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BFUG Meeting LXXIII

24 September 2020

online, hosted by Germany

Minutes

List of participants

#	Delegation	First name	Surname
1	Albania	Linda	Pustina
2	Andorra (incoming BFUG Co-chair)	Jordi	Llombart
3	Andorra	Mar	Martínez
4	Armenia	Gayane	Harutyunyan
5	Armenia	Samvel	Karabekyan
6	Austria	Gottfried	Bacher
7	Austria	Stephan	De Pasqualin
8	Austria (BICG Co-chair)	Helga	Posset
9	Azerbaijan	Lala	Abasova
10	Azerbaijan	Shahin	Bayramov
11	Belarus	Elena	Betenya
12	Belgium/Flemish Community	Magalie	Soenen
13	Belgium/French Community	Caroline	Hollela
14	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Aida	Đurić
15	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Petar	Marić
16	Bulgaria	Ivana	Radonova
17	Croatia (outgoing BFUG Co-chair)	Leonardo	Marušić
18	Croatia (outgoing BFUG Co-chair)	Ana	Tecilazić Goršić
19	Croatia (AG1 on Social Dimension Co-chair)	Ninoslav	Šćukanec Schmidt
20	Cyprus	Kyriacos	Charalambous
21	Czech Republic	Tomáš	Fliegl
22	Denmark	Trine Bolette	Svensson
23	Estonia	Kristi	Raudmäe
24	European Commission	Vanessa	Debiais-Sainton
25	European Commission	Klara	Engels-Perenyi

#	Delegation	First name	Surname
26	Finland	Jonna	Korhonen
27	Finland	Maija	Innola
28	France	Denis	Despréaux
29	France	Hélène	Lagier
30	France (AG2 Co-chair)	Philippe	Lalle
31	Georgia	Kakha	Khandolishvili
32	Georgia	Lasha	Margishvili
33	Germany	David	Akrami
34	Germany (BFUG Co-chair)	Anja	Diek
35	Germany (BFUG Co-chair)	Peter	Greisler
36	Germany	Wolf-Dieter	Lukas
37	Germany	Marius	Michalski
38	Germany	Patrick	Neuhaus
39	Germany	Frank	Petrikowski
40	Greece	Alexia	Karvouni
41	Greece	Yiannis	Katsanevakis
42	Holy See	Melanie	Rosenbaum
43	Hungary	Beatrix	Borza
44	Hungary	Ernö	Keszei
45	Iceland	Una	Strand Viðarsdóttir
46	Ireland	Joseph	Gleeson
47	Ireland	Padraig	Hennigan
48	Italy (BFUG Vice-chair)	Ann Katherine	Isaacs
49	Italy	Vincenzo	Zara
50	Kazakhstan	Rauza	Mendaliyeva
51	Kazakhstan	Maiya	Rakhimova
52	Kazakhstan	Assel	Shukurova
53	Latvia	Daiga	Ivsina
54	Liechtenstein	Daniel	Miescher
55	Lithuania	Andrius	Zalitis
56	Luxembourg	Isabelle	Reinhardt
57	Malta	Rose Anne	Cuschieri
58	Moldova	Nadejda	Velisco
59	Netherlands	Tessa	Bijvank
60	Netherlands	Berto	Bosscha
61	North Macedonia	Borco	Aleksov
62	Norway	Tone Flood	Strøm
63	Poland	Maria	Boltrusko

#	Delegation	First name	Surname
64	Poland	Ilona	Juszczuk
65	Portugal	Maria Lurdes	Correia Fernandes
66	Portugal (incoming BFUG Co-chair)	Ana Isabel	Mateus
67	Romania	Cristina	Ghițulică
68	Romania	Mihai Cezar	Haj
69	Russian Federation	Andrew	Bricheev
70	Serbia	Vanja	Nedeljkovic
71	Serbia	Bojan	Tubić
72	Slovak Republic	Jozef	Jurkovič
73	Slovenia	Duša	Marjetič
74	Spain	Margarita	de Lezcano-Mújica
75	Sweden	Robin	Moberg
76	Switzerland	Aurélia	Robert-Tissot
77	Switzerland	Silvia	Studinger
78	Turkey	Elif	Huntürk
79	Ukraine (outgoing BFUG Co-chair)	Olexandr	Smyrnov
80	Ukraine (outgoing BFUG Co-chair)	Kateryna	Suprun
81	United Kingdom (BFUG Co-chair)	Pamela	Wilkinson
82	United Kingdom (Scotland) (BFUG Co-chair)	Michael	Watney
83	Council of Europe	Sjur	Bergan
84	ENQA	Maria	Kelo
85	EQAR	Karl	Dittrich
86	EQAR	Colin	Tück
87	ESU	Sebastian	Berger
88	ESU	Gohar	Hovhannisyan
89	ESU	Robert	Napier
90	ETUCE	Andreas	Keller
91	ETUCE	Agnes	Roman
92	EUA	Amanda	Crowfoot
93	EUA	Michael	Gaebel
94	EUA	Tia	Loukkola
95	EURASHE	Michal	Karpíšek
96	EURASHE (AG2 Co-chair)	Ulf-Daniel	Ehlers
97	EURYDICE (WG1 Co-chair)	David	Crosier
98	EURODOC	Iryna	Degtyarova
99	EURODOC	Beata	Zwierzynska
100	BFUG Secretariat (Head)	Luca	Lantero

#	Delegation	First name	Surname
101	BFUG Secretariat	Rocío	Iglesias de Ussel Rubio
102	BFUG Secretariat	Vera	Lucke

Apologies from Montenegro, BUSINESSEUROPE and UNESCO.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this BFUG meeting was held completely online.

Welcome speech by Wolf-Dieter Lukas, State Secretary at the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research

Wolf-Dieter Lukas welcomed everybody and underlined the importance of the BFUG as cooperation of 48 countries that agree on a common way forward in higher education policy.

He mentioned that the peer support measures turned out to work successful in the last two years and gave the possibility to finetune reforms concerning Quality Assurance, Recognition and Qualifications Frameworks. Dialogue on academic freedom and fundamental values can help all the higher education systems in the EHEA to further flourish and improve for the sake of students, staff and teachers.

During the German EU Presidency, the Ministerial Conference on the European Research Area will adopt a declaration on fundamental values and academic freedom.

Mr. Lukas mentioned that the Rome Ministerial Communiqué is based on long discussions about wording and meaning and is sure that the BFUG will come to an agreement soon and that the Ministers will sign this important Communiqué.

He wished the Italian BFUG Secretariat and Italian host all the best for the Ministerial Conference and thanked for much flexibility in these difficult times. He also thanked Albanian delegation for hosting the next Ministerial Conference in 2024 and thanks the United Kingdom and United Kingdom (Scotland) for the smooth and splendid cooperation during the Co-chairmanship. He wished everybody good luck for this BFUG meeting and closed his speech.

1. Welcome and introduction

1.1 Welcome by the current BFUG Co-chairs: Germany / United Kingdom / United Kingdom (Scotland)

The German BFUG Co-chair welcomed the participants and introduced the agenda.

The BFUG Co-chairs from the United Kingdom and United Kingdom (Scotland) welcomed the participants and thanked the German Co-chairs for the productive cooperation.

1.2 Welcome by the BFUG Vice-chair (Italy)

The BFUG Vice-chair welcomed everybody to the last big BFUG meeting before the Rome Ministerial Conference. The unforeseeable and difficult situations made the BFUG develop new competences. The work period since the Paris Ministerial Conference was short and intense and lots of new things were elaborated and achieved that will be discussed and approved today.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted and reduced to one day.

Attachment: [BFUG_DE_UK_73_2a_Draft_Agenda.pdf](#)
[BFUG_DE_UK_73_2b_Draft_Annotated_Agenda.pdf](#)

3. Feedback from the last meetings

3.1 Report from the online BFUG meeting hosted by Croatia (25 June 2020)

The outgoing BFUG Co-chair from Croatia greeted from Zagreb and reported on the online 71st BFUG meeting that was initially supposed to be held in Split in June 2020. It was a very efficient meeting with all the regular topics plus two sets of parallel discussion groups, one on the Bologna Key Commitments and one on the implications of Covid-19 on Higher Education and the EHEA. The outcomes of the first set of parallel session fed into the BICG Final Report and the outcomes of the discussions on the Covid-19 situation were taken to the Drafting Committee and fed into the Rome Communiqué. The Minutes of the [June BFUG Meeting are online](#) and were adopted.

3.2 Report from the online Board meeting hosted by United Kingdom (Scotland) (4 September 2020)

The online Board meeting, that was originally supposed to be held in Edinburgh, was a constructive meeting with discussions on the implications of the Covid situation. The Board discussed the preparations for the Rome Ministerial Conference, the first proposals for ToRs for the new work plan and in general prepared this current BFUG meeting. [The minutes can be found online.](#)

4. Information from the BFUG Secretariat

The Head of the BFUG Secretariat informed that the Italian host is working on the finalisation of all the documents of the work period 2018-2020 and finalised the draft programme and concept for the Rome 2020 EHEA Ministerial Conference.

Each delegation should appoint one IT responsible to be in contact with the organisers and the other IT responsables.

There will be a BFUG meeting and meeting for the IT team on 18 November at 14:00-16:00.

6 delegates for each EHEA Member and Consultative Member will have special access to the Conference's platform and will have access to a chat. The BFUG Secretariat will send a proposal for the composition of the delegations. One person per delegation will be given access to the registration platform to register all the delegates on the platform. This person will also be responsible to be in contact with the BFUG Secretariat giving all the necessary information.

The whole Ministerial Conference will be video-streamed, can be watched by the general public and will be interpreted in Italian, English, French, German, Russian and Spanish.

Attachment: [BFUG_DE_UK_73_4_Information_BFUG_Secretariat_presentation.pdf](#)

5. Draft Concept of the Rome 2020 Ministerial Conference and global dialogue proposal

The draft programme for the Rome Ministerial Conference was presented and the BFUG asked questions and discussed single issues, such as that the BFUG Co-chairs from Germany, the United Kingdom and United Kingdom (Scotland) should be given a special role in the conference and they could for example have their speeches at the very beginning of the Ministers' round table to open the discussion. Some parts could be made more interactive, such as the part of the Consultative Members.

The draft programme for the Ministerial Conference and also the proposal from the part on the global dialogue, with the proposed changes, were approved by the BFUG.

*Attachment: BFUG_DE_UK_73_5_Draft_Concept_Rome_2020_Ministerial_Conference.pdf
BFUG_DE_UK_73_5_global_dialogue_proposal.pdf*

6. Final Reports from the AGs, CGs, WG1 and the EHEA Network of NQF Correspondents

6.1 AG1 on Social Dimension (AG1) – Final Report

AG1's Final Report was presented by the Croatian AG1 Co-chair. The group has put the final report in the given format and elaborated a proposal on how to continue developing the future for Social Dimension in the EHEA. The Co-chairs thanked all the people who have contributed to the work. No comments were made and the AG1's Final Report was approved.

Attachment: BFUG_DE_UK_73_6_1_AG1_Final_Report.pdf

6.2 AG2 on Learning and Teaching (AG2) – Final Report

The Dutch Co-chair of AG2 presented the Final Report with the Principles and Guidelines on three themes including 22 best practice examples. Since the last BFUG meeting, the group has shaped the text and discussed on whether to take on board practices concerning the digital evolution during the corona crisis. AG2 has decided that it was too early to include this topic and that it could be included in the future work. The Board had asked AG2 to be more concrete concerning the actions to be taken and to adapt the summary and introduction to better fit the content. Those changes have been done by the group. The Co-chair thanked all the people who have provided input to this work.

There were no comments on AG2's Final Report from the BFUG and it was approved.

Attachment: BFUG_DE_UK_73_6_2_AG2_Final_Report.pdf

6.3 Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG) – Final Report

The Austrian BICG Co-chair presented the BICG's Final Report. The BICG had seven online meetings since March 2020 and had sent out a feedback survey to the whole BFUG, which fed into the Final Report. The BFUG was virtually asked for their willingness to participate in the future Thematic Peer Groups and a roadmap for the handover to the next BICG was presented. The BICG Co-chair thanked all the BICG and TPGs for their huge amount of work.

The Council of Europe commented that the peer approach had been a success and that in the future impact of the work within the countries should be monitored and the question whether implementation has improved because of the peer groups' work should be asked. The Thematic Peer Groups focused on their respective areas and the BICG should reflect on the peer groups work as working method that could maybe also be used in other contexts.

No further comments were made by the BFUG and the Final Report was approved.

Attachment: BFUG_DE_UK_73_6_3_BICG_Final_Report.pdf

6.4 CG1 on Global Policy Dialogue (CG1) – Draft Final Report

The Italian Co-chair of CG1 presented the first draft of the Coordination Group's Final Report. As the Global Policy Forum should have been the final product of CG1's work and can now not take place

with guests from all over the world, CG1 hadn't produced a Final Report before. The Final Report was drafted on the given template with all the foreseen chapters to show all the work that the group has done and to give a good basis for the future group that will continue to work on this topic. The report will be updated on the basis of the BFUG's decision and can then be approved.

Attachment: BFUG_DE_UK_73_6_4_CG1_Draft_Final_Report.pdf

6.5 WG1 on Monitoring (WG1) – Final Bologna Process Implementation Report

The Co-chair of WG1 (Eurydice) explained that the latest version of the Bologna Process Implementation Report (BPIR 2020) had been circulated before the Split BFUG meeting in June. In summer the last round of comments had taken place and all the comments and corrections will be integrated into the final version as soon as possible. He thanked everybody who had carefully read through the report and sent comments. The final report should be ready in the third week of October and will be sent to the BFUG under embargo, before it will be published a few days before the Ministerial Conference. Printed copies can be requested via e-mail.

6.6 EHEA Network of NQF Correspondents – Final Report

The Council of Europe presented the Final Report of the EHEA Network of NQF Correspondents which has been updated since the Network's meeting on 11 November. During the work period 2018-2020, the Network focused on self-certification, short-cycle qualifications and the relationship of micro-credentials to the qualifications framework in good cooperation with the European Commission and EQF.

The BFUG had no comments and the Final Report was adopted as presented.

Attachment: BFUG_DE_UK_73_6_6_Network_NQF_Correspondents_Final_Report.pdf

7. Draft Proposals for Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the work plan 2021-2024

All the groups from the work period 2018-2020 present Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the work plan 2021-2024. The ToRs should be presented and discussed and could be preliminary adopted by the BFUG in order to smoothen the transition from one work period to the next. The countries will be asked for their willingness to participate in these groups and also about their willingness to co-chair one of the groups.

7.1 AG1 on Social Dimension (AG1) – Draft Proposal for ToR 2021-2024

AG1 proposes Terms of Reference for the work plan 2021-2024. According to the current Co-chairs, the future group should work on two main objectives: 1. define indicators and benchmarks for the 10 elaborated principles, and 2. develop a system to monitor the implementation of the principles and guidelines at national level. The group should also focus on peer support within the field of social dimension to put the principles in practice.

The CoE commented that "full members" should be corrected to BFUG Members and Consultative Members.

Attachment: BFUG_DE_UK_73_7_1_AG1_ToR_2021-2024_draft_proposal.pdf

7.2 AG2 on Learning and Teaching (AG2) – Draft Proposal for ToR 2021-2024

AG2 proposes Terms of Reference for the work plan 2021-2024 with the overarching aim to continue the work done in the work period 2018-2020. The group should find out if qualitative indicators or benchmarks could be developed for the work on learning and teaching and should find a system to monitor and support the implementation at national level. In addition, the group should reflect on good practices and actions related to what happened during the Covid-19 crisis concerning digitalisation.

Austria commented that it could be proposed to include more peer learning activities in all the other topics of the Bologna Process.

The EUA commented that it should be clarified that the survey would monitor the support measures at national level and not the quality of learning and teaching.

ETUCE commented that “improving teacher professionalisation” should be added as 4th bullet point to the section “Overarching aims”, as the Rome Communiqué emphasises the support to teachers and staff of institutions and teachers are almost not mentioned in the ToR.

Finland commented that it would be better if the group focused on peer learning before finding benchmark indicators and that it is important to highlight the cooperation at EHEA and system level.

Attachment: BFUG_DE_UK_73_7_2_AG2_ToR_2021-2024_draft_proposal.pdf

7.3 Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG) – Draft Proposal for ToR 2021-2024

The BICG proposes Terms of Reference for the work plan 2021-2024 for the BICG and 3 TPGs on Qualifications Frameworks, Recognition and Quality Assurance. The existing structure of the composition should be kept in the future and there should be a balance between old topics and new ideas. The BICG proposes the concrete composition of the BICG and TPGs although participation in the TPGs ins continuously open and as many countries as possible should participate. According to the expression of interest received by the countries, the BICG proposes three co-chairs per TPG, concretely TPG A would be co-chaired by Croatia, Georgia and Latvia; TPG B would be co-chaired by Albania, France and Italy; and TPG C by Belgium Flemish Community, Romania and Kazakhstan. According to this proposal of the ToR, the BICG is composed by Albania, Austria, Belgium Flemish Community, Bulgaria, Georgia, Italy, EURASHE, EUA, ETUCE, European Commission, Romania and the TPGs’ Co-chairs.

The Council of Europe and European Commission added that an assessment of the working method (peer learning) and its impact including whether they should be extended to other policy areas should be added to the ToR. Other BFUG members supported this proposal.

The Vice-chair commented that the most important tasks of all the groups should be to share information, knowledge, good practices and experiences.

Attachment: BFUG_DE_UK_73_7_3_BICG_ToR_2021-2024_draft_proposal.pdf

7.4 CG1 on Global Policy Dialogue (CG1) – Draft Proposal for ToR 2021-2024

The CG1 on Global Policy Dialogue proposes Terms of Reference for the work plan 2021-2024 to continue dialogue with other regions in the world. The main aim of the group is the organisation of the Albanian Global Policy Forum in 2024 and the Global Policy Statement. The group should be co-chaired by BFUG countries and, if possible, one should be the host of the next Global Policy Forum. Other experts could be invited to the group, such as UNECSO regional offices or similar. The

thematic objectives are detailed, e.g., the societal role of higher education, inclusive and balanced mobility. Contacts should be created to support the reciprocal referencing of qualifications frameworks. During the period 2021-2024 other events to foster dialogue among the regions should be organised.

The Council of Europe commented that it was good to outline the thematic objectives. It should be taken into account how to interconnect the work on similar topics of other groups (social dimension, recognition, etc.). The second bullet point on the promoting awareness of the vital role of HE in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals should be more concrete. There are national and regional QFs and the referencing should be made to regionals QFs. The meeting schedule should be changed in face-to-face meetings when possible and online meetings when necessary.

Attachment: BFUG_DE_UK_73_7_4_Global_Policy_Dialogue_ToR_2021-2024_draft_proposal.pdf

7.5 WG1 on Monitoring (WG1) – Draft Proposal for ToR 2021-2024

The Terms of Reference for a Monitoring Working Group for the work plan 2021-2024 outline the tasks to produce the implementation report and the links to other groups. In previous Ministerial Communiqués there was always sentences in which the Ministers ask for an implementation report and this reference is still missing in the Rome Communiqué. The discussion on this was postponed to agenda item 9 when the BFUG will discuss the Rome Communiqué.

ESU commented that a reference to the group on Social Dimension should be included in the WG's ToR.

Attachment: BFUG_DE_UK_73_7_5_WG_on_Monitoring_ToR_2021-2024_draft_proposal.pdf

7.6 WG on Fundamental Values – Draft Proposal for ToR 2021-2024

WG1 on Monitoring proposes Terms of Reference for a group on Fundamental Values in the work plan 2021-2024. The proposed ToR is based on the guidelines that were elaborated by the task force on fundamental values as sub-group of WG1. The purpose of the WG is to develop a comprehensive framework to further the monitoring and implementation of fundamental values and to have a constructive dialogue and peer learning in this area. There is a reference to the section in the Rome Communiqué and the specific tasks include the development of indicators on de jure and de facto implementation of academic freedom and integrity based on the definition of academic freedom adopted by the ministers in the Rome Communiqué. Additional fundamental values defined in the Paris and Rome communiqués, like institutional autonomy, participation of students and staff in higher education governance, and public responsibility for and of higher education, should be defined, understood and implemented in the EHEA. The group should continue to develop a framework for future reporting on these issues and should organise data collection of de jure monitoring for the 2024 BPIR. The WG on fundamental values will be well connected with the WG on monitoring. It is important to have policy dialogue and peer learning activities and concerning the composition a balance of countries and consultative members should be given and experts in the field should be invited to contribute.

The Council of European, Iceland, Italy and the Holy See are expressed their interest to be part of this group.

The EUA asked to rephrase the wording concerning “additional fundamental values” making clear that one fundamental value has already been defined and treated and all the other remaining fundamental values still need to be in the focus.

Romania commented that, instead of putting an accent on the monitoring, the group should put more focus on the development of a framework that should lead to the enhancement of fundamental values, fostering self-reflection, constructive dialogue and peer learning across national authorities (quote from the Rome Communiqué).

Attachment: BFUG_DE_UK_73_7_6_WG_on_Fundamental_Values_ToR_2021-2024_draft_proposal.pdf

7.7 EHEA Network of NQF Correspondents – Draft Proposal for ToR 2021-2024

The Council of Europe quickly presented the EHEA Network of NQF Correspondents Terms of Reference for the work plan 2021-2024. It is similar to the one of the work period 2018-2020 with the addition to coordinate with the TPG on QF and the addition of the following specific tasks:

- advising on the development and implementation of ECTS-based short cycle qualifications as stand-alone higher education qualifications within the QF-EHEA in countries that wish to develop and implement which short cycle qualifications (including micro-credentials);
- developing proposals for arrangements to strengthen the peer review of national self-certification reports and processes.

Attachment: BFUG_DE_UK_73_7_7_NQF_Network_Correspondents_ToR_2021-2024_draft_proposal.pdf

After the presentation of all the draft ToRs, the BFUG discussed how to proceed with the creation of the groups for the work plan 2021-2024. The Co-chairs of all groups are asked to send the corrected ToRs to the BFUG Secretariat as soon as possible.

The BFUG Secretariat explained that the incoming BFUG Secretariat (Albania) will ask all the BFUG Members and Consultative Members to express their written interest in participating or co-chairing single groups of the work plan 2021-2024. Additional Advisory, Coordination and Working Groups can be proposed to the incoming BFUG Secretariat as well. The BFUG could then discuss whether some topics can be integrated to already existing groups.

The Holy See commented that the naming of groups should be discussed, as some might be Working Groups instead of Advisory Groups.

The Albanian delegate confirmed that the incoming BFUG Secretariat will work in close cooperation with the current BFUG Secretariat on this issue and that everything will be worked out as soon as possible. Exact deadlines will be sent via e-mail to the BFUG.

The BFUG Co-chairs Germany and United Kingdom, United Kingdom (Scotland) offered their support to the Italian and Albanian BFUG Secretariat for this procedure.

8. Recommendations from the Ad Hoc Group on the application of San Marino to join the EHEA

The Finnish Chair of this ad hoc group presented the Final Report and the Draft Roadmap for San Marino. She clarified that San Marino will be admitted as a full member to the EHEA. San Marino has the same rights and obligations as any other EHEA member. The Ad Hoc Group, in consultation with the Sammarinese authorities, proposes that San Marino will be supported in the implementation of its commitments with a roadmap in the period of the next work plan. The roadmap was drafted together with San Marino and builds on the National Report that had been submitted together with the application.

EQAR had submitted a proposal to slightly rephrase the part on QA, which will be done after this BFUG meeting.

The BFUG approved the Ad Hoc Group's proposal to the EHEA Ministers to admit San Marino to the EHEA.

*Attachments: BFUG_DE_UK_73_8_Ad_Hoc_San_Marino_Final_Report.pdf
BFUG_DE_UK_73_8_Ad_Hoc_San_Marino_Road_Map.pdf*

9. Draft Rome Ministerial Communiqué

The BFUG discussed Draft 6 of the Rome Ministerial Communiqué and went through it section by section. The comments by the BFUG were included during the meeting and could be sent to the Secretariat by Monday, 29 September to be taken to the next Drafting Committee meeting.

There were no comments to the annexes of the Rome Communiqué.

The Drafting Committee will work on the final version of the Rome Communiqué on 2 October 2020 and will then send it to the BFUG for the final approval and proposal to the Ministers.

*Attachment: BFUG_DE_UK_73_9_Draft_6_Rome_Communique.pdf
BFUG_DE_UK_73_9_Draft_6_Rome_Communique_Annex_I.pdf
BFUG_DE_UK_73_9_Draft_6_Rome_Communique_Annex_II.pdf
BFUG_DE_UK_73_9_Draft_6_Rome_Communique_Annex_III.pdf*

10. The situation in Belarus

The BFUG Co-chairs presented a note on the situation in Belarus and asked the BFUG for its opinion.

Many countries and Consultative Members support the note and were asked to send their written support via e-mail.

Other countries could not express themselves or didn't want to express themselves on this topic.

The Belarusian delegate read the following position of the Minister of Education on the note: "As of today, the Minister of Education does not have any information about measures of reprisal towards those students and staff that participate in political actions. We are not aware of any cases of politically motivated expulsion of students and academic staff from higher education institutions. Expulsions may result from failure in academic performance or violations of labour legislation. At the same time, we have to admit that in the past few weeks we have been dealing with a great amount of fake news and distortion of facts distributed by internet resources. That is why we have put a lot of effort into information verification and fact checking using various reliable sources. We are going to work further on supporting academic freedom and values in higher education. We do hope that the current political situation will resolve peacefully for the benefit of our people and our country."

The BFUG discussed the note and the reaction to it and came to the conclusion that it will not be possible to add something on this specific point to the Rome Communiqué as consensus will not be possible.

A Statement from the BFUG Co-chairs, signed by the countries and Consultative Members who wish to sign it, could be presented as a background document at the Ministerial Conference. All the Ministers who wish speak about the situation in Belarus in their speech can then refer to the statement. Countries can in addition offer support to the academic community in Belarus.

Attachment: BFUG_DE_UK_73_10_Belarus.pdf

11. Updates from the Consultative Members

The updates from the BFUG Consultative members were presented only in writing and were available online several days before the meeting.

ESU submitted a full report on the outcomes of the survey on the students' situation during Covid-19. Comments on this report can be sent via e-mail to ESU.

EQAR wanted to draw the attention of the BFUG to the part of their update concerning digital systems and their interoperability, as the DEQAR Connect project collects initiatives that deal with higher education data for different purposes. This part can be interesting for the new work plan 2021-2024.

The EUA is running a series of online seminars on the Bologna Process and asks the BFUG to announce these to their national stakeholders. A short survey will also be sent around about digitally enhances learning.

11.2 Update from the Council of Europe

Attachment: BFUG_DE_UK_73_11_2_CoE.pdf

11.3 Update from Education International / ETUCE

Attachment: BFUG_DE_UK_73_11_3_ETUCE.pdf

11.4 Update from ENQA

Attachment: BFUG_DE_UK_73_11_4_ENQA.pdf

11.5 Update from EQAR

Attachment: BFUG_DE_UK_73_11_5_EQAR.pdf

11.6 Update from ESU

Attachment: BFUG_DE_UK_73_11_6_Students_Covid-19_survey_results.pdf

11.8 Update from EURASHE

Attachment: BFUG_DE_UK_73_11_8_EURASHE

12. Information by the incoming BFUG Co-chairs

12.1 BFUG Board Meeting in Andorra (11 February 2021)

The incoming BFUG Co-chair (Andorra) gave information on the higher education system and on the planned Board meeting to be held online or in Andorra on 11 February 2021.

Attachment: BFUG_DE_UK_73_12_1_Andorra_incoming_Co-chairs_presentation.pdf

12.2 BFUG meeting in Portugal (15-16 April 2021)

The Portuguese incoming Co-chair informed about the Portuguese higher education system and BFUG meeting in Portugal to be held on 15-16 April 2021 either online or face-to-face in Lisbon.

Attachment: BFUG_DE_UK_73_12_2_Portugal_incoming_Co-chairs_presentation.pdf

15. AOB

Tessa Bijvank (Netherlands), Gottfried Bacher (Austria), Robert Napier (ESU) and Ernő Keszei (Hungary) said goodbye to the whole BFUG as this was their last BFUG meeting.

The BFUG meeting was closed with thanks and good wishes by the BFUG Co-chairs.