Date: June 12, 2014

***5th Meeting of the Third Cycle Ad-Hoc Working Group***

***Rome, 12-13 May 2014***

***Venue: Ministry of Education, Universities and Research***

 ***v.le Trastevere 76/a, Roma. Room “ex URP”, ground floor***

**Draft minutes**

**Participants**

**Co-Chair: Italy Marzia Foroni**

**Co-Chair: Italy Nicola Vittorio**

**Co-Chair: Romania Cezar Haj**

**Co-Chair: Spain Gloria Molero**

Armenia Lusine Fljyan

Belgium / French Community Marc Vanholsbeeck

Czech Republic Šťastná Věra

Denmark Signe Nielsen

Denmark Kristian Thorn

France Pascal Gosselin

Germany Eric Otto

Hungary Etelka Farkas

BFUG Secretariat Hayk Sargsyan

EC Frank Petrikowski

EI Riku Matilanen

EUA Lidia Borrell-Damian

EURODOC Anna Tschaut

EURODOC Fabiana Dimpflmeier

Apologies were received from: Monika Sieghardt (Austria), Noël Vercruysse (Belgium / Flemish Community), Horia Iovu (Romania), Larisa Bugaian (Moldova), Maria Boltruszko (Poland), Thomas Jorgensen (EUA).

**Welcome address**

**Daniele Livon, Director General for Universities (MIUR)**

**Co-chairs introduction of the meeting**

**Adoption of the agenda and the minutes of the 4rd meeting of the ad-hoc WG**

Mrs. Marzia Foroni introduced Mr. Daniele Livon, Director General for Universities (MIUR) who welcomed the participants on behalf of the Ministry for Education, University and Research which hosted the meeting at their headquarters.

Mr. Livon informed the WG members that the Italian University system has had many changes in the past years. Mainly, Doctoral education has been reformed aiming at increasing its quality, improving the research environment and ensuring that Doctorate students are empowered for a career inside and outside the academia.

Moreover, the Ministry supported specifically international Doctoral programmes and the projects that have been evaluated positively at the European level. After several years of reform in the first and the second cycle, Doctoral education, being the connection between higher education and research systems, receives now more political attention.

Additionally, he underlined that taking into account the responsibility that Italy will have as Presidency country in the EU and as co-chairing country in Bologna Process, the contribution to the reform process on the entire front was made, mainly in the Bologna Process, with the co-chairing of the ad-hoc WG on Third Cycle and in EU, by proposing Doctoral education as a key priority and by promoting several events.

Mr. Livon noted that Italy paid careful attention to the inputs and discussions of the WG, while preparing the political proposal for the upcoming six months. He thanked the WG members for contributions and for efforts in drafting the final report.

While concluding his welcome speech Mr. Livon invited the WG members to take part to the events that are organised during the Italian Presidency on Doctoral Education (e.g. Trento, 18-19 November 2014 and Padova 20-21 November 2014).

**Co-chairs introduction of the meeting**

**Adoption of the agenda and the minutes of the 4th meeting of the ad-hoc WG**

Mrs. Marzia Foroni thanked the participants for their presence, comments and contribution to the final report of the ad-hoc WG. She introduced the main points of the meeting while emphasizing that the final report of the ad-hoc WG will be delivered to the Structural Reforms WG at its next meeting in Rome. Moreover, it was underlined that the WG members should discuss and finalize the contribution of the WG to the 2015 Yerevan Ministerial Communique.

She also announced that based on the discussions the WG held during its previous meetings each of the Co-Chairs drafted a part of the report with a reference to the task set by Ministers during the Bucharest Ministerial meeting in 2012.

It was underlined that in the revision of the text, the co-chairs team took into account:

* The task set by Ministers in Bucharest and the ToR approved by the BFUG;
* The debate, the agreements and final conclusion of previous WG discussion;
* The debate on the revision of European Standards and Guidelines, on the Joint approach for quality assurance and accreditation in joint programmes and on the revision of the ECTS User’s Guide that took place at the last BFUG meeting in Athens;
* The comments and contribution received by the WG members on the structure of the paper and on proposals for re-formulation.

The Agenda and the minutes of the 4th meeting of the ad-hoc WG were unanimously adopted without any change.

**Discussion on the final report**

Mr. Cezar Haj recalled the attention of the participants on the draft of the final report of the ad-hoc WG and stressed the importance of further discussions. While emphasizing the importance of the wording of the final report he proposed to discuss major comments during the meeting of the WG and send corrected spelling mistakes via email. Thus, the WG members concentrated on the content of the report.

Following the questions coming from the WG members, the Co-Chairs reminded that the Third Cycle ad-hoc WG final report will be integrated in the Structural Reforms WG final report as an annex. Thus, the draft report will be finalized after receiving comments from Structural Reforms WG members. Moreover, it was underlined that the final report could be hosted on the EHEA website with the support of the BFUG Secretariat.

At the beginning of the debates, the Co-Chairs were asked to remove the repeating information in the report and give explanations to the recommendations. Moreover, the WG members noted that the internationalisation issue should be stated more precise in the summary of the report.

The group debates led to the final version of the Third Cycle ad-hoc WG report as inserted below.

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**Contributes of the Third Cycle Ad–Hoc WG to the Ministerial Communique**

While opening the debates on the respective issue Mrs. Marzia Foroni emphasized the importance of precise reflection of the WG discussions in the final contributes to the Ministerial Communique. Thus, the Co-Chairing team worked hard to summarize the conclusions of the WG discussions very accurate.

Additionally, the ad-hoc WG on the Third Cycle should suggest that the formulations should be taken into consideration when drafting the Yerevan Communique. Moreover, it was underlined that the WG should leave to the Structural Reforms WG, the Yerevan Ministerial Communique drafting committee and to the BFUG the task to further summarize the formulations presented.

During the WG debates on the formulations presented by the Co-Chairs following priorities were re-drafted:

* Doctoral training is the connection between EHEA and ERA and Doctoral graduates contribute to social progress, through the advancement in knowledge and innovation and the enhancement of productivity;
* Governments and Institutions should commit to further realize the full potential of Doctorate graduates in the advancement of knowledge and innovation and make society aware of their contribution;
* National and institutional quality assurance frameworks for Doctoral programmes should be based on: supportive and inclusive research environments; provisions for strengthening the supervisors’ competencies and role; independent and external peer review in research assessment;
* Taking into account the research-based approach of Doctoral training, more mobility opportunities should be available for doctoral candidates and for supervisors, as support for increasing quality and diversification of the research environment. In addition, joint programmes or other forms of collaboration with international partners should be supported;
* To increase transparency in Doctoral qualifications national qualifications frameworks should be duly defining the intended outcomes for the third cycle, the Diploma Supplement should be available for all Doctoral graduates across the EHEA and the use of ECTS in the Doctoral training, where in place, should take into consideration the specificities of its research-based approach;
* National and institutional regulations should facilitate the transition of talented students interested in research from the second to the third cycle, to increase the quality and the in-take of Doctoral candidates;
* To increase Doctorate holders’ career opportunities in line with their research profile, collaborations between institutions and the non – academic sector, interdisciplinary and intersectoral programmes, structured programmes and promotion of self-employment and entrepreneurship must become a common practice of HEI’s;
* Ministries and HE institutions across all EHEA countries should make an effort to collect comparable data on essential third cycle issues;
* In order to successfully implement policy reform in the third cycle, Ministers commit to ensure its sustainable development across EHEA by funding HEI’s research capacity, balancing core and targeted funding, supporting the attraction and diversification of external funds either from private or other public sources.

The Co-Chairs once again thanked the participants for their contribution and informed that the WG members are welcome to once again send their proposals for re-drafting the discussed points after the WG meeting via email.

**Conclusion of the meeting**

**Follow Up Actions**

Mrs. Marzia Foroni explained that the final report of the ad-hoc WG on Third Cycle will be an annex to the Structural Reforms WG final report. Thus, she will be participating in the Structural Reforms WG next meeting where the draft report of the Third Cycle ad-hoc WG will be discussed. Additionally, the WG members will be updated on the outcomes of the discussion held. Moreover, the BFUG Secretariat was requested to circulate the minutes of the respective meeting of the Structural Reforms WG to the ad-hoc WG members.

She emphasized the importance that Italy will pay to the issue of Doctoral Training during its presidency in EU and Bologna Process. It was noted that the WG didn’t invent completely new ideas during the two years of work, but various important issues were clarified. The outcomes of the discussions should bring the attention of ministers on the directions the governments should take during the Doctoral training reforms.

The WG members thanked the Italian hosts for the excellent services provided.