



BFUG BOARD MEETING LXXVII

Hosted by Armenia, Online
Thursday, 21 October 2021
09:00-13:10 (Brussels time)

Minutes

List of Participants

Country	Name	Last Name
Slovenia (BFUG Co-chair)	Duša	Marjetič
Slovenia	Darinka	Vrečko
Slovenia	Andrej	Kotnik
Slovenia	Marija	Skerlj
Armenia (BFUG Co-chair)	Tatevik	Gharibyan
Armenia	Elina	Asriyan
Portugal (Outgoing BFUG Co-chairs)	Ana	Mateus
Portugal (Outgoing BFUG Co-chairs)	Maria de Lurdes	Fernandes
1. Andorra (Outgoing BFUG Co-chair); 2. WG on Supporting the Implementation of the Roadmap for San Marino's Accession to EHEA	Jordi	Llombart
France (Incoming BFUG Co-chair)	Mathieu	Musquin
Azerbaijan (Incoming BFUG Co-chair)	Nijat	Mammadli
BFUG Vice-chair	Linda	Pustina
Council of Europe	Sjur	Bergan
Council of Europe	Katia	Dolgova-Dreyer
EQAR	Colin	Tück
ESU	Martina	Darmanin
European Commission	Lucie	Trojanova
European Commission	Kinga	Szuly
EUA	Michael	Gaebel
EURASHE	Michal	Karpišák
EUROSTUDENT	Kristina	Hauschild
WG on Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process	Tone Flood	Strøm
WG on Fundamental Values	Cezar	Haj
WG on Social Dimension	Ninoslav Šćukanec	Schmidt
WG on Learning and Teaching	Terry	Maguire
Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue	Magalie	Soenen
Bologna Implementation Coordination Group	Ivana	Radonova
Ad Hoc Task Force to Increase Synergies Between the EHEA, the EEA and the ERA	Tine	Delva
Taskforce on Enhancing Knowledge Sharing in the EHEA community	Luca	Lantero
BFUG Secretariat (Head)	Enida	Bezhani
BFUG Secretariat	Kristina	Metallari

1. Welcome and introduction

1.1. Welcome by the BFUG Co-chairs

Tatevik Gharibyan (Co-chair, Armenia) welcomed everybody to the second Board meeting of the 2021- 2024 work period on behalf of the BFUG Co-chairs and thanked the Vice-chair, BFUG Secretariat and outgoing Co-chairs for their support and contribution.

Further, Duša Marjetič (Co-chair, Slovenia) gave an overview of the Directors-General of Higher Education(DGHE) meeting, hosted by the Slovenian Presidency on September 29-30, 2021, focusing particularly on the session on Bologna instruments in support of the European strategy for HEIs, linking EEA and ERA. Its aim was to reinforce cooperation, while acknowledging each organization's respective ambitions and objectives. She also commended the presentation of the 2021-2024 BFUG Work Plan delivered by the BFUG Secretariat at the DGHE meeting.

1.2. Welcome by the BFUG Vice-chair

Linda Pustina (Vice-chair, Albania) greeted the meeting and shared her hope for the future meetings to be held in a hybrid format. She highlighted that despite the difficult situation, the work of the WGs, TPGs and TFs has continued intensively. She acknowledged the great collaboration with the BFUG Co-chairs, smooth transition with the outgoing Co-chairs and the continuous support to all the working structures by the BFUG Secretariat.

1.3. Information by the Outgoing BFUG Co-chairs (Portugal and Andorra)

Thanks were expressed by all the outgoing Co-chairs to their counterparts, Vice-chair and BFUG Secretariat for the support during their chairmanship. Maria De Lurdes Fernandes (Outgoing Co-chair, Portugal) emphasized that the support of the senior officials of Portugal and Andorra contributed effectively to the last BFUG meeting with the approval of the Rules of Procedure and 2021-2024 Work Plan, discussions on the Covid-19 impact in the HE system in terms of QA and more. Ana Mateus (Outgoing Co-chair, Portugal) also notified the Board that this would be her last meeting and thanked everyone for their support.

Jordi Llobart (Outgoing Co-chair, Andorra) emphasized the importance of the rotating co-chairing system of the BFUG, as it has a significant impact on the work the BFUG carries out. He observed that the approach of each respective Co-chair is significantly different, therefore, information exchange and knowledge sharing among the outgoing, current and incoming Co-chairs is crucial in achieving the best outcomes.

For more information, please see: [BFUG Board PT AD 75 Minutes of Meeting](#)
[BFUG PT AD 76 Minutes of Meeting](#)

2. Adoption of the agenda

A letter was submitted by ESU on October 20, 2021, asking the Co-chairs and the Board 'to ensure that the issue of the scheduled Belarusian Co-Chairmanship of the BFUG, and their membership in the Board, is put on the agenda of the December BFUG.' It was agreed to discuss this matter under point 7 of the Board agenda. The agenda of the meeting was adopted with the respective change.

For more information, please see: [BFUG Board SI AM 2.1 Draft Agenda](#)
[BFUG Board SI AM 2.2 Draft Annotated Agenda](#)

3. Update from the BFUG Secretariat

Enida Bezhani (Head of BFUG Secretariat) delivered an overview of the key processes and activities undertaken by the BFUG Secretariat since the last BFUG meeting, including the contribution of the Secretariat during the handover to the incoming Co-chairs. Besides a summary of all the meetings organized, Ms. Bezhani provided also statistical details on the individual working structures, status of meetings organized, as well membership and attendance rate respectively. She acknowledged the training enabled by the CoE and the support by the Vice-chair.

Ms. Bezhani sought the Board's advice on new requests for memberships in WGs and TFs and proposals by members for more concise Minutes of meetings (format/content). It was clarified that new requests should be first consulted with the BFUG Co-chairs and decided upon by the BFUG through electronic procedure. On the Minutes members observed that at least for the WGs meetings, minutes should recollect key discussions that take place and note decision reached or pending.

4. Update from the Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG)

Ivana Radonova (Co-chair, BICG) provided an update of the Bologna Implementation Coordination Group including its composition and ToRs for the 2021-2024 work period, as well as a briefing on the topics discussed in the first and second BICG meetings. Furthermore, she gave an overview of the work of the 3TPGs including the membership of each peer group, specific thematic indications, organization of meetings, submission of umbrella projects (including the Work Packages) and the expected time of the finalization of the Work Plans and Country Plans for each individual TPG.

She also raised the issue of the non-EU countries being unable to participate in the Erasmus+ Call due to the restrictions of the call, while these countries are EHEA members. They ought to be considered as equal partners and should be able to participate in the call, given that it is designed to support the EHEA reforms. This issue was corroborated by the members in the meeting. Kinga Szuly (European Commission) informed the members that for the next call (2023), the Commission will do its utmost to make the process inclusive of non-ERASMUS+ program countries, however, added that interim solutions from the Commission before 2023 for non-EU countries are not available.

For more information, please see: [BFUG Board SI AM 77 BICG Update](#)

5. Updates from the Working Groups and Task Forces

5.1. Working Group on Social Dimension

Ninoslav Šćukanec Schmidt (Co-chair, WG on SD) provided an overview of the progress of the WG on SD to this point, underlining the importance of the new definition of SD, the Principles and Guidelines (P&Gs) and the need to develop a framework for the implementation of the P&Gs. This WG will work intently with the WG on Monitoring, EUROSTUDENT and other European databases for the development of a monitoring system and indicators for the P&Gs. One more PLA related to Principle 8 will be organized this year, with the assistance and support of colleagues from the Support Center for Inclusive Higher Education and the Commission.

Kinga Szuly also provided an update of the Commission's plans on social inclusion, adding that this is considered a priority topic in the European Strategy for Universities and, thus, the Commission plans to streamline the data collection in this context, including U-Multirank and the European Tertiary education Registry. Regarding inclusive mobility, the Commission plans to share its inclusive mobility Erasmus actions with the WG at its next meeting.

For more information, please see: [BFUG Board SI AM 77 WG SD Update](#)

5.2. Working Group on Learning & Teaching

Terry Maguire (Co-chair, WG on L&T) provided an overview of the first meeting of the group, noting that due to the large number of members, there had been a lot of discussion on the working arrangements. The group had defined the key priorities for their work with student-centered learning being one of them. The group had agreed to organize a survey and establish a task force with the aim of signifying potential methodologies to be used for the survey and review what the group might build on, in order to present a plan of first actions. As a lot of work has been done on micro-credentials already, the group had decided to look into this task after projects with the same goal are concluded (i.e., Microbol), to avoid duplication.

5.3. Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue

Magalie Soenen (Co-chair, CG on GPD) provided an overview of the state-of-play of the CG on GPD, including the membership and information on the kick-off meeting. Among others the group has agreed to use the existing materials prepared at the GPF in Rome as a basis for the current work period. The CG will also establish different sub-groups. The aim of the group is to focus on macro regions and the involvement of regional and sub-regional organizations. Ms. Soenen also presented an overview of the umbrella project "IN-GLOBAL: Enhancing Internal Knowledge and Global Dialogue of EHEA," including the partners and Work Packages.

A discussion followed on the aim of the CG to focus on macro regions rather than specific topics, inquiring whether the group will look at differences or commonalities among regions, when dealing with specific topics.

For more information, please see: [BFUG Board SI AM 77 CG GPD Update](#)

5.4. Working Group on San Marino Roadmap

Jordi Llombart (Co-chair, WG on SMR) emphasized that the purpose of this WG is to support the Sammarinese authorities in the implementation of the key elements of the EHEA. Based on the overview presented by the Sammarinese representatives of the current situation of the HE system in their country and the implementation plan, the Co-chairs have developed a document that matches the roadmap's goals alongside the implementation goals of San Marino.

The next meeting of WG will be held in presence in San Marino, on 10-11 November 2021, with the participation of various local stakeholders. The meeting will focus on Quality Assurance and the WG will provide support the plan for peer learning activities related to QA.

For more detailed information, please see: [BFUG Board SI AM 77 WG on SMR](#)

5.5. Ad Hoc Task Force to Increase Synergies Between the EHEA, the HE Dimension of the EEA and the ERA

Tine Delva (Co-chair representative, TF on Synergies) provided an update on the setup and first meeting of the Ad Hoc TF, established to encourage the increase in synergies between the EHEA, the HE Dimension of the EEA and the ERA. The governance structures are currently being revised and a final decision in the form of Council Conclusions is to be expected in November. The Task Force will come forward with a proposal to the BFUG on how the Bologna structures could fit in.

The TF aims to cooperate also with WG on FV, WG on SD, WG on L&T and CG on GPD. A draft proposal to increase synergies among the three areas will be elaborated by the Co-chairs prior to the second meeting of the TF. Darinka Vrečko (Co-chair, TF on Synergies) noted that as

the TF's mandate concludes at the end of 2021, the December BFUG will need to consider the way forward for the work of this Task Force, based on the recommendations to be presented by the latter.

5.6. Task Force on Enhancing Knowledge-Sharing in the EHEA community

Luca Lantero (Co-chair, TF on Knowledge-sharing) presented an overview of key points and activities of the TF. In the first meeting held, the objectives of the TF were specified and an agreement was reached on the ToRs that the mandate of the TF should last for the entire duration of the 2021-2024 work period and a specific plan and an interim report will be introduced to the BFUG after one year of activities. The members had agreed to conduct a survey within the BFUG to identify how EHEA goals and activities are currently perceived within the different EHEA member countries.

Mr. Lantero noted that a joint project proposal was submitted with the CG on GPD, IN-GLOBAL project (see point 5.3.), in line with the framework of the EHEA call from the Commission. The project will support the activities of both groups through the organization of activities, involvement of experts and assistance in data analysis.

5.7. Working Group on Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process

Tone Flood Strøm (Co-chair, WG on Monitoring) presented the state of play of the WG on Monitoring and noted that the commitment and engagement of the group from the first meeting to now has been very positive. The feedback received from the members on the special, standalone edition of the 2020 report was highly positive. For the 2024 report, focus was decided to be placed on coherence, style and involvement of external experts to cowrite the report with Eurydice (i.e, EUROSTUDENT, EQAR). This reflects the request by the EHEA ministers that progress is assessed in terms of the agreed commitments. The existing agreed commitments will be included in the report alongside the new ones agreed in the Rome Communique. Current indicators will require revising and possibly even removal, which is a significant and perplexing task. A full and comprehensive report will be generated for 2024. A draft proposal of the report structure and key elements will be presented at the BFUG meeting.

5.8. Working Group on Fundamental Values

Cezar Haj (Co-chair, WG on FV) provided an update on the first meeting of this WG and informed the members that a project proposal in light of the Erasmus+ call was submitted. It will be implemented by Romania and Norway in partnership with ESU and EUA as associated partners. International experts will be invited to contribute as well. The group will map, analyze and propose indicators to monitor fundamental values.

The CoE encouraged all Co-chairs of the working structures to bring forward to the BFUG meeting issues on which they may need feedback, rather than limit reporting to procedural aspects. In this sense, the reports to the present Board meeting were encouraging. A proposal was made for the Secretariat to distribute information on upcoming meetings from time to time to the BFUG via email. The Secretariat committed to do so promptly.

6. Update from the EHEA Network of QF National Correspondents

Katia Dolgova-Dreyer (CoE) delivered an update on the EHEA Network of NQF Correspondents' annual meeting. The participation rate for this meeting was significantly higher than before, with 35 country representatives. The discussions on the advancement of the self-certification processes showed that there was large disparity between countries with some having achieved self-certification years ago and some still in the adoption stage. In addition, there was a

change of perception on the non-formal education within the QF. With regards to the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, some of the competences have already been included in the QFs, with Andorra and Germany as good examples. The CoE also shared that it has decided to produce a new publication focusing on tools for modernization, within the QF of the EHEA.

For more information, please see: [Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture \(RFCDL\)](#)

For more detailed information, please see: [Annual Meeting 2021 Report CoE](#)

7. Discussion of the draft agenda for the BFUG Meeting in Slovenia

Duša Marjetič (Co-chair, Slovenia) presented the draft agenda for the BFUG Meeting in Slovenia on December 1-2, 2021. Following, members suggested that:

- As the Benelux and the Baltic member states have signed the treaty on Automatic Recognition, a short presentation be included in the agenda on the topic, as practical examples can be beneficial to other countries;
- On item Update by European Commission on the application for projects the Commission present the received applications or have the member countries present an outline of the proposed projects;
- On item 9 Updates and recommendations from the Task Forces, as all the comments on the work of the TF on Knowledge-sharing have been resolved and the ToRs have been approved, the update from this TF might not be an essential point for the agenda;
- EUA proposed to include the issue of mobility in the agenda of a BFUG meeting, given that the Rome Communiqué reiterates the commitment toward enhancing mobility. A well-prepared thematic session highlighting the state of play and ongoing difficulties created for temporary mobility and cross border exchanges due to the pandemic could be planned for the next BFUG meeting;
- On item Updates from the Consultative Members, adequate time be given to accommodate updates on ongoing changes and engagements in projects. EURASHE representative referenced the LOTUS project and proposed that an update on developments and outcomes of the policy forum of the project will be provided at the BFUG meeting by EUA and/or other partners in the project.

It was agreed that mobility will be included and the EHEA members will be notified to prepare any information they wish to share on this point and adequate time will be set apart for the Consultative Members. Kinga Szuly clarified on the presentation of projects that as the applicants will have not yet been informed on the winning project by the upcoming BFUG meeting, such information can only be shared in the BFUG meeting in April 2022. Only basic statistics will be presented for the EHEA call projects. She also noted that the Commission would like to provide a broader overview on the European Strategy for Universities, an update on the draft Council recommendations, on micro-credentials and on education for environmental sustainability.

Regarding the ESU letter concerning the co-chairmanship of Belarus, it was observed that while there are many countries displaying issues concerning fundamental values, it is important to realize that the situation in Belarus is more complex. Martina Darmanin (ESU) noted that this issue was addressed in the statement by the BFUG Co-chairs, supported by 24 country members and 6 consultative members, to the 2020 Rome Ministerial Conference. Given its sensitive nature, Ms. Darmanin requested that this matter be presented and discussed in the upcoming BFUG meeting. Ms. Marjetič acknowledged the situation, however,

she observed that co-chairing is the rightful duty of every country member and the Rules of Procedure provide no stipulations how and why (when) a country member should be exempted. The Commission noted that the Belarus situation is considered very problematic. The official position of the Commission is to cease cooperation with the Belarusian authorities, but continue support for individuals and students through the Erasmus+ program.

It was emphasized that the aim of discussing this issue at the BFUG meeting is not to exclude Belarus from the Bologna Process, but to consider whether Belarus should co-chair the BFUG in the current context. Various points of view were shared by the participants ranging from lack of trust in the public authorities of Belarus to an emphasis on the need for BFUG to assist Belarus in participating in the EHEA. A meeting to discuss fundamental values was proposed, regardless of whether Belarus co-chairs or not. Belarus should also be given the opportunity to state its position in the BFUG meeting. Possible outcomes ought to be examined and the order of co-chairing will have to be looked into, in case Belarus does not proceed with the co-chairmanship.

There have been precedents of the BFUG Co-chairmanship order changes approved by the BFUG, therefore, the BFUG can change the structure and order of the Co-chairing of non-EU countries, if the need be. However, as no provisions exist in the Rules of Procedure for similar scenarios to the situation of Belarus, it was proposed that a specific text on this matter/similar matters is added. Also, a procedure on the suspension of a specific Co-chairmanship or change of the order of Co-chairmanship is also needed, as similar situations might occur and the BFUG should have in place a clear number of procedures on how to approach such situations.

Several participants emphasized that the Belarus Co-chairmanship is a very urgent issue, which needs to be raised among the BFUG members well in advance, to allow for necessary consultations with relevant authorities. The European Parliament resolution on restriction of Belarusian representatives' entry to the EU was also observed.

The Board agreed that the issue of Belarus' upcoming co-chairmanship will be included as a separate item in the agenda of the BFUG meeting, so that the issue is thoroughly discussed. A document will be prepared by the BFUG Co-chairs with the help of ESU and other relevant members, as a preparation for the upcoming discussion at the BFUG meeting. The document should outline 1. the current situation in Belarus, as the members would need to consult with their representatives on the political aspects of the matter, and 2. the procedural aspects.

For more detailed information, please see: [BFUG SI AM 78 Draft Agenda](#)

8. Information by the incoming Co-chairs

8.1. BFUG Board Meeting in Azerbaijan

Nijat Mammadli, representing the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan announced that Azerbaijan will be hosting the next BFUG Board meeting on 9 February 2022 in presence (should Covid-19 restrictions allow).

He officially requested the members' support with the procedural steps for Azerbaijan to join other BFUG working structures, besides the TPGs where it already is participating. Azerbaijan looks forward to co-chairing BFUG with France and working closely with the BFUG, Board members and Secretariat.

8.2. BFUG meeting in France

Mathieu Musquin (Incoming co-chair) provided an update on the planned objectives for the 2022 BFUG meeting that will take place at the CoE's premises, in Strasbourg on April 11-12, 2022. Moreover, in alignment with the Rome Communiqué, where close cooperation with

ERAC is encouraged to strengthen synergies, a joint side event with the Committee may take place also in Strasbourg, depending on the discretion of the next BFUG meeting and the outcome of the work of the respective TF on Synergies. This will also be a good occasion to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

9. AOB

A request to clarify the wording in the BFUG Rules of Procedures and website concerning the role of EQAR was presented. Colin Tück (EQAR) explained that EQAR is referenced as a non-voting member of BFUG, with 'similar status to the consultative members, but has so far not been officially named consultative member'. As an organization that was created by the Bologna Process, EQAR contributes to the work of the BFUG and the working groups, but it is not a representative stakeholder organization like E4 colleagues. Mr Tück requested that the wording be clarified as follows: 'EQAR has a similar status to the consultative members (non-voting member of BFUG). The Board agreed to the request with the caveat that it is circulated to the BFUG through an electronic procedure for feedback.

Kristina Hauschild (EUROSTUDENT) extended an invite to the BFUG to designate one representative with an active role in the EUROSTUDENT Steering Board, as it has been the case in the previous two steering boards. EUROSTUDENT is involved in the WG on SD and WG on Monitoring and it will expectantly provide indicators for these WGs. Thus, it might be valuable to have links with the BFUG through this project. It was decided for the BFUG to identify its representative through an Expression of Interest Call and following it can approve the candidate through an electronic procedure, if there is more than one candidate.

10. End of meeting

Tatevik Gharibyan delivered a summary of the meeting discussions and outcomes and wrapped up the meeting.