EQAR.
	A fully functioning quality assurance system is in operation nationwide, but only some higher education institutions are subject to regular external quality assurance by an agency that has successfully demonstrated compliance with the ESG through registration on EQAR.
	A quality assurance system is in operation nationwide, but has not (yet) been fully aligned to the ESG.
	No quality assurance system is in operation.
Not available	

Use of a QA Agency that is registered with EQAR

In November 2017, 45 Agencies from 26 EHEA countries were registered on EQAR. Since the 2015 implementation Report, 14 agencies have been added to the Register. This is clearly an area where positive developments continue.

Figure 4.9 - Countries with quality assurance agencies registered on EQAR, 2017



Source: EQAR.

ANNEX I Terms of Reference for AG3 as adopted by the BFUG in Luxembourg, September 2015

Name of the Advisory group

Advisory group on Dealing with non-implementation

Contact person (Chair)

Una VIDARSDOTTIR – Iceland (una.strand.vidarsdottir@mrn.is; una.vidarsdottir@gmail.com)
[subsequently joined by Daniel Miescher, Liechtenstein, endorsed by BFUG in Amsterdam, March 2016]

Composition - Members

Albania, Council of Europe, EI/ETUCE, EQAR, ESU, EU Commission, EURASHE, France, Iceland, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Netherland, Poland, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine^{8 9 10 11}.

Purpose and/or outcome

The Advisory group on Dealing with non-implementation is mandated to submit proposals for addressing the issue of non-implementation and incorrect implementation of key commitments (how to implement them best by respecting and reflecting the EHEA instruments and the EHEA culture).

Reference to the Yerevan Communiqué

- The governance and working methods of the EHEA must develop to meet these challenges. We ask the BFUG to review and simplify its governance and working methods, to involve higher education practitioners in its work programme, and to submit proposals for addressing the issue of non-implementation of key commitments in time for our next meeting.
- Implementing agreed structural reforms is a prerequisite for the consolidation of the EHEA and, in the long run, for its success. A common degree structure and credit system, common quality assurance standards and guidelines, cooperation for mobility and joint programmes and degrees are the foundations of the EHEA. We will develop more effective policies for the recognition of credits gained abroad, of qualifications for academic and professional purposes, and of prior learning. Full and coherent implementation of agreed reforms at the national level requires shared ownership and commitment by policy makers and academic communities and stronger involvement of stakeholders. Non-implementation in some countries undermines the functioning and credibility of the whole EHEA. We need more precise measurement of performance as a basis for reporting from member countries. Through policy dialogue and exchange of good practice, we will provide targeted support to member countries experiencing difficulties in implementing the agreed goals and enable those who wish to go further to do so.
- Nonetheless, implementation of the structural reforms is uneven and the tools are sometimes used incorrectly or in bureaucratic and superficial ways. Continuing improvement of our higher education systems and greater involvement of academic communities are necessary to achieve the full potential of the EHEA. We are committed to completing the work and recognize the need to give new impetus to our cooperation.

8 Liaison with the WG 2 on “Implementation - Fostering implementation of agreed key commitments”

9 Liaison with the AG 2 on “Support for the Belarus roadmap”

10 Liaison with the WG 3 on “New goals - Policy developments for new EHEA goals”

11 Liaison with the WG 1 on “Monitoring”

Specific tasks

- To develop an approach of dealing with non-implementation or incorrect implementation of the main principles and tools of the EHEA by respecting and reflecting the EHEA instruments and the EHEA culture;
- To identify key commitments concerning the non-implementation;
- To submit proposals to the BFUG for addressing the issue of non-implementation of key commitments (e.g. through peer learning, policy advice, assistance, action plans, minimum standards);
- To keep the Working Group on “Implementation - fostering implementation of agreed key commitments” informed and together put the above-mentioned proposals into practice (in order to provide targeted support to member countries experiencing difficulties in implementing the agreed goals).

Reporting

Minutes of advisory group meetings will be made available to the BFUG board and to the BFUG on the protected part of the website.

The chair(s) will present regular updates to the board and to the BFUG.

Progress reports should be submitted at least three weeks before each board or BFUG meeting. In between meetings, updates should be circulated by the Bologna Secretariat via e-mail.

The final report will be presented and discussed at the BFUG meeting at the latest in the second half of 2017.

Meeting schedule

[meeting schedule is just tentative, will be decided by the advisory group at a later stage]

- First meeting: January 2016
- Second meeting: June 2016
- Third meeting: November 2016
- Fourth meeting: January 2017
- Fifth meeting: March 2017

Liaison with other WGs' and/or advisory groups' activities

- WG 1 on “Monitoring”
- WG 2 on “Implementation - Fostering implementation of agreed key commitments”
- WG 3 on “New goals - Policy developments for new EHEA goals”
- AG 2 on “Support for the Belarus roadmap”

Additional remarks

These terms of reference may be reviewed in the light of progress of the work, in agreement with the BFUG.

ANNEX II Participants in AG3 meetings during the BFUG working period 2015-2018

Meeting 1, Brussels (Belgium), 14 January 2015

Albania Linda Pustina
Council of Europe Villano Qiriazhi
EI/ETUCE Alessandro Arienzo
EQAR Colin Tück
ESU Blazhe Todorovski
European Commission Mette Moerk Andersen
France Patricia Pol
Iceland Una Vidarsdottir
Liechtenstein Daniel Miescher
The Netherlands Hester van den Blink
Switzerland Silvia Studinger
BFUG Secretariat Fabien Neyrat
BFUG Secretariat Nina Salden

Meeting 2, Reykjavik (Iceland), 12 September 2016

COE Villano Qiriazhi
EQAR Colin Tück
ESU Blazhe Todorovski
European Commission Mette-Moerk Andersen
EURASHE Michal Karpíšek
France Eliane Kotler
Iceland Una Vidarsdottír
Liechtenstein Daniel Miescher
Poland Zbigniew Marciniak
Switzerland Silvia Studinger
BFUG Secretariat Françoise Profit
BFUG Secretariat Marina Steinmann

Meeting 3, Zürich (Switzerland), 19 January 2017

COE Villano Qiriazì

EI/ETUCE Alessandro Arienzo

EQAR Colin Tück

ESU Lea Meister

European Commission Mette-Moerk Andersen

EURASHE Michal Karpíšek

France Eliane Kotler

Iceland Una Vidarsdóttir

Liechtenstein Daniel Miescher

The Netherlands Ferdi Geleijnse

Poland Zbigniew Marciniak

Switzerland Silvia Studinger

BFUG Secretariat Marina Steinmann

Meeting 4, Strasbourg (France), 7 June 2017

COE Villano Qiriazì

EQAR Colin Tück

ESU Lea Meister

EURASHE Michal Karpíšek

European Commission Klara Engels-Perenyi

France Marie-Odile Ott

Iceland Una Vidarsdóttir

Liechtenstein Daniel Miescher

The Netherlands Ferdi Geleijnse

BFUG Secretariat Marina Steinmann

Meeting 5, Brussels (Belgium), 7 December 2017

EQAR Colin Tück

ESU Helge Schwitters

European Commission Kinga Szuly

EURASHE Michal Karpíšek

France Hélène Lagier

Iceland Una Vidarsdóttir

Liechtenstein Daniel Miescher

The Netherlands Tessa Bijvank

Poland Zbigniew Marciniak

Switzerland Silvia Studinger

BFUG Secretariat Françoise Profit

BFUG Secretariat Marina Steinmann

WG1 chair David Crosier

WG2 chair (Belgium fl.) (representative) Magalie Soenen

WG2 chair (Austria) Helga Posset



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