



## BFUG MEETING LXVII

12-13 November 2019

Helsinki (Finland)

### Minutes

#### List of participants

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6.	Azerbaijan	Yashar	Omarov
7.	Belarus	Elena	Betenya
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9.	Belgium French Community	Caroline	Hollela
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18.	Estonia	Janne	Pukk
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31.	Germany	Peter	Greisler
32.	Germany	Frank	Petrikowski
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34.	Hungary	Beatrix	Borza
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42.	Latvia	Daiga	Ivsina
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45.	Luxembourg	Stéphanie	Schott
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49.	Norway	Tone Flood	Strøm
50.	Poland	Maria	Boltruszko
51.	Portugal	Afonso	Oliveira-Martins
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53.	Romania	Mihai Cezar	Haj
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55.	Serbia	Nikola	Lazic
56.	Serbia	Aleksandar	Zivkovic
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67.	United Kingdom (Scotland)	Michael	Watney
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70.	EI/ETUCE	Agnes	Roman
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72.	ENQA	Maria	Kelo
73.	EQAR	Karl	Dittrich
74.	EQAR	Colin	Tück
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77.	ESU	Gohar	Hovhannisyan
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79.	ESU	Anniina	Sippola
80.	EUA	Michael	Gaebel
81.	EUA	Tia	Loukkola
82.	EURASHE (AG2 Co-chair)	Ulf-Daniel	Ehlers
83.	EURASHE	Michal	Karpíšek
84.	EURASHE	Stéphane	Lauwick
85.	EUROSTUDENT	Kristina	Hauschildt
86.	EURYDICE (WG1 Co-chair)	David	Crosier
87.	BFUG Secretariat	Filippo	Benedetti
88.	BFUG Secretariat	Rocío	Iglesias de Ussel Rubio
89.	BFUG Secretariat	Edlira Adi	Kahani Subashi
90.	BFUG Secretariat	Luca	Lantero

Apologies from: Albania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Montenegro.

## **Opening words by Ms. Hanna Kosonen, Minister of Science and Culture**

The Finnish BFUG Co-chair welcomed the participants to the BFUG meeting in Helsinki. There have already been 20 years of intergovernmental cooperation and the Rome 2020 Ministerial Conference will assess the progress and set the agenda for the EHEA beyond 2020. The purpose of this BFUG meeting is to prepare the agenda for the discussions by the EHEA Ministers at the Rome 2020 Ministerial Conference.

The Finnish Minister of Science and Culture Ms. Hanna Kosonen opened the 67<sup>th</sup> BFUG meeting by bringing greetings from the Finnish government. The impact of the Bologna Process (BP) and the EHEA in shaping European Higher Education (HE) over the last two decades is profound and evident. They have succeeded in agreeing on HE reforms and in boosting cooperation in Europe. One of the strengths of the BP has been a common and shared vision, supported by common tools and measures. Another factor of the success is that governments, HEIs, students and other actors are engaged in an ongoing dialogue. The intensified peer support is very much welcomed to ensure the full and coherent implementation of agreed reforms needed to keep the EHEA alive and credible. The themes discussed within the EHEA are relevant also for Finland on the national level. Education and training provide the best safeguard against exclusion and lack of prospects. Therefore, an equal society should seek to provide opportunities for every citizen to study to their full potential. Finland has a reputation for having created a top performing system of comprehensive school education. However, inequality, exclusion and differences in learning outcomes are beginning to threaten the Finnish success story. In the spirit of the social dimension of the BP, the Finnish government has decided to draw up a national accessibility plan for HE.

Issues such as climate change, globalization and technological development are all transforming the world faster than ever before. HE has a key role to play if we want to meet successfully the needs that our societies are facing. Minister Kosonen stressed that the Rome Ministerial Conference in June 2020 will pave the way for the coming decade. First of all, future provisions and ambitious goals are necessary for the development of the EHEA beyond the 2020. Secondly, for a successful and meaningful EHEA in the future, there is the need to put more effort in promoting fundamental values. Concrete action in order to guarantee that fundamental values remain the cornerstone of the EHEA is needed. Thirdly, the future EHEA should offer more flexible and diverse learning opportunities. The challenge of reskilling and upskilling is immense. Research, innovation and education are key elements to fostering European competitiveness, wellbeing, and sustainable growth. Therefore, it would be useful to break down the walls existing between education, research and innovation, both at national and international level, and further develop synergies between these sectors. The Minister thanked the BFUG for its input and work towards the Rome Ministerial Conference and wished a fruitful meeting for all in Helsinki.

### **1. Welcome and introduction**

#### 1.1 Welcome by the current BFUG Co-chairs: Finland / Turkey

The Finnish and Turkish BFUG Co-chairs greeted the participants, expressing their pleasure at hosting all of them in Helsinki, and wishing an important and successful meeting

#### 1.2 Information by the BFUG Vice-chair (Italy)

The BFUG Vice-chair greeted the participants, also as the coordinator of the Drafting Committee of the Rome 2020 Ministerial Communique. The BFUG meeting in Helsinki is a strategic one, to enable discussions on the challenges and work ahead. This meeting should have its main emphasis on free

and constructive discussion about the future of the EHEA. The agenda includes breakout sessions – a formula which turned out successfully in the BFUG meeting in Bucharest. The time allocated to plenary sessions and discussions should focus on the most important matters, such as the vision of the future, the priorities, how to go beyond declarations of intent and make these thoughts, sentences, reach beyond slogans and make them possible for the EHEA. It should also include discussions on the EHEA's global context, to realise its strength and potentiality to use it (both in the sense of “be aware” and “to make real”). So, we will really be able to discuss and build up the concepts in need to go forward, using resources of knowledge, sensitivity and understanding.

## **2. Adoption of the agenda**

The Finnish Co-chair informed the BFUG that due to the fact that various BFUG Groups requested extensions of the deadline for preparing their documents, it had not been possible to have them available on time. BFUG Co-Chairs pointed out that documents are a common effort, therefore the input and respect for deadlines from everyone is appreciated. The agenda was adopted without alterations.

*Attachment: BFUG\_FI\_TK\_67\_2a\_Draft Agenda.pdf*

*Attachment: BFUG\_FI\_TK\_67\_2b\_Draft\_Annotated\_Agenda.pdf*

## **3. Feedback from the last meetings**

### **3.1 Adoption of the minutes from the BFUG meeting in Bucharest**

The minutes of the BFUG meeting in Bucharest on 4-5 April 2019 are published on the [EHEA web site](#), including the input received by BFUG delegations.

Hungary suggested a change to the wording of Item 9.2 of these BFUG Meeting minutes, which was accommodated by changing the wording from “The proposal to raise the number of participants from each country in the BFUG meetings did not receive support...” to “The proposal to raise the number of participants from each country in the BFUG meetings did not receive *enough* support...”.

### **3.2 Report from the Board meeting in Istanbul**

The Turkish Co-chair provided information on the Board meeting in Istanbul on 24 September 2019. At the Board meeting, the BICG, AG1, AG2, CG1 reported on the work carried out. The Council for Europe (CoE) informed on the Network of QF National Correspondents. The Turkish Co-chair informed also on the fruitful meeting of the drafting committee. The Draft 0 of the Rome 2020 Communiqué, already disseminated to the BFUG, would be discussed at this BFUG meeting in Helsinki, as it appears on the agenda.

## **4. Information from the BFUG Secretariat**

The Head of the BFUG Secretariat gave brief information on the main topics the BFUG Secretariat had been working on between the two BFUG Meetings: reports from all BFUG groups, responses on national consultations, BPIR questionnaires to all BFUG Members, update of the list of EHEA Network of National QF Correspondents, Rome 2020 Ministerial Conference preparations and letters to all EHEA Ministers on behalf of the Minister for Education University and Research of the Italian

Republic. The Head of the BFUG Secretariat reminded the participants that the BFUG meeting would be audio-recorded, as done in previous meetings.

*Attachment: BFUG\_FI\_TK\_67\_4\_Info\_from\_the\_BFUG\_Secretariat*

## **5. Work plan 2018-2020 – Updates and draft recommendations from the AGs, BICG, CG and WG**

### **5.1. Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG)**

The Croatian BICG Co-chair gave an update on the activities and outcomes of the 3 thematic peer groups (TPGs) on the 3 key commitments. The BICG will have its meetings until March 2020, while the Final Report to the BFUG will be ready for the BFUG meeting in Split in May 2020. First impressions on usefulness of the peer approach for the implementation of the key commitments will be complemented by a short survey asking the countries about how they perceived the peer support and their recommendations for improvement in the future. All TPGs have created standard action plans with country specific inputs, while the ERASMUS+ funded projects support the overall work of the TPGs and specific themes. The goal to have each EHEA country participating in at least one TPG has been reached; however, more stable participation would be beneficial.

The information on the work carried out by **TPG A on QF** focused on:

- peer support in self-certification of NQFs to the QF-EHEA and implementation of ECTS;
- the webpage on NQFs to be updated with self-certification criteria and reports;
- the need to work further on ECTS implementation in line with the ECTS Users Guide;
- short cycle higher education and study programmes outside the Bologna 3-cycle structure;
- relationship between the Qualifications Frameworks and Quality Assurance;
- multiple purposes and use of the Qualifications Frameworks by the stakeholders;
- more active and stronger involvement of the HEIs in the implementation of the NQFs as well as cooperation with the National Correspondents for QF-EHEA.

Concerning the **TPG B on LRC** information focused on:

- the work done to establish the legal framework to allow the implementation of the LRC;
- involvement of the stakeholders in the implementation of the LRC (students, HEIs, QAAs);
- optimizing the potential of digital technology in recognition – digitalization in recognition practices towards automatic recognition: use of digital credentials, digitalization of the recognition process, application of new technologies in recognition, such as blockchain;
- links with QA on the way to simplify verification of accreditation status - the use of DEQAR database;
- establishment of a "European Assessment Report" to give a common standard to recognition decisions within the EHEA and information on different Erasmus+ projects related to recognition.

**TPG C on QA** has been focusing its work on:

- the legislative framework in line with the ESG;
- internal QA arrangements including the use of QA results in the decision-making process, quality culture, links to L&T;
- external QA and the role and engagement of stakeholders in QA (students, teachers, employers);
- cross-border QA and the European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes;

- study visits and different Erasmus+ projects related to QA;
- peer to peer support on the different thematic orientations in order to better fulfil the key commitment on QA as well as the thematic sessions on thematic orientations to exchange ideas and good practices.

Considering the importance of the three Key Commitments, the work of the BICG in the future is considered crucial. The peer approach has shown clear added value. The role of the BICG should now shift towards thematic policy coordination, ensuring that cross-cutting issues and challenges that arise from the TPG's work can be effectively addressed. There is the need for the BFUG to give direction to the BICG on how to stimulate more links on related content between the peer groups. It was suggested that the funding for the umbrella projects for the peer groups (financed by the Erasmus+ EHEA call) could be embedded in the European Commission (EC) grant to the BFUG Secretariat (some self-financing from countries to participate in peer group meetings will still be expected).

In the discussions, the participants expressed their appreciation for the work and report prepared by the BICG. The idea of the mentioned upcoming survey was welcomed, as first impressions are very positive, and with the Erasmus+ umbrella projects underway, there is the need to look forward to tangible results. The participation of all EHEA countries in at least one TPG is a positive step. This shows the importance given to the peer support. The purpose of the peer support is to focus mainly on supporting the implementation of key commitments and not to turn them primarily in discussions on further policies. There is the need for further clarification in regard to the "European Assessment Report" and whether it is needed, especially when considering instruments available for implementation, including the LRC, DS and Recognition Centres. There is the need to further discuss the topic, with the ENIC-NARICs among others. In order to allow the peer group co-chairs to focus on content-related work in the peer groups, the EC is ready to consider new ways to provide support to peer group members to participate in the meetings. Even if such support could be made available through the Erasmus+ Program, for example through the BFUG Secretariat, participating countries and organisations should still share responsibility on funding their participation in meetings.

*Attachment: BFUG\_FI\_TK\_67\_5\_1\_BICG*

## 5.2. EHEA Network of NQF Correspondents

The Council of Europe (CoE) informed the BFUG of the Network's annual meeting held in September 2019 in Strasbourg. In addition to an update on national developments, the meeting focused on:

- a) the coherence between the structural reform areas and tools (QF, recognition and QA), which is important not only on European but also on national level,
- b) self-certification (review of the existing mechanism and ideas for the future), the current situation and lack of peer review of self-certification reports being unsatisfactory, and
- c) inclusion of the short cycle qualification within the QF-EHEA, with EURASHE doing a very good work in that area. Following the Paris Communiqué, the topic is on the agenda of all bodies dealing with QF, while taking into consideration the complexity of short cycle qualifications. Even in HE short cycle qualifications represent a large variety, some linked only to the labour market. In some systems, such qualifications are linked directly to adult education. Inclusion of short cycle qualifications underlines the importance of establishing a necessary dialogue between VET providers and HEIs, with the need to define QA in specific cases.

In regard to self-certification, almost all reports are included within the referencing reports against the EQF, with few countries outside the EQF having so far self-certified their NQF for HE. The

wording of the QF-EHEA should be reviewed and made more easily available. The meeting encouraged reflection on how a peer review process could be introduced within the QF-EHEA, with the TPG A on QF being a proper place for such review.

The meeting decided on the actions to be taken, recommending that reference to the need for further development of QF-EHEA be included in the draft Rome Communiqué, in particular as concerns a review of the criteria on self-certification, the need to include stronger elements of peer review in self-certification reports, inclusion of further developments of QFs as well as continuation of the network of national correspondents for QFs in the future.

EURASHE stressed that the short cycle is one of the issues less understood, although it is important as it can grant access to a wider segment of society to higher education. EURASHE would like to, but has not enough capacity, advance with mapping the state of play in the different countries. The EURASHE representative asked BFUG members to advise how more evidence (in form of studies or research) could be gathered in this topic.

*Attachment: BFUG\_FI\_TK\_67\_5\_2\_NQF\_Correspondents*

### 5.3 Working Group on Monitoring (WG1)

The Co-chairs of WG1 reported on the development of the 2020 Bologna Process Implementation Report (BPIR), that will combine qualitative and quantitative data as well as narrative texts. Qualitative data was collected using a questionnaire sent to the BFUG member countries. Data collection ended in early September 2019 (questions for clarification were sent to countries during the summer) and at the moment Eurydice is engaged in “data processing”. The BFUG Members were asked to comment by 4 November 2019, and to include confirmation messages that the information is correct. Qualitative indicators and draft analyses will be sent to the BFUG for checking in November 2019, after the Helsinki BFUG meeting. Eurostat is the other main source of data, while data from countries outside the European Statistical System are collected via questionnaires. Statistical indicators, analyses and graphic visualisation are currently being developed and by the end of 2019 the data is expected to be integrated into the draft BPIR. As for the narrative section of the Report, WG1 approved guidelines for the drafting of the narrative texts to be discussed by WG1, which are currently being drafted by EQAR and ENQA (Development of the QA system), EUROSTUDENT (Development of the social dimension) and ACA (Development of internationalisation in HE). Another narrative section is being written on the degree structure reforms. A further meeting of the WG1 is foreseen between the Spring 2020 BFUG meetings, to enable guidance and feedback on how to finalise the 2020 BPIR.

*Attachment: BFUG\_FI\_TK\_67\_5\_3\_WG1*

### 5.4 WG1 Task Force for future monitoring of values

The Task Force (TF), established by the BFUG under WG1 umbrella, made good use of the inputs by experts, researchers and organisations. The TF has considered how to approach the issue of fundamental values. The task force has stuck closely to the values outlined in the Paris Communiqué – academic freedom and integrity, institutional autonomy, participation of students and staff in HE governance, and public responsibility for and of HE. The TF recognises that all of these values are important, but it has considered that the area most lacking in monitoring and in reporting is academic freedom. Consequently, the TF has chosen to focus particularly on academic freedom as a first step. Further work will be required to strengthen the protection and promotion of the other values as well in the next phase.

Monitoring of fundamental values should take into account both the legal (*de jure*) protection of values and the actual (*de facto*) level of respect of these values. Strengthening existing EHEA mechanisms should be considered as one way of monitoring the respect of values, as should the development of new monitoring approaches.

The TF proposed a short and clear definition of academic freedom that can be adopted by the Ministers in the Rome Communiqué - with an explanatory text in an annex. The aim is to help to achieve a common understanding across the EHEA. Looking at the period post-2020, the TF is discussing proposals for *de jure* mapping of protection of values in EHEA countries (e.g. laws, regulations, etc); taking steps to develop a *de facto* monitoring framework on fundamental values; strengthening the reference to fundamental values in a future revision of the ESG.

The debate revealed the high level of importance attached to fundamental values and the members of the BFUG stressed that this issue is a priority for the EHEA. The work of the TF has been highly appreciated and the draft report is considered clear although some members stated that it is too long to be included in the Communiqué. It has therefore been proposed to shorten it, or to include only the definition of Academic Freedom in the Communiqué, without including the appendix. Moreover, the need to encourage the TF to focus on other fundamental values mentioned in the Paris Communiqué and to develop all fundamental values of the EHEA emerged. The status and mandate of the sub-group was raised in the discussion, bearing in mind that the decision of giving the mandate to TF as a sub-group of WG1 was made at the BFUG in Vienna. The issue of whether in the future TF should be a separate group is a decision to be taken by the BFUG for the new workplan 2020-2023. Moreover, discussions raised the need to develop methodology, to expand the scope to other fundamental values and to expand the work beyond monitoring to policy dialogue and to promoting fundamental values.

*Attachment: BFUG\_FI\_TK\_67\_5\_4\_Task Force*

### 5.5 Advisory Group 1 on Social Dimension (AG1)

The Co-chairs of AG1 reported on the development of the draft Document “European Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education” (PAGs) that the group is currently preparing for the BFUG in view of the next Ministerial Conference. Following the discussions in its group meetings, AG1 on Social Dimension had put forward a set of 10 PAGs, representing a vision for the next decade and affirming SD as a core value of the Bologna Process. AG1 last meeting, held one day before the BFUG meeting in Helsinki, focused on the fine tuning of the principles, and also on the topic of SD as a core commitment for the EHEA, while discussion on the topics of monitoring and peer learning activities is planned for February 2020. The main topics included in the 10 PAGs draft were presented, including a reference to the proposed related guidelines. The Social Dimension should be seen not as an additional commitment but as stimulus for the other principles to be implemented. The difficulty in reaching a univocal notion of Social Dimension, as it can be interpreted in different ways by different countries, was noted. The PAGs should engage national authorities and allow the development of a discussion in the various countries.

Discussions expressed once more the BFUG’s support for the work carried out by AG1 on Social Dimension. Most of the participants supported the PAGs as a way to further strengthen social dimension across the EHEA when inclusion is important for individuals as well as societies at large. However, attention should be given to Principle 4, as data collection should respect national laws, also related to data protection. It was agreed that in the future work attention should be paid to the wording of the principles: especially the wording of Principle 4 (data collection) and 6 (funding) needs to be changed, and the repetition of many “*should*” along the text, which would hinder effective

action, was questioned by some. Full portability of grants and loans across the EHEA, which EHEA Ministers agreed on in the past, should not be forgotten as well. Besides, social inclusion is part of the understanding of quality education. Therefore, although it is not possible to quality assure the social dimension, the question should be posed as to whether there is the need to look at the links between the social dimension and QA. It was concluded that AG1, after taking into consideration the current feedback and recommendations from the BFUG, will make a revised version of the draft PAGs in connection to a BFUG consultation to be organized by the BFUG Secretariat in order to get BFUG comments.

*Attachment: BFUG\_FI\_TK\_67\_5\_5a\_AG1*

*Attachment: BFUG\_FI\_TK\_67\_5\_5b\_AG1\_Principles and Guidelines*

### 5.6 Advisory Group 2 on Learning and Teaching (AG2)

The Dutch and EURASHE Co-chairs of AG2 jointly presented an update on the work done so far and on the current situation and next steps. Following the discussions and decisions from the Group's meetings, a first draft is in progress. The document is based on principles and guidelines (what the group finds important regarding the theme) and government recommendation (what national governments can/should do) and should consist of recommendations that are structured in three chapters: 1. making student-centred learning a reality; 2. fostering learning through improved teaching practices; 3. strengthening HEIs organizational development to support learning and teaching. The chapters have the same structure: policy recommendations; principles and European good practices. The main focus will be on open education, open education resources, digital transformation, with an emphasis on innovation. Envisaged future steps of the AG2 on L&T will be continuing the work on the recommendations – including (re-)structuring and prioritising them, also on the basis of the feedback received and collecting best practices related to the draft recommendations.

Discussions emphasized the steps forward taken so far by AG2 on Learning & Teaching. The proposals of AG2 on L&T are helpful and useful and should not be considered only as tick boxes. Digitalisation is a topic that should be included in the Rome Communiqué. In order to avoid confusion, it has been proposed to clarify certain terminology: principles, guidelines, recommendations and what is meant by good practices. It was also specified, however, that examples of good practice were emphasized in the ToR of the AG2 on L&T. Furthermore, it is necessary to focus on the skills that students will need to have in order to find suitable employment: among others, critical thinking and ability to adapt to future challenges.

*Attachment: BFUG\_FI\_TK\_67\_5\_6\_a\_AG2*

*Attachment: BFUG\_FI\_TK\_67\_5\_6\_b\_AG2*

### 5.7 Coordination Group 1 on Global Policy Dialogue (CG1)

The Belgium Flemish Community Co-chair presented the work of CG1 on GPD. The remit of CG1 on GPD is to promote more constant dialogue with other parts of the world (on macro-region, national and organizational levels). CG1 on GPD is also responsible for organizing the 1<sup>st</sup> Global Policy Forum (GPF), to take place back to back with the Ministerial Conference in Rome in June 2020 or sandwiched into it. Part of the CG1 on GPD activities was the organisation of the event in Rome in October 2019, during the Festival of Diplomacy. The BFUG was informed about the list of topics the CG1 has suggested should be included in the Rome 2020 Ministerial Communiqué (all the detailed

information is on the report prepared by the Co-chairs, [published on the EHEA](#) web site and disseminated among the BFUG), academic freedom being one of the topics, which was proposed during discussions after the presentation. As for the list of non-EHEA countries to be invited, “save the date” letters should be sent out as soon as possible.

The list of non-EHEA countries to be invited should be made available for the BFUG, as for diplomatic issues certain BFUG members might find it difficult to invite certain non-EHEA countries to the GPF. In particular, invitations should not be extended to countries where (a) the authority of the government is disputed, or (b) that clearly violated the most basic norms of democracy and human rights, including the fundamental values of higher education. The BFUG Secretariat will circulate the list of countries to the BFUG asking delegations to notify electronically the BFUG Secretariat as to whether there are diplomatic problems with specific countries from the prepared list. Beyond the Rome GFP itself, it will indeed be necessary to follow up after the Rome 2020 Ministerial Conference, in order to ensure a systematic dialogue and to keep it constantly alive. As umbrella topic, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are proposed. Furthermore, the CG1 proposes six subtopics for discussion on the Global Policy Forum,

- Innovation, new skills and their link to employability
- New (digital) ways of learning and teaching in a lifelong learning context
- Mobility of persons, minds and knowledge
- Untapped talent: opening up higher education and career opportunities to refugees
- Inclusion as a driver for excellence
- Building trust in a global context.

It is necessary to find the proper formula for interaction of EHEA and non-EHEA participants during the Ministerial Conference and Global Policy Forum. It should be avoided to develop the Ministerial Communiqué and Global Policy Statement separately, as done previously. The BFUG asked to have a draft of the Global Policy Statement in its next BFUG meeting in Kiev on 4-5 March 2020. The idea to involve in the GPF not only non-EHEA governments but also non-governmental, international and regional organizations is appreciated, and the BFUG Consultative members should be involved to get in touch with their fellow organisations throughout the world. The idea of “*Bologna Dialogue Partners*”, suggested for a more sustainable political dialogue and cooperation between the EHEA and sustainable partners in the rest of the world, willing to cooperate with the EHEA , should be further discussed; something of this kind has been proposed unsuccessfully several times in the past, but now the time seems ripe. The definition of the term and its implications should be discussed at the BFUG.

*Attachment: BFUG\_FI\_TK\_67\_5\_7\_a\_CG1*

*Attachment: BFUG\_FI\_TK\_67\_5\_7\_b\_Higher Education in the Global Context*

## **6. Work Plan 2018-2020 – update and next steps for EHEA-ERA interaction**

The Paris Communiqué mandated BFUG to establish interaction with the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) by 2020 in order to develop synergies between the EHEA and the European Research Area (ERA). No specific group had been set up in the work plan of the BFUG to address this issue. The Finnish Co-chair informed the BFUG about two initial steps that have been taken so far. The BFUG and ERAC co-chairs met informally in September 2019 in Brussels and considered it important to start enhancing interaction in a practical way without introducing burdensome new structures. It was felt that in spite of the differences in governance and working methods much can be done to increase collaboration and interaction between EHEA and ERA.

During the current Finland's Presidency of the Council of European Union the meeting of Directors-Generals for Higher Education was organised back to back with the very first joint meeting of the EU Directors-General for Higher Education and the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC). The joint conference was organized in cooperation with the European Commission on 1 October 2019. The aim of this conference was to start a dialogue between these two sectors, education and research, by bringing together policy makers to discuss three major game-changers and find common ground and enhance cooperation around these and other relevant topics: openness, digitalization and artificial intelligence.

It was noted in the discussion that silos between education and research sector are real and the dialogue and interaction between the ERAC and the BFUG should continue. The European Commission emphasised that the new structure of the Commission combines education, research and innovation in the same portfolio which will give new opportunities for developing synergies between education and research and innovation policies. It is not feasible to organise meetings of the BFUG and ERAC together. Other platforms for an exchange of views and for systematic flow of information can be found, Both EHEA and ERAC are working on documents building on their new visions for the next decade – there could be exchange on these ideas. Suggestions for collaboration themes: sustainability, digitalisation, mobility, openness, fundamental values, teaching, research-based learning. Co-Chairs could meet at regular occasions and ERAC could participate by a representative in BFUG thematic sessions and vice versa.

The BFUG thanked Finland for starting the dialogue. The suggested co-operation themes were supported by adding the European Universities Initiative (EUI) to the list. BFUG stressed that it is essential to involve the whole EHEA and not only EU Member States in the future cooperation.

*Attachment: BFUG\_FI\_TK\_67\_6\_Next\_Steps\_EHEA-ERA*

## **7. Future of EHEA: thematic discussion on vision and priorities**

### 7.1 Results from the national consultations

The Head of the BFUG Secretariat presented the BFUG with the results of the consultations. The report prepared by the BFUG Secretariat consists of an analysis of the responses it received on the national and organizational consultations, as decided by the BFUG in its meeting in Bucharest on 4-5 April 2019. The survey was carried out on 28 June 2019 and the online questionnaire was sent to all BFUG Members, with a deadline of 15 October 2019. At the end, 39 BFUG members responded (35 BFUG Members, 3 BFUG Consultative Members and 1 BFUG Partner). Background documents for the consultations were the documents "Governance and Thematic priorities after 2020. Outcomes of the online survey" and the "BFUG work on vision and thematic priorities after 2020. Summary of the current state of affairs (June 2019)". Different tools were used, including written and online consultations and surveys based on questionnaires, e-mail messages, face-to-face and virtual meetings, workshops, focus groups, round tables, etc. The results of the consultations largely confirm the overall vision and the thematic priorities indicated for the EHEA after 2020. Feedback from national consultations confirm the centrality and the relevance of the seven EHEA key themes. In most countries a real discussion has taken place, involving a large number of national actors (ministries, policy makers, HEIs, national organisations, researchers, employers, student unions, stakeholders) in different forms and with different tools. This process appears extremely positive. Equally relevant is the approach followed in some countries where the discussion has mainly focused on the state of the national implementation of the Bologna Process. The results were proposals for systemic reform, as well as the identification of national targets to be achieved in the near future.

The participants expressed appreciation to the work carried out by the BFUG Secretariat on gathering the feedback from BFUG members and proposed that such information should be kept and published. While on individual/country level information received might be interesting, the question is how to integrate it on European level, as there is the need to develop the future EHEA vision as a whole and not with regard to separate countries. Emphasis should be given also to the importance of the EHEA and also to why it should continue in the future. Considering that the Rome 2020 Ministerial Conference will establish the goals of the EHEA for the following decade, it is essential to go beyond the list of priorities. The focus should be more on the vision of the EHEA in 2030. The EHEA in 2030 should be an area in which students, staff and holders of qualifications should be able to move and work freely, an area of social inclusion (building on initiatives like the CoE's on the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees, etc). Academic freedom and institutional autonomy should continue to be at the core of the EHEA. The EHEA should be an area in which HE systems are dynamic and allow innovation in learning and teaching. The input from EHEA countries gathered should be presented in a document, as it is very valuable for the EHEA, and it should be preserved. Consultations also pointed out the different pace at which Europe is developing and there is the need to address how to create and maintain solidarity. There is a huge cleavage between the north-western part of Europe and south-eastern one, and there is the need to address this difference, in order to avoid ending up with a long shopping list of small items. Cooperation and solidarity, academic values, new initiatives based on increasing geographical balance, should be at the core of discussions, to enable generations to enjoy the benefits of the EHEA on an equal basis.

*Attachment: BFUG\_FI\_TK\_67\_7\_1\_National Consultations*

*Attachment: BFUG\_FI\_TK\_67\_7\_1\_National Consultations Presentation*

## 7.2 Introduction to the breakout sessions

The Finnish Co-chair informed the BFUG on the concept note for the breakout sessions to follow. The concept note focuses on inspiring a forward-looking discussion on the future of EHEA during the breakout sessions. Discussions should build on the results of the consultations at the national level and on the work done previously in the BFUG. The discussion in the Bucharest BFUG meeting focused on what the foreseeable changes in society and in the economy of the EHEA and the wider world would mean for HE, and how and whether the present structures and tools of the EHEA would be sufficient for the future scenario, or whether and how they would need to be adapted. The findings from the Bucharest discussion were grouped under seven general themes: The societal role of higher education, Inclusiveness of higher education, Innovative, flexible and relevant learning and teaching, Lifelong learning, Digitalisation, Internationalisation and mobility, Governance and autonomy. Main questions for discussion in the following breakout sessions in Helsinki would focus on:

1. What should be the role of higher education and the EHEA in securing sustainable future and meeting the United Nations SDGs? How can the EHEA work towards these goals?
2. How should the protection and promotion of the fundamental values to be reflected in the future vision of the EHEA?
3. Do you think that the idea (and goal) of European Higher Education Community could be useful for building the future of the EHEA? What should it mean in practice?
4. In addition to the present EHEA commitments and priorities, what other elements would help to shift the emphasis and clarify what the EHEA should become by 2030 and beyond?

*Attachment: BFUG\_FI\_TK\_67\_7\_2\_Introduction breakout sessions*

### 7.3 Breakout sessions (4 discussion groups)

The BFUG Participants were divided into four groups to discuss the themes proposed on the vision of the future EHEA and the priorities beyond 2020. The 4 groups were co-moderated by Romania and EURASHE; North Macedonia and ESU; Croatia and EI/ETUCE; Ukraine and ENQA.

*Attachment: BFUG\_FI\_TK\_67\_7\_3\_Breakout sessions*

### 7.4 Rethinking EHEA – Expectations of Society (Ms. Anita Lehtikoinen, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Culture)

Anita Lehtikoinen, Permanent Secretary at the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture greeted the participants and recalled the beginning of the Bologna Process in Finland 20 years ago, remembering the scepticism with regard to the process, and the fear of too much regulation at international level. Looking back, and considering the achievements of the BP, it is clear that the BP has been a game changer for many HE systems as well as on European level. BP/EHEA, in its 20 years, has been a unique co-operation structure, based on a shared vision, agreed commitments and a follow-up structure, leading to undisputed achievements. It has improved transparency and increased attractiveness. HE community (faculty staff, students) other national stakeholders as well as governments have been involved in the process, making it possible to reform the EHEA in a more attractive way. For example, Finland has completely renewed its legislation concerning HEIs, degree structure, and the QA system, while increasing cooperation through peer learning. The current landscape looks very different than in 1999, and it is important to rethink the process and its goals, what to achieve, and renew the commitment. Global challenges are reflected in society's growing expectations for higher education. There is a need to offer skills for the future and more possibilities for continuous learning. Also learning and teaching methods have been changing, which means that there is the need to make use of new possibilities of L&T as well as technological developments, AI, and data collection. There is a need to think about the role of the EHEA in relation to the EU-led European Education Area (EEA) and the European Research Area (ERA), focusing on openness, flexibility, the need for increased diversity, support to national policy making, the need to take a strong stand in favour of fundamental values for democratic societies, shared vision, development of common tools, peer learning structures and sustainable HE for sustainable Europe. With regard to the challenges ahead, clearly it is essential to find ways to implement the EHEA commitment and to deliver on the BP ideals and vision. It is also very important to think about whether EHEA is attractive as a global player and to find ways to be more competitive.

*Attachment: BFUG\_FI\_TK\_67\_7\_4\_Rethinking\_EHEA\_Presentation*

### 7.5 Conclusion from the breakout sessions

The co-moderators of the breakout sessions reported key messages from each group. All four groups held lively discussions and produced very useful feedback.

**Group 1/Co-moderation: Romania and EURASHE** - The discussions started following the structure of the questions posed. In the discussion about the future, words such as diversity, openness with the society, openness of partnership and flexibility, cooperation and partnership were mentioned most often. Thinking about the shape of HE in 2030, the participants confirmed the importance of the autonomy of HEIs and their ability to take the initiative: this aspect must be

strengthened in the future. It is essential to allow HEIs to make their own decisions, while the role of government must be primarily to coordinate and set the rules. This will be the optimal configuration for responsible development.

The Sustainable Development Goals are already in HEIs policies and should be part of the Ministers' Communiqué. Great attention was paid to general competences and flexibility, and there was also strong interest in keeping the European Universities Initiative (EUI) open beyond the EU, comprising all the EHEA. The fundamental values constitute clearly agreed baselines, the respect for which should be addressed through different channels, fora and peer exchange formats. Another point addressed was coherence and solidarity throughout the EHEA, and the importance of finding solutions. On the discussion about the term European Higher Education Community, the conclusion is to keep it with small letters, there is no need for new structures. At the same time, it is important to keep the stakeholders on the loop, involving all of them in the discussions. It is better not to change the name of EHEA but to change the way of thinking about it and describing it. There is a need to further improve the range of the community.

With regard to the social aspects of the SDGs, the HEIs are doing a lot on the subject, and with their activities they already contribute to meeting them. Still, it would be a good idea to develop a framework to raise awareness about what universities can do more to contribute to all the Sustainable Development Goals, not only the ones related to education.

**Group 2/Co-moderation: North Macedonia and ESU** - The group started by considering the successes of the Bologna Process. Mobility, QA and recognition are its most successful aspects. The group discussed the differences between fundamental values versus fundamental purposes, and the need for the EHEA to invest more in critical thinking. There is a need to review who the learners are and put more emphasis on LLL. The most important aspect discussed was the need to connect the Bologna Process to its main beneficiaries and have a more modern discourse about it. Digitalization was one of the main points discussed within the group, since its role in Learning & Teaching is becoming increasingly important and in the next decade it will increase exponentially. It is necessary to give it adequate emphasis. The group also discussed the issue of European Higher Education Community and the importance of having community participation, but the creation of new terms may not cause positive results. This issue was connected to the image of the Bologna Process that is now improving, and to the fact that the terms created 20 years ago are being understood now. It is important to understand that the gap between the BFUG members and the beneficiaries is quite large, so any new terminology introduced in the BFUG takes time to be understood by the end user, therefore it is important to be careful when creating new terms and to focus on things that will bring tangible results.

**Group 3/Co-moderation: Croatia and EI/ETUCE** - All four questions were discussed within the group. About the first question no consensus was reached as to whether the SDGs or climate change should be addressed as an EHEA priority. There were reasons and arguments in favour and against this proposal. Some arguments in favour are related to the fact that if we want to make the Bologna spirit live again, targeting a sustainable future could bring the academics back into the debate. However, there were some arguments against this proposal, as it seems that all the SDGs are equally important and the BFUG cannot focus only in one and skip the others, and secondly environmental issues cannot be the main objective of the EHEA as such. SDGs can be and should be a topic of the universities in general, but EHEA as a community should be focusing on the SDG 4 on education, which means inclusive and equal education and LLL for all. Emphasis was given to the fact that the fundamental values represent the most important pillars of the EHEA and that they must be conceived as a whole and not separately. On the question of the new term European Higher Education Community, the discussion came up with a clear conclusion that there is no need to

introduce new terms if there is no clear idea behind it. The aim is to engage all people of the HE community (students or academics) into EHEA and involve them in policy developments is undisputable and this is something to remember always to focus on, how to keep people together in the community and to share the ownership of the Bologna Process. It is a clear goal to achieve and keep alive but trying to reach another level and not changing the substance. The vision of the future of the BP is missing and there is the need to define it, the same as it was 20 years ago. The vision of the future should also consider that it is still a struggle to achieve the initial vision while trying to create a new one at the same time. It is important to renew the vision, even though it is difficult to create a new path, without being successful in achieving the initial one. The group discussed also proposals like the need to shift from discussions about 3-cycle structure and implementation of the key commitments to new topics such as saving our planet or fundamental values and possibly incorporated in the social dimension.

**Group 4/Co-moderation: Ukraine and ENQA** - The group was subdivided in two, one discussed about all the four questions, and the other focused on the new idea of EHEA Community.

The first point was harnessing the HE potential to address the SDGs, and it was discussed whether EHEA should focus in all SDGs or only in the ones related to education. About the fundamental values and the transformation towards the future vision of the EHEA, the conclusion was that the EHEA in the next decade has to focus on contributing to build a peaceful and sustainable Europe through open and flexible HE and the European dimension. In this respect, the group came up with a number of points such as mobility, employability, societal impact, and flexibility which could potentially be reflected in the Communiqué to be taken into consideration for the next decade. Special emphasis could be given to the NQFs, to short and partial qualifications and micro credentials. In the discussions it was stated that traditional HE triangle is not valid anymore; now it should be a rectangle of HE, research, innovation and link to the society. Solidarity and 'transfer of know-how' between the EU and non-EU members of the EHEA should be taken into account in the next period and reflected in the Rome Communiqué. About the idea of European Higher Education Community, several perspectives were raised. For some, the idea of a European Higher Education Community can be useful giving the fact that it can be used for promoting EHEA values and ideas such as "Together stronger than divided and more sharing, belonging and connection". Having the European Higher Education Community can also be the interconnection of all tools of the Bologna Process and with the Community being the space and ecosystem where all these tools are being successfully implemented in the coming period. Besides, it would be fundamental to communicate the idea of 'community' among the EHEA stakeholders. However, for others, there was a strong questioning raised on whether the 'community' terminology is appropriate politically, instead of the EHEA reference, when the EHEA is a political goal linked to several actions lines and dimensions which go far beyond the only issue of a "community": political appraisal too is important and any new concept must be attractive to all EHEA Ministers.

The BFUG, after hearing the conclusions from the breakout sessions, discussed the topic in plenary session. 'EHEA Community' could bring the idea of cooperation, but there is the need to better explain, in case it is included in the ministerial communiqué. The majority of comments expressed the view that the concept of involving the community is important to capture, but not with a new term (and capital letters) as European Higher Education Community. The BFUG emphasized the fact that a vision for the future of the EHEA must consider its key pillars; cooperation, partnership and cohesion. Education is important as it affects many societal goals. It is also important to look at what specific changes the EHEA can achieve. The EHEA is a loosely organized entity, and while thinking about the future priorities, there is a need to choose priorities where EHEA can actually make a difference.

## **8. Towards the Rome 2020 Ministerial Conference**

### 8.1. Road map for the Rome 2020 Communiqué and Global Policy Statement

The BFUG Vice-Chair, in her capacity as the coordinator of the Drafting Committee, explained the rationale behind the draft roadmap and the dates appearing in it. The draft road map for the Rome 2020 Communiqué was uploaded on the EHEA web site to assist the Drafting Committee in the preparation of the Rome 2020 Ministerial Communiqué. The dates appearing in the Road map are indicative, according to the needs of the Drafting Committee. The fixed dates are connected to Board and BFUG meetings.

Some BFUG consultative members expressed concern about the short time left for them to provide feedback, asking to revise the road map by reducing the number of different versions of the draft Communiqué and by extending the time deadlines for comments. It was concluded that there is the need to reconsider the dates of the Road map, taking into consideration the request from the BFUG.

### 8.2. Discussions on Draft 0 of the Rome 2020 Communiqué

The BFUG Vice-Chair, in her capacity as the coordinator of the Drafting Committee, presented the rationale and the structure of the Draft Communiqué to the BFUG. The discussion showed that important proposals for the Rome Communiqué have already emerged from the breakout sessions, considering essential to think about to whom the document is addressed and to use “the same language”, and, if necessary, to affirm obvious things, such as the importance of cooperation. Concerning the structure, the discussions confirmed the need for a clear and effective Communiqué, starting from remembering that it is fundamental to continue with EHEA, then express the vision and how to achieve it and make it a reality.

Discussion on the Draft 0 of the Rome 2020 Communiqué concentrated on general feedback and on comments on the structure of the Communiqué. The BFUG asked for a clearer structure that illustrates what has been done, what needs to be done now and how and by what means the issues should be tackled. The steps for 2023 should also be stated clearly even if the vision is for a longer period. The BFUG asked the Drafting Committee to pay attention to the language used in the text. The Communiqué should include forward looking commitments that are attractive for the Ministers and for the wider higher education community. The language used might benefit from more human centred approach. It was suggested to open the Rome Communiqué reaffirming the commitment to continue with EHEA in the next decade, and to have a clear vision on how to connect the BP key commitments with the HEIs and students. It was also highlighted that the focus should be on what can reasonably be achieved in the Bologna Process given its character as a fairly loosely organized intergovernmental structure and how to shape and fit the vision to respond to the changing demands of society. The idea of core commitments added to the key commitments was welcomed by some. Moreover, it was underlined that peer learning is an effective method, and that the regional cooperation within Europe should be emphasized even more. Participants asked to give more space in the Communiqué to the Social Dimension and Learning and Teaching. Digitalization and use of digital tools should also be mentioned in the Rome Communiqué, as all these topics represent very important issues for the future of EHEA.

In conclusion, the Co-chairs thanked BFUG for the feedback and reminded the BFUG members to send written comments by 27 November 2019 and informed them that especially their ideas on the future vision are welcomed by the Drafting Committee.

### 8.3 Tentative Program for the Rome 2020 Ministerial Conference

The Head of the BFUG Secretariat presented the tentative programme for the Rome 2020 Ministerial Conference. The formula presented for the Ministerial Conference took into account among other aspects the input from the CG1 on GPD on the basis of their last meeting in Rome in October 2019. Considering that it is a Ministerial Conference, there should be only plenary sessions, focusing on the intervention of the EHEA Ministers to express their perspective on the future of the EHEA after 2020. The GPF should take place within the Ministerial Conference, allowing Ministers from non EHEA countries to participate at the plenary sessions of the Ministerial Conference, as observing countries. The BFUG Secretariat provided the BFUG with some points for discussion such as: EHEA delegations, their composition and maximum number, non EHEA delegations, their composition and maximum number, additional participants from the EHEA delegations as observers, observers participating at the Ministerial Conference, etc. The Head of the BFUG Secretariat gave also information on the logistic aspects of the Ministerial Conference, such as space available, services included, credentials for participants and observers, possibility for bilateral meetings and side events, etc. The BFUG Secretariat informed the BFUG of the communication with the Co-chairs of various BFUG Groups and BFUG Consultative Members about their possible expression of interest in organizing side events for the Global HE Summit, which will take place right after the Ministerial Conference (on 26 June 2020). Several ideas were received in regard to this topic. Some BFUG Consultative Members have already expressed their interest in such side events and would be interested to discuss them further with the BFUG Secretariat.

In the discussions following the presentation, the participants found very stimulating the idea of discussions among the Ministers on the future of EHEA. It was suggested to prepare a number of topics for the Ministers during their intervention. There should be time dedicated to the consultative members to read their statements as well as time dedicated to the students' contribution. The positive and negative aspects of having parallel sessions must be considered, if they are proposed.

## **9. Procedure and schedule for application to host the next ministerial conference**

The BFUG Secretariat prepared and disseminated among the BFUG a document highlighting the role and responsibilities of the host EHEA country for the next Ministerial Conference after Rome. The aim of the BFUG discussion was to decide on the procedure and the time frame for the selection of the next post 2020 Ministerial Conference and BFUG Secretariat 2020-2023 host, after Rome. Discussions carried out at the Board meeting in Istanbul in September 2019 pointed out that the BFUG had not yet discussed the post 2020 arrangements. The document reflects the discussions and recommendations made during this Board meeting. It was considered that regardless of any potential changes in the duties of the next host, still the next host should take care of the BFUG Secretariat duties because it is not possible to “jump” to a new way of governance without preparations. The proposal to the BFUG is to set the deadline of **15 March 2020** to submit any candidatures to host the next Ministerial Conference and the BFUG Secretariat after Rome. The BFUG meeting in Split in May 2020 should make a recommendation to the Ministerial conference on the next host country, based on the applications and according to the selection procedures. Following the discussions, the BFUG decided that the next Ministerial Conference after Rome would be in 2023: The time frame of 2020-2023 and the procedures were therefore approved. The decision made by the BFUG in May 2020 in Split, regarding the next host country, will go to the Ministerial Conference for approval.

## **10. Application of San Marino**

The Finnish BFUG Co-chair, when introducing this item, emphasized the fact that San Marino has sent a Preliminary National Report. Therefore, the discussion at the BFUG meeting should be focused on the bases of the proposal about the next steps and not on the report itself. In the document accompanying the preliminary National Report of San Marino, prepared by the BFUG Secretariat, it was proposed that a small ad hoc group should be established, composed by the current BFUG Co-chairs, the BFUG Vice-chair, the BFUG Secretariat, the CoE and BFUG members interested to join the group. The group would look at the report and make recommendations to the BFUG. The BFUG decided to establish the mentioned ad hoc group and added Andorra, the Holy See and a representative of WG1 to the composition of the group based on their expression of interest to join. It was agreed, as written in the document, that San Marino has a deadline of **10 January 2020** to finalize its national report and deliver it to the BFUG Secretariat. Poland asked to receive the letter of San Marino, which has been published on the web site of the BFUG meeting, among other documents.

## **11. Update from Consultative Members**

BFUG Consultative Members were asked to forward their reports in writing. The reports received were uploaded on the dedicated section of the [EHEA website](#). Reports by the remaining BFUG Consultative Members were to be sent in the near future. In the discussion part of this Item, the CoE informed the BFUG on the Global Forum on Academic Freedom, held in June 2019 at the CoE and about the book with the materials of the Global Forum, which is to be published in spring 2020.

## **12. Information from the incoming Co-chairs**

### 12.1 Croatia

The Croatian incoming BFUG Co-chair gave information on the Croatia 2020 EU Presidency, underlining that it will be the first Croatian EU Presidency. The priorities of the Croatian EU presidency will focus on a) balanced and sustainable development of the EU and its Member States, b) networked economy and used potentials, c) a safer EU and its citizens and d) EU as a global leader and strong partner for its neighbours. The Croatian EU Presidency with regard to the topic of education and training would focus on: European teachers and trainers for the future, reforms in education, the post ET 2020 cooperation framework as well as balanced mobility and brain circulation. The BFUG was presented with a provisional calendar of events that will take place during the Croatian EU Presidency. The dates and venues of the BFUG Board meeting (Zagreb, 6-7 February 2020) and of the BFUG meeting (Split, 4-5 May 2020) were announced.

### 12.2 Ukraine

The Ukrainian incoming BFUG Co-Chair gave information on the incoming co-chairing semester. Basic information on the country, its HE system and the international performance of Ukrainian HE was presented. The dates and venues of the BFUG meeting LXIX (Kyiv, 4-5 March 2020) and of the BFUG Board meeting LXX (Lviv, 3 April 2020) were announced.

## **13. AOB**

Germany asked the BFUG to address the issue of co-chairing arrangements of the BFUG after the Rome Ministerial conference starting in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of 2020. Depending on the fate of the Brexit, Germany would co-chair with Albania or with the UK. Considering the need to clarify and start work

for their semester, Germany asked the BFUG to approve their request to co-chair with the UK. The BFUG decided that the decision of the next co-chairs will be taken according to the written procedure and the decision should be made after electronic consultations. In addition, the question was raised how to deal with the situation that would develop if a country applying to host the 2023 Ministerial Conference will have a Co-Chairing responsibility during the same period. This question needs to be revisited in the next BFUG meetings.

BE French Community raised the issue of national consultations and as to whether they would be available to the entire BFUG. The issue was put for discussion before the BFUG and, with no objections, it was decided that the responses received should be uploaded on the EHEA web site, in a restricted area, available to all BFUG Members. The task was given to the BFUG Secretariat.

BE Flemish Community informed the BFUG on the project “Establishing a total policy framework for inclusive mobility across Europe” they are carrying out, funded through Erasmus+. The project has as one of its outcomes the publishing of a policy report, including national input for the BFUG. BFUG Members were asked to participate on the preparation of the policy report.

Romania informed the BFUG on the Bologna Researchers’ Conference to be held in Bucharest in January 2020, and that registration to participate is open on the Conference’s [web site](#).

Belgium French Community representative suggested to add to the list of possible themes of cooperation the theme of “human resources” (elaboration of common human resources standards for higher education and research in order to address challenges common to both areas such as career assessment of academic staff, parity of esteem between education & research; gender balance). This theme has also been raised by the ERAC Standing Working Group (SWG) on Human resources and Mobility. It was suggested to share with BFUG the ERAC SWG reflexion on that matter”, the document would be forwarded to the BFUG Secretariat at the end of the BFUG meeting and disseminated among BFUG.

The Finnish Co-chair wrapped up the BFUG meeting, thanking all participants for their active contribution to the discussion. The success of the fruitful meeting is due to not only the hard work of the BFUG Co-chairing team, Vice chair and BFUG Secretariat, but also to the lively discussions by all participants.