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**MEETING OF THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP
Vilnius, 7 November 2013 - 8 November 2013
Draft Outcome of Proceedings**

Participant list

Country / Organisation	Name
Albania	<i>Absent</i>
Andorra	Jordi Llombart
Armenia	Robert Sukiasyan
Armenia	Arkadi Papoyan
Austria	Gottfried Bacher
Azerbaijan	Nazrin Baghirova
Belgium/Flemish Community	Noël Vercruysse
Belgium/French Community	Kevin Guillaume
BFUG Secretariat	Gayane Harutyunyan
BFUG Secretariat	Ani Hovhannisyan
BFUG Secretariat	Sahakanush Sargsyan
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Aida Durić
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Petar Marić
Bulgaria	Ivana Radonova
BUSINESSEUROPE	Irene Seling
Council of Europe	Sjur Bergan
Croatia	Ana Tecilazić Goršić
Croatia	Ivana Krznar
Cyprus	Stella Christodoulou
Czech Republic	Věra Šťastná
Denmark	Jette Søgren Nielsen
Denmark	Jonas Husum Johannesen
EC	Margaret Waters
EC	Frank Petrikowski
EI	Jens Vraa-Jensen
EI	Guntars Catlaks
ENQA	Achim Hopbach
ENQA	Maria Kelo
EQAR	Colin Tück

EQAR	Eric Froment
Estonia	<i>Absent</i>
ESU	Rok Primožič
ESU	Elizabeth Gehrke
ESU	Fernando Miguel Galán Polomares
EURASHE	Stefan Delplace
EUROSTAT	<i>Absent</i>
EUROSTUDENT	<i>Apologies</i>
Eurydice	<i>Apologies</i>
EUA	Michael Gaebel
Finland	Maija Innola
France	Patricia Pol
France	Hélène Lagier
Georgia	Elene Jibladze
Germany	Kathleen Ordnung
Germany	Heide Ahrens
Greece	Dimitrios Skiadas
Greece	Eleni Thanasouloupoulou
Holy See	Friedrich Bechina
Hungary	Ernö Keszei
Iceland	<i>Absent</i>
Ireland	Laura Casey
Italy	Marzia Foroni
Kazakhstan	Rimma Seidakhmetova
Kazakhstan	Kymbat Beisekina
Kazakhstan	Svetlana Ismagulova
Latvia	Andrejs Rauhvargers
Latvia	Inese Stūre
Liechtenstein	Helmut Konrad
Lithuania	Jolanta Spurgienė
Lithuania	Jolanta Navickaitė
Lithuania	Rimantas Vaitkus
Luxembourg	Germain Dondelinger
Malta	<i>Absent</i>
Montenegro	<i>Absent</i>
Moldova	Elena Petrov
Netherlands	Johan van der Veen
Norway	Tone Flood Strøm

Norway	Toril Johansson
Poland	Maria Boltruszko
Poland	Bartłomiej Banaszak
Portugal	Maria de Lurdes Correia Fernandes
Romania	Marilena-Aura Din
Russian Federation	<i>Absent</i>
Serbia	<i>Absent</i>
Slovak Republic	Peter Plavcan
Slovenia	<i>Apologies</i>
Spain	Luis Delgado
Sweden	Albin Gaunt
Switzerland	<i>Apologies</i>
"the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	<i>Absent</i>
Turkey	Şaban Halis Çalış
Turkey	Canan Ünvan
Turkey	Özlem Pınar Oran
Ukraine	<i>Absent</i>
UNESCO	<i>Absent</i>
United Kingdom	Pamela Wilkinson
United Kingdom	Ian Crombie
United Kingdom/Scotland	Rebecca Robinson
ESG Thematic Session	
ENQA	Achim Hopbach
EUA	Tia Loukkola

1. Welcome and Introduction to the BFUG Meeting by the Chairs

Welcome by Lithuania

The Vice-Minister of Education and Science of Lithuania, Rimantas Vaitkus, welcomed the participants to the BFUG meeting and stressed that Lithuania is actively involved in the Bologna Process since joining the EHEA. The Vice-Minister stressed that he was among the participants and had eye witnessed when the Bologna Declaration was signed in 1999. It was also highlighted that Bologna Process has been steadily gaining momentum with the reforms finally changing the face of the higher education (HE) across Europe. After a brief introduction of the main issues to be addressed at the BFUG meeting, the Vice-Minister expressed his best wishes for a productive and meaningful meeting.

The Chair, Ms. Jolanta Spurgienė (Lithuania), opened the meeting while congratulating the outgoing BFUG Co-Chairs, Ireland and Croatia, for the productive six-month period of the BFUG Co-Chairmanship and also for the smooth handover of the BFUG Co-Chairing responsibilities to Lithuania and Georgia, which took place on 16 September 2013 in Tbilisi. The Chair also expressed her appreciation to Georgia for hospitality during the BFUG Board meeting in Tbilisi held on 17 September 2013 as well as to the Secretariat for the good preparation of all the documents for the Vilnius BFUG meeting.

The Chair advised that the two main priorities of the Lithuanian EU Presidency in the field of education are quality and efficiency and she outlined the main official events that were planned during the Lithuanian EU Presidency.

The Chair stressed that the purpose of the meeting of the DG on HE, which was held on 23-24 September 2013, was to discuss the efficiency of funding of HE and impact of diverse funding mechanisms on the effectiveness of HE. One of the key dimensions of this diversity is the level of different forms of private funding of HE systems. Discussions on efficiency have proved that whatever the arrangements in place in the different Member States, all of them attest to efforts to implement performance-based funding.

The objective of the Conference on Higher Education "European Higher Education in the World" held on 5-6 September 2013, was to debate on how internationalisation can be best achieved by different countries as well as HE institutions.

The upcoming events of the Lithuania EU Presidency are the following:

- DG Vocational Education and Training, 11-12 November 2013;
- Conference on VET, 12-13 November, 2013;
- DG General Education, 2-3 December 2013.

The Chair informed the BFUG that there were 74 participants present at the meeting and apologies were received from EUROSTUDENT, Eurydice, Slovenia and Switzerland. The following countries were not present at the meeting, though being registered: Iceland, Montenegro and Serbia. No information and notification has been received from the following countries and organisations: Albania, Estonia, EUROSTAT, Malta, Russian Federation, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Ukraine, UNESCO.

Welcome by Georgia

Ms. Elene Jibladze (Georgia) highlighted that since signing the Bologna Declaration in 2005, Georgia has developed its HE in line with the main principals of the Bologna Process. Although during the past few years the visibility of Georgia has decreased at the BFUG meetings, the country re-establishes its commitment and participation in the Bologna Process. It was also noted that Georgian BFUG Co-Chairmanship was used to raise the attractiveness of the Bologna Process at the national level. The Georgian Co-Chair also recalled the wish of the Georgian

Minister of Education expressed during the Tbilisi Board meeting, to include Georgian delegates in the WGs, especially in the Structural Reforms WG.

As for the upcoming events, it was noted that a national conference on HE reforms will be organised in December 2013.

2. Adoption of the agenda

Documents: Documents: BFUG_LT_GE_37_2a [Draft agenda]
BFUG_LT_GE_37_2b [Draft annotated agenda]

The agenda was adopted without any amendments.

3. Draft minutes of the BFUG Board meeting, Tbilisi, 17 September 2013 and the draft outcome of proceedings of the BFUG meeting, Dublin, 14-15 March 2013

Documents: BFUG_LT_GE_37_3a [BFUG Board Tbilisi draft minutes]
BFUG_LT_GE_37_3b [BFUG Dublin draft outcome of proceedings]
BFUG_LT_GE_37_3b_Annex1 [Thematic session on EIT]

The draft outcome of proceedings of the Dublin BFUG meeting was endorsed without any amendments. The BFUG took note of the Tbilisi BFUG Board meeting draft minutes with a suggestion for minor rephrasing.

4. 2012-2015 BFUG Work Plan and Terms of References of the WGs/Networks/Ad-Hoc WGs, Proposal for the Co-Chairs' coordination meeting of the 2012-2015 BFUG Work plan structures

Documents: BFUG_LT_GE_37_4a [Work plan 2012-2015]
BFUG_LT_GE_37_4a_Annex1 [ToR of the Reporting on the Implementation of the Bologna Process WG]
BFUG_LT_GE_37_4a_Annex2 [ToR of the Structural Reforms WG]
BFUG_LT_GE_37_4a_Annex3 [ToR of the Network of National Correspondents (NQF)]
BFUG_LT_GE_37_4a_Annex4 [Draft ToR of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Network]
BFUG_LT_GE_37_4a_Annex5 [ToR of the Revision of the ECTS Users' Guide Ad-Hoc WG]
BFUG_LT_GE_37_4a_Annex6 [ToR of the Third Cycle Ad-Hoc WG]
BFUG_LT_GE_37_4a_Annex7 [ToR of the Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning WG]
BFUG_LT_GE_37_4a_Annex8 [ToR of the Mobility and Internationalisation WG]
BFUG_LT_GE_37_4a_Annex9 [ToR of the Network of Experts on Student Support in Europe (NESSIE)]
BFUG_LT_GE_37_4b [Proposal for the coordination meeting]

Ms. Gayane Harutyunyan, the Head of the Bologna Secretariat, recalled the main decisions made during the Dublin BFUG meeting concerning the 2012-2015 BFUG Work Plan and Terms of References (ToR) of its structures. The ToRs of the WGs were endorsed, while:

- ToR of NESSIE was subject to revision according to the Bucharest Communiqué;
- ToR of the RPL Network was not endorsed by the BFUG and the Network was asked to align its ToR with the Bucharest Communiqué.

Both Networks followed the recommendations made by the BFUG. Moreover, the RPL Network incoming and outgoing Chairs revised the ToR in consultation with the Co-Chairs of the Structural Reforms WG as well as discussed it during the Network's meeting held on 26-27 September 2013 in Krakow.

During NESSIE's annual meeting held on 23-24 May 2013, both Peter Greisler, the Co-Chair of the Mobility and Internationalisation WG and Brian Power, the Co-Chair of the Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning WG, were present for facilitation of the links of the two working groups with the Network. The ToR of the Network was also discussed during NESSIE's Co-Chairs handover meeting organised on 25 September 2013 in Zagreb.

The following comments were made:

- The role of the Networks has changed: besides exchanging information, they also aim to have their input in the policy recommendations;
- If the BFUG agrees that Georgia joins the Structural Reforms WG, the composition of the WG indicated in the ToR should be changed correspondingly;
- It is recommended to include a point in the ToR of the RPL Network indicating that the Network should cooperate more with the Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning WG;
- EURASHE will organise further events in cooperation with the RPL Network.

The BFUG endorsed the ToR of the RPL Network and NESSIE. It was also agreed to include Georgia among the members of the Structural Reforms Working Group.

The Head of the Secretariat also introduced the proposal of the coordination meeting of the Co-Chairs of the 2012-2015 Work Plan structures, while highlighting the purpose of the meeting as well as the expected outcomes. It was stressed that the proposal had also been brought to the attention of the Board, which favoured the idea by recommending the organisation of the event a day before the BFUG meeting in Athens.

The BFUG stressed that:

- The meeting will help to drive the process focusing on the outcomes;
- It is important to find out what kind of discussion is expected during the meeting concerning the last point of the paper: Discussions and suggestions regarding Yerevan Ministerial Conference and the Fourth Bologna Policy Forum;
- It will be a platform to brainstorm on the effective structures after 2015;

- It will be useful to have a written outcome of the meeting.

The BFUG agreed to organise a coordination meeting of the Co-Chairs of the 2012-2015 Work Plan structures end-on with the BFUG meeting in Athens. Moreover, it was noted that during the BFUG Board meeting in Astana, the Board will discuss whether only the Co-Chairs of the four main WGs will participate in the meeting or the Co-Chairs of the Ad-Hoc WGs/Networks will also join the meeting.

5. Reports from the Chairs of the working groups

5a. WG on Reporting on the Bologna Process Implementation

Document: BFUG_LT_GE_37_5a [Report of the Reporting on the Implementation of the Bologna Process WG]

Mr. Andrejs Rauhvargers (Latvia), the Co-Chair of the Reporting on the Implementation of the Bologna Process WG, informed the BFUG that during its second meeting, held on 2 July 2013 in Luxembourg, the WG made progress on defining both the content and process for developing the next edition of the Bologna Implementation Report. Thus, several principals for the 2015 Implementation Report were agreed:

- 2015 Implementation Report should be more outcome-oriented;
- It should focus on changes that have taken place since the 2012 reporting;
- The chapters and structure of the 2015 Implementation Report should be in the same format as the 2012 edition;
- Greater autonomy should be enjoyed and political interference should be minimised;
- Importance should be given not to the length of the report but rather to its readability and the report should not be shortened at the expense of its accuracy.

The WG has also made considerable progress in identifying the indicators to be included in the 2015 Report and invited all the 2012-2015 BFUG Work Plan structures to make proposals for any new scorecard indicators that they would consider to be useful in the 2015 Implementation Report. Those indicators will be considered during the WG's upcoming meeting on 15 November 2013 in Riga. During that meeting the WG members will discuss the questionnaire, which will be launched in early 2014 and again be completed online. The software will be hosted and managed by the Bologna Secretariat.

The following comments were made by the BFUG:

- There is a need to have the final decision on the number and scope of the scorecard indicators;
- It is important to find out whether the final decision regarding the scorecard indicators would be made by the BFUG or the WG;
- The questionnaire should not be overloaded;
- In 2015 Report reference should be given to the reports developed by the data collectors recently;

- The 2015 Implementation Report should give the picture of the recent developments of the HE and focus more on the outcomes/results;
- If possible, it is requested to link the final report of the Structural Reforms WG to the introductory chapter of the 2015 Implementation Report;
- The contribution of the EQAR to the Reporting WG is recommended;
- It should be taken into consideration whether there is a need to include a scorecard indicator on the cross-border activities of QA Agencies at this point;
- Data available on governance and funding should be indicated while describing the context of the EHEA;
- Data available on staff mobility will most probably not be included in the 2015 Implementation Report;
- There is not much information available on implementation of the Salzburg II recommendations and principles and it seems that there will not be any indicators concerning this issue, though it will be highly appreciated.

The Chair noted that due to the limited timeframe, the BFUG members can send their suggestions/comments to the WG Co-Chairs. Summing up the deliberations, the Chair concluded that based on the discussions on the 2015 Implementation Report, two schools of thought seemed to have evolved:

1. one in favour of an increased number of scorecard indicators;
2. other one – more cautious in terms of possible political implications the increase of scorecard indicators might create.

The argument of the second school of thought is that the increased number of scorecard indicators as an end in itself providing representations in absolute categories should not be the goal of the stock taking exercise. What should be provided is a rich analytical descriptive information including also indicators by way of which countries do not score, but reveal trends and developments, and therefore the argument of this school of thought is to limit the scorecard indicators to the ones that are in line with the objectives explicitly expressed in the Bucharest Communiqué.

This considered, it was suggested that the BFUG takes account of the two divergent opinions regarding the scorecard indicators and, when the initial draft of the scorecard indicators and their categories are there, the BFUG be afforded the opportunity to reflect on the concrete scorecard indicators to be finally included in the report. Bearing in mind that BFUG WGs are “offspring” of the BFUG, the BFUG’s reflections will not be regarded as political interference, but rather as efforts to balance out the two different conceptual perspectives.

5b. Structural Reforms WG report including the updates from Ad-Hoc WG on the Third Cycle, Ad-Hoc WG on the Revision of the ECTS Users’ Guide, RPL Network, and NQF

Document: BFUG_LT_GE_37_5b [Report of the Structural Reforms WG]

Mr. Sjur Bergan (CoE), the Co-Chair of the **Structural Reforms WG**, highlighted that the WG is perhaps the group with the broadest mandate and the most complex set-up..

The BFUG was informed that the WG's second meeting was on 22-23 May in Warsaw, where the group focused on transparency instruments and their relationship to the other policy areas of structural reforms. The WG also met in Brussels on 24–25 September 2013. Discussions at this meeting focused in particular on qualifications frameworks as well as on the first draft outline of the report of the WG which will be submitted to the BFUG in autumn 2014. On 25 September, a half day meeting jointly with the EQF Advisory Group was organised.

It was stressed that the Co-Chairs of the WG aim to meet once between every meeting of the WG. Moreover, the exchange between the Co-Chairs and the chairs of the sub-structures proved to be very useful as demonstrated by the meeting of the Co-Chairs with the co-chairs of the subgroup on July 8 in Vatican City.

During its upcoming meeting on 9–10 December 2013 in Ghent the work will focus on further developing the final report of the group, which will aim to cover the main elements in the ToR as well as make recommendations within each of the four main policy areas and their interrelation.

The Co-Chair briefly introduced the main outcomes of the meetings of the Ad-hoc WGs and Networks under the remit of the Structural Reforms WG: Ad-hoc WG on the Third Cycle, Ad-hoc WG on the Revision of the ECTS Users' Guide, RPL Network, NQF Network.

Ms. Margaret Waters (EC) informed the BFUG that the Ad-hoc WG on the Revision of the ECTS Users' Guide will organise a seminar for the discussion of the revised Guide at the end of January 2014.

5c. Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning WG

Document: BFUG_LT_GE_37_5c [Report of the Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning WG]

Ms. Elizabeth Gehrke (ESU), the Co-Chair of the Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning WG, briefly introduced the report of the WG, stressing that the second meeting of the WG was held on 17 April 2013 in Dublin.

The following issues were discussed during the meeting:

- EU Council conclusions on the social dimension;
- Lifelong learning in the Bologna Process;
- Social dimension and lifelong learning strategy/framework;
- Social dimension and lifelong learning work plan;
- Update on the PL4SD project;
- Change of Co-Chair.

The BFUG was informed that the third meeting of the Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning WG will be held on 13-14 November 2013 in Ghent in conjunction with a meeting of the Expand-O project, which also involves peer learning for the social dimension.

5d. Mobility and Internationalisation WG including the update from NESSIE

Document: BFUG_LT_GE_37_5d [Report of the Mobility and Internationalisation WG]

The report of the Mobility and Internationalisation WG was presented by the Co-Chairs of the group- Mr. Luis Delgado (Spain) and Mr. Gottfried Bacher (Austria). The BFUG was informed that the third meeting of the WG was held on 21-22 October 2013 in Madrid. The meeting had a joint session with the Ad-hoc WG on the Third Cycle. The meeting hosted 16 countries, 5 organisations, the Secretariat and representatives of the Reporting on the Implementation of the Bologna Process WG and of the Ad-hoc WG on the Revision of the ECTS Users' Guide.

The following aspects were discussed at the meeting:

- European approach on the accreditation of joint degrees;
- Description of study programmes;
- Portability of grants and loans;
- Internationalisation of the EHEA;
- Preparatory work for the Bologna Policy Forum (BPF);
- Quality of mobility;
- Attractiveness of the EHEA;
- Staff mobility.

The Spanish Co-Chair stressed that the WG has come up with the definition of staff mobility and it was decided that "Staff mobility comprises all groups of staff".

The Austrian Co-Chair noted that during the joint session with the Ad-hoc WG on the Third Cycle, aspects of the mobility of doctoral candidates were discussed. The differences between knowledge-mobility and learning-mobility were analysed.

The next meeting of the WG will be organised on 23-24 January in Vienna, where the WG will discuss two new topics, which are "Promoting mobility of underrepresented groups" and "Balanced/imbalanced mobility".

NESSIE activity report was attached to the report of the Mobility and Internationalisation WG.

The BFUG emphasised that:

- Though the definition of staff mobility will help to identify the barriers to staff mobility, the definition still needs further elaboration;

- ENIC-NARIC Networks may be asked to be involved in the issue of European approach on the accreditation of joint degrees;
- Within the strand of Erasmus+ programme, the student loan scheme will be introduced for a full Master degree abroad in order to enhance student mobility.

All the comments received from the BFUG members would be taken into consideration by the WG's Co-Chairs.

6. Updates on the Pathfinder group on automatic recognition, Financing and governance of HE

Documents: BFUG_LT_GE_37_6a [Report of the Pathfinder group on automatic recognition]
BFUG_LT_GE_37_6b [Update on Financing and governance of HE]

Ms. Margaret Waters (EC) introduced the report of the Pathfinder group on automatic recognition. The fourth meeting of the group was held in Dubrovnik during which Croatia joined the group as a new member.

The main agreements reached by the group during its meeting are the following:

- It should work on automatic recognition of generic levels of qualifications by moving away from individual to system-based recognition, placing students on an equal footing irrespective of the country of origin of their academic degree;
- Barriers to automatic recognition should be dismantled through a series of regional initiatives, identifying elements which could be transferred to other countries for strengthening cross border cooperation;
- The group will also look at practical proposals for trialling automatic recognition initiatives, including proposal from the European Commission to support innovative cooperation under Erasmus+.

The BFUG was also updated on the progress made by the Pathfinder group countries as well as further steps to be taken. It was highlighted that the group agreed to discuss the scope and possible recommendations to be contained in the final report. It plans to submit the report to the Structural Reforms WG in time to incorporate its views before the BFUG meeting in autumn 2014.

The next meeting of the Pathfinder group will be held in Brussels at the end of January 2014.

The BFUG welcomed the initiative of the Pathfinder group on automatic recognition as well as the decision of the group to move away from individual to system-level recognition. At the same time it was stressed that recognition methodology used in some systems creates barriers to automatic recognition. Finally, it was noted that

while speaking about recognition, a clear distinction should be made between the academic recognition and the recognition of professional qualifications.

Mr. Arkadi Papoyan (Armenia) introduced the draft programme for the thematic session on Financing and Governance of HE that would take place during the next BFUG meeting in Athens, Greece. Moreover, the BFUG was advised that the programme reflected all the proposals made at the Tbilisi Board meeting held on 17 September 2013: Croatia and Ireland had expressed their willingness to share their experience of financing reforms in their HE systems, whereas the EC had agreed to present the interim results of the study on the impact of different cost-sharing models on effectiveness, efficiency and equity in HE.

Finally, Mr Arkadi Papoyan informed the BFUG that the Ministry of Education and Science of Armenia (MoES) had planned to organise a second conference on funding of HE in autumn of 2014. The event, similar to [the first conference](#) held in September 2011 in Yerevan, would aim at providing a platform for exchange of experiences regarding HE funding issues in the EHEA and would largely draw upon the research of the field in recent years.

Several remarks and suggestions followed:

- The session could benefit from the preliminary results of [DEFINE](#) project that is being carried out by EUA as it aims at contributing to the improved design and implementation of HE funding policy;
- Having in mind that in Bucharest the Ministers committed to securing the highest possible level of public funding for HE, the emphasis should be laid on the public financing, its supplementation rather than the replacement with private financing, and its role in enhancing the equal access to and quality and efficiency of HE;
- The session should consider the issue of financing from the perspective that the Bologna Process by no means promotes the commodification of HE;
- In view of the fact that public authorities have important but not exclusive responsibility for financing HE, it is recommended that the latter establish the framework of funding at the national level.

7. Update on the Peer Learning for Social Dimension (PL4SD) project

Ms. Elisabeth Gehrke (ESU) the Co-Chair of the SD&LLL WG briefed the BFUG on the progress of PL4SD project. She noted that the SD&LLL WG as a member of project's Stakeholders' Forum had an active participation in advising and "steering" the project.

The BFUG was advised that the project would reach its objective of improving the SD in HE through a combination of two different approaches, namely creating a searchable online database and conducting country reviews. The former would be based upon data obtained through surveys among the EHEA Ministries and national stakeholders in several phases. In

addition, the database would be supplemented by the current scientific literature concerning the field.

The first round of data collection among Ministries had finished resulting in more than 100 measures from 22 countries, whereas the first round of data collection among the national stakeholders had started with the aim of inviting them to comment on the impacts of the measures collated from the Ministries. The database would go online early in 2014.

Moreover, it was noted that the country reviews would be directed towards facilitating coherent national strategy development and evaluation for improving the SD of HE in 3 countries. However, 4 countries (Armenia, Croatia, Lithuania, and Romania) had expressed their interest in participating in the review. The selection of the countries and further steps would be discussed at the third meeting of SD&LLL WG on 13-14 November 2013 in Ghent.

Finally, Ms. Elisabeth Gehrke emphasised that the project results would be disseminated and made accessible by different means, i.e. the [project website](#), newsletters, reports and two dissemination conferences (interim and final). The interim conference will be held on 2-3 April 2014 and hosted by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research, whereas the final one will be organised jointly with EUROSTUDENT in February of 2015.

For more details, please refer to the document below:



8. Draft work programme of the activities of peer learning and peer review initiative

Document: BFUG_LT_GE_37_8 [Draft work programme of the activities of peer learning and peer review initiative]
BFUG_LT_GE_37_8_Annex1
BFUG_LT_GE_37_8_Annex2
BFUG_LT_GE_37_8_Annex3
BFUG_LT_GE_37_8_Annex4

Ms. Gayane Harutyunyan, the Head of the Bologna Secretariat, introduced the programme of activities of PL and PR initiative recalling the BFUG's decision in Dublin to adopt the proposal for the initiative and have a draft programme of activities prepared for the Vilnius BFUG meeting. She informed the BFUG that the document had been presented to the Board on 17 September 2013 in Tbilisi and had already incorporated the comments and suggestions received from the Board. Ms. Gayane Harutyunyan noted that the programme endeavoured to provide a schedule of the PL & PR proposals and avoid any overlapping between their objectives and the BFUG sub-structures' tasks.

Furthermore, the BFUG was advised that the proposed PL activities had been split into two groups to distinguish between those that already had volunteers to follow on and those that still lacked them.

Concerning the funding for PLAs, participants were informed that an element had been introduced within the Erasmus+ programme to support HE. Within that strand of initiatives countries could apply for funding starting from February 2014 provided that the programme of PL & PR activities was approved by the BFUG. The PLA proposals would be evaluated according to the importance of the issue for the proposing countries/organisations. However, it was pointed out that funding under Erasmus+ would be on co-financing basis and the EC's share could reach up to 80% for 2-3 PLAs per year.

In the discussion that followed a number of comments and suggestions were made:

- PL could further support the already-in-place BP reforms to work in practice. For this purpose, there is a need to shift the emphasis from the European to national and institutional levels. The BFUG representatives would contribute to this through identifying institutions at the country level that could greatly benefit from the PL and PR activities;
- The programme of activities could be designed for 2 years (2014-2015).
- The format of proposed PLAs should be reconsidered to ensure the topics are tackled in depth;
- The number of PLA participants could be limited to 20-30 persons on a first come, first served basis;

Regarding the PLA proposals, the following remarks were made:

- The funding for the first PLA on the Role of NQFs and QA in Recognition organised jointly by Croatia and EQAR will be provided from the national budget and supplemented by EC funds;
- Belgium/French Community noted that EQAR and Croatia had been contacted to discuss the possibility of holding the next PL and PR on recognition in Wallonia. ENIC-NARIC Network had been also contacted to provide their expertise on the issue;
- ENQA volunteered to follow on the proposed PLA on Accreditation of Joint Degrees scheduled for the first semester of 2015;
- Belgium/Flemish Community volunteered to organise the proposed PLA on Permeability Between Different Types of HE scheduled for the second semester of 2015;
- One of the PL and PR activities at the institutional level could be aimed at enhancing HE internationalisation: the HEI could invite external group to support them in improving their internationalisation policies with the ultimate goal to develop a strategy.

The BFUG Secretariat will revise the draft programme of activities according to the feedback received and present it to the BFUG for adoption during the BFUG meeting in Athens, Greece.

9. Preliminary information on the preparation of the Ministerial Conference and the Fourth Bologna Policy Forum in Yerevan in 2015

Document: BFUG_LT_GE_37_9 [Preliminary information on the preparation of the Ministerial Conference and the Fourth Bologna Policy Forum in Yerevan in 2015]

Mr. Arkadi Papoyan (Armenia) briefly introduced the issue under this point of agenda. The BFUG was updated on the possible venue, main actors, financial aspects as well other preparatory measures.

It was highlighted that by the decision of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia an Intergovernmental Steering Committee has been established, which involves all relevant ministries and agencies that will be involved in the smooth organisation of the events. The Intergovernmental Steering Committee will start its work from January 2014.

10. Participation in the BFUG, Board, WGs', Networks' and Ad-Hoc WGs' meetings in the period of 31 May 2012 – 23 October 2013

Documents: BFUG_LT_GE_37_10a [Participation in the BFUG, Board, WGs', Networks' and Ad-Hoc WGs' meetings in the period of 31 May 2012-23 October 2013]
BFUG_LT_GE_37_10a_Annex1 [Participation in the BFUG, Board, WGs', Networks' and Ad-Hoc WGs' meetings in the period 31 May 2012 – 23 October 2013]
BFUG_LT_GE_37_10b [Letter of the Lithuanian Minister of Education and Science to the Ministers responsible for HE in the EHEA]

Ms. Gayane Harutyunyan, the Head of the Bologna Secretariat, informed the BFUG that the paper prepared by the Secretariat as well as the survey carried out on the mid-term figures providing evidence to the participation rates of the representatives of the EHEA countries/partner organisations in the meetings held after the Bucharest Ministerial Conference was first presented during the Tbilisi Board meeting. Based on the recommendations of the Board concerning the importance of the issue, it was also included in the agenda of the Vilnius BFUG meeting.

Since the participation rate of some of the countries is not encouraging, there is a need to find out the reasons for non-participation to the meetings as the involvement of 47 member countries as well as partner organisations is crucial.

Following the recommendations of the Board a letter prepared by the Minister of Education and Science of Lithuania was sent to those EHEA Ministers of HE whose countries demonstrated low participation rates.

Moreover, upon the request of the BFUG Board the Secretariat contacted members and consultative members that had been absent over a period of time with a view to determine the cause of absence in each case, with a view both to underlining the commitment members and

consultative members undertook when joining the Bologna Process and to finding possible solutions.

The BFUG agreed on the importance of the issue. At the same time, the BFUG noted that active participation of all the member countries/organisations ensures the success of the EHEA reforms and their sustainability.

11. Update on the EHEA accession issues

Documents: BFUG_LT_GE_37_11a [Update on the EHEA accession issues]
BFUG_LT_GE_37_11b [EHEA Accession Questionnaire]

While presenting this point of agenda, Ms. Gayane Harutyunyan, the Head of the Bologna Secretariat, stressed that the criteria for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) accession defined in the 2003 Berlin Communiqué are still valid.

The BFUG was informed that during the Board meeting in Tbilisi, the Board advised that the deadline for accession applications should be 1 November 2014. Moreover, during the same meeting the Secretariat was asked to analyse the document on the "Information to be provided by countries applying for accession to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)" and suggest necessary updates.

After a thorough examination, the Secretariat concluded that there was no need to update the document.

The BFUG agreed that the deadline for submitting applications for accession to the EHEA should be 1 November 2014 and approved the findings of the Secretariat concerning the revision of the EHEA accession questionnaire.

12. BFUG thematic session (ESG Revision)

Document: BFUG_LT_GE_37_12a [ESG thematic session programme]
BFUG_LT_GE_37_12b [Explanatory note for BFUG]
BFUG_LT_GE_37_12c [Draft ESG for BFUG inputs]

The highlights of the discussion are presented as Annex 1 of the present document.

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

Documents: BFUG_IE_HR_37_13a [CoE update]
BFUG_IE_HR_37_13b [EURASHE update]
BFUG_IE_HR_37_13c [ENQA update]
BFUG_IE_HR_37_13d [EC update]
BFUG_IE_HR_37_13e [ESU update]

BFUG_IE_HR_37_13f [EQAR update]

BFUG_IE_HR_37_13g [EI update]

The BFUG took note of the written contributions.

Ms. Věra Šťastná (Czech Republic), who was appointed as the BFUG representative in the EUROSTUDENT V Steering Board, gave a brief background on the project. The current additional initiative aims to involve NIS countries so that data for NIS countries can be added to the 2015 Implementation Report.

The BFUG was also informed that though EURASHE's project on "Harmonizing Approaches to Professional Higher Education in Europe" covers only EU member countries, based on the findings of the final report, which will be presented in early 2014, it will become clear, whether there is a need to widen the scope of the project and include non-EU countries as well.

14. Next BFUG meeting, Greece (Athens), 7-8 April 2014 and next BFUG Board meeting, Kazakhstan (Astana) 12 February 2014

Mr. Dimitrios Skiadas (Greece) presented the higher education priorities and the events planned during the period of the Greek EU Presidency and BFUG Co-Chairmanship. It was noted that the final dates of the BFUG meeting in Athens (7-8 April 2014 or 9-10 April 2014) are still under consideration.

For more details, see the PowerPoint presentation (Greece EU Presidency Presentation).

Ms. Kymbat Beisekina (Kazakhstan) presented the outline of the priorities of Kazakhstan during their BFUG Co-Chairmanship as well as the main events to be organised.

For more details, see the PowerPoint presentation below:



PPT_Kazakhstan.ppt

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15. Any Other Business

Ms. Marzia Foroni (Italy) asked for the floor to briefly introduce the contribution of the Third Cycle Ad-hoc WG to the Revision of the ESG.

For more details, see the PowerPoint presentation below:



ESG.pptx

The Chair thanked the BFUG members for their fruitful discussions and contributions.