



MALTA EU2017



Norwegian Ministry  
of Education and Research

**Annex 3 to the work progress report of WG 2 for the Malta BFUG**  
**Working group 2 'On Implementation – Fostering implementation of agreed key commitments**

**Structure of the report**

Summary

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## Chapter II A: Implementation of the key commitments

### Context

The BFUG has identified three key commitments:

- Implementing the qualifications framework for HE, including the use of ECTS and DS
- Implementing a system of quality assurance
- Ratification (and implementing?) of the Lisbon Recognition Convention

Yerevan Communiqué:

**Implementing agreed structural reforms** is a prerequisite for the consolidation of the EHEA and, in the long run, for its success. A common degree structure and credit system, common quality assurance standards and guidelines, cooperation for mobility and joint programmes and degrees are the foundations of the EHEA. We will develop more effective policies for the recognition of credits gained abroad, of qualifications for academic and professional purposes, and of prior learning. Full and coherent implementation of agreed reforms at the national level requires shared ownership and commitment by policy makers and academic communities and stronger involvement of stakeholders. Non-implementation in some countries undermines the functioning and credibility of the whole EHEA. We need more precise measurement of performance as a basis for reporting from member countries. Through policy dialogue and exchange of good practice, we will provide targeted support to member countries experiencing difficulties in implementing the agreed goals and enable those who wish to go further to do so.

### Implementing key commitments: Qualifications Framework

#### Events

The Flemish Community of Belgium has organized a peer review and policy dialogue about the implementation issues related to qualifications framework with the participation of the following countries Belgium (Flemish and French Community), the Russian Federation and Slovakia and including the participation of the Ghent University and the Artevelde University College.

#### Analysis and conclusions

#### Recommendations

### Implementing key commitments: Quality Assurance

#### Events

The Flemish Community of Belgium has organized a reversed peer review on quality assurance with the participation of the following countries Belgium (Flemish and French Community), Albania, Georgia, Greece, Hungary and Portugal and including the participation of the Ghent University and the Artevelde University College.

NCEQE seminar “Fostering Development-oriented Quality Assurance in Eastern Partnership Countries”, Tbilisi, 4 June 2016

#### Analysis and conclusions

#### Recommendations

## Implementing key commitments: Implementing Lisbon Recognition Convention

### **Context**

### **Events**

PLA "*Fine-tuning recognition processes: challenges, strategies, tools*" organized by Greece in the framework of the Greek GEAR (Greece exploring advanced recognition in higher education) Erasmus + project

Other material to be considered: the first survey of the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, presented during the Bratislava BFUG meeting.

### **Analysis and conclusions**

### **Recommendations**

## **Chapter II B: Implementation of the Yerevan decisions and agreed commitments**

### **Quality Assurance**

#### **Implementing the policy measures adopted: the revised Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)**

##### **Context:**

During the Yerevan ministerial conference in May 2015 the ministers have adopted the revised Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015). Compared to the ESG 2005 the main changes are related to part I of the ESG:

There is no doubt that it is the primary responsibility of the HEIs to implement part I. As a consequence of the implementation of ESG 2005 most of the HEIs have already developed their own internal system of quality assurance. But ESG 2015 have introduced some new concepts such as student centred learning and put greater emphasis on learning outcomes, assessment, the provision of quality information than the ESG 2005.

##### **Events and actions:**

The Register Committee has adopted and published the new document: The Use and Interpretation of the ESG (2015).

EUA has published a paper: ESG Part I: Are the universities ready?

In the framework of the EQUIP project the EQUIP team has made a comparative analysis of the ESG 2015 and ESG 2005:

The EQUIP project has organized 5 events open to all interested parties on the implementation of the ESG 2015 as a tool of change. The material of these events are available and can be used for training purposes.

To support the discussion on quality assurance topics in Europe the EQUIP project has set up a LinkedIn group.

Furthermore the partners of the EQUIP project will organize in 2017 6 focus groups on the ESG challenges and innovative practices.

By the end of 2017 a final study will be produced.

Early 2018 policy recommendations will be published.

During the EQAF in Ljubljana many presentations focused on the implementation of the ESG 2015:

##### **Analysis and conclusions**

All stakeholders are taking the implementation of the ESG 2015 seriously.

The implementation of the revised Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) adopted by the ministers in 2015 is on the right track.

##### **Recommendations**

## **Implementing the policy measures adopted: the European approach for quality assurance of joint programmes**

### **Context**

In Yerevan the ministers adopted the European approach for quality assurance of joint programmes. The main aim was to avoid that joint programmes should be subjected to multiple evaluation and accreditation procedures by putting forward the principle of single evaluation leading to multiple accreditation and recognition.

### **Events:**

Spain has organized a peer learning activity within the Spanish higher education reforms project in the frame of the restricted call for proposals EACEA/2014 EHEA-Key action 3 Support of the implementation of EHEA reforms.

During the EQAR members' dialogue in Oslo (24 and 25 November 2016) the European approach was discussed (presentation made by ...).

Thematic session of the Working Group 2 on the internationalization of quality assurance, Nice, November 2016

### **Analysis and conclusions**

### **Recommendations**

## **Implementing the policy measures adopted: ESG and Student-centred learning**

### **Context**

Student-centred learning (SCL) was included as a standard in the revised ESG 2015. SCL was first mentioned in the Bologna process at the ministerial conference in Leuven in 2009. It has been followed up in each successive ministerial communiqué since then. But the implementation of SCL has been challenging.

Excerpt from the EUA paper ESG part I: are the universities ready: while there is consensus on both the definition of SCL and the fact that there is partial progress in this area, it is unclear what evidence will or should be used to show that the requirements of this standard are being met. ....

### **Events**

Spain has organized a peer learning activity within the Spanish higher education reforms project in the frame of the restricted call for proposals EACEA/2014 EHEA-Key action 3 Support of the implementation of EHEA reforms.

Parallel session on Student-centred learning during the BFUG meeting Amsterdam March 2016

### **Analysis and conclusions**

### **Recommendations**

### **Implementing Bucharest and Yerevan Commitments:**

**Allow EQAR-registered quality assurance agencies to perform their activities across the EHEA, while complying with national requirements;  
To enable our higher education institutions to use a suitable EQAR registered agency for their external quality assurance process, respecting the national arrangements for the decision making on QA outcomes**

#### **Context**

#### **Events**

Thematic session of the Working Group 2 on the internationalization of quality assurance, Nice, November 2016

#### **Analysis and conclusions**

#### **Recommendations**

### **Qualifications frameworks**

**Yerevan commitment: to include short cycle qualifications in the overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) based on the Dublin descriptors for short cycle qualifications and quality assured according the ESG, so as to make provision for the recognition of short cycle qualifications in their own systems, also where these do not comprise such qualifications**

#### **Context**

The position of the short cycle qualifications was heavily discussed issue in the EHEA. Should the qualifications framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF for EHEA) include the short cycle qualifications as a distinct cycle? The QF for EHEA as it was adopted in Bergen mentioned the short cycle as a kind of a sub-cycle of the first cycle: 'within the '. Following the recommendations made by the Structural Reforms Working Group to the ministers in Yerevan, the ministers decide that the short cycle qualifications should be included in the QF for EHEA as a distinct cycle. Countries that have short cycle qualifications should include them in the NQF for HE. Those countries have to make provisions for the recognition of those qualifications in particular to progress to the next cycle of HE (the bachelor programmes). Countries that haven't short cycle qualifications aren't obliged to organize them. But those countries have also to make provisions for the recognition of those qualifications from other EHEA countries allowing those graduates to progress in their first cycle (bachelor) higher education. The use of ECTS, a diploma/certificate supplement, the use of learning outcomes and a system of QA in line with ESG could foster the recognition.

#### **Measures**

Working group 2 has discussed the implementation of the short cycle commitment during its meeting in Tbilisi. As an outcome of that discussion the WG2 proposed to the BFUG to delete the wording 'within the first cycle' in the QF for EHEA as it was adopted in Bergen in 2015. As consequence the short cycle will be considered as an autonomous cycle within the QF for EHEA.

WG 2 felt that it won't be appropriate to ask the countries to go through a new self certification procedure when they have included the short cycle qualifications in their own NQF.

Under the umbrella of the Erasmus + programme – KA3 Consolidation of the EHEA – the Flemish Community of Belgium organized a peer learning activity on permeability between the different

categories of higher education: level 5/short cycle to level 6/bachelor and level 6/bachelor to level 7/master.

CEDEFOP working paper 'Qualifications at level 5: progressing in a career or to higher education'.

### **Analysis and conclusions**

### **Recommendations**

#### **Implementing Yerevan Commitments:**

**to remove obstacles to the recognition of prior learning for the purposes of providing access to higher education programmes and facilitating the award of qualifications on the basis of prior learning, as well as encouraging higher education institutions to improve their capacity to recognize prior learning;**

**to review national qualifications frameworks, with a view to ensuring that learning paths within the framework provide adequately for the recognition of prior learning;**

### **Context**

### **Events**

Conference "Refugees' impact on Bologna reform – Recognition of Prior Learning and inclusion in the light of increased migration", Malmö, 12-13 June 2016

### **Analysis and conclusions**

### **Recommendations**

## **Recognition**

**Yerevan commitment: to ensure that qualifications from the other EHEA countries are automatically recognized at the same level as relevant domestic qualifications**

### **Context**

Automatic recognition of the qualifications across the EHEA is a prerequisite to realize the vision of the EHEA as defined in the Yerevan Communiqué:

### **Events and actions**

The Flemish Community of Belgium organized three country workshops and a final seminar on automatic recognition. The project was a Erasmus + project KA3 Consolidation of the EHEA and has been funded with support from the European Commission.

The aim of the project was to explore ways how to enact automatic recognition of degrees by applying the criteria laid down in the Flemish law on higher education regarding automatic recognition: a self certified qualifications framework for higher education and a system of quality assurance in line with the ESG. Those criteria are in line with the commitment of the ministers in the Bucharest Communiqué:

FAIR project:

### **Analysis and conclusions**

### **Recommendations**

## Employability

**Yerevan Communiqué: goals in the new context: Fostering the employability of graduates throughout their working lives .... Following graduates' career developments**

**Implementing Yerevan commitment:  
to ensure, in collaboration with institutions, reliable and meaningful information on graduates' career patterns and progression in the labour market, which should be provided to institutional leaders, potential students, their parents and society at large**

### Context

### Events

Poland has organized a PLA on Tracking graduates.

### Analysis and conclusions

### Recommendations

## Social dimension

**Implementing Yerevan commitments:**

**to make our higher education more socially inclusive by implementing the EHEA social dimension strategy;**

### Context

### Events

Working Group 2 has had a discussion on the implementation of the Yerevan commitment with regard to the social dimension during its meeting in Tbilisi.

Austria has organized an international PLA on the Social dimension in Linz (22 March 2017)

### Analysis and conclusions

### Recommendations

## Mobility

### **Yerevan commitments towards: mobility and internationalization:**

- **to promote staff mobility taking into account the guidelines from the Working group on mobility and internationalization;**
- **to promote the portability of grants and loans taking into account the guidelines from the Working group on mobility and internationalization;**

### **Context**

### **Events**

Working Group 2 has discussed the issue of student and staff mobility during its meeting in Vienna.

Other material: the Mobility Scoreboard Higher Education background report.

### **Analysis and conclusions**

### **Recommendations**