

Task Force on the Review of the Rules and Regulations for the Governance of the EHEA (TF RR)

Two main discussion issues:

- **EHEA rules**
- **Long-term EHEA secretariat – by 2027**

Since the last BFUG ...

Rules of Procedure

- Further comments from some countries
- Checked by colleagues with a legal background
- Still to be done: Copy-editing
- Still requires 1 issue to be solved

Documents

1. Revised RoP (clean & track changes version)
2. Update

Secretariat

- Letter to BFUG members and consultative members
 - Encouraging consultation within your ministries/organisations
 - Offering advice – also as a considerable number of parties were undecided in February
- Further development of the process post-Tirana (Roadmap)

Documents

1. Text proposal for Communiqué
2. Annex for Communiqué (abbreviated concept note – incl. Roadmap)
3. Questions for the discussion today

EHEA & BFUG Rules of Procedure

- **One document - with two interrelated parts**
 - Rules of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) – to be adopted by Ministers
 - Rules of the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG) - to be adopted by the BFUG
- **Clarification of existing rules and practices, harmonisation of terminology**
- **One last pending issue: exemption of issues from voting**
 - Strong emphasis on consensus, deeply rooted in the BP culture - but also enable decision-making, when needed
 - Vote on all issues? **Risk:** Dictate of majorities **But:** quorum, 2/3 decision, general non-voting culture
 - Exclusion of certain issues? **Risk:** one member can veto
 - Which issues should be excluded?

What to exclude?

- Adoption of the priorities of the European Higher Education Area?
- Adoption of communiqués, standards, guidelines and binding policy instruments and goals?

(Suggested by individual BFUG members)

Next steps:

- Final changes & editing

Longterm EHEA Secretariat

Feasibility:

- independent from any individual member, accountable to BFUG
- sustainable, fit for purpose re staff profiles & numbers
- NGO or Foundation (tbd, also on in consideration of location /national legal context)
- cost-sharing – approach to be agreed
 - EC grant
 - Regular contributions of members
- budget estimate
- call for host countries/organisations 2024)
- to be implemented by 2027
- At least 2 periods – review in 2033

Decision making

- Discussion on 19 February BFUG
 - majority of the BFUG members who expressed themselves in favour of the “long-term” Secretariat
 - considerable number: undecided
- Today: Need for a decision in principle
 - Communique
 - Next steps (Roadmap, Call for hosts, further exploration of technical details)
- In principle, means:
 - Yes - to the concept of a long-term secretariat
 - But: subject to additional steps and decisions, e.g. location, legal form, finance etc.
 - Spring 2026 a milestone go/no-go decision on the launch of the long-term secretariat including its funding model

Proposal for the Communique

...across borders and with the BFUG.

A long term, firmly based EHEA

In view of the long-term character of the EHEA, we consider that firmer structural arrangements are now necessary to ensure its consistent, stable development. We therefore:

- adopt revised Rules of Procedure for the EHEA and invite the BFUG to adopt Rules of procedure of for its own work in due course;
- agree on benefits of establishing a long-term, independent, international EHEA Secretariat to strengthen a European aspect, stability, and effectiveness of the EHEA;
- mandate the BFUG to prepare the new arrangements for such an EHEA secretariat, and ensure it may be launched on 1 July 2027, in line with the principles and the roadmap laid out in the Annex X.
- agree to undertake an assessment of this arrangement after the completion of the 2030-33 work programme

Outlook

For our 2027 Ministerial Conference...

Questions: Do you agree – or disagree

1. Text proposal for the Tirana Communiqué: If endorsed by Ministers the BFUG would

- continue to explore the long-term secretariat, as proposed in the roadmap
- launch a call for hosting countries or organisations
- discuss and decide the details and steps in the next work period (e.g. whether NGO or foundation, location, detailed TOR, budget, organisation and staffing).
- may set up a Task Force responsible for supervising the process,

2. The Secretariat should be fully accountable to the BFUG?

- under the authority of the BFUG
- Governance mechanism to be decided (Board/ standing committee).

3. All EHEA members contribute to the costs of the Secretariat?

- fair sharing of the costs - How? Discussion and decisions during the 2024-2027 work period.
- Inability to contribute fully to the costs would not be a reason to restrict or exclude members.
- Solve problems that individual members may experience (legal, budgetary)
- Not everything will and has to be achieved by 1 July 2027.
- 2027-2030: fine-tuning, transition, and practical experience