

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR
BFUG WORKING GROUP ON STOCKTAKING**

Background and mandate

In Berlin on 19 September 2003, Ministers with responsibility for Higher Education stated:

“With a view to the goals set for 2010, it is expected that measures will be introduced to take stock of progress achieved in the Bologna Process.”

Ministers saw that the

“stocktaking exercise would provide reliable information on how the Process is actually advancing and would offer the possibility to take corrective measures, if appropriate.”

They agreed that:

“Participating countries will, furthermore, be prepared to allow access to the necessary information for research on higher education relating to the objectives of the Bologna Process” and that “access to data banks on ongoing research and research results shall be facilitated”.

In their next conference in Bergen on 19 -20 May 2004 the Ministers analysed the mid-term stocktaking report and stated:

“We charge the Follow-up Group with continuing and widening the stocktaking process and reporting in time for the next Ministerial Conference. We expect stocktaking to be based on the appropriate methodology and to continue in the fields of the degree system, quality assurance and recognition of degrees and study periods...”

The Ministers further stated:

“It will be important to ensure that progress is consistent across all participating countries. We therefore see a need for greater sharing of expertise to build capacity at both institutional and governmental level”

In the further text of the Bergen communiqué Ministers gave the BFUG an explicit mandate on a number of issues that should be included in the stocktaking for 2007 and underlined important aspects in which they expect results and therefore it could be useful to consider for inclusion in stocktaking in order to fulfil the Ministers' request for widening the stocktaking process and to base it on appropriate methodology.

The following paragraphs set out under each heading (a) the issues which were explicitly included in the Bergen communiqué to be part of the next stocktaking exercise; and (b) related issues mentioned in the communiqué where we need to be able to demonstrate that progress has been made. A key issue for the stocktaking group in working out how to approach the stocktaking exercise will be to consider the extent to which the related issues can and should be reflected in the stocktaking exercise this time. The experience of the previous stocktaking exercise, where clearly measurable information was included in the scorecard and other issues were covered in the text, will be relevant here. Drawing on this model, it should be possible to strike a balance between the reliability of the information and data and the breadth of coverage. It should also help to ensure that we keep the stocktaking exercise manageable.

A separate issue for the working group to consider is to what extent the countries which have more recently joined the Bologna process and those which were identified in the 2005 stocktaking exercise as needing to make progress in specific areas are asked to report to demonstrate their progress.

Degree system

(a) Explicit mandate for inclusion in stocktaking:

- implementation of the national frameworks for qualifications¹: all countries are expected to have launched work by 2007 and to complete it by 2010; the awarding and recognition of joint degrees, including at the doctorate level;

(b) An issue where measurement of results would be needed:

- employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications:
“... to increase the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications, including in appropriate posts within the public service.”

¹...having started work on elaborating national frameworks for qualifications compatible with the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA by 2007'

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Quality assurance

(a) Explicit mandate for inclusion stocktaking:

“...implementation of the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area as proposed by the ENQA report.”

(b) An issue where measurement of results would be needed:

“... introducing the proposed model for peer review of quality assurance agencies on a national basis, while respecting the commonly accepted guidelines and criteria.”

Recognition

(a) Explicit mandate for stocktaking:

“We expect stocktaking ... to continue in the fields of the degree system, quality assurance and recognition of degrees and study periods.”

(b) In the further text of the Communiqué this fairly general mandate is supplemented by several issues that have to be addressed:

“We commit ourselves to ensuring the full implementation of its [Lisbon Convention] principles, and to incorporating them in national legislation as appropriate.”

“We will draw up national action plans to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications. These plans will form part of each country’s national report for the next Ministerial Conference.”

“We express support for the subsidiary texts to the Lisbon Recognition Convention and call upon all national authorities and other stakeholders to recognise joint degrees awarded in two or more countries in the EHEA”.

Lifelong learning

(a) Explicit mandate for stocktaking:

- *“...creating opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education, including procedures for the recognition of prior learning.”*

Social dimension

*“We also charge the Follow-up Group with presenting comparable data on the mobility of staff and students as well as on the social and economic situation of students in participating countries **as a basis for future stocktaking** and reporting in time for the next Ministerial Conference. **The future stocktaking will have to take into account the social dimension as defined above.**”*

The availability of data on mobility and the economic/social situation of students is a prerequisite for being able to carry out a sensible stocktaking on the social dimension. The stocktaking working group will need to keep in close touch with the data working group as their work progresses.

BFUG response

In its meeting in Manchester, 12-13 Oct, 2005, BFUG decided:

The BFUG takes overall responsibility for the conduct of the stocktaking exercise. The stocktaking exercise will be widened and appropriate methodology will be elaborated to meet the ministers' request for stocktaking as stated in the Bergen Communiqué.

The BFUG appoints the following members to a working group to carry out the stocktaking and report back to the BFUG: (provisional)

- 1 Latvia (chair)
- 2 Belgium (Flemish Community)
- 3 Estonia
- 4 Slovenia
- 5 Norway
- 6 Turkey
- 7 Greece
- 8 Romania
- 9 EU Commission
- 10 Bologna secretariat representative

*EUA shall participate in the work for stocktaking through delegating an expert
The working group can decide to select more organizations to participate as experts in its meetings.*

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

In order to realise the objectives set by the Ministers, the Working Group shall:

1. Identify the key issues to be addressed through the stocktaking exercise as well as the methodology to be used in this exercise
2. Collaborate with partner and other organisations in order to maximise the use of data sources;
3. Define, where appropriate, the structure of a separate questionnaire to be used in the stocktaking should this be required;
4. Prepare a structure for the national contributions to the stocktaking to be submitted by member States;

5. Prepare a report for approval by the BFUG in advance of the London Conference in 2007.

The Working Group will be supported in its task by the Secretariat, and shall draw on expertise as it considers appropriate.

The Group shall submit reports to the BFUG, and shall make its draft reports and other relevant documents accessible for all BFUG members on the web.