

Last updated: 13.07.2020

Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue

5th meeting

Online

4 June 2020

Draft Minutes

List of participants

Delegation	Surname	First Name
Belgium Flemish Community	Soenen	Magalie
ENQA	Kelo	Maria
EUA	Gaebel	Michael
European Commission	Perotto	Fiorella
France	Lagier	Hélène
Holy See	Rosenbaum	Melanie
Ireland	Lynch	Orla
Italy	Isaacs	Ann Katherine
Italy	Finocchietti	Chiara
UNESCO	Wells	Peter
United Kingdom	Ritchie	Ella
BFUG Secretariat	Lucke	Vera
BFUG Secretariat	Ioimo	Clarissa
BFUG Secretariat	Benedetti	Filippo

Apologies from Azerbaijan, Belgium French Community, Bulgaria, EI-IE, Germany and Kazakhstan.

1. Meeting opens. Approval of the Agenda. Welcome and Introduction by the Co-Chairs

The Co-chairs welcomed the participants and thanked them for joining the online meeting. The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss how to organize the future work of the group, also in light of the situation caused by COVID-19.

The agenda was approved.

2. Update on format for the Rome Conference (19-21 November 2020): Ministerial Conference, Global Policy Forum (GPF), Global Summit

The Co-chairs informed the group that the Global Summit on Higher Education will be postponed to 2021, while the dates for the Ministerial Conference and Global Policy Forum (GPF) will, at this point, remain on 19-20 November 2020. However, given the current evolving situation of the pandemic, and the likely risk of a 2nd wave in autumn that cannot be overlooked, the possibilities of organizing these events either with around 200 participants in loco and the others involved virtually or as a completely virtual meeting are currently taken into consideration by the Italian hosts and it has been emphasized that the most innovative and sophisticated virtual technologies will be used for this. The issue will be discussed at the BFUG meeting at the end of June, therefore the group should discuss the proposal it wants to submit to the upcoming BFUG for the Global Policy Forum. To do so, a brainstorming mode was encouraged by CG1 Co-chairs

The group commented that the Bologna Global Policy Forum will certainly be different with respect to how it was originally imagined. Nevertheless, it is essential that the global aspect, inclusiveness and active involvement of participants be maintained.

The first critical aspect that emerged from the debate is the time zone. Originally the GPF was set for the afternoon of 19 November, in the virtual version this could cause problems for colleagues in Asia and/or America. Some participants proposed to have the GPF around noon or 13:00/14:00 (Central European Time) and to have it on several days to include as many world regions as possible in order to keep the global dimension, whereas this could be problematic for the European lunch time. Finally, the importance of reducing the meeting time and reshuffling the agenda as well was stressed as virtual meetings cannot be as long as in presence meetings, so times must be reviewed and shortened.

The second aspect not to be underestimated, according to the group, is related to the number of participants. Initially a maximum number was set for the members of the delegations, but this number can be problematic in virtual meetings. It was pointed out that virtual meetings with many participants are difficult to manage and the interactive aspect, an important element for the group, can be lost.

The third aspect that emerged is that, considering what GPFs are for and meant to be, ie : enhancing political dialogue and increase cooperation, GPFs allowing ministers to participate do have an added in order to give them the opportunity to discuss and debate, and foster further action. The question was also asked as to how the communiqué and the statement would be debated and adopted by ministers.

Finally, it was proposed that some ministers or key speakers might pre-record their views as a stimulus for reflection for the plenary debate.

3. The Statement: discussion on Draft 3

The Co-chairs reported that Draft 2xxx presented to the April Board would actually become Draft 3 of the Statement. The BFUG Board appreciated the draft, several new inputs were suggested and the resulting new draft will be presented to the BFUG.

4. Global Policy Forum: discussion on keynotes & content parallel sessions based on input templates

The Co-chairs recalled that there were six parallel sessions scheduled and the time available for the entire GPF was 3,5 hours. The group discussed the need to make the programme shorter, without losing the interactive part of the forum.

The group wondered whether it would be useful to maintain parallel sessions or whether it would be better to hold a plenary meeting only. Some proposals by the participants suggested that the parallel sessions could be a kind of preparatory work for the plenary meeting and could be organised before the Ministerial Conference. Another proposal was to postpone the parallel sessions to the period after the Global Policy Forum or even to 2021 before or during the Global Summit on Higher Education. A last proposal made was to consider the option to hold focused interactive sessions (2 to 3 maximum) in a row, therefore in the plenary in November, rather than parallel sessions whose feasibility before November when summer is just around the corner remains an issue.

This idea of having the parallel sessions before or after the Ministerial Conference would generate more ongoing dialogue with other countries in the world, as was mentioned as one of the main objectives in the original setup of the coordination group.

As the group needed more time to reflect on this, the final decision of the group to be proposed to the upcoming BFUG will be made after an online consultation. The feasibility of these sessions outside the Ministerial Conference needs in particular to be checked with the current and future BFUG Secretariat.

It was proposed to organize something by geographical areas, however it was finally agreed that it is better to organize by topics in order to guarantee a global perspective.

Finally, the consensus was that the keynotes' speeches should not be too long. If meetings are virtual, they must be attractive and engaging but limited in time.

5. Actions and initiatives in the coming months: a Roadmap for the CG

A google doc will be sent as soon as possible in order to work on the proposal to be submitted to the BFUG. The deadline for submitting documents for the BFUG meeting is 10 June with an extension foreseen until 12 June.

The group agreed that actions and initiatives in the coming months will be discussed after the virtual BFUG meeting to be held at the end of June.

6. Meeting closes

The Co-chairs thanked the participants and closed the meeting.