



## **Task Force on the Review of the Rules and Regulations for the Governance of the European Higher Education Area**

December 16, 2022

Online

### **Conclusions of the meeting**

#### **The main document (“constitution”)**

It was suggested that the main document should start with a preamble that would set out the whole structure, the BFUG, and the purpose of the EHEA/BFUG that has evolved compared to the original one. This preamble is an opportunity to show the purpose of the European Higher Education Area.

It was noted that the main document should comprise the governance of the EHEA, including the rules on how countries become members of EHEA as well as how they may cease to be members, by withdrawal, suspension, or exclusion, the Ministerial Conference, the BFUG, the BFUG Board and the Working Groups. Moreover, a point was made that there is a need to give a positive reason for why the need to codify the governance of the EHEA, to a greater extent. This can be said, by saying that “we take note of the past development in EHEA, the fact that it is actually 25 years, and that’s a good opportunity that after a quarter of century of existence, it’s time to codify and adopt this document”.

It was proposed that this main document be considered like the “constitution” and relatively short, while including parts of the ToRs of this TF, taken from different Communiques. This “constitution” should set out things that the ministers should agree and only ministers should be able to change and a need to spell out the areas that are exclusive competence of the Ministers.

It was suggested that some of these areas are the acceptance of new members, exclusions of members, along with the adoption of the Communique. Moreover, it was noted that a possible change in the arrangements of the Secretariat was something expected by the ministers to commit, as the members might be paying the fees for the handling of the Secretariat.

When discussing the placement of the main document (“constitution”), it was suggested that it should be present with one or two sentences in the Communique and then as part of an annex/appendix of the Communique.

#### **The Rules and Procedures**

It was suggested that while discussing the issues to be put in the main document to be adopted by the ministers, at the same time to put aside the things that are needed to be put



into the new Rules of Procedures, as a separate document. This document, proposed to be called Rules and Procedures for the BFUG, would allow the BFUG to determine and change its own ways of work when needed.

It was noted the need to look at what rules are needed, as there might be issues in the current RoP that are not needed to be covered. This process should start by an outline of the issues that need to be covered.

### **The arrangement of the Secretariat**

It was noted the importance of the structure for the Secretariat in the Rules of Procedures. Some members suggested the consultation of a paper on the challenges of setting a Permanent Secretariat, which was provided online. It was suggested to include this issue for the next BFUG meeting in May, so the direction is clear to everyone, and then aim for the Ministerial Conference 2024 decision in principle.

A concern was raised about the preparations in case of setting up a permanent secretariat. There were several options presented, in relation to the time needed to implement a permanent secretariat, starting from 2024 to 2027 in between the Tirana Ministerial and the following Ministerial Conference.

### **Other aspects**

It was suggested to keep the roadmap as a possible tool presented in the rules (or main document). The roadmap is necessary, and the reason is only partly that this is a very useful instrument. By using a roadmap, the BFUG does not have to discuss which countries are potentially problematic and which are not, avoiding a very difficult discussion in the BFUG.

It was highlighted that the outreach is important to be included in the RoP, to spread the best practices of the Bologna Process. Moreover, it was suggested that the RoP should have the main information or structure to be presented on the website, without detailing that much.

### **Document for the BFUG**

It was suggested to provide structure or the key elements and highlight some of the points that the TF has identified as particularly important and potentially contested and discuss them rather than the text of possible rules. There is a need to prepare a document of topics, questions and challenges that are needed for the BFUG feedback. The discussion document should contain some context, some of the main issues and then ask questions that will guide the discussion, but of course not limit the discussion.

### **Co-chairs and the next meeting**

Co-chairs appointed and subject to confirmation by the BFUG were Michael Gaebel, Michal Karpisek and Luca Lantero. The next meeting will be on Friday, January 13, 2023, starting at 9:00, and finishing by 16:00, in Brussels. The EUA will check if they can host (EQAR too).