



MALTA EU2017



Norwegian Ministry  
of Education and Research

## FUNDAMENTAL VALUES OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

*During the BFUG Board meeting in March 2017, the Secretariat has been asked to prepare a summary on how the BFUG has been discussing fundamental values during this working period and what had already been included in former Communiqués. This document shall enhance the discussion of proposals for the Ministerial Conference and Communiqué during the next BFUG and BFUG board meetings.*

In 1999, the Bologna Declaration stated that "... universities' independence and autonomy ensure that higher education and research systems continuously adapt to changing needs, society's demands and advances in scientific knowledge." Ever since, underlying principles and fundamental values of the Bologna Process have been addressed in many ways. In 2015, the Yerevan Communiqué claimed "to build inclusive societies, founded on democratic values and human rights [...], support and protect students and staff in exercising their right to academic freedom and ensure their representation as full partners in the governance of autonomous higher education institutions.

For the BFUG Meeting in Amsterdam (7-8 March 2016), and following the Yerevan Communiqué, a discussion on fundamental values had been put on the agenda. It had been agreed to concentrate parallel session of the coming BFUG meeting(s) on this central issue and to devote a part of the 2018 Communiqué to these assets. Furthermore, it should be made sure that measuring implementation of fundamental values is included by WG1 Monitoring. After 2018, these new data will also be used for the "Dealing with non-implementation" once decisions about the proposals made by AG3 are taken.

To prepare the discussion of the BFUG during the second semester 2016, the Council of Europe, Magna Charta Observatory, IAU and the Vice-chair drafted a discussion paper on fundamental values. In co-operation with two external authors, they proposed a first version of this paper for the Board meeting in Podgorica (24 October 2016) with academic freedom and institutional autonomy as key aspects. It had been stressed that even if some countries have to face greater challenges fundamental values are an issue for all. The Board members decided to propose the BFUG to start with institutional autonomy and academic freedom but to continue during the next semester with other aspects of fundamental values. Some elements which were raised have been incorporated in a revised discussion document for the Bratislava meeting.

During the BFUG Meeting in Bratislava (8-9 December 2016), the discussion started with a presentation of Sijbalt Noorda (President of the Magna Charta Observatory) and was continued in parallel sessions. The BFUG members agreed that the values of institutional autonomy and academic freedom discussed during this meeting should be put in relation with other core values of higher education (e.g. integrity, democracy, human rights, quality assessment, or inclusiveness) and with national legislative frameworks. Including existing information (e.g. data from the EUA autonomy scoreboard; case studies) and provide another background paper on other topics would be helpful.

WG1 reported that it is trying to include indicators for reporting on fundamental values.

It has been decided to continue the discussion to be able to say something in the declaration about which values are at the core of the EHEA. The debate at the Gozo BFUG meeting should define the aim(s) for 2018 (e.g. a special document, a paragraph in the Communiqué, a specific session). A message of the Ministerial Conference 2018 should be devoted to these fundamental values and conclusions/recommendations on this topic.

## **Quotations from all Communiqués/Declarations**

### **1999 Bologna Declaration**

"A Europe of Knowledge is now widely recognised as an irreplaceable factor for social and human growth and as an indispensable component to consolidate and enrich the European citizenship, capable of giving its citizens the necessary competences to face the challenges of the new millennium, together with an awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural space."

"European higher education institutions, for their part, have accepted the challenge and taken up a main role in constructing the European area of higher education, also in the wake of the fundamental principles laid down in the Bologna Magna Charta Universitatum of 1988. This is of the highest importance, given that Universities' independence and autonomy ensure that higher education and research systems continuously adapt to changing needs, society's demands and advances in scientific knowledge."

### **2001 Prague Communiqué**

"Ministers reaffirmed that efforts to promote mobility must be continued to enable students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff to benefit from the richness of the European Higher Education Area including its democratic values, diversity of cultures and languages and the diversity of the higher education systems."

### **2003 Berlin Communiqué**

"They also stress that consistent with the principle of institutional autonomy, the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself ..."

### **2007 London Communiqué**

"Building on our rich and diverse European cultural heritage, we are developing an EHEA based on institutional autonomy, academic freedom, equal opportunities and democratic principles that will facilitate mobility, increase employability and strengthen Europe's attractiveness and competitiveness."

"We recognise the important influence higher education institutions (HEIs) exert on developing our societies, based on their traditions as centres of learning, research, creativity and knowledge transfer as well as their key role in defining and transmitting the values on which our societies are built."

"We therefore underline the importance of strong institutions, which are diverse, adequately funded, autonomous and accountable. The principles of non-discrimination and equitable access should be respected and promoted throughout the EHEA. We commit to upholding these principles and to ensuring that neither students nor staff suffer discrimination of any kind."

### **2009 Leuven/Louvain la Neuve Communiqué**

"The necessary ongoing reform of higher education systems and policies will continue to be firmly embedded in the European values of institutional autonomy, academic freedom and social equity and will require full participation of students and staff."

### **2010 Budapest-Vienna Declaration**

"We, the Ministers, recommit to academic freedom as well as autonomy and accountability of higher education institutions as principles of the European Higher Education Area and underline the role the higher education institutions play in fostering peaceful democratic societies and strengthening social cohesion."

## **2012 Bucharest Communiqué**

"We commit to supporting the engagement of students and staff in governance structures at all levels and reiterate our commitment to autonomous and accountable higher education institutions that embrace academic freedom."

## **2015 Yerevan Communiqué**

"Together we are engaged in a process of voluntary convergence and coordinated reform of our higher education systems. This is based on public responsibility for higher education, academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and commitment to integrity."

"By 2020 we are determined to achieve an EHEA where our common goals are implemented in all member countries to ensure trust in each other's higher education systems; where automatic recognition of qualifications has become a reality so that students and graduates can move easily throughout it; where higher education is contributing effectively to build inclusive societies, founded on democratic values and human rights; and where educational opportunities provide the competences and skills required for European citizenship, innovation and employment. We will support and protect students and staff in exercising their right to academic freedom and ensure their representation as full partners in the governance of autonomous higher education institutions. We will support higher education institutions in enhancing their efforts to promote intercultural understanding, critical thinking, political and religious tolerance, gender equality, and democratic and civic values, in order to strengthen European and global citizenship and lay the foundations for inclusive societies."