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TASK FORCE ON ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE SHARING IN THE EHEA COMMUNITY

Hosted by Italy, First Meeting, Online*
11 October 2021
10.00-13.00 (Brussels time)

Minutes

List of Participants

	Country	Name	Last Name
1	Albania (Co-chair)	Linda	Pustina
2	Belgium Flemish Community	Magalie	Soenen
3	EQAR	Karl	Dittrich
4	ESU	Ruben	Janssens
5	EUA	Michal	Gaebel
6	Germany	David	Akrami Flores
7	Italy (Co-chair)	Luca	Lantero
8	Italy	Ann Katherine	Isaacs
9	Italy	Rocio	Iglesias
10	Malta	Adam	Liwak
11	The Netherlands	Robert	Wagenaar
12	Romania (Co-chair)	Daniela Cristina	Ghitulică
13	United Kingdom	John	Reilly
14	BFUG Secretariat (Head)	Enida	Bezhani
15	BFUG Secretariat	Kristina	Metallari
16	BFUG Secretariat	Aida	Myrto





EURASHE and European Commission did not attend the meeting.

1. Welcome remarks

The Co-chairs welcomed everybody to the first meeting of the 2021-2024 work period. Daniela Cristina Ghitulică (Co-chair) underlined the main objectives of this meeting and pointed out that one of the priorities of the Romanian co-chairmanship was for the academic community to be more involved in the work of the BFUG. Wide-based consultations have been conducted to better understand the vision of the different stakeholders on the future of the Bologna Process.

During the tour de table the members introduced themselves and informed the group on their respective roles within the institutions they represented.

2. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda of the meeting was adopted without changes.

For more detailed information, please see TF on Knowledge-sharing_SI_AL_1_Draft_Agenda.pdf

3. Information on recent developments

Luca Lantero (Co-chair) provided an overview of the IN-GLOBAL project 'Enhancing Internal Knowledge and Global Dialogue of EHEA', submitted jointly for this Task Force (TF) and the Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue (CG GPD), in response to the Erasmus+ Call by the European Commission. The application was submitted the week prior to this meeting and the final decision is expected in February 2022. The project contains a work package dedicated to this TF to support expenses, travels, mapping exercise, data analysis, etc. The application was submitted by the Italian and Romanian Co-chairs on behalf of the TF. The aim is to involve different stakeholders in the governance of the project and for the different components. Should the proposed project be selected, a Steering Committee will be established with the Co-chairs of the TF and CG. A Consultative Board for the TF will be formed with the participation of all the consultative members within the EHEA. The establishment of a Board of Experts is also planned, including representatives from agencies and organizations working on the promotion of the national HE systems, like DAAD and others.



While Albania is one of the Co-chairs of this TF as well, it was unable to participate in the above-mentioned project proposal, as it was not eligible for financing, due to being an associate partner country. A question has been submitted already to the Commission, on whether members from the countries outside of the EU can be funded as well, to be part of the proposed project.

To have a general overview of the project, it was agreed that Mr. Lantero would prepare and share with the members an overview of the work packages, outcomes and meetings planned to be supported by the project.

It was observed that, in line with some comments made when the ToRs were circulated for members' review, part of the objectives was understood to be determining the extent of knowledge and understanding of the EHEA and Bologna Process, in order to provide the basis for an informed and focussed strategy to inform and engage the wider academic community (especially in the countries where understanding is low). The extent of the problem needs to be verified in order to decide what needs to be addressed and how to tackle it.

A clear distinction was made between the TF and the project. The latter supports the activities of the TF. However, if some of the activities planned for in the project are not considered relevant for the TF, the TF will continue to focus on its own targets and work according to its ToRs.

4. Defining the task

Mrs. Ghitulică provided an overview of the ToRs, which were first discussed in the TF and then sent for approval to the BFUG using an electronic procedure. Two comments were received from the BFUG on defining the duration of work for this TF. It was observed that in the BFUG meeting in April 2021, the BFUG left it up to the TF to propose the duration of its work. The Co-chairs maintained that the TF should not be limited in time.

Since up until now dissemination and embedding in the academic community was not a primary goal of the EHEA and with time not much has been done in this area, it was proposed that in the future the EHEA should have a permanent strategy for dissemination and connection with the academic community.

While this process should be further monitored, it is too early for now to propose to the BFUG the establishment of a permanent group to follow up this matter,



given that a WG on Monitoring is already in place. It was advised that one year be used to discuss with peers, even outside the TF, to understand the extent of the problem, to map the gap in developing dissemination of knowledge and feedback with the broader community, and then report back to the BFUG with recommendations on steps to be taken.

As an example of lack of awareness of the tools available by Bologna and the relevant policies, the difficulties faced by Afghanis that arrived in Italy during the recent and ongoing refugee crisis to have their degrees recognized was mentioned. In such cases (and others), it is clear how crucial it is to inform and promote knowledge sharing, so that the relevant information is easily accessible for everyone.

With the introduction of its new working structures, topics and tasks, the functioning of the BFUG was less clear to many who are not directly involved. Thus it becomes even more important now to map the disconnect issue, identify what is lacking and where and propose how to tackle the problem. An EHEA Newsletter informing everyone on the latest news and updates on the Bologna Process may be a possible measure. Different actions should be proposed to the BFUG to be delegated later on to the relevant BFUG working structures and national organizations.

As this TF is formed by a dedicated group of experts who are striving to define how to address the disconnect between what happens at the EHEA/BFUG level and the 'real world', where learning and teaching actually take place, it should think in concrete and quite urgent terms what the solution to this gap may be. The group should set up a roadmap with recognizable signals as to what it expects and hopes to be achieved.

While over the last years the cooperation of 49 countries has been a great achievement, EHEA/BFUG has not been able to communicate the Bologna Process achievements adequately. Dissemination of information is a structural problem within the BFUG, therefore, a thorough analysis should be conducted, the most important gaps to be filled should be identified and an assessment should be made of how and how quickly the problem can be addressed.

Understanding the uses and the usefulness of the Bologna-triggered reforms is also very important, as a lot of work goes into them. Therefore, the public should not only know about Bologna, but also understand its value.

Linda Pustina (Co-chair) noted that as per the ToRs, the TF should not only provide proposals to the BFUG or identify measures, but it should also organize events and initiatives as per Specific Task 5, for example, and it is difficult to achieve this



within a limited period of time. The TF may report from time to time to the BFUG on the work done and the initiatives undertaken.

The TF may work on different tracks and initiatives and carry out analyses at the same time. Establishing collaborations, utilizing more participatory approaches and ensuring that the academic sector takes more ownership of Bologna at different levels may be the way to go with the identification/research of the problem.

It is very important that the TF clearly defines who it wants to communicate to and with and also why. The group should have a thorough look into the possible initiatives and commitments and see what worked best and follow a similar approach.

A discussion in the BFUG on how the country representatives that attend BFUG follow up with their HE communities on Bologna developments may be of interest.

It was concluded that the mandate of the TF should not be limited in time, however, in one year the TF should present the BFUG with a report of the work done, tentative conclusions formulated and concrete steps proposed for the future. A careful mapping should be conducted, including consultations with the BFUG through a survey that should also map examples of good practice at the national level. Understanding the problem would help identify best solutions. A detailed Work Plan should be elaborated. A database with relevant organizations that can assist with the work of this TF should be created. Based on the mapping exercise, a strategic approach should be proposed on how to tackle the gap between what is happening at the national level and the policies coordinated by the BFUG. It is emphasized that the process of sharing information and knowledge should be a two-way approach also through a collaborative dialogue. Relevant events and activities could be coordinated by the TF and experts be invited. A Excel format framework with the components planned in the project will be shared with the members, in order to serve as a starting point for the work of the TF. Members' feedback on the framework is welcome.

4. Presentation of the 'Bologna with Student Eyes' Report

ESU provided an overview of the "Bologna with Student Eyes" report underlining that the aim of the project is to give a student-centered view of the Bologna implementation and shed light on the state of the different Bologna Key Commitments and how they are implemented throughout the EHEA.



EUA noted that focus should not be placed too much on content and how the KCs are being implemented in each country, but rather on what is the perception of the sector on the Bologna Process and what it does. Thus, the work of the TF should be clearly defined, so that it does not overlap with that of the other WGs.

5. Involvement of Experts

It was suggested that focus groups (from rectors' conferences, students' organizations, QA agencies, institutional structures) be consulted, to obtain different perspectives and viewpoints on areas/matters to be tackled at the national level.

The IN-GLOBAL project proposal anticipates the involvement of experts that will also contribute to the work of the TF and CG GPD in areas of communication, strategy, activities and data analysis. A BFUG communication toolkit may be created, focusing not only on instruments but also messages. Students' unions or academics involved in mobility may also be invited to share valuable perspectives - such inclusion can contribute to the two-way process of dissemination.

6. Concluding remarks

It was propose that the next meeting be held in person (in Italy) prior to the BFUG meeting, with November being the most likely option. The Co-chairs will work on finalizing the relevant Work Plan prior to the BFUG meeting. As no other business was brought forward, the first meeting of the TF was concluded.