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Social Dimension Coordination Group Update on activities between BFUG Brdo and Paris

The coordination group met twice in Budapest, April 7 and Brussels, October 2, 2008.

At the Budapest meeting the template for the national reports on the national strategies for the social dimension was adjusted following the mandate given to the coordination group at the Brdo BFUG meeting.

The Bologna Secretariat was entrusted to look for a research team to help the coordination group with the analysis of the national strategies for the social dimension and contacted the Centre for Social Policy Studies of the University of Antwerp.

At the Brussels meeting of the coordination group the Director of the Centre, Prof. Bea Cantillon, was invited to discuss the broad outline of the analysis. The coordination group concluded that the report should be limited in scope. Although the issue of underpinning data to support the analysis could be mentioned in the introduction, the report should not duplicate the analysis to be prepared by Eurostat and Eurostudent in the context of the Bologna data collection action line. Moreover, this stocktaking exercise on social dimension should by no means use sensitive score-card methodologies neither rank countries among each other. The analysis will rather be a synthetic state-of-the-art document on the strategies on the social dimension in the EHEA as a whole. It will identify trends and convergences, common challenges, issues, ways of problem-solving and typical blind-spots in policy-making.

In order to meet the strict deadlines – the coordination group plans to discuss the first draft report preferably as early as January 9 – countries are requested to carefully respect the deadline of November 1, 2008 to hand in their national report to the Bologna Secretariat.

Finally the coordination group launches an appeal to all BFUG members, consultative members and Bologna partners to join the seminar to be held in Budapest, 10-11 November 2008 on "Equality in a knowledge based society: how to widen opportunities". This event was carefully prepared by Hungary in wide cooperation with other Bologna countries and organisations and will be the only seminar in the Bologna work programme 2007-2009 on the social dimension.