

MEETING OF THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP (BFUG) Alden Biesen, Belgium, 24-25 of August 2010

Draft outcome of proceedings

Welcome and introduction to the meeting

The Chair, Noël Vercruyse (Belgium, Flemish Community), opened the meeting, welcomed the participants and announced that formal apologies had been received from Iceland to the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG).

The Chair welcomed the delegation of Kazakhstan, on the occasion of its first attendance to a BFUG meeting, following the accession of Kazakhstan as a member of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The chairing distribution was agreed as follows:

- **Noël Vercruyse: during the morning of 24th of August;**
- **Rezarta Godo: during the afternoon of 24th of August;**
- **Chantal Kaufmann: during the agenda points on 25th of August.**

1. Information by the Chairs (Belgium & Albania)

Main points outlined below:

- **the Chair introduced the Belgian EU Presidency's priorities in the field of higher education (HE);**
- **Rezarta Godo (Albania) presented the latest developments and reforms undertaken by the Albanian authorities in the field of HE.**

The Chair introduced the Belgian EU Presidency's priorities in the field of higher education (HE). For more details, see the PowerPoint presentation below:



BE PRES High Level
25 June 2010.ppt

Rezarta Godo (Albania) presented the latest developments and reforms undertaken by the Albanian authorities in the field of HE. For more details, see the PowerPoint presentation below:



BFUG_Albanian
introductory presentat

2. Adoption of the agenda

Documents: BFUG (BE/AL) 21_2a [draft agenda]
BFUG (BE/AL) 21_2b [draft annotated agenda]

The agenda was adopted.

3. Outcome of proceedings of the BFUG meeting, Madrid, 18-19 February 2010

Document: BFUG (BE/AL) 21_3 [BFUG Madrid draft outcome of proceedings]

The Chair thanked the former Secretariat for drafting the outcome of proceedings of the BFUG meeting that had taken place in Madrid on 18-19 of February 2010.

The outcome of proceedings was adopted.

4. Information by the Bologna Secretariat & presentation of the EHEA website

Documents: BFUG (BE/AL) 21_4a [Bologna Secretariat 2010-12 TOR]
BFUG (BE/AL) 21_4b [BFUG decision making and communication procedures]
BFUG (BE/AL) 21_4c [EHEA website]

Main points of the discussion and conclusions outlined below:

- **the Secretariat's ToR were endorsed with the amendment regarding the Secretariat's role in organizing the 2012 Ministerial Conference.**
- **concerning the draft paper on BFUG decision-making and communication procedures the BFUG members were asked to submit to the Secretariat written suggestions within one month. The redrafted version, written by the Secretariat, will be presented for a BFUG approval during the 2011 March meeting;**
- **with regard to the new EHEA website, the future steps that need to be undertaken in order to accommodate the various points of view expressed during the related debate, were:**
 - **seeing what the BFUG wants to adopt as additional working methods within the EHEA;**
 - **involving all BFUG members in making the website more relevant and oriented towards the main target groups.**

The Chair pointed out that the official handover of the Bologna Secretariat, from the Benelux countries to Romania, had taken place on the 5th of July, 2010, in Bucharest.

Ligia Deca, as Head of the Bologna Secretariat, introduced the new Secretariat team and presented the Secretariat's Terms of Reference (ToR). She mentioned:

- The Secretariat's new responsibilities include creating the Bologna Process' archive and developing and maintaining the permanent EHEA website;

- The Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports in Romania (MECTS) will cooperate with the Bologna Secretariat in the process of organising the Bucharest Ministerial Conference and Third Edition of the Bologna Policy Forum;
- The Secretariat's consultative experts are employees of the Romanian Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, who have been delegated to support the activity of one BFUG working group or network each.

The Secretariat's ToR were endorsed with the amendment regarding the Secretariat's role in organizing the 2012 Ministerial Conference.

The Head of the Bologna Secretariat introduced the draft paper on BFUG decision-making and communication procedures, described the context in which the document had been drafted, emphasized that it represented just a first step for a further debate and, in order to redraft it, asked the BFUG members to contribute with comments and suggestions, especially concerning the Board's role and the proposed actions outlined in the end of the presented document.

There were many opinions and arguments focused on the controversial issue of formalizing (some of) the internal procedures versus preserving the current informal approach of the process, while several other issues linked to this topic were touched upon, such as:

- the question of having or not specific ToR for the BFUG;
- having voting procedures just for particular situations or as a general rule;
- the relation between the Secretariat and: the BFUG, the Board and other Bologna Process' sub-structures;
- whether the procedures used by different BFUG sub-structures should vary or not;
- the possible role of the BFUG in approving the composition of the BFUG sub-structures;
- making a better distinction (and possible criteria in this respect) between official and unofficial events under the Bologna Process;
- the conditions to be respected for the external representation of the BFUG;
- the logos and other symbols in the view of the transition towards the EHEA from the Bologna Process and the improving of the external communication in this respect;
- the inclusion of EU events in the Bologna calendar;

The Chair concluded by asking the members to submit to the Secretariat written suggestions within one month. The redrafted version, written by the Secretariat, will be presented for a BFUG approval during the 2011 March meeting.

Ligia Deca, the Head of the Bologna Secretariat, presented the new EHEA website (www.ehea.info). For more details, see the PowerPoint presentation below:



EHEA permanent
website presentation.ppt

The comments and suggestions expressed on this occasion by the BFUG members were focused on the following aspects:

- a general appreciation on the work done by the new Secretariat;
- various requests to widen and, according to the given situation, deepen the area covered by the EHEA website (more space allocated for the stakeholders, including information for and from them; more space for best practices; to give visibility to research papers on the Bologna Process/ EHEA), while there was criticism that the actual website is too much designed for the BFUG;
- the website cannot be a solution to all EHEA communication needs and its further development needs increased commitment and investment from all BFUG members;
- to clarify the public access to different kind of documents related to the BFUG and the work of its sub-structures;
- to have a second discussion (a brainstorming was proposed as well) on the future development of the website and during this time to collect other useful ideas, including contributions from the Working Groups (WGs) and networks;
- to explore the opportunity to include a glossary;
- to use the website as a tool to present the EHEA to the global community;
- not to look at the website as a form of support to increase the efficiency of the Bologna Process implementation, because its aim is the dissemination of information and full transparency regarding the activities within the EHEA.

At the end, Ligia Deca described the future steps that need to be undertaken in order to accommodate the various points of view expressed:

- seeing what the BFUG wants to adopt as additional working methods within the EHEA;
- involving all BFUG members in making the website more relevant and oriented towards the main target groups.

5. Feedback on the Budapest/Vienna Ministerial Conference

Document: BFUG (BE/AL) 21_5 [Budapest-Vienna Declaration]

Austria thanked the former Bologna Secretariat, provided by Benelux countries, for their support, made a few remarks about the students' protests around the Ministerial Conference and promised that it would offer help and assistance for the Romanian delegation to benefit from Austria's experience in organising such events.

6. Feedback on and follow-up to the Second Bologna Policy Forum

Document: BFUG (BE/AL) 21_6 [Vienna Bologna Policy Forum Statement]

Main points of the discussion outlined below:

- **it would be important to have all EHEA Ministers present within the next BPF;**
- **additional feedback was asked to be sent to the Secretariat by September 17th, 2010;**
- **Romania is currently exploring the possibility to organise an event dedicated to the researchers on the Bologna Process, able to provide some new ideas and inputs for the Ministerial Conference and the BPF.**

Austria appreciated that the morning info-session for the non-EHEA delegations in Vienna had been too short and that a signal from the Ministers to the non-EHEA members, by having all EHEA Ministers present within the next BPF edition, would be very important.

Ligia Deca asked for additional feedback to be sent to the Secretariat by September 17th, 2010.

The Vice-Chair, Adrian Curaj (Romania), announced that Romania is currently exploring the possibility to organise (before the Ministerial Conference) an event dedicated to the researchers on the Bologna Process, able to provide some new ideas and inputs for the Ministerial Conference and the BPF.

7. Proposal for written procedure on language regime for ministerial conferences

Document: BFUG (BE/AL) 21_7 [ministerial conference language regime]

Main points of the discussion and conclusions outlined below:

- **there were three options presented (two of them as in the draft document prepared by the Secretariat and a third one sent by France not long before the meeting that proposed adding French and German languages to the first option);**
- **during the lengthy debate as consensus could not be met, it was concluded:**
 - **to have internal discussions regarding the current Ministerial Conference language regime in each country;**
 - **to invite the Chairs and the Bologna Secretariat to draft a revised paper, which would be the basis for discussion in the next BFUG meeting;**
 - **there was no agreement to ask the Ministers for a formal statement on the matter before the Ministerial Conference in Bucharest;**
 - **the paper would be redrafted in light of the discussions, sent to the BFUG members that would consult their respective organizations or country authorities, and then come back on March 2011 and have a discussion on what to be put forward to the Ministers, while the Bucharest Ministerial Conference would remain under the regime of the Stockholm rules.**
 - **a formal written position from each delegation should not be asked, but there should be orally expressed preferences during the next BFUG meeting on the suitability of the Stockholm rules and their preferences after internal consultations;**
- **it was also suggested:**
 - **first to ask whether the dissatisfaction with Stockholm rules is shared;**
 - **for the use of different languages more arguments would be needed.**

The Chair introduced the two options, as in the draft document prepared by the Secretariat, and then presented the third option sent by France not long before the meeting that, in brief, proposed adding French and German languages to the first option, motivated by the diplomatic tradition and French Minister's request to re-introduce French for the Budapest/Vienna Conference. Further on, the third option implied Ministers themselves approving the language regime.

A lengthy debate followed, but no consensus could be met. Some of the points raised are listed below:

- warning about the financial and logistical consequences in the event of an extension of the language regime and on the pressure that would be made upon the hosts;

- ethical considerations in regards to discriminating amongst European languages;
- the need for a distinction between reading, listening and speaking regimes;
- the possible negative impact on the Bologna Process in the event of a formal questioning of the Ministers in this respect or on the involvement of the ministries for foreign affairs;
- the need to question the BFUG members on their satisfaction with the Stockholm agreement before deepening the discussion on the language regime.

It was concluded:

- to have internal discussions regarding the current Ministerial Conference language regime in each country;
- to invite the Chairs and the Bologna Secretariat to draft a revised paper, which would be the basis for discussion in the next BFUG meeting;
- there was no agreement to ask the Ministers for a formal statement on the matter before the Ministerial Conference in Bucharest;
- the paper would be redrafted in light of the discussions, sent to the BFUG members that would consult their respective organizations or country authorities, and then come back on March 2011 and have a discussion on what to be put forward to the Ministers, while the Bucharest Ministerial Conference would remain under the regime of the Stockholm rules.

It was also suggested:

- first to ask whether the dissatisfaction with Stockholm rules is shared;
- for the use of different languages more arguments would be needed;
- a formal written position from each delegation should not be asked, but we should have orally expressed preferences on this matter during the next BFUG meeting.

The Chair closed this point by clarifying that the oral opinions should be expressed during the next BFUG meeting on the suitability of the Stockholm rules and their preferences after internal consultations.

8. Criteria for accession to the European Higher Education Area

Document: BFUG (BE/AL) 21_8 [EHEA accession criteria]

The BFUG decided to postpone this point for its next meeting in Budapest.

9. Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve agenda / 2009-2012 Work Plan

Documents: BFUG (BE/AL) 21_9a [calendar of events 2009-2012]

BFUG (BE/AL) 21_9b [BFUG work plan 2009-2012]

Conclusions outlined below:

- **the new Work Plan would include, under the Education, research and innovation chapter, the PLA-seminar led by Denmark and the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) ToR;**
- **the document was adopted with the additions formulated during the debate.**

At this point the chairing was taken over by Rezarta Godo (Albania).

Ligia Deca introduced the draft Work Plan and explained the reasons for having a new document in which minor changes had been operated.

The following proposals were expressed:

- to include a peer learning activity (PLA) seminar in 2011 on the link between research, higher education and innovation;
- to correct the date of the seminar on "Embedding Short-Cycle HE in the (Higher) Education System" that would be held in Budapest, 4-5 November 2010, to 20-21 January 2011.

It was concluded that the new Work Plan would include, under the Education, research and innovation chapter, the PLA-seminar led by Denmark and the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) ToR. The document was adopted with the above additions and its new form would be re-circulated by the Secretariat before the next BFUG meeting.

9.1 Reporting on the Implementation of the Bologna Process

Documents: BFUG (BE/AL) 21_9.1a [reporting timeline]
BFUG (BE/AL) 21_9.1b [questionnaire for data collection]
BFUG (BE/AL)21_9.1c [questionnaire on student and staff mobility]
BFUG (BE/AL) 21_9.1d [input from Eurostat/Eurostudent]
BFUG (BE/AL) 21_9.1e [EC update on mobility]

Main points of the discussion outlined below:

- **the printed document covered only the qualitative indicators and not the quantitative ones (that would be discussed during the next meeting of the WG on Reporting (November 16th, 2010, in Luxembourg);**
- **one of the challenges is to find out whether the questionnaire (that had been simplified) was correctly formulated and properly understood for the pre-testing phase soon to follow;**
- **in Spring 2011, the BFUG members would receive a first outlook of the report;**
- **participants advanced suggestions, comments or questions related to the questionnaire, concerning: overlaps, missing questions, definitions that should be inserted, needed clarifications, technical improvements, risks of errors and actions to counteract them;**
- **it was stressed the role of BFUG national representative as main responsible for of keeping an overview on the coherence and reliability of the answers to all parts of the questionnaire.**

Chairs of the Working Group (WG) on Reporting introduced the topic:

- the aim is to have an integrated report for the Ministerial Conference, which is able to provide the base for evidence-based policy, yet the way in which the report would be used for evidence based-policy had not been discussed up to the now;
- in spite of its length, the questionnaire had been simplified and the main changes that had occurred and its structure were explained;
- the printed document covered only the qualitative indicators and not the quantitative ones (statistical evidence); the quantitative indicators had not been yet established and would be discussed during the next meeting of the WG on Reporting (November 16th, 2010, in Luxembourg);
- one of the challenges is to find out whether the questionnaire was correctly formulated and properly understood for the pre-testing phase soon to follow;
- in Spring 2011, the BFUG members would receive a first outlook of the report.

Participants praised the work done in the drafting process, while proposing some suggestions, comments or questions related to the questionnaire, as follows:

- there are few overlaps and some questions are missing (e.g. no question on workload related to ECTS), or a need for additional questions on some issues (e.g. student centred learning, social dimension);
- definitions should be inserted into the questionnaire;
- important aspects related to academic staff are missing;
- clarifications will be needed concerning any possible confusion coming from the similarities with another recent EURYDICE questionnaire;
- the BFUG needs to take into account the responsibilities and difficulties at different national and sub-national in filling the present questionnaire levels;
- there is a need for technical improvements leading to consequences both on the filling-in manner of the questionnaire and on the coordination between the questions and comments related to the fees, scholarships and grants in different parts of the questionnaire;
- the WG needs to take into account the existing risks of errors in completing such a wide questionnaire and possible measures to diminish them;
- the data collectors should provide room for comments and to include textboxes for the possible alternative answers in the case of closed questions;
- the importance and the time constraints related to collecting the responses on students and staff mobility; in this respect, coordination with the activity of the Mobility WG is needed.

The Co-Chairs stressed on the role of BFUG national representative as main responsible for of keeping an overview on the coherence and reliability of the answers to all parts of the questionnaire.

9.2 Mobility

Document: BFUG (BE/AL) 21_9.2 [Mobility WG update]

Main points outlined below:

- **the Chair of the Mobility WG introduced the topic regarding the distinction between EHEA and EU benchmark on mobility and stressed on the 30th of September 2010 deadline for the answers on the mobility questionnaire;**
- **a debate followed and during it the Chair of the WG agreed to amend the Preliminary Remarks section of the questionnaire so that it is made clear that BFUG, in the ToR for the Mobility WG, called for the drafting of an EHEA strategy on mobility.**

The Chair of the Mobility WG introduced the topic:

- the distinction between EHEA and EU benchmark on mobility;
- stressed the importance of having, as soon as possible, (before September 30th, 2010) the answers on the mobility questionnaire that would be circulated at the end of this week, in order to draft the EHEA mobility strategy.

During the debates and in reaction to concerns raised by United Kingdom, the Chair of the WG agreed to amend the Preliminary Remarks section of the questionnaire so that it is made clear that BFUG, in the ToR for the Mobility WG, called for the drafting of an EHEA strategy on mobility.

9.3 Recognition

Document: BFUG (BE/AL) 21_9.3 [Recognition WG update]

Main points outlined below:

- **the Chair of the Recognition WG introduced the main items of the report;**
- **various opinions were expressed during the discussion that followed.**

The Chair of the Recognition WG introduced the main items of the report:

- the six action lines for improving recognition identified by the WG;
- the project delivering a handbook on the different recognition procedures and criteria across Europe, coordinated by the NUFFIC (Dutch NARIC) and funded by the European Commission;
- the stage of the cooperation with the Qualifications Frameworks (QF) WG on adjusting the Lisbon Convention;
- the stakeholders' conference on recognition to be organized most probably in Riga, 26-27 of April, 2011.

The below listed points were raised during the discussions that followed the introduction:

- the lack of Ministers' commitment to the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC);
- the positive benefits of a European recognition handbook on good practices across the EHEA;
- effective recognition procedures are a prerequisite for mobility;.

- the EHEA website cannot solve the problems within the frame of recognition, more action would be required;
- the vagueness and diversity (both good and bad examples) of national action plans for recognition;
- the need to properly address recognition at grassroots level, while much more emphasis should be put on the national level;
- the Bologna Process was initially aiming at “automatic recognition”;
- the role of the BFUG members would be to convince persons involved in higher education institutions and responsible central authorities.

9.4 Social Dimension

Document: BFUG (BE/AL) 21_9.4 [Social Dimension WG update]

The WG’s Chair informed the BFUG that the meeting scheduled on the 26th of April 2010 had been postponed and the WG held its first meeting on the 20th of May 2010. He briefed the participants on the main results of that meeting.

He also mentioned that the Group would have its next meeting in the first half of 2011, followed by another one in September 2011.

A useful new publication “Who Gets a Degree ?” was announced as being available at: <http://www.strediskovzdelavacipolitiky.info/download/Whogetsadegree.pdf> .

9.5 Network of Experts in Student Support in Europe (NESSIE)

Document: BFUG (BE/AL) 21_9.5 [NESSIE update]

Main points outlined below:

- **the Co-Chair of the Network, Brian Power, introduced the latest developments related to the activities of this Network;**
- **a discussion followed and the Co-Chair clarified the issues raised by BFUG members concerning the Network’s report.**

The Co-Chair of the NESSIE Network (Brian Power, Ireland) presented the latest developments related to the activities of the Network. He detailed, amongst others, the internal manner of cooperation and the relation with the BFUG, as agreed within the Network. For more details, see his PowerPoint presentation:



NESSIE ToR Alden
Biesen 24 August 2010

The following discussion gravitated around the following issues:

- whether student unpaid loans represent a significant problem or not;
- portability of grants and loans, its reflection in NESSIE activities, its relation to social security within EU;
- the inclusion of non-EU issues on the agenda of the network;
- the inclusion of mobile students' access to local student support schemes;

- the distinction between support schemes that can be accessed by EU students and non-EU students.

The network Co-Chair clarified NESSIE's report:

- the report submitted summarizes the last full network meeting in Dublin, where the aim was to facilitate exchange of information on policy and operational issues. It includes updates from individual national experts on developments in their countries;
- the Network expanded its approach to more explicitly cover all of the tasks defined in Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve in the field of student support, including the promotion of the full portability of grants and loans;
- the report of the Network meeting simply reflected updates on student support .

The Chair ended this point and closed the meeting of the BFUG for the day of the 24th of August.

On the 25th of August, the Chair, Chantal Kaufmann (Belgium, French Community), opened the second day of the BFUG meeting, thanked the Flemish hosts and briefed the participants on the remaining points in the program.

9.6 International Openness

Documents: BFUG (BE/AL) 21_9.6a [Int. Openness WG updated TOR]
 BFUG (BE/AL) 21_9.6b [Int. Openness WG Work Plan 2010-12]
 BFUG (BE/AL) 21_9.6c [Int. Openness WG update]

Main points and conclusions outlined below:

- **the WG's Chair informed the BFUG members on:**
 - **the takeover of the WG chairing from the Austrian to the Romanian delegation, starting with the 1st of July 2010;**
 - **the changes operated during the last WG in the ToR (that were adopted with these changes);**
 - **the changes occurred in the WG's Work Plan;**
 - **the main points on the recent and forthcoming activity of the WG, including the setup of the new Information and Promotion Network (participants were also briefed on the related launching event in Vienna on the 28th of May 2010 and on the elected Steering Committee, the Work Programme and the sub-groups);**
- **it was noted the BFUG agreement on:**
 - **finding solutions for having the EHEA Ministers present at the BPF;**
 - **giving the opportunity for an initial input to the BPF thematic orientation to the colleagues from non-EHEA countries.**

The Chair of the International Openness WG informed the BFUG members on the takeover of the WG chairing from the Austrian to the Romanian delegation, starting with

the 1st of July 2010. She listed the changes that had been operated in the WG's ToR and Work Plan:

- the subsequent modifications due to changes in chairing;
- the inclusion in the Work Plan of the task to support the organization of the BPF in 2012.

She asked the BFUG members to approve these changes.

The WG's Chair informed the BFUG about the recent and forthcoming activity of the WG:

- the setup of the new Information and Promotion Network;
- the inclusion on the agenda of the next International Openness WG meeting (28th of October 2010, Bucharest) of a discussion on the organization of the next BPF;
- no more than seven nominations of national contact persons for the preparation of the BPF had been received (only three from EHEA countries, namely: Austria, Norway and Poland).

In this context, the WG's Chair asked the BFUG whether to include the BFUG members as contact persons in the list and, in the event of a positive answer, to decide how to manage the cases where there are two or more representatives in the BFUG for the same country.

She further presented the WG's proposal to split the Ministerial Conference or to interrupt it and to include the BPF in between and asked for suggestions both on this matter, but also on the topic of the BPF. Various suggestions were received. Concerns were raised on the image and identity of EHEA towards non-Europe world.

Magalie Soenen (Belgium, Flemish Community) briefed the participants on the launching of the new Information and Promotion Network in Vienna on the 28th of May 2010:

- the election of three Co-Chairs: Hubert Dürrstein (Austria), Heli Aru (Estonia) and Magalie Soenen (Flemish Community of Belgium);
- the Work Programme prepared by the Steering Committee (the Co-Chairs plus Cyprus and Hungary) will be made available in September 2010;
- the organization of the IPN in three sub-groups working on: WG1 - the development of an overview of all the Information and Promotion existing initiatives; WG2 - the contribution to the EHEA website and producing promotional materials for the EHEA; WG3 - expert meeting focusing on the promotion of EHEA.

She stated that the new Network would also deal with some of the questions already raised during this meeting, such as the issue of the "face" of the EHEA for the global world (introduced by UNESCO) or about the use of the logo (introduced by Germany).

The Chair concluded by noting the BFUG agreement on:

- approving the updated ToR of the International Openness WG;
- finding solutions for having the EHEA Ministers present at the BPF;
- giving the opportunity for an initial input to the BPF thematic orientation to the colleagues from non-EHEA countries.

9.7 Qualifications Frameworks

Document: BFUG (BE/AL) 21_9.7 [QF WG/ Network update and NQF synthesis]

Main points of the discussion outlined below:

- **the WG's Chair informed the BFUG members on: the progress made in this field and the world wide policy attention to this issue; the importance of national correspondents and the role of the existing national related structures; the next national correspondents and national LLL-EQF contact points meeting, on the 26th of October 2010 (followed by the WG meeting on the 27th of October 2010);**
- **recognition and QF were proposed as a topic for the next BPF.**

The WG's Chair informed the participants on the following matters:

- the progress made by most of the countries and the areas of concern;
- the importance of national correspondents. He asked whether the BFUG felt a need to endow this informal network of national correspondents with formal terms of reference;
- the next national correspondents and national LLL-EQF contact points meeting, on the 26th of October 2010 (followed by the WG meeting on the 27th of October 2010);
- the world wide policy attention to qualifications framework (could be a topic for the next BPF);
- the need, importance and complexity of making the existing national structures work in practice.

Some BFUG members briefed their colleagues on the developments on the matter from their national contexts. Recognition was proposed as a topic for the next BPF.

In the end, the WG's Chair asked the participants to double-check that their national correspondents' representatives would be present at their meeting on the 26th of October 2010.

9.8 Transparency Tools

Document: BFUG (BE/AL) 21_9.8 [Transparency Mechanisms WG update]

Main points of the discussion outlined below:

- **the Directors General of Higher Education (DGHE) meeting would take place on 13-14 September, in Namur (Belgium) focusing on the issue of transparency;**
- **the WG's Chair presented the main tasks of the WG and mentioned the main activities of the WG that had been held or were scheduled for 2010:**
 - **next meeting would be held on the 11th of October 2010;**
 - **the idea of organizing a mini-seminar on transparency tools (possibly during the Polish EU Presidency);**
 - **the WG would probably need to have two meetings in 2011 in order to conclude its work;**
- **a debate followed and the WG's Chair underlined that:**
 - **a page on the EHEA website on transparency tools would be welcome;**
 - **a possible format of the mini-seminar would be to invite experts to react to the developments under this thematic area.**

The BFUG Chair announced that the Directors General of Higher Education (DGHE) meeting would take place on 13-14 September, in Namur (Belgium) and would be focused on the same issue of transparency.

The WG's Chair presented the main tasks of the WG and mentioned the main activities of the WG that had been held or were scheduled for 2010.

Concerning the next WG meeting that would be held on the 11th of October 2010, the WG's Chair announced the main agenda topics. He mentioned, amongst others, the idea of organizing a mini-seminar on transparency tools (possibly during the Polish EU Presidency) and appreciated that the WG would probably need to have two meetings in 2011 in order to conclude its work.

The main issues approached during the respective debate were:

- aspects related to the scheduling of the mini-seminar: location and audience;
- the need to provide additional information concerning transparency tools;
- the monitoring scope of the WG.

The WG's Chair underlined that a page on the EHEA website on transparency tools would be welcome, having in mind the many interesting documents on the issue of transparency received from various institutions. He added that a possible format of the mini-seminar would be to invite experts to react to the developments under this thematic area.

9.9 RPL Network

Document: BFUG (BE/AL) 21_9.9 [RPL Network draft TOR]

Main points and conclusions outlined below:

- **Ann McVie (Scotland) briefed the BFUG on the background of the RPL issue (within the frame of the Bologna Process);**
- **a debate followed and at its end the Chair noted the existing agreement on creating the RPL Network and on ToR (with the minor adjustments resulted in the debate);**
- **the BFUG charged the Network to stay in contact and to liaise with the other WGs (mainly the QF WG and the WG on Recognition).**

Ann McVie (Scotland) briefed the BFUG about:

- the outcomes of the last seminar held on RPL in February in Brussels;
- the proposal for an RPL network starting from the NESSIE model;
- specific Network tasks;
- the envisaged Co-Chairmanship (Scotland, Ireland, the Netherlands).

In the subsequent debate the following points were mainly raised:

- general support for the proposal;
- suggestions for the Network to work also on: the links between recognition (as specified in the LRC) and recognition of prior learning; cross-border RPL;
- the need to involve staff and students in the RPL process;
- suggestions to include in the ToR the need for liaising with the QF and Recognition WGs, as well as the obligation to report back to the BFUG (France).

The Chair noted the existing agreement on creating the RPL Network and on ToR (with the above mentioned minor adjustments). The BFUG charged the Network to stay in contact and to liaise with the other WGs that had been mentioned during the debates (mainly the QF WG and the WG on Recognition).

10. Brainstorming on additional working methods

Document: BFUG (BE/AL) 21_10 [additional working methods]

Main points and conclusions outlined below:

- **the head of Bologna Secretariat introduced the document and the process that had led to it;**
- **during the brainstorming that followed various opinions were expressed on additional working methods including: proposals for new methods; development of cooperation and information activities meant to support the documents approach; warnings and concerns on the possible obstacles and risks;**
- **it was announced that the European Commission is launching a study on the national impact of the Bologna Experts in early 2011 (results would be made available in mid 2012);**
- **a systematic overview of the already existing working methods was asked for, to be developed through updated reports of the BFUG members;**
- **it was concluded that:**
 - **the Secretariat would try to create a matrix with the additional working methods used/financed or willing to be used/financed by each EHEA member;**
 - **some of the working methods presented in the paper would be further detailed while focusing more on the institutional level based on a joint undertaking (EUA and EURASHE would be asked to assist in building an overview of the already existing institutional working methods on Bologna implementation);**
 - **not all the BFUG members would be invited to the Bologna Experts activities / trainings. However, some BFUG representatives could contribute as speakers;**
 - **the Secretariat took note and would consider the specificity of the non-EU countries in their access to funding in the process of redrafting the additional working methods paper;**
 - **the Secretariat would provide the BFUG with a revised paper for its March meeting.**

Ligia Deca presented the document and the process had led to it (the provisions from the Budapest-Vienna Declaration; the analysis on the already existing methods and tools; the main proposals identified for additional working methods). She invited the BFUG members to brainstorm on the additional working methods and, depending on the decided procedure, to send out to the Secretariat any written comments they may have.

The following opinions were expressed:

- appreciation for the drafted document and general support for looking into new ways of deepening the implementation of the Bologna Process;
- support for the study visits method;

- the so called "Tuning Project", as an additional working method;
- a database on courses at higher education institutions, as an additional working method;
- support for strengthening the link between BFUG representatives and national Bologna experts;
- interest in EHEA peer-learning activities;
- call for the extension of the ideas presented in the background document to the grassroots level (student-unions, local institutions, etc);
- the diversification of the EHEA website with respect to the working methods presented to the wider audience;
- an extended use of a database outlining what working methods are used by each BFUG member;
- adding coaching measures targeted at the EHEA HEIs such as "task-forces" helping academic communities to understand and implement the EHEA action lines;
- adding a network of contact-persons in HEIs, both academics and students, with the task of ensuring proper flow of information to/from the national level;
- support to increasing the link between the research community working on Bologna Process implementation and the BFUG and doubts on the feasibility of the selection method described in the background paper;
- warning on the need to look for synergies with the existing EU schemes, in order to avoid duplication;
- concerns on the resources involved, as well as possible alternative sources ranging from the European Commission to the national authorities.
- a matrix with regard to the countries interested on different working methods for study visits, peer learning, job-shadowing/ coaching and internships.

Further on it was announced that the European Commission is launching a study on the national impact of the Bologna Experts in early 2011. This study would be a starting point for decisions on the strategy to adopt after 2013. The results would be made available in mid 2012.

A systematic overview of the already existing working methods was asked for, to be developed through updated reports of the BFUG members.

At the end of this point, Ligia Deca (Head of the Bologna Secretariat) concluded as follows:

- the Secretariat would try to create a matrix with the additional working methods used/financed or willing to be used/financed by each EHEA member;
- some of the working methods presented in the paper would be further detailed. The Secretariat would consider the input of focusing more on the institutional level, but that should be a joint undertaking and, in this respect, EUA and EURASHE would be asked to assist in building an overview of the already existing institutional working methods on Bologna implementation;
- the Secretariat took note of the fact that not all the BFUG members would be invited to the Bologna Experts activities / trainings. However, some BFUG representatives could contribute as speakers;

- the Secretariat took note and would consider the specificity of the non-EU countries in their access to funding in the process of redrafting the additional working methods paper;
- the Secretariat would provide the BFUG with a revised paper for its March meeting.

11. Information on ECTS and Diploma Supplement by the European Commission

Document: BFUG (BE/AL) 21_11 [ECTS and DS labels]

The European Commission presented the already circulated paper, underlined the main unsatisfactory findings and asked the BFUG members to take note of these problems. Furthermore, the European Commission urged the BFUG members to involve national Bologna Experts in this issue, due to the need to use their expertise in the correct implementation of the ECTS and Diploma Supplement.

The Chair proposed that any possible comments are to be sent by email having in view the time constraints.

12. Updates from EC, consultative members, EQAR (written contributions)

Documents: BFUG (BE/AL) 21_12a [CoE update]
 BFUG (BE/AL) 21_12b [EQAR update]
 BFUG (BE/AL) 21_12c [ESU update]
 BFUG (BE/AL) 21_12d [EURASHE update]
 BFUG (BE/AL) 21_12e [UNESCO update]
 BFUG (BE/AL) 21_12f [EI update]

EQAR briefed the participants on the following facts:

- **EQAR was already fully operational;**
- **from the expected 47 Bologna Process' members, only 26 joined EQAR up to that moment. He encouraged all EHEA members to become EQAR General Assembly members, even if the national quality assurance agency(ies) was/ were not yet listed within EQAR.**

As there were no questions (just brief announcements made by UNESCO, ESU and EURASHE regarding events on the topic of quality assurance), the Chair ended this point by thanking the EQAR Director for his presence.

13. Next BFUG meeting, Hungary (Budapest), 17-18 March 2011

The Hungarian representative briefed the BFUG members as follows:

- **the draft Agenda of the meeting was not ready up to that moment, but would be communicated in due time;**
- **a similar organisation with the Alden Biesen meeting was foreseen (arrival on the 16th of March followed by two days of conference and leaving at noon, on the second day);**
- **the Board meeting would take place on the 11th of February 2011 and would be organised by Andorra as Co-Chair.**

14. Any other business

1. The Chair announced that Myrna Smitt (Sweden) would leave from her position as a BFUG member, due to her retirement. The Chair presented Myrna with the best wishes on behalf of the entire BFUG.
2. The European Commission representative announced that two other colleagues who had been active BFUG delegates would leave: Christian Tauch and Barbara Nolan.
3. Italy presented the international seminar "The European Higher Education Area: Proposals for the Future" that would be organized in Bologna on the 15th of September 2010.
4. The Vice-Chair (Adrian Curaj, Romania) thanked the Secretariat and the Flemish organizers.

Finally, the Chair congratulated the hosts for their work and closed the meeting.

Country/institution/association	Name	First name
Albania	Godo	Rezarta
Andorra	Enric Manel	Garcia
Armenia	Harutunyan	Gayane
Armenia	Mher	Melik-Bakhshyan
Austria	Bacher	Gottfried
Belgium	Baele	Kim
Belgium	Adriaens	Anja
Belgium	Bourdon	Françoise
Belgium	Callaert	Kurt
Belgium	Guillaume	Kevin
Belgium	Julia	Bucz
Belgium	Kaufmann	Chantal
Belgium	Soenen	Magalie
Belgium	Vercruyssen	Noël
Bologna Secretariat	Deca	Ligia
Bologna Secretariat	Nicolaescu	Marius Dorian
Bologna Secretariat	Petcu	Vlad
Bologna Secretariat	Proteasa	Viorel
Bologna Secretariat	Ruse	Mario
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Aida	Duric
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Petar	Maric
BUSINESS EUROPE	Dettleff	Henning
Council of Europe	Bergan	Sjur
Council of Europe	Meira Soares	Virgílio
Croatia	Juros	Luka
Cyprus	Michael	Efstathios
Czech Republic	Stastna	Vera

Denmark	Nielsen	Helle Damgaard
Denmark	Otte	Helle
Education International Pan-European Structure (EI)	Fouilhoux	Monique
ENQA	Hopbach	Achim
Estonia	Põllo	Helen
EUA	Gaebel	Michael
European Association of Institutions in Higher Education(EURASHE)	Delplace	Stefan
European Association of Institutions in Higher Education(EURASHE)	Nielsen	Lars Lynge
European Association of Institutions in Higher Education(EURASHE)	Orphanides	Andreas G.
European Commission	Eriksson	Sophia
European Commission	Wallis De Vries	Ruard
European Students' Union(ESU)	Blaettler	Andrea
European Students' Union(ESU)	Ofstad Malnes	Magnus
European Students' Union(ESU)	Santa	Robert
EURYDICE	Crosier	David
EURYDICE	Dalfarth	Simon
Finland	Innola	Maija
Former Bologna Secretariat	Racké	Cornelia
France	Lagier	Hélène
France	Vallat	Yves
Germany	Greisler	Peter
Germany	Hendriks	Birger
Germany	Herdegen	Andrea
Greece	Papazoglou	Vasileios
Holy See	Bechina	Friedrich
Hungary	Csekei	László
Hungary	Keszei	Ernő
Ireland	Power	Brian
Italy	Foroni	Marzia
Kazakhstan	Apsemetova	Yerkezhan
Kazakhstan	Gulnar	Dugalova
Latvia	Andrejs	Rauhvargers
Liechtenstein	Konrad	Helmut
Luxembourg	Dondelinger	Germain
Malta	Calleja	Joachim James
Moldova	Petrov	Elena
Montenegro	Misovic	Biljana
Netherlands	Feiertag	Susanne
Netherlands	Leegwater	Marlies
Norway	Johansson	Toril
Norway	Strøm	Tone Flood
Poland	Bołtruszko	Maria

Poland	Marciniak	Zbigniew
Romania	Curaj	Adrian
Romania	Nicolescu	Luminita
Russian Federation	Chistokhvalov	Victor
Serbia	Vesovic	Mirjana
Slovenia	Komljenovič	Janja
Spain	Bonete	Rafael
Sweden	Karlsson	Åsa
Sweden	Smitt	Myrna
Switzerland	Studinger	Silvia
Turkey	Omer	Demir
UNESCO	Glass	Anna
United Kingdom	Baldwinson	Peter
United Kingdom	McVie	Ann

Used abbreviations

ACA	<u>Academic Cooperation Association</u>
<u>Benelux</u>	Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg
BFUG	Bologna Follow-up Group
BPF	Bologna Policy Forum
CBHE	Cross-border higher education
CoE	Council of Europe
DGHE	Directors General of Higher Education
E4 group	EUA + ENQA + EURASHE + ESU (in context of cooperation on quality assurance)
EAIE	<u>European Association for International Education</u>
ECA	<u>European Consortium for Accreditation</u>
ECTS	<u>European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System</u>
EEA	European Economic Area
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EI	Education International
ENIC	<u>European Network of Information Centres</u>
ENQA	<u>European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education</u>
EQF-LLL	<u>European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning</u>
EQAR	<u>European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education</u>
ERA	<u>European Research Area</u>
ESG (QA)	European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

ESN	Erasmus Student Network
ESU (formerly ESIB)	<u>European Students' Union</u>
EU	European Union
EUA	<u>European University Association</u>
EURASHE	<u>European Association of Institutions in Higher Education</u>
EUROSTAT	<u>Statistical Office of the European Communities</u>
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
LLL	Lifelong Learning
LRC	Lisbon Recognition Convention
NAFSA	<u>Association of International Educators</u>
NARIC	<u>National Academic Recognition Information Centres</u>
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OECD	<u>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</u>
PLA	Peer Learning Activity
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
QA	Quality Assurance
QF	Qualifications Framework
QF-EHEA	Overarching framework of qualifications of the European Higher Education Area
Tempus	<u>Trans-European mobility scheme for university studies</u>
TNE	Transnational education
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNESCO	<u>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</u>
UNESCO- CEPES	<u>UNESCO's European Centre for Higher Education</u> (Centre Européen pour l'Enseignement Supérieur)
WG	Working Group