

Last modified: 15.03.2019

**Coordination Group 1 on Global Policy Dialogue
First meeting, Brussels, 8 February 2019**

List of participants

Family name(s)	First name	Country / Institution
Akrami Flores	David	Germany
Bayramov	Shahin	Azerbaijan
Gaebel	Michael	EUA
Hollela	Caroline	Belgium - French Community
Isaacs	Ann Katherine	Italy
Kelo	Maria	ENQA
Lagier	Hélène	France
Lynch	Órla	Ireland
Ritchie	Ella	United Kingdom
Rosenbaum	Melanie	Holy See
Simionescu	Liliana	UNESCO
Soenen	Magalie	Belgium - Flemish Community
Benedetti	Filippo	BFUG Secretariat
Kahani Subashi	Edlira Adi	BFUG Secretariat
Lantero	Luca	BFUG Secretariat

Apologies from the European Commission and Germany.

1. Welcome by the host: Flemish Government, Department of Education and Training

Magalie Soenen, Co-chair of Coordination Group (CG1) on Global Policy Dialogue (GPD) and representative of Belgium Flemish Community, welcomed the CG1 members at the Flemish Government Department of Education and Training in Brussels.

Ann Katherine Isaacs, Co-chair of CG1 on Global Policy Dialogue and BFUG Vice-chair, welcomed the CG1 members, introduced the meeting and explained the inspiration of the CG1: an operational group hoping to move forward rapidly to promote on-going dialogue between the EHEA and other macro-regions regarding HE. She proposed that the meeting should be frank and informal, an occasion to discuss in person the major aims and issues, as well as practical: it is necessary to report to the BFUG Board in Skopje on 12 February, and to prepare a more detailed report in time for the April BFUG meeting. To begin the work, she invited the participants to express their ideas and hopes for the work of the CG in the opening Tour de Table.

Tour de Table

Each member in turn introduced him/herself, giving a short description of expectations and advice for the future work of the group.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted without modification.

3. Review of the Coordinating Group's Terms of Reference and its background document

As a starting point, the Co-chairs invited the members to review carefully both the CG1's Terms of Reference (ToR) and the background document which led to its creation.

The ToR and the background document give the CG the task of continuing, or instituting and promoting, on-going dialogue among significant players in the global HE world, preferably not focussing on single countries but on significant groupings of countries, and organizations, in order to foster a positive and proactive discussion between equals. Dialogue should be on significant matters of common concern. Although the theme of 'social inclusion' was mentioned in Paris as one of the possible themes around which to develop the future dialogue, this in no way limits choices. We are also tasked with guiding the transition from the "Bologna Policy Forum" formula, which has had its high and low points, to the future "Global Policy Forum", to be held in Rome in June 2020 in conjunction with the Ministerial Conference, in which the EHEA will be one 'macro-region', hosting the meeting, in order to share insights and aspirations with other macro-regions.

The ToR indicates a certain number of initial steps that the CG should take: however, the action plan needs to be elaborated further, insofar as the ToR has promised to provide more

detail to the BFUG in the upcoming meeting. The CG1 members agreed that the time frame is very tight, which requires to speed up works to be carried out. The scope of this first meeting was to discuss the major issues and the general orientation face to face prior to taking decisions.

4. Action to take with respect to the countries and associations invited to the Paris BPF

One of the first actions indicated in the ToR is the follow-up after the Paris meeting. To this end, the Co-chairs presented drafts of two letters to be sent to the countries and organizations invited to the Paris BPF: one for those that came, and one for those that did not. A further letter was planned for other countries and organizations, not invited to the Paris meeting.

The CG1 discussed the draft letters, raising a number of questions. It was agreed that a distinction should be made between a political participation (i.e. countries whose Minister attended the Paris Conference) and a senior staff participation (i.e. countries represented by senior staff from administrations). It was agreed that letters should be sent to the ministers' bureaus and that the formality of the language should be adjusted according to the level of the representation. The draft with changes discussed during the meeting should be finalised by the Co-chairs and approved electronically by the CG. Ella Ritchie and Orla Lunch volunteered to prepare pre-final drafts. The follow-up letters should be sent to ministers on paper and accompanied by an e-mail to known lower level contacts. The letter should present the Rome 2020 Forum as well as the importance of continuing HE dialogue after the Rome Ministerial Conference, looking forward to 2030. The letters are also a good way to follow up with countries that did not attend the Paris meeting.

It was also decided to send letters giving information, creating good will, and inviting those that were not invited to Paris in 2018 to join the future dialogue. The discussion should focus on moving from a country approach to a regional approach to ensure dialogue between comparable entities. The letters should describe the EHEA desire for global dialogue but should be formulated as follow-up-information about Paris, and not as an invitation to the Rome 2020 Conference. The letters to the ministers should be sent as soon as possible after the Skopje BFUG Board meeting and should be kept short with additional information attached.

The celebration of the 20th anniversary of Bologna Declaration and the related scientific conference in June in Bologna were mentioned, and it was decided to discuss that issue under the following point.

5. Organising an ongoing dialogue with countries, associations, world regions and 'macro-areas':

- *Cooperation with international associations (IAU, ACA, UNIMED etc.)*

The Co-chairs informed the CG that requests had arrived from several organisations expressing their desire to join the CG. The Co-chairs have sent out a diplomatic but formal letter explaining that the CG is a small operative group, not an Advisory Group, and that they will be kept informed and their collaboration and support will be welcome, but membership is not foreseen.

- *Interaction with existing events*

The first event discussed was the Council of Europe's "Global Forum on Academic Freedom, Institutional Autonomy, and the Future of Democracy" to be held in Strasbourg in June 2019; and the second was the 20th anniversary of Bologna Declaration also in June 2019.

According to the CG's ToR, specific events can be autonomously organized, and existing events that are relevant for GPD can be designated as contributing to it.

Discussion developed as to what can be considered relevant: the CG felt that the link with the EHEA and the Bologna process had to be clear if we are to consider an event as contributing to our promotion of global dialogue. It is agreed that a link with Bologna tools could be useful as a criterion.

It would be useful to propose sessions at significant events already planned.

More in general, according to the ToR, the CG1 should establish relations, organise or designate events that can lead up to the Rome 2020 Ministerial Conference: it is now possible to place the CG calendar in its section on the new EHEA web site (<http://ehea.info/page-Coordination-Group-1>).

We must be clear on how and why the group selects certain events. They can be considered a run up to the GPF. The Global Convention Meeting of UNESCO and CoE are good opportunities, and there may be other suitable events on national level. UNESCO's Global Convention Meeting in March 2019 could be a good opportunity to present information on the GPF, which could be distributed to the participants.

- *Creation of ad hoc events*

The Co-chairs of the CG1 informed the participants about an *ad hoc* event, planned in October 2019 for representatives of all embassies present in Rome, with the support of the EU Representation in Rome. This event is to be hosted at the representation's "Europe Hall", and will provide a setting for presenting the aims of the CG and the EHEA in general and encouraging and explaining the importance of the Rome Ministerial Conference in 2020 and the GPF.

The key focus and work of the CG1 should go beyond organising the Global Policy Dialogue in Rome in 2020 and aim at establishing longer-term dialogue with the other macro-regions. The group should prepare the list of relevant organisations for macro regions. The Co-chairs already have an extensive list. The task of checking the list and adding to it can be divided among the CG1's members working in sub-groups to identify the best contacts for the

various macro regions world-wide. UNESCO has a list of over 70 stakeholders in HE in different regions, which could be shared with the members and give more information about regional stakeholders, that may or may not already appear in our lists.

- *Communications and newsletter*

The group discussed the possibility of creating a short and effective page containing information on what is going on in the European Higher Education Area, which could be shared with everyone. The CG1 asked the BFUG Secretariat to investigate the possibility to create a short newsletter on the ongoing of the Bologna Process. The BFUG Secretariat asked to receive bullet points on how the CG1 would like the newsletter to be and who should be the recipients.

The Co-chair (BE-fl) showed the ASEM Secretariat's [web site](#). The European Commission has a link to all the events on HE, and it would be interesting to have a page on the events including feedback from CG and others. The EHEA website is a very important tool, and the BFUG Secretariat has already worked on launching the updated site in January 2019.

- *Consolidating and extending dialogue*

The purpose of the entire meeting was to explore how best to consolidate and extend dialogue, promoting the regional approach within the global context.

6. Possible status of countries requesting EHEA membership

The Co-chairs explained that requests continue to arrive from countries outside of Europe enquiring about the possibility of 'joining' the EHEA. In their view, an important task for the CG is to discuss, develop and propose a special status (such as affiliated, associated, observer, or the like) which could be given to countries outside the EHEA that wish to signal their interest in it. Quite a few countries have worked hard, particularly thanks to Tempus and CBHE projects, to bring their HE systems closer to "Bologna". It would be important for the CG1 to consider the status issue in order to build closer dialogue with several regions.

The BFUG Secretariat informed the CG1 on two new requests of this sort, from Uzbekistan and Iraqi Kurdistan have arrived.

In the discussion it was pointed out that the question of special membership status is not new. In order to find a solution, the question needs to be carefully prepared, considering that for now having signed the CoE Cultural Convention is the legal criterion which makes a country eligible to join the EHEA, but that this for interested countries is often not possible. There have been discussions in past BFUG meetings on the membership criteria, as well as on whether it is possible to establish an associate status for countries wishing to join the process. In order to prepare any proposal on this matter, the archives should first be checked for previous discussions of membership criteria. The Co-chairs asked the BFUG Secretariat to make such a search and to forward the findings to them.

7 Looking forward to Rome and the Global Policy Forum (June 2020)

Discussions focused on what could be the best formula for the arrangement of the GPF on occasion of the Rome 2020 Ministerial Conference. This item was discussed in conjunction with other items on the agenda as well.

Considering what worked well in Paris and where there was space for improvement, some suggested that the Paris formula could be 'embedded' in the Ministerial Conference, giving less time to the non-EHEA Ministers and more time to stakeholder organizations, adding an "How to"-session. An interactive formula, especially for parallel sessions is the best, although its success depends on the chosen topic, the moderator/chairperson and on how much time is available.

The topics for the breakout groups can be developed on the basis of the answers received from the countries, following the letter to the ministers asking for their ideas on HE in the SDG context.

The format will need to be coordinated in a transparent way with the Ministerial Conference itself. The CG's suggestions with respect to this topic must be developed with the BFUG as a whole, since the organization of the Rome conference does not depend only on the CG. It is suggested to ask non-EHEA Ministers to share how they are approaching SDGs in relation to HE and, potentially, to Bologna to understand their interests.

It was agreed that the CG1 should speak unanimously to the Board as a group. Key stakeholders/players operating on regional organisations as well as countries will be invited. The participation of specific Ministers should not only be the measure of success of the GPF. Regional rectors' conferences around the world, or other organisations active on GPD issues, should also be among the invitees for a meaningful dialogue. It was suggested that the CG members who have particular experience with and links to certain regions can advise on which countries take the lead in regional organizations.

8 Internal communication, organization and responsibilities

Concerning this group's internal communication, organization and responsibilities, it was decided for now to restrict face-to-face meetings to a second meeting to be held back-to-back with the 20th anniversary of Bologna Declaration event in Bologna in June (on the morning of 24 June), and a third meeting on occasion of the event planned for the embassies in Rome, to be held in October 2019. Most work should proceed electronically. The Co-Chairs asked for full cooperation, for example on requests for information and doodles; participants asked to have drafts of materials beforehand and not at the last minute. All parties agreed to do their best.

9 Contents of Report to BFUG Board (Skopje, 12 February)

10 Preparation of Report to the BFUG (Bucharest, 3-4 April):



Items 9 and 10 on the agenda were discussed jointly, considering they are closely connected.

The CG1 report to BFUG Board (Skopje, 12 February) will be given orally by one of the Co-chairs (Magalie Soenen). The Co-chairs will also draft for the written CG1 report to the BFUG (Bucharest, 3-4 April) to be circulated electronically among the group members. Possible participation in events such as the one organised by the Council of Europe (CoE) and the event in Bologna in June should be mentioned.

11 Any other business

No other business was introduced.