



MEETING OF THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP ON "BOLOGNA BEYOND 2010"

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 24 – 25 June 2008

Draft outcome of proceedings

OPENING AND WELCOME

The representative of the host country Bosnia and Herzegovina, Zenan Šabanac, and the Chair of the BFUG, Darinka Vrečko (Slovenia), welcomed the participants to the extraordinary BFUG meeting in Sarajevo and opened the meeting. Apologies had been received from Armenia and Spain.

The meeting started with a speech by Sredoje Nović, Minister for Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He briefly explained the complex higher education system of Bosnia and Herzegovina and informed BFUG about the ongoing higher education reforms to implement the Bologna Process objectives. Those reforms include a national action plan for recognition, the development of a national qualifications framework and the establishment of a national quality assurance agency (for details see the Minister's PowerPoint presentation in annex). The Minister concluded by encouraging BFUG to develop a new European vision in response to new challenges (such as globalisation, diversity of systems and institutions, demographic changes, and the need to secure adequate financing) and to do so in partnership with all stakeholders.

INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT

Voting on the 6 remaining places in the advisory board for the selection and monitoring of the independent assessment of the Bologna Process

At the BFUG meeting in Brdo it had been agreed that the European Commission would be assisted by an advisory board in the selection and monitoring of the independent assessment and that this advisory board would consist of ten members (seven country representatives, plus one representative each from ESU, EUA and EURASHE). At least one of the country representatives was to come from a country that joined the Bologna Process in or after 2003. Since Russia was the only one of the ten candidates to meet this criterion, Victor Chistokhvalov (Russia) was automatically elected and a vote was organised to designate the six remaining country representatives to join the advisory board.

Outcome of the vote

Austria (Gottfried Bacher) 63 votes
Bulgaria (Svetomira Apostolova-Kaloyanova) 20 votes

Croatia (Luka Juroš) 53 votes
Czech Republic (Věra Štastná) 62 votes
Denmark (Helle Otte) 48 votes
France (Elie Cohen, substitute Hélène Lagier) 44 votes
Germany (Peter Greisler) 68 votes
Romania (Mihai Korca) 48 votes
Spain (José-Ginés Mora) 30 votes

As a result, the advisory board will be composed as follows:

Austria (Gottfried Bacher), Croatia (Luka Juroš), Czech Republic (Věra Štastná), Denmark (Helle Otte), Germany (Peter Greisler), Romania (Mihai Korca), Russia (Victor Chistokhvalov), ESU (Bruno Carapinha), EUA (Lesley Wilson), EURASHE (Andreas Orphanides).

DISCUSSION ON BOLOGNA BEYOND 2010

By way of introduction, the Chair Darinka Vrečko (Slovenia) briefly reminded BFUG of the history of the Bologna Process and the enormous change it had brought about in just 9 years. She referred to relevant sources of inspiration for the discussion on "Bologna beyond 2010", such as the Ghent Seminar (www.bologna2009benelux.org/BolognaSeminars/Ghent2008.htm) but also a report entitled "The Bologna Club: what U.S. Higher Education Can Learn from a Decade of European Reconstruction", published by the Institute for Higher Education Policy in Washington (<http://www.ihep.org/Research/thebolognaprocess.cfm>).

The Chair encouraged the participants to use the opportunity of the Sarajevo meeting for an open discussion and to do so in an objective, critical and open-minded way. She explained that the purpose of the Sarajevo meeting was precisely to give all BFUG members the chance to express their ideas. Agreement on the (draft) report and ultimately also the resulting communiqué would follow at later BFUG meetings.

The Vice-Chair Germain Dondelinger (Luxembourg) then explained the way the working group discussions would be organised and reminded BFUG to focus on issues to be taken up *jointly at European level* to advance higher education to make a meaningful contribution to society.

For the parallel sessions, the participants of the BFUG meeting were divided into three groups, chaired by Věra Štastná (Czech Republic), Sjur Bergan (Council of Europe) and Torben Kornbech Rasmussen (Denmark) respectively. The discussions took place in three stages:

1. finalising the initial agenda
2. new challenges
3. support structure

Working group sessions on finalising the agenda and new challenges

The brainstorming sessions on existing action lines and new challenges used the same methodology to reach a prioritisation of action lines and challenges and to identify the corresponding key measures. At the beginning of the first session, participants were asked to write down the *major challenge* they see on the way to realising the EHEA *within the existing Bologna action lines*, as well as the *measures* they propose to tackle this challenge. On the basis of the input given by the participants, each working group identified *three priorities* among the challenges related to the existing action lines (*finalising the initial agenda*), and for each of them proposed adequate solutions and measures. In the same way, the second and third sessions identified and prioritised *new challenges* for the EHEA in the next decade as well as the solutions and key measures required.

The three working groups identified the following priorities and measures (for details see the presentations of the working group chairs, which are annexed to this report):

Finalising the initial agenda: priorities and measures proposed

1) Mobility of students and staff (3 groups)

- "Mobility windows" in every curriculum (3x)
- Portable grants and loans (2x)
- Better data collection (2x)
- Erasmus-type funding at EHEA level
- Institutional partnerships and joint degrees
- Visas and work permits
- Recognition
- Political commitment to mobility for all, e.g. setting a benchmark or adopting a Mobility Code for the EHEA

2) Social dimension, aiming at equity in access, progress and completion (3 groups)

- Benchmarks for participation in higher education
- Data collection
- Sharing of experiences
- Developing lifelong learning paths
- Providing a high quality learning environment and good social and working conditions
- Establishing a link to secondary education (access policy)
- Developing a sound social dimension policy for the EHEA

3) Qualifications frameworks (2 groups)

- Developing a common understanding and vision (2x)
- Developing learning outcomes (2x)
- Cultural change required
- Training of and communication with practitioners
- Developing NQFs with stakeholder involvement
- Link to quality and quality assurance
- Moving from structure to practice

4) Recognition (linked to quality assurance as a basis for trust) (1 group)

- Coherence in recognition procedures and decisions (full implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention)
- Automatic recognition if a degree is related to a certified QF level

5) Curriculum reform / student-centred learning were identified by two groups as "transitional issues", belonging partly to finalising the initial agenda and partly also being a new challenge. As we will see below, both were also mentioned several times as measures to address some of the other new challenges.

- The real implementation of "Bologna" at ground level
- Focus on subject areas
- Tuning methodology
- Thematic networks
- Key challenge: move from structures to practice

All three working groups called for **interaction with other policy areas** to address issues outside the competences of education ministers (e.g. mobility-related issues like visas, work permits, pension arrangements).

New challenges and measures proposed

1) Global competitiveness/role of European HE in the global context (3groups)

- Finalising the Bologna agenda
- Implementing the Strategy on European Higher Education in a Global Setting
- Balancing cooperation and competition; strengthening North-South cooperation; Working towards a globally engaged European higher education
- Improving conditions for quality research in HEIs and connecting EHEA and ERA
- Innovating curricula to adapt them to new challenges
- Furthering the role of higher education in developing intercultural awareness
- Addressing issues of new forms of provision
- Defining the characteristics of European higher education / the EHEA

2) Demography / lifelong learning (2 groups)

- Widening access and diversifying the body of learners
- Student-centred learning
- Flexible learning paths connected to QFs at European and national level
- Mainstreaming lifelong learning in universities, which may require changes in the legislative framework as well as changes in society more generally
- Fair recognition of prior learning

3) Educate creative graduates able to function in the knowledge society (1 group)

- Student-centred learning
- Lifelong learning pathways
- Generic skills / interdisciplinarity
- Better match between demand for graduates per discipline and study choices
- Research methodology as part of the curriculum from early on
- Skills to deal with continuously changing technologies
- Mobility

4) Redefine the roles and responsibility of actors (2 groups) (with particular emphasis on public authorities) with regard to:

- Quality development and assurance
- Funding framework
- Governance / structures
- Institutional autonomy and accountability
- Diversity of missions and institutions

It was proposed to work towards a policy statement of Ministers on this issue.

5) Resources to finalise the Bologna agenda and to meet the new challenges (1 group)

- Complementing public funding with other and diversified sources of funding
- Performance-based funding mechanisms
- There was no consensus whether or not a benchmark for investment in higher education should be introduced and whether or not funding would be an issue to be addressed by Ministers of Education in their next communiqué.

The Vice-Chair Germain Dondelinger (Luxembourg) summarised the discussion as follows:

- The instruments are multipurpose instruments and can address various challenges.
- The Bologna Process needs to move from structure to content - to curriculum reform, including student-centred learning, which emerged as one of the key messages of the debate in Sarajevo. It exists as both an objective and a tool but a lot of work still needs to be done to clarify what exactly is meant, and how it should work.
- The issue of research needs to be taken up further in the Bologna Process but this also requires further work.
- Benchmarking and sharing experience were proposed as two methods for future cooperation within the Bologna Process. At the Paris meeting BFUG will have to decide in which areas to opt for benchmarking and in which areas to opt for sharing experience.
- The interaction of higher education policy with other areas of public policy also needs to be addressed. This also has important consequences for the way countries and organisations work together in the Bologna Process.
- BFUG needs to ensure that the collective memory of the Bologna Process does not get lost.
- Finally, the Bologna Process should use a language that is easily and commonly understood.

Support structures

Following the discussions on the content of future Bologna cooperation, BFUG discussed the structures required to support the envisaged cooperation – first in the three working groups and then again in the plenary. The Vice-Chair summarised the discussion as follows:

- There was a general consensus that by and large the existing support structures worked well and only small modifications were necessary.
- BFUG agreed that Ministers should continue to meet on a regular basis to monitor progress and to maintain the momentum of the process, with the first of such meetings after 2010 to take place in 2012. No agreement was reached yet whether the meetings should then take place every two or every three years. (A possible compromise solution was suggested by working group 3, see annex)
- BFUG agreed that non-EU countries should be involved in the chairmanship of the Bologna Process. BFUG should explore further the modalities for such involvement, whilst maintaining the link with the EU Presidency.
- There also appeared to be agreement on the desirability of a permanent website with a neutral name but the practicalities still need to be worked out.
- The need for a Secretariat was confirmed. BFUG agreed that there should be a link to the next host country/countries and that the Secretariat should by preference be internationally composed. It should continue to work on the basis of rotation but issues of continuity also have to be addressed. Again, further work is needed to clarify the details.
- The Board should be kept with updated terms of reference and possibly a new name.
- The question of how the need to interact with other policy areas would be reflected in the follow-up structures had not been discussed in the working groups. A proposal will be prepared for the Paris meeting.

Next steps

On the basis of the outcomes of the Sarajevo BFUG meeting, Vice-Chair and Secretariat will prepare a draft of the 2009 report on Bologna Beyond 2010 for discussion at the BFUG meeting in Paris, including a chapter with draft conclusions drawn from the discussions held so

far. Eventually, BFUG should agree on conclusions on the Bologna Beyond 2010 issue so that they can be integrated into the next ministerial communiqué.

The document to be discussed at the Paris meeting will be circulated by the end of July to give all BFUG members sufficient time for the necessary consultations. In preparation of the Paris meeting, BFUG members are expected to initiate comprehensive consultations and discussions within their countries and organisations, involving all stakeholders, to make sure they come to Paris with an explicit mandate reflecting the agreed position of their country or organisation.

PROVISIONS FOR THE BOLOGNA SECRETARIAT 2009 - 2010

Austria and Hungary as hosts of the celebration conference of 2010 had indicated that they did not intend to provide a Bologna Secretariat. Instead they suggested that the country/the countries hosting the next regular ministerial conference take over the Secretariat after the 2009 conference and indicated their willingness to send two national experts to this Secretariat.

For budgetary reasons, the preparations for hosting the Secretariat from 1 July 2009 onwards have to start in summer 2008 but the decision on the host country/countries of the next regular ministerial conference in 2012 will only be taken later. Since the Chair felt responsible for continuation of the process, she therefore proposed that the present Secretariat stay on until 1 July 2010. She asked if her proposal was acceptable to BFUG or if there were any other proposals.

In the discussion that followed, the BFUG agreed with the Chair's proposal. The Benelux countries were formally asked to provide the Bologna Secretariat until 1 July 2010, with national experts from Austria and Hungary. The Secretariat promised to transmit the request to their respective authorities.

MEMBERSHIP/CONSULTATIVE MEMBERSHIP/PARTNERSHIPS

At its meeting in Brdo, on 13-14 March 2008, with a view to applications from countries outside the geographical scope of the EHEA, BFUG had asked the working group on European higher education in a global setting to prepare a proposal on the issue of cooperation based on partnership, including partnership arrangements, for the extraordinary meeting in Sarajevo. The conclusions and recommendations of the working group were annexed to the Bologna 2020 background paper.

The chair of the working group, Barbara Weitgruber (Austria), explained that the working group had come to the conclusion that it was not possible to come up with objective criteria for granting countries the status of "partner countries" or "associated countries". The working group therefore recommended to maintain the existing criteria for membership and to find cooperation mechanisms that could offer something to those not eligible for membership. These mechanisms should be of mutual benefit and could include policy dialogue on specific issues or on the concept of the EHEA; invitations to Bologna seminars; the use of existing fora etc. The Secretariat could play a role in providing information and site visits but also in setting up a database of experts, which could be invited as speakers by interested countries.

The European Commission, which is also represented in the working group, agreed with most of the conclusions and recommendations but would like to offer countries that are not eligible to join the Bologna Process but that nevertheless introduce the Bologna reforms some kind of acknowledgement for their efforts. Before the meeting, the Commission had circulated the

proposal to do so by granting those countries the status of "associated country". During the meeting, the Commission acknowledged that a different term would have to be found as associated membership would give a wrong signal that associated membership could be a preparatory status that ultimately could lead to full membership.

The discussion that followed made clear that agreement existed on the following points:

- The existing criteria for membership should be maintained.
- The decision-making structures of the Bologna Process (both ministerial conferences and BFUG) should not be opened up to countries that are not members of the Process.
- It should be avoided to raise false expectations among countries.
- Cooperation with countries outside the EHEA is more important than ever. The question that needs to be addressed is not whether to cooperate but how to best cooperate.
- Cooperation should be open to all countries that are interested and should be cooperation among equal partners.
- Implementation of the Strategy on European Higher Education in a Global Setting and information to other countries how they could cooperate with Bologna countries and the EHEA as a whole.

Proposals that need to be explored further:

- A forum for cooperation could be set up with experts from Bologna countries as well as from countries outside the EHEA.
- The Bologna Process should be represented in events worldwide. For this purpose, the Secretariat should keep track of relevant events and BFUG should mandate people to represent Bologna at such events, if possible as speakers.

It was agreed that the issue of cooperation with countries outside the EHEA would be taken further by the next Presidency and that a proposal would be prepared for the BFUG meeting in Paris.

INFORMATION BY THE INCOMING PRESIDENCY

BFUG was informed that the three main priorities of the incoming French Presidency in the field of higher education would be lifelong learning, mobility and quality assurance. The meeting of Directors General on 8 September 2008 would focus on lifelong learning, in connection with the LLL charter which is being prepared by EUA. The conference on quality assurance on 9-10 September 2008 (Strasbourg) would focus on aspects like the link between institutional policy and quality of programmes and on linking evaluation of education with evaluation of research. Invitations will be sent in the early weeks of July. A seminar on student mobility will take place on 4-5 November 2008 (Nancy).

List of participants

Country/Organisation	Name
Andorra	Aitor Osorio Martí
Austria	Gottfried Bacher
Austria	Barbara Weitgruber
Belgium	Kevin Guillaume
Bologna Secretariat	Marlies Leegwater
Bologna Secretariat	Marie-Anne Persoons
Bologna Secretariat	Cornelia Racké
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Petar Marić
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Zenan Šabanac
Bulgaria	Svetomira Apostolova-Kaloyanova
BUSINESSEUROPE	Irene Seling
Council of Europe	Sjur Bergan
Council of Europe	Radu Mircea Damian
Croatia	Luka Juroš
Cyprus	Efstathios Michael
Czech Republic	Lenka Pospíšilová
Czech Republic	Věra Šťastná
Denmark	Helle Otte
Denmark	Torben Kornbech Rasmussen
Education International	Paul Bennett
Education International	Monique Fouilhoux
ENQA	Bruno Curvale
ENQA	Emmi Helle
Estonia	Heli Aru
ESU	Bruno Carapinha
ESU	Ligia Deca
ESU	Milica Popović
EUA	Michael Gaebel
EUA	Michael Hörig
EUA	Jean Marc Rapp
EUA	Lesley Wilson
EURASHE	Stefan Delplace
EURASHE	Lars Lynge Nielsen
EURASHE	Andreas Orphanides
European Commission	Peter van der Hijden
Finland	Maija Innola
France	Hélène Lagier
Georgia	Lela Maisuradze
Germany	Peter Greisler
Germany	Birger Hendriks
Greece	Foteini Asderaki
Holy See	P. Friedrich Bechina
Hungary	Janos Csirik
Iceland	Hellen Gunnarsdottir
Ireland	Tim Cullinane

Country/Organisation	Name
Italy	Marzia Foroni
Italy	Maria Sticchi Damiani
Latvia	Andrejs Rauhvargers
Liechtenstein	Helmut Konrad
Lithuania	Rimvydas Labanauskis
Luxembourg	Germain Dondelinger
Malta	Jacques Sciberras
Montenegro	Ljubiša Stanković
Netherlands	Denise Heiligers
Norway	Toril Johansson
Norway	Sverre Rustad
Poland	Tomasz Saryusz-Wolski
Portugal	Sebastião Feyo de Azevedo
Romania	Mihai Korca
Romania	Gheorghe Poede
Russian Federation	Victor Chistokhvalov
Slovenia	Andrej Kotnik
Slovenia	Darinka Vrečko
Sweden	Myrna Smitt
Switzerland	François Grandjean
"the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	Nadežda Uzelac
Turkey	Talip Kucukcan
Ukraine	Anatolii Garmash
UNESCO-CEPES	Peter Wells
United Kingdom	Rachel Green
United Kingdom	Ann McVie