



Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency

Erasmus+: Education and Youth Policy Analysis

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Note to BFUG

WG1 proposal on the conception of the 2020 Bologna Process Implementation Report

This proposal was developed through discussion within WG1 at its meeting of 10 July 2018 in Brussels. The meeting considered a number of different scenarios for the 2020 report and reached some conclusions which are brought together here. The purpose at this stage is to outline the rationale for this proposal to the BFUG so that a decision is taken that enables the report to be developed within this framework.

1 Context of the 2020 report

Launched with the Bologna Declaration of 1999, the Bologna Process will soon celebrate its 20th anniversary. Italy will host the next Ministerial conference of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and Bologna Policy Forum in 2020. For this event, the Paris Communiqué states:

"We mandate the BFUG to develop a Bologna Process Implementation Report assessing the main developments in the EHEA since the Bologna Process began, including to what extent we have fulfilled the mobility target agreed in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve in 2009."

In previous BFUG discussions it has already been agreed that the 2020 report should not aim to replicate the approach of the 2018 report which makes a comprehensive assessment of the current state of the European higher education landscape, and includes analysis of nearly 200 indicators. There would be insufficient additional benefit in updating such a large volume of information in 2019, and the enormous workload involved in that exercise – for countries, organisations and the authors of the report - would not be worth the marginal additional value - particularly given the (relatively) short period of two years between the 2018 and 2020 Ministerial Conferences.

Instead the 2020 report should aim to be concise and focused on the main developments in the EHEA.

2 Challenges

Time and human resources clearly represent significant constraints for the 2020 report. It is therefore important to develop and agree a clear and feasible concept to guide the report. One of the main questions that the report should address is, "what have been the achievements of the Bologna Process, and how far has the EHEA now come?" How can this be assessed?

A general methodological limitation is that it will not be possible to establish an accurate picture of reality with regard to qualitative indicators at any specific point in the development of the EHEA. Findings of reports prior to the Implementation reports (eg Stocktaking) are not directly comparable even when indicators cover the same topics, as different questions were used, different definitions and guidelines were provided, and information provided by countries was sometimes based on a less precise understanding of concepts.

Statistical data should be more reliable in showing change over time. However, there will also be some limitations as a result of changes and improvements in European statistical collection - for example the changes in ISCED definitions with the introduction of ISCED 2011.

As the report should be (relatively) short, it cannot be as inclusive as previous reports of information drawn from other stakeholder organisations. However, this report – looking at longer-term change - should be understood as a one off edition. Inclusion of information from stakeholder organisations would be resumed for future editions.

3 Principles for developing the 2020 report

WG1 considered a number of key questions and agreed the following principles:

- 1) Focus on main developments & trends in the EHEA as a whole – and not on all issues in all countries
- 2) Make use of existing data, and limit collecting and analysing new data as far as possible.
- 3) Embed indicators within a clear narrative that is focused on discussing key changes over time.

3.1 Approach for developing the 2020 report

Eurydice will continue to be responsible for the coordination and overall drafting of the report, working under the guidance of WG1 delegated by the BFUG.

Sections of the report may be drafted by different contributors – both within and outside WG1. For example, narrative describing and assessing the evolution of the social dimension may be written by Eurostudent, while EQAR/ENQA may offer a similar text with regard to the evolution of quality assurance in higher education. Other organisations/individuals could be asked to provide narrative text for other themes, but always on the basis of agreement in WG1 and under the auspices of the BFUG.

These narrative texts on the main developments throughout the Bologna period would be supported by updated statistical data and key indicators. Fewer statistical indicators will be included compared to the 2018 Bologna Process Implementation Report. However indicators will examine longer term trends, and not just recent years. New indicators will be required for credit mobility data in order to assess the 2020 mobility benchmark.

The key indicators would include, but not be limited to, the scorecard indicators, and would certainly cover the three key commitments agreed in Paris, and now followed through the work

of the Bologna Implementation Coordination Group. The indicators will be agreed at the next meeting of WG1, presented to the BFUG and updated early in 2019. These indicators would be used to show the current state of play – ie the point reached by the efforts described in the narrative text.

For these selected qualitative indicators, countries would be asked to verify information from the 2018 Bologna Process Implementation Report and bring it up to date in case reforms have been undertaken since 2018. The updating exercise will be based on very precise guidelines to ensure correct checking/reporting.

3.2 Fundamental values

The Paris Ministerial Conference discussions indicated that further work needs to be undertaken to monitor the **respect of fundamental values** across the EHEA. While the 2018 BPIR attempted to provide an overview of these issues, WG1 recognises that the data collection methods available are not adequate to develop this task in an optimal way during before the 2020 Ministerial Conference.

WG 1 therefore recommends that specific work should be undertaken on the topic of values. The task would be to develop and trial indicators that can be used in the future to assess how far values such as academic freedom and institutional autonomy are respected, and on what evidence this can be assessed. This work should be taken forward by organisations that have particular expertise. The Magna Charta Observatory could be invited to lead this work, and a task force or consortium of interested organisations and countries could be set up to support the initiative.

The report of such a consortium would be presented to the BFUG and Ministerial Conference directly. However, if the consortium were to consider that it could provide a narrative text on the evolution of values for inclusion in the 2020 Implementation Report, WG 1 would be happy to consider this option.

4. Summary

This proposal can be summarised under the following points:

- 4.1. With the possible exception of the topic of "fundamental values" (see 3.2 above) all main issues addressed by the Bologna process will be tackled in the 2020 report.
- 4.2. The main question that will be addressed is " what have been the achievements of the Bologna Process with regard to this thematic area, and how far have we now come?"
- 4.3. The report will combine a narrative text addressing the question of achievements with main indicators showing the current situation, and thus demonstrating how far the process has brought European higher education.
- 4.4. Different contributors will be invited to submit narrative texts to include in the report.