Progress report from the joint chair of the Network of Experts on Student Support
For the BFUG meeting on 14-15 October 2008

- Following the network meeting on 22 & 23 January in Stockholm, the joint chairs have taken forward the action points with members of the Network acting as work stream leaders as follows:

1. Information Data Base
- Final country data template have been produced, illustrating the basic data agreed to be essentially useful to members of the expert group
- 9 templates have been completed by countries currently participating in the Network of Experts on students support as an example.
- Discussions have been ongoing with BFUG secretariat to have templates posted on network's password area of the BFUG website, and these are now available.
- Discussions have just begun with BFUG secretariat around making the template information more publicly available on the BFUG website and to encourage more countries to join the Network

2. Data sharing
The data sharing work stream agreed at the Stockholm meeting of the network to develop:
- Blueprint Data exchange: what information does a country need to establish if there is reason to believe a student has a double grant.
- Template data-protection: make a template on the website which helps participating countries to illustrate, in a understandable way, what their demands are in the field of data-protection;

this work is currently being finalised.

3. Brussels Seminar preparation
- A presentation was prepared by four country members (Sweden, Scotland, Netherlands and Georgia) of the network and it was delivered at the seminar in May.
- One of the main areas highlighted was the need for more consistent collection of data from countries on portability of student support and that this should be part of the wider BFUG data collection activities.

Next Steps
- Discussion continue with the BFUG secretariat around making template information available more publicly and to encourage more countries to join the network.
- Members of Network will be asked to revise contact details to ensure no personal information is in the template.
- Joint chairs to meet to draft final report in October; and issue to network members for comments
- Recommendations on making the Network work sustainable will be agreed with members and form part of final report for Ministerial meeting.
- Draft final report for final Ministerial conference in April due to BFUG secretariat by end 2008.

The joint chair would like to bring to the attention of the BFUG the following points which were brought to the attention of the BFUG at the last meeting in March, and remain the main concern of the group:

- for the short the term, the Network can find a place on the Bologna Website to post information, hosted by the secretariat. This does not, however, offer a permanent solution.
- for the long term, we think it is necessary to have a more permanent structure to support the Network, which will rely on a virtual web-based environment to exchange information to be successful. It is important to make decisions on how to establish and fund such a structure. As we understand it, this issue arises in other working groups as well;
- there is still need to establish more consistent data collection on portability of student support and the chairs of the Network would like some encouragement for joint working across the other BFUG working groups to take this forward.

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