Minutes of the 1st Working Group on Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process meeting
Online
11th of December 2024

List of participants

Nr.	Name	Country/Organisation
1	Entela Haloci	Albania
2	Helga Posset	Austria (Co-chair)
3	Kyriacos Charalambous	Cyprus
4	Rob Copeland	Education International - ETUCE
5	Aleksandar Šušnjar	EQAR
6	Henriette Stoeber	EUA
7	David Crosier	Eurydice (Co-chair)
8	Daniela Kocanova	Eurydice
9	Kristina Hauschildt	Eurostudent
10	Lana Par	ESU
11	Mathieu Musquin	France
12	Magdalena Klann	Germany
13	Alibek Madibekov	Kazakhstan
14	Stefan Sant	Malta (Co-chair)
15	Marius Deaconu	Romania
16	Jernej Širok	Slovenia
17	Aslı Günay	Türkiye
18	Horia Onița	Head of the EHEA Secretariat
19	Oana Țînțar	EHEA Secretariat

The Republic of Moldova and Montenegro were absent.

The meeting starts at 10:00 CET.

1. Introduction of the WG co-chairs
1.1. Approval of the agenda
1.2. Tour de table of the WG members

Documents: WG_Monitoring_1_HU_IS_1_Agenda

The Austrian Co-chair opened the meeting by welcoming the participants and introducing the Co-chairs. She invited the participants to raise any possible questions or concerns with regard to the proposed agenda. As the participants did not raise any issues, the agenda was adopted as proposed by the Co-chairs.

The Austrian Co-chair invited the participants to introduce themselves.

2. Update from the EHEA Secretariat and other working structures

Documents:

- WG_Monitoring_1_HU_IS_2_1_Bologna Follow-Up Group Work Programme 2024-2027
- WG_Monitoring_1_HU_IS_2_2_Rules of Procedure for the European Higher Education Area and for the Bologna Follow-Up Group

The Austrian Co-chair gave the floor to the Head of the EHEA Secretariat (HoS) to outline the activity of the BFUG working structures and the Secretariat since the beginning of the 2024-2027 cycle. The HoS briefly presented the working structures established by the Work Programme adopted by the BFUG and their mandates to implement the commitments from the Tirana Communique. He mentioned that all the relevant information regarding the previous and upcoming meetings of the BFUG, BFUG Board and working structures could be found on the EHEA website.

The French representative asked if the events directly linked to the Bologna Process, organised independently by BFUG members, should be described in English to be promoted on the EHEA website. The Head of the Secretariat clarified that this would not be a requirement.

The Austrian Co-chair inquired about the lack of a dedicated working structure in the Work Programme 2024-2027 for the ESG reform. The Head of the Secretariat informed that the first meeting of the ESG revision Steering Committee, composed of the authors of the ESG, already took place and explained that, given the previous practice, the ESG review Steering Committee and Drafting Group had not been considered BFUG working structures. He added that the BFUG would continue to liaise with the ESG Steering Committee, receive the drafts of the ESG and be consulted in the development process, since the BFUG endorses the ESG for the Ministerial Conference. The first draft of the revised ESG should be submitted in one of the BFUG meetings in 2026.

The Eurydice Co-chair informed about his participation in the first meeting of the Working Group on Fundamental Values, emphasising the importance of liaising with it, since the WG on FV would monitor the implementation of fundamental values in the EHEA.

3. Presentation of the Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process

Documents: WG_Monitoring_1_HU_IS_3_Draft ToRs WG on Monitoring

The Maltese Co-chair presented the Draft Terms of Reference for the WG on Monitoring. As the participants did not raise any issues, the Austrian Co-chair stated that the current draft would be transmitted to the BFUG by the EHEA Secretariat.

4. Review of The European Higher Education Area in 2024 – Bologna Process Implementation Report
5. Brainstorming for the 2027 Bologna Process Implementation Report

Documents: WG_Monitoring_1_HU_IS_5_Presentation_Bologna_Process_Implementation report: review of 2024 report and way forward to 2027

The Eurydice Co-chair gave a brief overview of the development process of the Bologna Process Implementation Report 2024, pointing out both successful and problematic aspects. He emphasised the main difficulties identified at the end of the last cycle concerning the future development of the BPIR:

- Collecting a tremendous amount of information, which implied an extensive questionnaire sent to the BFUG members
- From the BFUG members' point of view, difficulties in submitting evidence-based responses and providing legislative references to the abovementioned questionnaire
- The extensive resources needed to process the collected information
- Significant delays and large time gaps between the transmission of information from some countries
- The increasing number of policy commitments in every new cycle, implying a more difficult comprehensive monitoring

The Eurydice Co-chair explained that for the 2027 report, the WG should develop a reduced comprehensive model, covering all the commitments but focusing on essential topics and indicators, per the BFUG decision. He outlined each chapter of the BPIR, explaining its current status, and invited the participants to discuss what should be kept or removed in the future.

Key data and key commitments

In relation to this section and the information provided by the Eurydice Co-chair that information would be collected from other data sources without a distinct data collection, The

Austrian Co-chair inquired how it had been envisaged to collect data for the 12 countries not covered by European Higher Education Sector Observatory (EHESO) or other data sources. The Eurydice Co-chair explained that EHESO had been developing its capacity according to guidelines set by the European Commission and suggested initiating a discussion with them in the following year about the possibility of extending its geographical scope. He pointed out that a solution hadn't been found yet in the current stage.

The EUA representative inquired about a potential correlation between the issues in filling in the questionnaire of the previous cycle and certain parts with specific, more complex, additional areas. The Eurydice Co-chair confirmed that some of the questions were not easy to handle but mentioned that the biggest challenge consisted of insufficient resources devoted at the national level to the process of providing the data. He explained that many countries delegated the questionnaire to one person, for whom it was impossible to be fully informed about all of the developments across disparate topics.

The EQAR representative supported the idea of focusing the report on the key commitments, while also emphasising topics which despite not falling strictly under the key commitments, provide a clear link to them. Furthermore, he mentioned that EQAR, as a provider of data and information on the national systems for the BPIR, would aim to improve the tool used to feed into the report.

The Eurydice Co-chair pointed out that EQAR data could cover central aspects regarding QA commitments from some indicators, which would reduce the number of questions in the questionnaire.

The Austrian Co-chair asked if there would be a need for more strict deadlines for the completion of the questionnaire, with the Eurydice Co-chair responding that the WG should emphasise at the BFUG meeting that, given the reduced emphasis of the process, the countries should also handle it more efficiently in terms of providing the information.

The Austrian Co-chair further inquired about the perspective on data collection for the national action plans and the idea of including it in a report, mentioning that she was not sure whether this would be within the mandate of the WG. The Eurydice Co-chair explained that the national action plans would contain proposals of future actions, whereas the WG would focus on looking for evidence of implementation.

The Slovenian representative pointed out that the national action plans would bring valuable information if one had oversight of what the countries are doing and how they are tackling implementation. The Head of the Secretariat mentioned that it would be necessary for the BFUG to discuss in Poland the monitoring of the 2024-2027 national action plans and the possible follow-up mechanisms.

Fundamental values

The Eurydice Co-chair explained that no agreements were in place yet, but it would be important to cooperate closely with the WG on FV and synchronise with its approach.

Social Dimension

The Eurydice Co-chair pointed out that collecting all the necessary data for updating the 10 scorecard indicators related to the Principles and Guidelines included in the 2024 BPIR would not be feasible. He explained that some decisions should be made in terms of selecting the criteria and indicators that would be used in coordination with TPG D.

The EUA representative suggested alternating the collection of indicators, for instance, by having a report with half of the scorecard indicators in the current cycle and including the other half in the following cycle report.

Learning and teaching

The Eurydice Co-chair mentioned that the report could be structured to include some aspects of learning and teaching within a key commitment concept. The Austrian Co-chair mentioned that content-wise, there would be a major overlap with student-centred learning and flexible learning paths and suggested that Eurostudent or other data sources could cover some information.

The EUA representative highlighted that, in the last cycle, EUA contributed with Trends data and that they would be happy to continue or perhaps even expand their contribution thereby replacing some of the data that would need to be collected. She also mentioned that EUA would apply with ESU for a project supporting Trends and Bologna with Student Eyes surveys and with EURASHE for a potential project for supporting student-centred learning.

The Eurostudent representative stated that they would be eager to provide relevant indicators, reminding about the same issue as in the EHESO case - not having full EHEA coverage.

The Slovenian representative suggested that Eurostudent should be considered an additional data source, highlighting that in their case information would be based only on the students' perspective.

Mobility and internationalisation

The Eurydice Co-chair explained that quantitative indicators would be necessary and mentioned that the only qualitative indicators used in 2024 BPIR were the ones related to the portability of student support. He emphasised that the aforementioned indicator had not shown any development in the last years.

The Austrian Co-chair mentioned that the European Commission and OECD reports should be checked for more available data. She also mentioned that the mobility of underrepresented groups is covered by Eurostudent, reminding however about the problems of scope and coverage. Furthermore, she emphasised the necessity of discussing with the WG on Internationalisation and Mobility.

General aspects

The Eurydice Co-chair proposed that the Co-chairs prepare a draft paper based on the meeting's discussion, which would include the possible limitations and issues that the WG would need to address. The Co-chairs would circulate the paper to the members by the second week of January 2025. The paper would be used as a proposal for the BFUG meeting in February. The WG members agreed with the proposed approach.

The Eurostudent representative suggested revisiting the format of the 2020 report and having a reduced scope of indicators based on data provided by the countries, followed by a reflection section with other findings from other relevant actors for each topic, analysing related information from different projects and other initiatives, even when they have partial coverage of EHEA countries. She offered her help for such a section, if needed.

The Eurydice representative asked if the previous suggestion would imply reducing the number of indicators relying on the BFUG data and potentially removing scorecard indicators, keeping only a few basic indicators which are not used within a scorecard.

The Eurostudent representative explained that she would consider a significantly reduced number of indicators, without suggestions on which indicators to be included and whether to feed into scorecards at this stage.

The EUA representative pointed out that, when talking about reducing the number of indicators, the group should take into consideration the extensive amount of work which went into developing detailed indicators, especially on the social dimension.

The Austrian Co-chair highlighted that the BPIR was also used by countries as a comparison mechanism, and this should be taken into account when discussing how many or which indicators to reduce.

The Eurydice Co-chair pointed out that there should be a balanced approach and, in the case of the social dimension, a proposal would be made only after the discussions with TPG D.

The Romanian representative highlighted that the BPIR is very important in shaping national policies but also addressing different kinds of stakeholders apart from governmental level ones. As such, the BPIR gives both information and accountability through explaining and making available a periodical follow-up concerning the Bologna Process. He also emphasised the importance of how the information is interpreted and communicated and the added value of the indicators with longitudinal testability.

The ETUCE representative echoed the concerns regarding the reduction of the number of indicators, especially in areas in which extensive amounts of work went into developing detailed indicators (such as social dimension and fundamental values) and emphasised that this could be politically problematic as well.

The Maltese Co-chair inquired about the possibility of structuring the report based on the aspects which would be mainly relevant for students. The Eurydice Co-chair explained that ESU would be doing its own reporting - Bologna with Student Eyes - same as in the last cycles. He emphasised that it would be good to analyse the common findings and differences between the two reports, pointing out that Governments might report a legislative reality not coinciding with the student perspective.

6. Next Working Group on Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process meeting

The Eurydice Co-chair informed the participants that the WG would have 2 meetings per year, generally close to the BFUG or BFUG Board meetings. He suggested that the next meeting take place in April or May 2025, and mentioned that the format of the meeting, online or in-person, could be decided through a survey.

The Austrian Co-chair mentioned that she could host a meeting in Vienna.

The French representative pointed out an in-person meeting would be great, especially when the WG discusses concrete indicators. He also mentioned that a physical meeting could be held in Paris.

The Eurydice Co-chair mentioned that the Co-chairs could propose the best arrangements for the meeting only after the BFUG meeting in Warsaw.

There was no other business. The meeting ended at 12:23 CET.