Future of the EHEA - Thematic discussion on vision and priorities

Outcomes of the online survey

Draft Report

Background

In the Paris Communiqué the Ministers "ask the BFUG to submit proposals for the main priorities for the next decade, in close cooperation with higher education institutions, staff and students, and for the governance of the EHEA". The first step has been to carry out a survey among the BFUG members in October 2018 and the results were presented at the BFUG meeting in Bucharest in April 2019. Building on the results of the survey, within the BFUG it was agreed to conduct a follow-up consultation at national level and among member organisations, focusing on the "thematic priorities" and the "vision of the future of the EHEA".

The Survey

The online survey was carried out on 28 June 2019 by the BFUG Secretariat and the invitation to answer the online questionnaire was sent to the BFUG members, Consultative members and Partners (https://forms.gle/qHTdKb4r3AkNXp5z6). To date, 04 November 2019, 39 answers were received, 35 from Members, 3 from Consultative members and 1 from Partners (see Annex 1). Some members and consultative members have informed the Secretariat that consultations are still ongoing and have therefore not been able to send the requested inputs[1] or final feedback[2] to the Secretariat in time. Others[3] stated that they do not consider the investigations to be concluded, and that they will continue the consultations in the light of the inputs that will result from the next BFUG meetings.

Methodology for consultation

National and organisational consultations on the future of the EHEA took place throughout the summer and autumn 2019. Background documents for the consultations were the documents "Governance and Thematic priorities after 2020. Outcomes of the online survey" and the "BFUG work on vision and thematic priorities after 2020. Summary of the current state of affairs (June 2019)". Different tools were used, including written and online consultation and surveys based on questionnaires, e-mail messages, face-to-face and virtual meetings, workshops, focus groups, round tables, etc.

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[1] ESU

[2] Belgium French Community, France

[3] Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom/Scotland, United Kingdom

Summary consideration

The results of the consultations largely confirm the overall layout and structure of the vision and the thematic priorities for the EHEA after 2020 as developed by the BFUG through the online survey on Governance and thematic priorities (Autumn 2018) and the cooperative discussion developed during and after the Bucharest BFUG meeting (4-5 April 2019).

Feedbacks from national consultations uphold the centrality and the relevance of the seven key themes proposed in the document "BFUG work on vision and thematic priorities after 2020. Summary of the current state of affairs (June 2019)". While no further issues are proposed as additional key themes, feedbacks provide in-depth analyses of the relevance of the proposed themes, suggest connections among different points, and make suggestions and recommendations for their further development. In some cases, clarifications are requested, and formulations that improve definitions and contents are suggested. In a very limited number of cases, further consideration is recommended with reference to specific topics, when a limited coherence with other topics is highlighted, or a clearer definition is required.

Some countries do not consider the consultation as concluded and asked for an extension of the deadline to arrive at more complete, and consistent conclusions. Other countries reported on an ongoing consultation process, which will continue over the next few months. In those cases, reference is made to the progress of the discussions within the BFUG; the steps forward and the results of the BFUG elaboration will nurture further discussions on a national basis.

What appears is that in most countries a real discussion has been animated, involving a large number of national actors (ministries, policy makers, HEIs, national organisations, researchers, employers, student unions, stakeholders) in different forms and with different tools. This process appears extremely positive. Equally relevant is the approach followed in some countries where the discussion has been mainly focused on the state of national implementation of the Bologna Process. The result were proposals of systemic reform, as well as the identification of national targets to be achieved in the near future.

The following part of this report summarises the in-depth analyses, the proposals for further discussion, the suggestions and recommendations related to the general vision of the future of the EHEA after 2020, and to the seven key themes proposed as a basis for consultation. Additional inputs are also listed in the form of proposals and recommendations related to the governance and working method of the EHEA, the work of the BFUG, the features of the Ministerial Conferences and of the Global Policy Forum. Finally, proposals emerging from local consultations with reference to specific national strategies or targets are listed.

Main results of the consultation

    A. The vision of the future of the EHEA after 2020

- Openness as a European value (Croatia; Iceland)
- Recommendations and non-binding commitments (Czech Rep)
- Need for new tools beside using/developing existing tools (e.g. ESG) (Finland)
- Working only at policy level is a risk, need for tools targeted at HEIs (Finland)
- The diversity of HE cultures as a strength for EHEA (Finland)
- Interdisciplinary approaches to tackle complex social issues (e.g. poverty, immigration, sustainable development, climate change) (Greece)
- EHEA needs to build on current strength but also to go further with respect of values in HE (Iceland)
- Climatically responsible HE to be a new value for EHEA (Iceland)

- Concern on a process more EU-driven than EHEA-facilitated (E+ funding to European Universities) (Ireland)
- Involve all relevant stakeholders, creating a community (Italy)
- Active participation of the European HE community and its stakeholder is essential for success and instill ownership, increasing active contribution to the policy making process (EUA)
- Bologna Process to be officially regarded as finished after 2020, Ministers to meet every three years to improve and consolidate EHEA (Liechtenstein)
- Few topics agreed by a majority of EHEA members to be selected as long-term priorities; innovation of L&T, teacher support and flexibility of studies to be included; fundamental values to be integrated in upcoming plans (Lithuania; United Kingdom)
- Linking of HE and research (Luxembourg; Slovenia; Italy; Romania)
- Move to next goals while remaining focused on implementation of key commitments (The Netherlands; Sweden)
- More communication between governments and institutions (The Netherlands)
- Focus on few key areas for 2020-2030, including: promoting and protecting fundamental values; challenge of non-implementation; link to SDGs; climate change (Norway; Switzerland; United Kingdom)
- Stable public funding for education and research is needed to enable HEIs to fulfil their societal role in the next years (Slovenia; Sweden)
- Benchmarking processes, quantitative goals and measurement tools to be further discusses (Switzerland)
- Key priorities for EHEA: active and responsible citizenship; digitalisation; governance and autonomy; competitiveness on a global scale; integral human development (Ukraine)
- Priority themes for EHEA: mobility, inclusiveness, LLL (United Kingdom)
- Quantitative targets for EHEA countries till 2030: 95% employed after 3 years from graduation; 100% curriculum uploaded in open virtual spaces; 100% e-document flow, including diplomas and DSs; 60% students and staff mobile at national/international levels (Ukraine)
- Priorities: Academic freedom, public investment in HE and research, supportive working environment for staff, better recognition of teaching in HE, inclusiveness in HE, climate change (ETUCE)
- An ambitious vision and common goals for the next decade demonstrate the added value of European collaboration but light and flexible approaches and structures are needed (EUA)
- HE should become more practice-oriented and prepare students to thrive in a changing society (Romania)

B. The seven thematic priorities after the BFUG Meeting in Bucharest

1. The societal role of Higher Education
- link with earlier education cycles also for quality of student performance (Croatia)
- focus on positive social and regional impact, not only research outputs (Croatia)
- Fostering innovation ecosystems based on stronger links HE-research-innovation to boost local/regional development (France)
- Stress the role of HEIs as knowledge hub for local/regional/interregional development (Greece; Romania)
- Reference to be added to the role of HEIs as protector of freedom of speech and thought and promoter/guardian of core values of HE (Germany; Ukraine)
- Include social role and responsibility of internationalisation in developing an identity as European/global citizens (Germany)
- The notion of "final truth" would be dangerous, fundamental right to freedom of opinion to be respected (Hungary)
- Create/reinforce dialogue and cohesion between HE and Research (Iceland; Italy)
- Inclusiveness is part of the societal role of HE, strong connection with primary and secondary education, academic education of schoolteachers (Italy; Romania)

- Technological development including AI will enable HEIs to act as agent for change in 21st century (Romania)
- Partnerships at local/regional/ level, for adapting the educational provision to the labour market, to ensure the knowledge transfer to economic/business environment and to make HEIs become first-class regional knowledge brokers (Romania)
- Encourage countries to share approaches towards SDGs (EUA)
- Instilling an spreading a value system among students is important to achieve social cohesion; skills are less relevant without appropriate value systems (Romania)

2. Inclusiveness of Higher Education
- Increasing completion rates (major concern in Eastern Europe) (Croatia)
- Inadequacy of public funding to HE could increase student inequality (Finland)
- The topic of guidelines/benchmarks on SD to be further discussed (pros/cons) (Germany)
- HE is not responsible for school policies, although acquisition of HE entrance qualification is relevant to a student body reflecting diversity of societies (Germany)
- Inclusiveness to be extended to academic staff (teachers, researchers) (Hungary)
- Internationalisation at home to be further developed and offered (Hungary)
- Inclusiveness to be related to gender, socio-economic background, disability, as well as age (adults, life-long perspective) and international students (including immigrants and refugees) (Italy)
- Define a common approach and minimum and/or general requirements for Social Dimension (Latvia)
- Inclusiveness should not be seen in isolation from LLL (needs of all learners) and digitalisation (flexible and diversified programmes) (United Kingdom)
- Equity, diversity and inclusion still widely perceived as problems to solve rather than an approach to enhance quality (EUA)

3. Innovative, flexible and relevant learning and teaching
- SCL to be based on a process of cooperative learning (Albania)
- SCL also in third cycle and post-doc (Croatia)
- Education for social and emotional skills, not just cognitive skills (Croatia; Romania)
- Enhancement of digital learning environments (Estonia)
- Upgrading of QA and recognition in changing organisation of L&T (Estonia)
- Research needed on how different (digital) teaching methods suit the needs of different kind students (Finland)
- Development of L&T beyond tools (digitalization) and outcomes (competences) (Finland)
- barriers to cooperation among different HE sectors to be removed (Finland)
- Teacher support to be included in this chapter (Germany)
- Quality of L&T as a major goal needs to be further relined (Germany)
- No necessity to further emphasize short-cycle programmes, refer to the Paris Communiqué (Germany)
- Uniform system of reliable QA within EHEA members might be softened by the notion of Innovation-inhibiting effect of QA (Germany; Ukraine)
- The purpose of HE is not only training for a particular profession, aptitude for scientific aptitude, personal development and active citizenship should be included (Germany)
- Broad platform of student skills to be creative problem solvers and active citizens (Greece)
- Create legal framework for enhancing inter-university and cross-departmental cooperation for the development of programmes and curricula (Greece)
- Mobility between fields and study programmes to be more flexible (Hungary; Iceland)
- To raise the value of diplomas by strengthening practice-oriented, project- and research based HE (Hungary)
- Develop a European level framework for assessing teachers' roles and performances (Hungary)
- Responding to the needs of the digital natives, different from previous generations (Iceland; Italy)

- "Short-cycle" notion suffering ambiguity, promote an EHEA-led vision of "associate" (or another descriptor) (Ireland)
- Learning goals to be flexible to form broad competences (including critical and analytical thinking, creativity, self-organisation) and soft skills (Italy; UK/Scotland)
- Value of teaching for academic careers (Italy)
- Most important theme for the future of EHEA; create/adapt study programmes to changing conditions in economy, digitalisation, internationalisation (Slovenia)
  Need for a recognition that can accommodate all types of learning (Sweden)
  The transformation of L&T to be driven by HEIs, with ministries supporting them in developments (EUA)
- Changes in the delivery of learning contents requires investing in new innovative L&T methods and learning facilities (Romania)

4. Lifelong learning
- Recognition of prior learning including non-formal/informal education (France; Iceland)
- Overemphasizing of one-sided responsibility of lifelong learners is dangerous, expansion of continuing education and workers' entitlement to (continuous) training are recommended (Germany)
- Including non-formal education in HE needs adequate funding to avoid jeopardising of QA (Greece)
- Digital infrastructures offering flexible LLL activities to different learners (Italy; Romania)
- Micro-degrees to be offered to long-time former learners (Latvia)
- Quality standards used for traditional academic offer to be transferred in LLL, guaranteeing same level of QA (Luxembourg)
- Developing HEIs capacity to provide LLL/continuous learning needs changes in L&T, diversification in educational provision but also resources and funding models at system level (an issue for policy making) (Romania; EUA)
- Interactive applications and mobile technologies bring great potential in support LLL endeavours (Romania)

5. Digitalisation
- Development of systems for verifying qualifications (Blockchain) (Czech Rep; Italy)
- The digital transition of society and A.I. need to be further discussed (France; United Kingdom)
- Possibilities of virtual mobility to be included in the chapter (Germany)
- Follow-up discussion on the paper "Bologna Digital 2020" to be considered (Germany)
- Standardisation to be used not only negatively (e.g. student data) (Germany)
- Focus on the role of HEIs in elaborating legal and ethical conditions for the use of IT (Hungary)
- EU funding for programmes in the field of digitalisation to be implemented (digital campuses, digital environments, learning management systems) Hungary
- 4th Industrial Revolution require added emphasis on shared/joint curriculum, collaboration, flexibility in programmes (Iceland)
- Digitalisation to maximise the potential of internationalisation at home (Italy)
- Digital technologies to be used in L%T but also in administration and student mobility (Switzerland)
- Targets for 2030: 100% curriculum uploaded in open virtual spaces; 100% e-document flow, including diplomas and DSs (Ukraine)
- Digitalisation as a key priority topic (Belarus)

6. Internationalisation and mobility
- Mobility of academics to be enhanced by reducing obstacles (Czech Rep)
- Student internationalisation/mobility to be integrated in all actions (Finland)
- Common status of European apprenticeship (France)
- Internationalisation at home to provide intercultural learning for non-mobile students (France)

- The increase of quantitative targets beyond 2020 to be revised (many countries will not reach the 2020 target), nevertheless quantitative targets should be set (Germany)
- Qualitative targets to be included, e.g. disadvantaged students (Germany)
- The notion of "EU joint degrees" to be replaced by "joint degrees" (Germany)
- Agency for the evaluation of joint degrees to be further discussed (Germany; Ukraine)
- Virtual mobility, international campuses, internationalisation at home to be included in this chapter (Germany)
- Green mobility to be further explored (Hungary)
- Staff mobility to be developed for sharing and dissemination of knowledge and experiences (Hungary)
- Internationalisation for staff and students, countries responsible for their mobility targets, EHEA support recognition of learning abroad (European Student Card) (Iceland)
- Quantitative targets questionable, but all students should conclude their studies having experienced internationalisation (different forms: mobility, internationalisation at home, international curriculum, etc.) (Italy)
- Lack of flexibility in recognition of qualifications (Higher vocational awards) in Europe needs additional work to be done (United Kingdom)
- Internationalisation and mobility as a key priority topic (Belarus)

7. **Governance and autonomy**
   - Academic values to be linked to Governance and Funding (Slovenia)
   - Academic freedom and institutional autonomy linked to QA (Hungary)
   - Alternative funding sources to diversify HEIs' revenues and allow excellence in HE and research (Romania) (Romania)

C. Additional inputs

1. **Governance and working method of the EHEA**
   - more involvement of practitioners in WG/AGs (Austria)
   - support for countries that did not reach Bologna goals (Belgium Flemish)
   - Continuation of the peer support for implementation of Bologna tools (Croatia; Italy; The Netherlands)
   - Stronger direct involvement of HEIs in BFUG and WGs activities (Croatia)
   - Peer learning and sharing of best practices among HEIs and academics (Croatia; Italy)
   - The idea of a permanent BFUG Secretariat to be encouraged (Luxembourg)
   - Teams of Bologna experts/promoters/HE experts to be promoted/reinvigorated (The Netherlands; EUA)
   - The BIR methodology for data collection should be abridged for countries outside the EU statistical system (Russian Federation)
   - Structures currently rely too much on a top-down approach, HEIs have acquired valuable experience and are in the best position to face future challenges of the EHEA (Switzerland)
   - Move away from tools lending themselves to bureaucratisation, emphasis on principles, guidelines and tools (UK/Scotland)

2. **BFUG**
   - BFUG as a more active and decision-making body for cooperation in implementing HE reforms throughout EHEA (Georgia)
   - Greater involvement of stakeholders, researchers, practitioners (Georgia; Italy)
   - More space for peer activities (Georgia; EUA)
   - Hearings an open and expert consultation to be included in the BFUG working methods (EUA)
   - Labelled Bologna events to be used for exchanges between BFUG and HE sector (EUA)

3. **Ministerial Conference**
   - 3-4 years period for Conferences (Austria; Italy)

4. **Global Policy Dialogue and Global Policy Forum**
    - EHEA to provide a better platform for interregional cooperation on global level (Ireland; Latvia)
    - BPF to be continued to develop exchange of minds and ideas with other HE areas (Liechtenstein)
    - Promotion of harmonization and interaction with regional organisation worldwide having an education agenda (Russian Federation)
    - Special status for non-EHEA countries developing EHEA tools/reforms (Italy)

D. National strategies and targets - proposals from the local consultation

- Changes to the existing legal framework with a focus on full implementation of ESG (Albania)
- Action plan for developing HE has been developed; draft of a new HE law; reviewing of State standards and other legislative documents for HE (Azerbaijan)
- Defining a focus group among stakeholders for further consultations (Cyprus)
- Definition of 8 key aspects of internal role of HE and its outreach in an international context (Malta)
- Social Dimension and academic freedom (Italy)

	Consultations on the Future of the EHEA			
	Feedback received by 5 November 2019			
	MEMBERS			
	Country	**Name**	**Institution**	**Date**
1	Albania	Bizena Bijo	Albania, Agriculture University of Tirana	10/10/19
2	Andorra			
3	Armenia			
4	Austria	Stephan De Pasqualin	Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research	21/10/19
5	Azerbaijan	Yashar Omarov	Ministry of Education	11/10/19
6	Belarus	Elena Betenya	National Institute for Higher Education	05/11/19
7	Belgium Fr	Caroline Hollela	Ministère de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles	15/10/19
8	Belgium Fl	Magalie Soenen	BFUG member	15/10/19
9	Bosnia and Herzegovina			
10	Bulgaria			
11	Croatia	Durdica Dragojevic	Ministry of Science and Education	15/10/19
12	Cyprus	Terpsa Constantinidou	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth	25/10/19
13	Czech Republic	Tereza Neumann Kotaskova	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	23/10/19
14	Denmark			
15	Estonia	Janne Pukk	Ministry of Education and Research	15/10/19
16	Finland	Sanna Hirsivaara	Department for Higher Education and Science Policy and General Upper Secondary Education, Ministry of Education and Culture	18/10/19
17	France	Siegfried Martin-Diaz	Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la recherche et de l'innovation	11/10/19
18	Georgia	Ekaterine Bagishvili	National Center for Education Quality Enhancement	14/10/19
19	Germany	Dr. Frank Petrikowski	Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Germany	03/10/19
20	Greece	Alexandra Karvouni	Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs	25/10/19
21	Holy See			
22	Hungary	Ernő Keszei	Ministry of Innovation and Technology	23/10/19
23	Iceland	Una Strand Viðarsdóttir	Ministry of Ecucation, Science and Culture	20/10/19
24	Ireland	Joseph Gleeson	Department of Education and Skills	25/10/19
25	Italy	Vincenzo Zara	Ministry of Education, University and Research	15/10/19
26	Kazakhstan			
27	Latvia	Daiga Ivsina	Ministry of Education and Science	29/10/19
28	Liechtenstein	Daniel Miescher	Liechtenstein / Office of Education	09/10/19
29	Lithuania	Andrius Zalitis	Ministry of education, science and sport	14/10/19
30	Luxembourg	Isabelle Reinhardt	Ministry of Higher Education and Research	15/10/19
31	Malta	Tanya Sammut-Bonnici	Ministry of Education and Employment, Malta	21/08/19
32	Moldova	Velisco Nadejda	Higher education policies department	15/10/19
33	Montenegro			
34	Netherlands	Tessa Bijvank	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	18/10/19
35	North Macedonia			
36	Norway	Tone Flood Strøm	Ministry of Education and Research	15/10/19
37	Poland			
38	Portugal			
39	Romania	Cristina Ghiţulică	Ministry of National Education	21/10/19
40	Russian Federation	Nadezda Kamynina	Ministry of Science and Higher Education	15/10/19
41	Serbia			
42	Slovak Republic			
43	Slovenia	Erika Rustja	Ministry of Education, Science and Sport	14/10/19
44	Spain			
45	Sweden	Martin Apelqvist	Sweden, Ministry of Education and Research	08/10/19
46	Switzerland	Aurélia Robert-Tissot	State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI)	10/10/19
47	Turkey			
48	Ukraine	Kateryna Suprun	Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine	14/10/19
49	United Kingdom	Pamela Wilkinson	Department for Education	14/10/19
50	United Kingdom (Scotland)	Michael Watney	Scotland - The Scottish Government	08/10/19
51	European Commission			
	CONSULTATIVE MEMBERS			
52	ENQA			
53	ETUCE	Agnes Roman	ETUCE / EI European Region	08/10/19
54	EUA	Gemma Fagan	EUA	16/10/19
55	BUSINESS EUROPE			
56	Council of Europe			
57	ESU	Robert Napier	President ESU	19/10/19
58	UNESCO			
59	EURASHE			
60	EQAR			
	PARTNERS			
61	EAIE			
62	EUROCADRES			
63	EURODOC	Eva Hnatkova	European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers	26/10/19
64	EUROSCIENCE			
65	AEC			

		Ministry	HEIs	Rectors' Conference	Student Unions/ students	Researchers, experts and practioners	QA Agency	Accreditation Council/ Agency	ENIC - NARIC centre	Labour market organisations/ enterprises	Trade Unions	Others
	MEMBERS											
1	Albania		x									
2	Andorra											
3	Armenia											
4	Austria	x	x		x							x
5	Azerbaijan		x									
6	Belarus		x									
7	Belgium Fr		x		x		x		x	x	x	x
8	Belgium Fl		x		x					x		x
9	Bosnia and Herzegovina											
10	Bulgaria											
11	Croatia		x	x	x							x
12	Cyprus	x										
13	Czech Republic	x	x		x		x	x				
14	Denmark											
15	Estonia			x	x							
16	Finland		x		x					x		
17	France	x	x		x					x	x	x
18	Georgia		x									
19	Germany			x	x		x	x		x	x	x
20	Greece		x				x	x	x			
21	Holy See											
22	Hungary	x	x	x		x			x			x
23	Iceland		x		x							
24	Ireland		x		x						x	x
25	Italy	x	x	x					x			
26	Kazakhstan											
27	Latvia		x	x	x					x	x	x
28	Liechtenstein		x									
29	Lithuania	x	x		x	x	x					
30	Luxembourg		x		x							x
31	Malta		x		x					x		x
32	Moldova		x									
33	Montenegro											
34	Netherlands				x	x						x
35	North Macedonia											
36	Norway			x	x						x	
37	Poland											
38	Portugal											
39	Romania		x	x	x						x	x
40	Russian Federation	x				x						
41	Serbia											
42	Slovak Republic											
43	Slovenia		x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x
44	Spain											
45	Sweden				x		x		x		x	x
46	Switzerland			x	x		x	x				
47	Turkey											
48	Ukraine		x			x						x
49	United Kingdom		x	x	x	x	x		x			x
50	United Kingdom (Scotland)			x	x	x						x
51	European Commission											
	CONSULTATIVE MEMBERS											
52	ENQA											
53	ETUCE										x	
54	EUA			x								
55	BUSINESS EUROPE											
56	Council of Europe											
57	ESU											
58	UNESCO											
59	EURASHE											
60	EQAR											
	PARTNERS											
61	EAIE											
62	EUROCADRES											
63	EURODOC										x	
64	EUROSCIENCE											
65	AEC											