

Draft Statement of the EHEA Global Policy Forum

1 We, the Ministers responsible for higher education, heads of delegation, representatives of students,
2 organizations and institutions participating in the EHEA Global Policy Forum, reaffirm our conviction that
3 higher education must expand its ability to address present and future challenges to global peace,
4 development and wellbeing.

5 In 2020, the EHEA Ministers in their Rome Ministerial Communiqué committed to “developing a more
6 inclusive, interconnected and resilient European Higher Education Area (EHEA)”. We all aspire to a world that
7 recognizes that quality education for all is a basic human right and where for all human beings the global
8 target to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for
9 all” becomes a reality, in line with the United Nation Sustainable Development Goal (SDG4).

10 In the lead up to the Forum, the Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue has explored, region by region,
11 opportunities for exchange of views and information on topics of common interest. Conversations,
12 colloquiums, seminars and conferences have allowed us to share information about the similarities and
13 differences between our higher education systems and the challenges we face, and to identify the added
14 value of global dialogue between regions.

15 We aim, through multilateral cooperation, to continue to foster mobility, to strengthen respect for
16 fundamental values such as academic freedom, to improve the quality, relevance and inclusiveness of higher
17 education, and to contribute to lasting peace. Our shared objectives and the ever greater connectedness of
18 our higher education institutions, provide a strong foundation for dialogue and inter-regional and global
19 cooperation.

20 Physical international mobility, of both students and staff, fosters intercultural and international
21 understanding. Innovative blended mobility experiences and virtual international learning environments are
22 increasingly important, and can open up new opportunities. We commit to working together on and sharing
23 the tools necessary to support mobility and the recognition of foreign qualifications and learning periods
24 abroad, in ways that foster reciprocal development, consolidate trust, and improve compatibility,
25 cooperation and transparency between macro regions.

26 To achieve a more inclusive higher education world, we need to ensure equitable access, higher rates of
27 admission and retention for all students, aspiring to provide equal access for all women and men to
28 affordable and quality tertiary education (cf. SDG 4.3).

29 We can further adapt our systems to serve a student body that is representative of the socio-demographic
30 structure of our countries and enhance the inclusiveness of our academic staff. We aspire to ensure equal
31 respect and recognition for the teaching and research of our academic staff, and the attractiveness of
32 teaching as a career.

33 We aim to improve our institutions’ capacity to retain learners and equip them with the competences they
34 will need for employment and for their personal and civic lives, as well as an awareness of and commitment
35 to the principles of sustainability. We also commit to supporting higher education institutions to deepen their
36 engagement with their communities, stakeholders and the labor market.

37 **Moving forward:**

38 We see positive potential for all our countries in continuing to work together to:

- 39 • Further develop all forms of reciprocal mobility of people and knowledge, both in and across regions,
40 as one of the most important keys to global understanding and to excellence in higher education,
41 balancing incoming and outgoing mobility.
- 42 • Reach a common understanding of the ethical principles and values of international academic
43 cooperation by sharing, on an equal footing, our experiences, practices and lessons learned on global
44 issues such as access to quality education, effective quality assurance practices and principles, and
45 attractive academic careers.

- 46 • Develop joint approaches to the handling of, adaptation to and, as much as possible, shaping of
47 technological developments, most notably artificial intelligence and, along with this, deal with the
48 challenge of disinformation.
- 49 • Make learning credits comparable and transferable according to compatible standards and
50 overarching frameworks, building transparency and understanding at global level and providing
51 secure modes of digitalization of data on qualifications and learning achievement.
- 52 • Foster innovation in learning and teaching, including digitally supported learning and teaching, and
53 opening up to new skills and ensuring their link to employability, while addressing the ongoing issues
54 of unequal access and retention.
- 55 • Promote the importance of student-centered learning taking place in a research-rich learning and
56 teaching environment, and the implications of this for the flexibility of study programs and lifelong
57 learning pathways, including forms of informal education.
- 58 • Further facilitate access to higher education by underrepresented groups, including refugees, and
59 strengthen the links between higher education and other systems such as VET to reach untapped
60 talent.

61 We consider the entry into force of the UNESCO *Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications*
62 *concerning Higher Education*, a landmark achievement, and call for its ratification. Building on pre-existing
63 regional agreements, it is an important step towards reaching Sustainable Development Goal 4. To benefit
64 fully from this achievement, we commit to working towards a shared understanding and, where possible,
65 comparability between national and regional Qualifications Frameworks, Qualifications Reference
66 Frameworks, and Quality Assurance systems and mechanisms developed in different world regions.

67 **Continuing Dialogue**

68 We take up our responsibilities towards our countries and peoples, in order to release the potential of higher
69 education to find shared solutions to the world's challenges. We want to support present and future
70 generations in learning to think and act ethically, creatively and critically, enabling them to address and
71 resolve the challenges of the future. Key to this is that higher education plays its pivotal role in the realization
72 of all the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Increased cooperation within and among regions
73 will strengthen our ability to elaborate and implement innovative and inclusive solutions, respecting the
74 resource limitations of our planet.

75 In this regard, we invite all participants to continue to promote global policy dialogue and to identify, region
76 by region, the themes where synergies can be found between the EHEA and, on the one hand, with global
77 organizations such as UNESCO and OECD, and, on the other hand, with intergovernmental processes, such
78 as the Berlin Process, the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Education Process, the Central Asian Higher Education
79 Area (CAHEA), the Union for the Mediterranean, Euro-Latin American and Caribbean (EU-LAC) space as well
80 as ongoing transnational projects regarding recognition, quality assurance and qualification frameworks.

81 We recognize that each region has its own priorities and see that such diversity enriches our dialogue. We
82 encourage the BFUG to create bridges between EHEA working structures¹ and parties interested in deepening
83 dialogue (through seminars, conversations, and joint events) on (but not limited to) the above mentioned
84 topics.

85 The next EHEA Global Policy Forum will be held in 2027 in *[to be decided]*.

¹ <https://www.ehea.info/page-work-plan-2018-2020>