



Latvian Presidency
of the Council of the
European Union



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MEETING OF THE BOARD OF THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP
Vatican City, 9 July 2014, 09:00 – 17:00

Draft minutes

List of participants

Country/ Organisation	Representative
Armenia	Karine Harutyunyan
BFUG Secretariat	Gayane Harutyunyan
BFUG Secretariat	Ani Hovhannisyan
CoE/ Structural Reforms WG	Sjur Bergan
EQAR/ Expert Group for Drafting a Proposal for European Approach for QA of Joint Degrees	Colin Tück
ESU/ Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning WG	Elisabeth Gehrke
EUA	Michael Gaebel
EURASHE	Johan Cloet
EC	Adam Tyson
EC	Margaret Waters
Greece	Christos Skouras
Holy See	Friedrich Bechina
Holy See	Julia Gonzales
Holy See	Karolina Kasperaviciute
Iceland	Ásgerður Kjartansdóttir
Italy	Daniele Livon
Italy	Marzia Foroni
Italy	Maria Sticchi Damiani
Kazakhstan	Zhassulan Shaimardanov
Kazakhstan	Kymbat Beisekina
Latvia	Jolanta Silka
Latvia	Daiga Ivsina
Mobility and Internationalisation WG	Luis Delgado
Reporting on the Bologna Process Implementation WG	Andrejs Rauhvargers

The Chair, Mr. Friedrich Bechina, opened the BFUG Board meeting by welcoming the participants on behalf of the Holy See and highlighted that it was a pleasure for the Holy See to share the BFUG Co-Chairing responsibilities with Italy and to have both the Board meeting and two BFUG meetings organised in Rome.

Mr. Daniele Livon, the director General for University, Students and Student Welfare of the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research of Italy thanked the outgoing BFUG Co-Chairs, Greece and Kazakhstan, as well as the BFUG Secretariat for the assistance. At the same time it was stressed that Italy had high expectations from the final outcomes of the debate on the future of the Bologna Process (BP) since it is important that the Process remains relevant to national agendas and successful both at the institutional and national levels. The discussion of the doctoral education is another important issue for the Italian BFUG Co-Chairmanship for ensuring the full implementation of the recommendation developed at the European level laid down in the Bucharest Communiqué. Moreover, the outcomes of the two BFUG meetings to be held under the Italian BFUG Co-Chairmanship should be a base for the preparation of the upcoming Ministerial conference, the final reports of the working groups (WGs) as well as for the future work for the next period of 2015-2018.

Furthermore, the Chair congratulated the outgoing BFUG Co-Chairs, Greece and Kazakhstan, for the productive six-month period of the BFUG Co-Chairmanship and also for the smooth handover of the BFUG Co-Chairing responsibilities to Italy and Holy See, which took place on 8 July 2014 in Vatican City.

The Board was notified that there were 24 participants present at the meeting.

1. Information by the outgoing BFUG Chairs: Greece and Kazakhstan

Mr. Christos Skouras (Greece) highlighted that during the Greek and Kazakh BFUG Co-Chairmanship the dialogue on the future of the BP was launched and a step forward would be taken by the Italian and Holy See BFUG Co-Chairmanship.

Once again the most important events under the Greek EU Presidency related to HE were listed:

- Launch of the Erasmus+ programme, 16 January 2014;
- BFUG meeting, 9-10 April 2014;
- DG meeting for HE, 20-21 May 2014;
- Conference on U-Multirank, 10-11 June 2014.

Mr. Christos Skouras also thanked Kazakh colleagues as well as the Secretariat for the persistent and prompt support.

Ms. Kymbat Beisekina (Kazakhstan) highlighted that Kazakhstan is a young country that joined the BP in 2010 which promoted the modernisation of its HE. The national HE priorities of Kazakhstan during its BFUG Co-Chairmanship were:

- National system of college graduates' employability;
- Internationalisation of HE;
- Development of the system of social responsibility.

The two notable events organised during the Kazakh BFUG Co-Chairmanship were the BFUG Board meeting (12 February 2014) and International conference on "Bologna Structural Reforms: History, Problems and Perspectives" (13-14 February 2014). The later hosted nearly 130 participants and was a "stocktaking" of national achievements in HE.

Last but not least Ms. Kymbat Beisekina wished all the participants success.

2. Information by the incoming BFUG Chairs: Italy and Holy See

Mr. Daniele Livon (Italy) presented the calendar of events to be organised under the Italian EU Presidency and BFUG Co-Chairmanship, which is as follows:

- BFUG meeting, 18-19 September, Rome;
- BFUG meeting, 27-28 November, Rome;
- DG meeting for HE, 20-21 October, Palermo;
- Conference on Doctoral Education "International, Intersectorial, Interdisciplinary: the triple 'I' approach to doctoral training with impact on doctorate holders' employment", 20-21 November, Padua;
- EU Summit on digital education, 27 October, Brussels;
- Education Council discussion, 12 December, Brussels.

Mr. Friedrich Bechina (Holy See) noted that the Italian EU Presidency is foreseen as a joint event for the Holy See and stressed that the Holy See would try to support as well as be involved in the Presidency events. Moreover, the Board was informed that a high level conference on the questions of studying and teaching the religion of others will be organised by the Holy See on 4-6 December 2014 in Rome. The official information will be sent to the Secretariat for the circulation to the BFUG members as well as for posting it on the EHEA calendar.

3. Adoption of the agenda

Documents: BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_3a [draft agenda]
BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_3b [draft annotated agenda]

The agenda of the meeting was adopted with the inclusion of one issue under "AOB".

4. Draft minutes of the BFUG Board meeting, Astana, 12 February 2014 and draft outcome of proceedings of the BFUG meeting, Athens, 9-10 April 2014

Documents: BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_4a [BFUG Board Astana draft minutes]

BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_4b [BFUG Athens draft outcome of proceedings]

BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_4b_Annex1 [Thematic session on Financing of HE]

The Astana BFUG Board meeting minutes were adopted without any amendments. The Board also took note of the draft outcome of proceedings of the Athens BFUG meeting and suggested some rephrasing.

5. Continuation of the dialogue on the future of the Bologna Process

Documents: BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_5a [Bologna Process Revisited_Ver.1]
BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_5b [Draft Programme of the BFUG internal seminar on the Future of Bologna Process]
BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_5c [EHEA members' Responses on National Priorities]
BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_5c.1 [EHEA members' Responses on National Priorities_With Explanations]

Ms. Marzia Foroni (Italy) introduced to the Board the documents under this agenda point, namely:

- First draft of the document "Bologna Process Revisited" based on the non-paper¹ - the paper was presented during the Athens BFUG meeting (9-10 April 2014) and the Secretariat, as well as the present and incoming BFUG Co-Chairs, were asked to prepare a paper reflecting the outcomes of the BFUG debate on the future of the BP and include in the batch of documents for the Vatican Board meeting (9 July 2014).
- Approach and methodology of the extraordinary BFUG meeting to be held on 18-19 September 2014 - taking into consideration the importance of the issue on the future of the BP as well as the need for its thorough discussion, the BFUG in its Athens meeting agreed to organise an extraordinary BFUG meeting in September and Italy as the upcoming BFUG Co-Chair kindly agreed to host the meeting in Rome.
- Survey of the EHEA member countries and the consultative members on their priorities - it was agreed at the Athens BFUG meeting to invite the EHEA member countries and the consultative members to provide their written answers to the questions concerning their priorities and send them back to the Secretariat. At the time of presentation 34 responses were received based on which the Secretariat had prepared a document presenting the national/organisation priorities as well as a pie chart introducing the latter ones in percentages.

For the pie chart see the file below:



National and
Organisational Prioriti

¹ "The Bologna Process revisited" (document BFUG_GR_KZ_39_5a) presented by Belgium (French and Flemish Communities), Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, EC, EUA, ESU and CoE and Spanish non-paper on the document "The Bologna Process revisited".

It should also be noted that some countries did not fully appreciate the approach of the survey and indicated that it should be more elaborated while the others decided not to choose only three priorities and indicated more with corresponding explanations.

Ms. Maria Sticchi Damiani (Italy) presented the structure and content of the BFUG meeting to be organised in September and stressed that as a joint delegation Italy and Holy See appreciated the opportunity that was offered them for the contribution of the discussion on the future of the BP.

It was highlighted that there was a clear message from the BFUG that the BP should be revisited and reconsidered. In order to have a fruitful discussion in September, there is a need to agree on the organisation of the discussion presented in the document *BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_5b* as well as on the aspects of the proposed three sessions of group discussions, which are:

- Implementation
- Relevance and involvement
- Governance and organisation

Moreover, it is important to ensure the involvement of the BFUG members in the discussions in such a way that they lead to the expected outcomes, which might be:

- Global vision of the EHEA with interconnected goals, as well as discrete actions and policies;
- Jointly designed educational project with agreed priorities that the different systems engage to pursue, at different speeds and tracks, in addition to the national priorities;
- Bottom-up process driven by the globalisation of education, the internationalisation strategies of HE institutions, the academic cooperation and exchange, and student and staff mobility, in order to complement the top-down process led by the EHEA Ministries.

Thus, the Board was invited to discuss the following important points concerning the September BFUG meeting without going into the content of the meeting itself:

1. General framework of the discussion;
2. Discussion structure of the BFUG meeting;
3. Appointment of the facilitators for the group discussions who will be consulted on the preparatory phase as well.

The Board noted that:

- There is a need to ensure the proper organisation of the BFUG meeting in September and the main document for the discussion should be the document *BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_5a*, which should be revised reflecting the recommendations of the Board made at its Vatican meeting.
- Country responses concerning their priorities are very valuable and they should be taken into consideration while discussing the issue in September. Therefore, it will be good that the country responses are analysed and a brief summery paper is prepared by the Secretariat reflecting the outcome of the responses, which will serve as a background document for the September BFUG meeting.
- The point made by France on the preliminary note in the document *BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_5c.1*, namely "*The EHEA political agenda should not be*

downsized to a mere collection of national priorities, or to "the lowest common denominator" taken from these, among the 47 EHEA countries. We should look at the challenge for the European direction" is very important and might lead the main document for the discussion during the September BFUG meeting in a right direction.

Moreover, it was stressed that:

- There is a need to have a common understanding of quality in HE and this might be one of the important issues to be put in future agenda. Moreover, although the structural reforms are one of the main achievements of the BP, still there is a lot to be done. Of course some strong policy guidelines have been adopted at the European level, but the challenge is to implement them at the national level. So, the question is how to work at the European level and ensure national and institutional implementation.
- Another important issue to be raised is the decreasing participation of the ministers at the Ministerial events and this is obviously a symptom of the lack of the political relevance. Thus, there is a need to identify what the main priorities are that lend themselves to the kind of cooperation that the Bologna framework is about.
- Furthermore, there is a need to ensure both the implementation of what has not been implemented so far but should still be implemented and pick up the major challenges.
- The approach presented in the "Draft programme of the BFUG internal seminar" on the future of the BP raises too many questions and may undermine the opportunity to reach agreed solutions, while it is recommended to have more problem solving approach.
- Maintenance function as well as the assessment of the Process should be continued.
- The BFUG should agree on two/three points and suggest a way forward.
- The paper needs to be structured around concrete questions leading the discussion.
- There is also a need to identify what the BP is for, whether there is a need to shift the focus as well as whether the uneven implementation is a problem.
- According to the stocktaking reports, there have been many positive achievements, which should be taken into account.
- Another important concern is that many valuable recommendations were endorsed by the Ministers but they are not used by the universities.

As for the format and structure of the BFUG meeting, the Board stressed that:

- The meeting should be focused and a clear presentation of the main discussion document should be made. The latter one should contain concrete questions for the BFUG members to respond as well as the indications of the expected outcome. The paper should be circulated to the BFUG members early enough to give the delegations time to come to the meeting well prepared and thus avoiding confusion as well as unbalanced discussion.
- A second draft of the document *BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_5a* will be produced by the Co-Chairs for the preparation of the meeting in September and the Board will be consulted on this new version, before it is sent to the BFUG delegates for the September meeting.
- It is important that there is coherence between the main discussion document and the group discussions.

Finally it was noted that the core areas for the September discussion should be:

1. Vision for the EHEA
2. Implementation of this vision
3. Way forward and functioning of the BFUG in this respect

Thus, the meeting should be extremely outcome oriented on key problems and their solutions.

As for the appointment of the facilitators for the group discussions, it was suggested that:

- Preference would be given to the countries rather than stakeholder organisations.
- While appointing the group discussion chairs, geographical spread should be taken into consideration.
- The facilitators should have corresponding competences as well as be able to work under time pressure at the same time being able to clearly identify and analyse the main points of the group discussions.
- Chairing and reporting at the same time is rather difficult; therefore it is recommended to have one facilitator and one rapporteur in each group.
- The results of each group session will be summarised and reported in plenary. A general rapporteur will summarise the main outcome of the discussion.
- It is preferable that the group facilitators are consulted while preparing the questions for the meeting.

Finally, it was noted that there is a need to have the agreement of the Board on candidatures of the facilitators.

6. Reports from the Chairs of the Working Groups

6a. WG on the Reporting on the Bologna Process Implementation

Document: BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_6a [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 Board that the last meeting of the WG was on 2 July 2014 in Riga, the agenda of which included the following issues:

- Information on the state of art of the data collection followed by WG discussion on the first results;
- Discussion on the indicators;
- Discussion of the next steps towards preparation of the report.

Status Quo in preparing the 2015 Implementation report was presented to the attention of the Board by highlighting that as of *07.07.2014, 19:00* 43 countries have submitted their online questionnaires.

For more details as well as for the timetable of the next steps towards the preparation of the 2015 Implementation report, please, refer to the PPT below:



Andrejs presentation
Board Rome_shorten

It was also highlighted that the final deadline for the submission of the online questionnaires is 27 July 2014 after which data collectors will start drafting the 2015 Implementation report and therefore there is no guarantee that data submitted after this deadline will be included in the report.

To the inquiry of the Board concerning the actions taken in order to ensure that those countries who have not submitted their data meet the deadline of 27 July 2014, the Board was informed that lots of reminders have been sent by the Secretariat.

Last but not least it was noted that 10-15 minutes will be allocated to the updated presentation of the Reporting WG on the proposal on stocktaking indicators and information on the preliminary outcomes while the BFUG will be able to comment on the first draft of the report during its meeting in Rome on 27-28 November 2014.

6b. WG on Structural Reforms (including the updates from the Ad-Hoc WG on the Third Cycle, Ad-Hoc WG on the Revision of the ECTS Users' Guide, RPL and NQF Networks)

Document: BFUGBoard_ IT_VA_40_6b [Report of the Structural Reforms WG]

Mr. Sjur Bergan (CoE), the Co-Chair of the **Structural Reforms WG**, updated the Board on the procedures, content and the subgroups of the WG.

Thus, the Board was informed that last meeting of the WG was on 27-28 May 2014 in Warsaw, where the main issue for the discussion was the report to be submitted to the BFUG at its November meeting. At the moment the WG is in the process of revising the report which will be finalised after the WG's final meeting to be held on 16-17 September 2014 in Rome. The report will be broad due the nature of the mandate of the WG as well as include an executive summary which will identify key suggestions for the future.

In terms of content the Board was informed that:

- One of the recommendations of the WG will be to reflect that the short cycle qualifications are explicitly recognised as part of the overarching QF-EHEA.
- WG will also recommend the Ministers to adopt the Revised ECTS Users' Guide.
- Last but not least there is a need to reflect on the current format of the Diploma Supplement and whether it should be reviewed.

As for the substructures, it was stressed that:

- WG has reviewed the revised draft of the ECTS Users' Guide on the basis of the presentation made by the EC.
- Draft report of the ad hoc group on third cycle qualifications has also been discussed by the WG.

- NQF Network functions well nevertheless a serious concern is the relatively low participation in the Network, which can threaten the viability of the group in the next programme period.
- RPL Network has not provided information on any activities since the April BFUG meeting or significant input to the draft report and has also not contributed to the draft report of the WG as foreseen.

6c. WG on Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning

Document: BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_6c [Report of the Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning WG]

Ms. Elisabeth Gehrke (ESU), the Co-Chair of the **Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning WG**, briefly introduced the report of the WG. The last meeting of the WG was on the 3-4 April 2014 in Vienna, which was held in connection with the PL4SD interim conference.

The main issues discussed at the meeting were:

- Second draft of the Strategy for the Development of the Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning in the EHEA to 2020 with the working title of "Widening participation for equity and growth";
- First draft of the National Access Plan guidelines;
- Structure and content of the final report.

As for the PL4SD interim conference, there was a general consensus that the conference was very useful and the online database was launched. Moreover, the WG members discussed how the project results would feed into the final report of the WG.

Finally, it was noted that the next meeting of the WG will be held on 23-24 September 2014 in Brussels.

6d. WG on Mobility and Internationalisation (including the update from NESSIE)

Document: BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_6d [Report of the Mobility and Internationalisation WG]

Mr. Luis Delgado (Spain) presented the report of the **Mobility and Internationalisation WG (M&I)**, while highlighting that the last meeting of the WG was on 19-20 May 2014 in Dublin, where besides the structure, format and priorities of the final report of the WG the following aspects were also discussed:

- Results of the BFUG meeting in Athens
- Staff mobility
- Proposal on incoming student mobility (target yes or no)
- Preparatory work for the Bologna Policy Forum
- Description of study programmes
- Portability of grants and loans
- Mobility of teacher – training students
- Quality in mobility
- Balanced/imbalance mobility of underrepresented groups
- Revision of the 2007 "The EHEA in a global setting"
- Report on Joint and Double/Multiple Degrees in Ireland

The next meeting of the WG will be organised on 8-9 September 2014 in Vienna. As for the NESSIE, the Board was updated that during the Network's annual meeting held on 19 May 2014 in Edinburgh, among other issues draft guidelines paper from the M&I WG on the portability of financial student support as well as double funding due to portability arrangements and EU Court rulings were discussed.

The Board noted that with the discussion of the issue on the future of the BP new ideas for the Communiqué might come up and in this sense the recommendations coming from the WGs are very important. At the same time, while making recommendations, it should be taken into consideration that the 2015 Yerevan Communiqué needs to be very forward looking and include those elements from the recommendations that will drive the process forward.

In terms of the tight calendar starting after the BFUG meeting in September, it was highly recommended that the Chairs make a clear point for the delegations in September that they keep close contact with their country representatives in different WGs since the WGs will present their final reports during the November BFUG meeting with a very short time (taking into account Christmas both in Western and Eastern traditions) for the BFUG to take them on board during the January BFUG meeting thus ensuring that the BFUG members and their country representatives in different WGs are on the same line.

7. Update on the Pathfinder group on automatic recognition

Document: BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_7 [Report of the Pathfinder group on automatic recognition]

Mr. Adam Tyson (EC) updated the Board on the progress of the **Pathfinder group on automatic recognition**. The last meeting of the group was on 15 May 2014 in Brussels, the main focus of which was on the following issues:

- Updates from Pathfinder group countries since the last meeting;
- Diploma Supplement;
- Revision of the LRC;
- European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes;
- Final report of the Group to be presented to the BFUG members at its November meeting.

The latter has been circulated among the Group members with the expected comments to be received by mid-August. The report includes the following recommendations for future action:

- Principal recommendation is that the governance needs to take necessary steps probably in legislative terms in order to ensure the recognition of HE qualifications from/within the EHEA. As a part of this there are a number of small recommendations reviewing the legislation.
- There is also a set of recommendations focusing more at the institutional level.
- The nature of the Diploma Supplement and its format are also recommended to be reviewed thus making the Diploma Supplement more useable and accessible for the different user-groups.

- The final recommendation looks at how the Pathfinder group itself has worked. One of the things that the Group recommends on the basis of its experience is that the idea of small groups working together on the same regional focus actually helped to drive forward the progress in reaching wider Bologna priorities.

The Board agreed that the task of the Pathfinder group on automatic recognition is very important. Moreover, the final report of the Group will be of great interest for the BFUG with its valuable outcomes.

8. Update on the status of revision of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA and the proposal for the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Degrees

Documents: BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_8a [ESG Revision_Feedback to the BFUG Board]
 BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_8a.1 [Proposal for the Revised ESG_July2014]
 BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_8a.2 [Proposal for the Revised ESG_Track Changes_July2014]
 BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_8b [Proposal for the European Approach for QA of Joint Degrees version 8.2]

Ms. Elisabeth Gehrke (ESU) presented the results of the **action taken based on the outcomes of the survey of the BFUG on additional changes to the revised ESG as agreed by the BFUG in its meeting in Athens.**

Thus, the Board was informed that the last meeting of the Steering Group was on 25 June 2014, where all the responses received had been gone through and additional changes to the document taking into account the inputs received through the survey were made. Moreover, it was noted that the Group had made important efforts to integrate textual changes wherever possible and reasonable.

The Board appreciated that a lot of changes have been made in the current proposal of the revised ESG based on the comments received by the BFUG. Although not all the proposed changes have been integrated, the point of the Steering Group concerning this issue is taken.

Moreover, the following specific comments were made:

- There should be consistency in the approach across the standards and guidelines as a whole.
- Flexible learning is a very important point as well as a new element; therefore there is a need to make this point very clear.
- Another significant issue is the academic fraud, thus simple reference is not enough and it should be stated explicitly.

To the comment that by changing "student complains" by "student appeals" on page 12 in the document *BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_8a.2*, the scope seems to be narrowed, it was noted that student complaints have not been deleted, but simply moved to a different place in the text.

Mr. Colin Tück (EQAR) presented the **revised version of the European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes (ver. 8.2) based on the comments by the BFUG made at the Athens BFUG meeting.**

The main changes reflected the following:

- The proposal to the Ministers was made clearer and the draft text for the Communiqué was revised by the Expert Group as well;
- The issue on national criteria on joint programmes and in particular on joint degrees was made more explicit;
- Equal applicability of the ESG, QF-EHEA and ECTS to the joint programmes was clarified;
- Application in different systems of external QA was also reviewed.

The Board recommended the Expert Group to deliver a slightly different presentation for the September BFUG meeting by reflecting more extensively the changes proposed by the BFUG at its Athens meeting as well as distinguishing the report and the actual approach.

9. Update on the preparation of the Yerevan Ministerial Conference and the Fourth Bologna Policy Forum (BPF); list of countries and organisations to be invited to the Fourth BPF and language regime for the 2015 Yerevan Ministerial Conference

Documents: BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_9a [List of Countries and Organisations to be Invited to the Fourth BPF]
BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_9b [Language Regime for the 2015 Yerevan Ministerial Conference]
BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_9b_Annex1

Ms. Gayane Harutyunyan (BFUG Secretariat) presented the following two issues for the attention of the Board:

1. Language regime for the 2015 Yerevan Ministerial Conference (MC).
2. List of countries and organisations to be invited to the Fourth BPF.

Thus, concerning the first point the Board stressed that when hosting the Bologna Secretariat Armenia had proposed the language regime consisting of the following languages: Armenian, English, French, German, Russian, Spanish for the 2015 MC, therefore, it is recommended to stick to Armenia's initial proposal and not to open the issue until the 2015 MC. Moreover, it was highlighted that the presence of the EHEA Ministers at the 2015 Ministerial events cannot be linked to the language regime or depend on the issues of the agenda. Highest level of representation should be ensured and any excuses of this kind should not be accepted.

As for the second point it was noted:

- Invitation of Syria to the Fourth BPF should be avoided in accordance with the agreement of the EU to have no contact with Syria.
- The engagement of student organisations of the Mediterranean region represented by students and rectors should be encouraged.

- The EC will provide updated contact information for Palestine² and Egypt and it is not appropriate to invite European Training Foundation as it does not work for HE.

Ms. Karine Harutyunyan (Armenia) indicated the willingness of Armenia as the host country to enlarge the participant list of the Fourth BPF with the inclusion of the participants from the Asian region at the same time considering the ASEM conference to be organised in April 2015 in Latvia. Since the list of invitees is composed of only 9 countries (leaving out Syria), success of the BPF as well as the creation of the policy dialogues among the countries might be challenged if two/three delegations decide not to participate in the event. Besides, Armenia as the host is interested in the cooperation also with the countries of the Asian regions.

Finally, Mr. Adam Tyson (EC) noted the importance of the invitation of Kosovo³ to the Fourth BPF as an important point for the EU.

After the deliberations the Board stressed that the invitation of additional delegations to the Fourth BPF should be taken by the host country. However this does not mean that the decision taken by the BFUG in Athens should be reconsidered and that the discussion on the issue should be reopened at the September BFUG meeting, as the focus of the BPF will still be kept on the Mediterranean region. Armenia in its turn should present during the September BFUG meeting an updated list of countries with the indication of the number, regions as well as selection criteria of the additional invitees to the Fourth BPF.

10.Procedure for the selection of the 2018 Ministerial Conference host

Document: BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_10 [Proposal for the selection procedure of the 2018 Ministerial Conference host]
BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_10_Annex1

The documents under this point of agenda were presented by Ms. Gayane Harutyunyan (BFUG Secretariat), who introduced the aim of the paper, the role and responsibilities of the country hosting the 2018 MC, historical overview as well as the proposal on a timeframe for the selection. Thus, it was suggested that the deadline for receiving the application letter for hosting the 2018 Ministerial Conference by the BFUG Secretariat should be no later than 1 November 2014.

Last but not least it was highlighted that the Secretariat had not received an official proposal to host the 2018 MC from any EHEA member country so far.

The Board agreed that 1 November 2014 is the first feasible deadline meaning that the application letters should be received by the Secretariat by this deadline. Moreover, the applicants are invited to mention in their application how many

² All reference to Palestine in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations General Assembly Resolution 67/19 adopted on 4 December 2012.

³ All reference to Kosovo in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

languages they can provide for the simultaneous interpretation during the 2018 MC. As for hosting the BFUG Secretariat, the issue will be clarified after the discussion of the issue on the future of the BP at the September BFUG meeting.

11. Preparation of the Yerevan Ministerial Communiqué and Fourth BPF Statement

Document: BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_11 [Recommendations Proposed by the 2012-2015 BFUG Work Plan Structures for the 2015 Yerevan Ministerial Communiqué and 4th BPF Statement]

While presenting this point of agenda, the Chair stressed that the BFUG as the main decision-making body of the EHEA should decide the content of the draft Yerevan Ministerial Communiqué and the draft Statement of the Fourth BPF indicated above, however the Board itself should make recommendations on the direction, necessary steps as well as the format of the documents. Moreover, it was noted that during the discussion of the third round of the questions at the September BFUG meeting, i.e. the way forward, it is also suggested to discuss what message should be conveyed in the Yerevan Ministerial Communiqué and maybe come up with clear recommendations after the meeting. Finally it was noted that there is no need to go into the content of the document *BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_11* but rather consider it as a framework document.

The BFUG Board made the following recommendations for the timetable as well as the drafting of the Yerevan Communiqué:

- Drafting should start after the September BFUG meeting. Taking into consideration that the recommendations made by the WGs will be available after the November BFUG meeting, the first draft will be available for the January BFUG meeting and the final version is supposed to be adopted by the BFUG t its March meeting. This means that the most of the discussion of the Communiqué will be under the Latvian and Icelandic BFUG Co-Chairmanship.
- It is recommended to establish a drafting group composing of the representatives from Italy and Holy See as present Co-Chair as well as Latvia and Iceland as the upcoming Co-Chairs and Armenia as a Vice Chair and the Secretariat.
- Corresponding section in the Backoffice restricted area should be ensured by the Secretariat for the delegations to make comments on the draft Communiqué.

12. Draft agendas of the BFUG meetings, Rome, 18-19 September 2014 and 27-28 November 2014

Documents: BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_12a [Rome BFUG meeting (18-19 September) draft agenda]
BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_12b [Rome BFUG meeting (27-28 November) draft agenda]

Ms. Marzia Foroni (Italy) presented the main topics on the draft agendas for the Rome BFUG meetings (18-19 September 2014 and 27-28 November 2014).

The Board stressed the following points for the September BFUG meeting:

- The finalised draft ECTS Users' Guide should be presented to the BFUG with the consideration of the input from the Structural Reforms WG.
- 10-15 minutes should be allocated to the updated presentation of the Reporting WG on the proposal on stocktaking indicators and information on the preliminary outcomes.
- The agenda should also include a point for the roadmap for the preparation of the Yerevan Communiqué and the statement of the Fourth BPF.
- The BFUG should take note of the proposed deadline for the procedure for the selection of the 2018 MC host and the depending on the outcomes of the discussion on the future of the BP it will be clarified whether the issue should be discussed for the November BFUG meeting as well.
- The agenda should also include a point for the updated list of the additional invitees to the Fourth BPF.

As for the November BFUG meeting, the Board suggested to introduce the point on the ECTS Users' Guide before the presentations of the final reports of the WGs.

13. Next BFUG Board meeting, Iceland

Ms. Ásgerður Kjartansdóttir (Iceland) informed the Board that the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture of Iceland has a pleasure to host the upcoming BFUG Board meeting in Reykjavik, which is planned on 26 February 2015. The hosts have not planned any other events during their BFUG Co-Chairmanship yet, but are open for any suggestions.

Ms. Elisabeth Gehrke (ESU) noted that the planned date of the Board meeting coincided with the final Conference of the PL4SD project and EUROSTUDENT V conference to be held on 25-27 February 2015 in Vienna to which the Icelandic representative replied that they were flexible and would probably change the date and inform the Secretariat as soon as possible.

14. Information related to the priorities of the Latvian EU Presidency and planning of the BFUG activities in the first semester of 2015, under the Latvian and Icelander Chairmanship

Document: BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_13 [Latvian Presidency Presentation]

Ms. Daiga Ivsina (Latvia) presented the overall priorities and main events to be organised in Latvia during its EU Presidency and the BFUG Co-Chairmanship.

For more details, see the PowerPoint presentation below:



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15. Any other business

Ms. Marzia Foroni (Italy) recalled the message of Věra Šťastná to the BFUG members informing that the time of her mandate as the Czech representative in the BFUG had come to an end on 30 June 2014, so as her mandate to represent the BFUG in the EUROSTUDENT V Steering Board. Thus, at the next BFUG meetings it is necessary to decide how to proceed with the latter.

The Chair closed the meeting, while thanking the Board members for their fruitful discussions and contributions.