



**Working Group  
„EHEA in a Global Setting“**

**Vienna, 22 November 2007**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

A list of participants is appended

**1. Welcome**

Barbara Weitgruber, the Chair of the group, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. Apologies had been received from the Slovak Republic and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”.

**2. Tour de table: short round of introduction**

The Chair initiated a tour de table, asking participants to briefly present themselves.

**3. Draft Agenda**

The agenda was adopted.

**4. Short overview of the basis for the work of the Working Group**

*Documents:* London Communiqué, Strategy "The European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting", report (as an outcome of the external dimension working group), terms of reference and overall Bologna Follow up work programme 2007 – 2009

The Chair explained that the London Communiqué formed the overall basis for the work of the group, together with the strategy and the report that had resulted from the work of the external dimension working group 2005-2007. The specific terms of reference of the group had been included in the overall Bologna work programme 2007-2009.

Since Norway had chaired the working group in the previous period, the Norwegian representative was asked to say a few words on the achievements of that group. Alf Rasmussen (Norway) explained that the working group had been a very dynamic one with good discussions, and that three seminars had been organised by the Holy See, Greece, and the Nordic countries respectively. The outcome had been a report by Professor Zgaga, as well as a proposal for a strategy and elements for future action.

Taking this strategy and the relevant parts of the London Communiqué as starting point, the Chair then presented the terms of reference of the working group on European higher education in a global setting.

The two main tasks are:

- To take forward work in the five core policy areas of the strategy "The European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting" with a special focus on the priorities “improving information on, and promoting the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA” and “improving recognition”,

- To prepare a draft report on the overall development at the European, national and institutional levels for BFUG by the end of 2008.

The Chair reminded the participants that the group was working for the BFUG that would then report to ministers. The group would therefore also regularly have to report back and decisions would have to be taken by the BFUG. Ideally, a first discussion should already take place at the BFUG meeting in March 2008.

Links would also have to be sought with:

- Stocktaking (concerning the template for national reports)
- Bologna Secretariat (concerning the website)
- Council of Europe (concerning recognition)
- European Commission (concerning EU projects on global promotion and cooperation)
- ENQA (concerning the seminar)
- Mobility Coordination Group

The Chair stressed that an important role of the working group was to ensure a good flow of information concerning the EHEA in a global setting and invited the participants to always keep the group informed about related events, policy dialogues, partner organisations active in the field etc.

For this purpose, the Chair then initiated a tour de table, asking the participants to inform the group about ongoing or planned activities related to European higher education in a global setting, such as meetings with partner organisation in the rest of the world such as the EU-LAC meeting at ministerial level at the beginning of February.

Bernd Wächter (ACA) informed the group about a report that was being produced for the European Commission on transnational education in Europe, to describe the activities of European providers with their strong and weak points. The report will also address the ethical question of whether transnational education should be pursued at all. Since the report should be ready by May 2008, it could still provide input for the ENQA seminar in December. Another report ACA was preparing for the European Commission concerned ongoing promotion activities at national and European level. This report should be ready by the beginning of 2008.

Diego Sammaritano (European Commission) briefly presented the global promotion project for European higher education, which the European Commission had launched in 2007. The project, which will run until 2009, consists of five components:

- (1) Developing a web portal "Studying in Europe", on Europe as study destination;
- (2) Three studies done by ACA on (a) feasibility of online information for students, (b) feasibility of creating a network of European advisers, (c) transnational education (see above);
- (3) Developing marketing tools for promotional organisations in Europe;
- (4) Organising European fairs;
- (5) Developing promotion materials.

Four of the five tasks are being carried out by a consultancy firm called Mostra.

Diego Sammaritano (European Commission) also explained that the EU activities that were mentioned in the list of possible actions were related to the five policy areas in different ways. Erasmus Mundus, for instance, had a clear link with attractiveness. For capacity building and promoting Tempus would be more appropriate. Partnership was at the core of programmes with the US and Canada. He therefore proposed to better link the programmes to the various objectives. He also added that the programmes had their own objectives and were not there to

serve Bologna in the first place, but if it could contribute, the Commission would of course be willing to help.

Kevin Guillaume (Belgium) informed the group about the mobility seminar, which will be organised by the French Community in May 2008.

Anne Baly, the Minister Counsellor for Education, Science and Training at the Australian Mission in Brussels had asked for a meeting with the Bologna Secretariat to discuss the Australian interest in the Bologna Process.

Sjur Bergan (Council of Europe) explained that the Council of Europe was a European organisation, promoting certain core values and engaged in inter-cultural dialogue, especially with the southern shores of the Mediterranean and with Arab countries. Council of Europe representatives are regularly invited to speak at various events, which puts them in a position to also inform about the Bologna Process. Sjur Bergan also invited the group to discuss if it was trying to relate to all world regions and if so, in what ways.

Education International is an international organisation with members all over the world that met at an international conference on higher education and research in Malaga, 12-14 November 2007. At this conference, Barbara Weitgruber had presented the outcomes of the London summit and the strategy for an EHEA in a global setting. Background papers, presentations and conference report can be downloaded from Education International's website using the following link: <http://www.ei-ie.org/highereducation/en/calendarshow.php?id=98&theme=highereducation>.

Reflecting on the conference, Monique Fouilhoux (Education International) stressed the relevance of the two priorities information (to overcome existing misunderstandings, notably in Africa) and recognition.

Françoise Profit (ENIC-NARIC networks) reminded the group that the ENIC network also included non-European countries and moreover had links with the MERIC (Mediterranean Recognition Information Centres) network.

Emmi Helle (ENQA) informed the group about the following activities:

- A survey to be conducted among ENQA members (from United States to Kazakhstan) by August 2008.
- ENQA's participation in INQAAHE (International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education).
- A World Bank/UNESCO project, which was launched in May 2007 for three years and which aims at further developing quality assurance (networks) in developing countries.
- The European Quality Assurance Register in Higher Education (EQAR), which is currently being developed by the E4 group, will be open to international organisations operating in Europe.
- The ENQA seminar on quality assurance in transnational education in December 2008 (see below).

Stefan Delplace (EURASHE) reported from EURASHE's symposium on quality assurance in Almaty (Kazakhstan), a Tempus project with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan as partners, taking into account student, government and business perspectives. According to the rector of the host university, if they manage to implement the European Standards and Guidelines as well as the other Bologna objectives, Kazakhstan will automatically be part of the EHEA. Presentations and recommendations of the symposium can be found on the EURASHE website (<http://www.eurashe.eu/RunScript.asp?page=114&p=ASP\Pg114.asp>).

The participants were interested in the practicalities of quality assurance but also in the Bologna Process more generally, which was presented by Sjur Bergan from the Council of Europe.

ESU is working to extend its membership to other European countries and is mainly focusing on capacity building within Europe. ESU also has some links with other parts of the world (e.g. Asian and Islamic platforms) but these links are not very strong.

EUA is organising a lot of activities related to the EHEA in a global setting. For EUA and its collective members, policy dialogue is very important. There are traditional contacts with North America and also Australia and Latin America. With support from the European Commission (Asia link), EUA will run a project together with NUFFIC in 2008-9, focusing on information exchange and policy dialogue with Asia, including two study fairs, workshops, a website and an interactive forum. EUA had also produced a small brochure, which according to Michael Gaebel (EUA) was unique in that it was the first comprehensive brochure on Bologna. An update is currently being produced and should be available early 2008, probably also with a translation into French (see attachment).

Christian Tauch (European Commission) explained that Erasmus Mundus was approaching its second phase, to start in 2009. The Commission's proposal had been discussed at the Education Council mid-November and should be adopted at the Council in December 2007.

On request of the European Commission, the French Presidency will organise a conference on mobility to launch the second phase of Erasmus Mundus, probably in November 2008.

Germany had hosted the Third Ministerial Meeting on Education of the Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) countries and the Group of Eight (G8) in Bonn, 21-22 November 2007 and Birgit Galler (Germany) offered to circulate the results, once they were known. The programme and some background information on the G8-BMENA relationship can be found here: <http://www.g8-bmena-education.de/index.php>.

A smaller conference with experts from Germany and the United States concerning Fulbright scholarships had again focused on the reoccurring question of recognition.

Foteini Asderaki (Greece) asked to be informed about the latest GATS developments. In her view, the Strategy is a European tool towards those negotiations and should therefore also be connected with them.

Alf Rasmussen (Norway) reported about a number of strategy papers that had been prepared by the Norwegian government for North America, Latin America, China, India, etc. – most of them influenced by the Bologna Process. Moreover, the Nordic Council of Ministers had launched a renewed "Nordplus programme 2008-2011", where the five Nordic together with the three Baltic states will continue to cooperate on networking, mobility and projects in the region. A white paper on internationalisation in education is being prepared.

Spain is creating a system to promote the Spanish system in the context of the EHEA and is very active in cooperating with third countries, especially in Latin America, reported Rafael Bonete (Spain). The Chair considered it useful for the group to have a look at the material Spain was using for promotion purposes in Latin America.

Denise Heiligers (Netherlands) announced a new strategic agenda for higher education and research in the Netherlands, focusing on quality and excellence. A white paper on internationalisation will follow in spring. There are already a number of government activities to promote the Dutch HE system, such as NESOs (Netherlands Education Support Offices) and Netherlands institutes.

Denise Heiligers also encouraged the group to discuss what exactly they would like to promote – an EHEA made up of individual higher education institutions, the

Bologna Process etc. She also recommended not to focus on education fairs only but also to include career fairs, where students, researchers, and the labour market come together. It might also be worthwhile using the experience of the European Research Area, where the international wing is already well developed.

Jan Sadlak (UNESCO-CEPES) had attended the second international conference on world-class universities in Shanghai, 31 October-3 November 2007, which had made very clear that there was a strong drive to make regional arrangements in Latin America and also some parts of Asia. Programme and presentations of this conference can be found at <http://www.arwu.org/wcu-2/wcu-2.htm>.

UNESCO will organise a world conference on higher education +10 on 7-11 July 2009 in Paris, which will be preceded by three or four regional conferences. The conference of the Europe region will take place on 22-24 May 2009. The place still needs to be decided, both Romania and the Russian Federation expressed interest. The conference for Latin America will be held 4-6 June 2008 in Colombia.

Jan Sadlak (UNESCO-CEPES) also suggested presenting the Bologna Process or the EHEA at the EXPO 2010 in Shanghai, so as to achieve a high visibility.

Rachel Green (UK) explained that higher education institutions in the UK were very active internationally but that it was difficult to know what was going on at institutional level. Universities UK set up an international unit to act as source of information on what is going on in other countries and to enable universities to expand what they are doing already. The problem is that higher education institutions in the UK act as competitors and therefore do not always like telling the others what they are doing. Rachel Green also stressed the need to focus on information about the Bologna Process and presenting it in a coherent way.

##### **5. General discussion on the organization of the work and how to take forward the five core policy areas with a special focus on the two priority areas "improving information on, and promoting the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA" and "improving recognition"**

The initial discussion focused on how to take forward the mandate of improving information on the EHEA. In the discussion the following points were made:

- There is a need to have information material that is available worldwide, free of charge and in a widely understood language.
- The information spread by different actors and through different media should be coherent.
- The presentation of the Bologna Process on the Council of Europe website could function as good example.
- It would be useful to have a kind of information package with a website, information material in writing and a set of PowerPoint slides.
- The Bologna promoters project has a slide show with 10 slides and also 2-3 brochures, which are available on their website. The European Commission has the ownership but could be asked to make them available (see attachment).
- Given that EUA had already produced a leaflet providing some basic information about the Bologna Process, EUA was asked to cooperate on the information part of the working group. Michael Gaebel (EUA) explained that in principle EUA would be willing to cooperate but that he would first have to check with his colleagues in charge of updating the leaflet.
- It is important to first define the needs of the different target groups (administrators, policy-makers, students, employers etc.) and then to think about the best format.

The group then discussed the **time frame** of the work:

- 11 January 2008: next meeting of the working group, Vienna
- 16 January 2008: Board meeting, Ljubljana – as input provide a written update and indicate which issues should be discussed at the BFUG meeting.
- End of February 2008: Send an update to BFUG in preparation of its next meeting, including the following elements:
  - draft leaflet
  - proposal for the website
  - information on ENQA seminar
  - updated version of the elements for future actions
  - structure of the report and an overview of the available sources
- 12-13 March 2008: BFUG meeting, Ljubljana

## **6. Discussion of specific tasks and a possible division of labour:**

### **a. To cooperate with the Secretariat regarding the development of the Bologna Secretariat Website for a global audience,**

In addition to the general points listed above, the following comments were made regarding the Bologna website:

- The information provided should be easily understandable also to those who are not involved in the decision-making of the Bologna Process.
- The Bologna website should have a part for links to the EU and other European initiatives (e.g. ACA) but also to different national initiatives (e.g. the Bologna website developed by the German rectors' conference) and to other regions.
- The website should have a permanent address that is known all over the world. This is not for the working group to decide but certainly something to think about.

### **b. To cooperate with EUA regarding the Bologna Handbook where appropriate,**

The Bologna Handbook is published by EUA in cooperation with Raabe academic publishers Berlin to support the implementation of the Bologna Process. It is available by way of subscription only and the prices are substantial, which means it reaches only those who already have a certain interest in the Bologna Process.

Members of the group agreed that it was a very valuable source of information and that it could also be useful for readers outside Europe, especially if they were trying to implement Bologna reforms.

The working group should, however, produce information material that would be easy to access, free of charge, and easy to understand also for those with little or no background information about the Bologna Process. For those interested in more details, a reference to the Bologna handbook could be included.

Michael Gaebel (EUA) explained that some articles from the handbook are reprinted at conferences, with permission of Raabe publishers. The group could consider doing that as well, following the normal rules for publication.

### **c. To cooperate with the Council of Europe, the European Commission and UNESCO as well as the ENIC and NARIC networks to enhance fair assessment of qualifications of other parts of the world on the basis of the LRC and, as appropriate, UNESCO Conventions for other regions,**

Sjur Bergan (Council of Europe) explained that all NARICs in the 32 countries which can participate in the LLP were also ENICs but not the other way round. The ENIC network covers states that are party to the European Cultural Convention or the UNESCO Europe Region, which means it goes beyond the Bologna framework and deals with recognition in a global context (Australia, Canada, Israel, New Zealand and the US are members of the ENIC network).

In most countries national information centres give advice on the recognition of qualifications but are not the place where the actual recognition decision are taken, which in most countries is done by higher education institutions – except for medical studies, architecture etc. where it is done by professional bodies.

An important task of the networks is to provide reliable information on European higher education systems to other European countries and the rest of the world. They also help to build up trust, to discuss issues, to establish contacts etc. At European level, this works quite well. In theory, it should be similar with other parts of the world.

The ENIC-NARIC website (<http://www.enic-naric.net>) is a valuable source of information, with general information per country and specific information for (a) credential evaluators and (b) students.

The networks have set up a working party on substantial differences – a key concept of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, according to which a qualification should be recognised unless a substantial difference can be demonstrated. The aim is to develop a better common understanding of the process of recognition and to get credential evaluators to take a less narrow approach.

The networks are also tasked to analyse the national action plans submitted for London, with the global dimension being part of that.

Developing a common understanding within the network and finding counterparts in other regions is already a challenge. The question is: how can this understanding be transmitted to evaluators and admission offices in different higher education institutions, where the decisions will be taken? How can professional bodies be involved and how to transmit the understanding to employers?

The following six points could form starting points for work with other regions on policy and practice of mutual recognition:

1. Questions of methodology and approaches to recognition, with an emphasis on interpreting the term “substantial difference”, which is at the key of the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention as a possible reason for non-recognition (see above).
2. Improving information on education and degree systems, including electronic information (where the ENIC-NARIC web site and the ELCORE working party are important starting points from a European and North American perspective)
3. The impact of qualifications frameworks on recognition
4. Development of national information centers and networks of centers in other parts of the world. This is a UNESCO responsibility, and the ENIC and NARIC Networks could be of assistance. One example is the MEDA project that aimed at establishing national centers in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia and that also played a role in developing a network for the Mediterranean area.
5. Organizing session on the global dimension of recognition at the EAIE – through the ACE profession section – as well as at relevant for a outside of Europe, such as NAFSA and AACRAO.
6. Organize thematic conferences with partners from other regions.

The prime actors are the Council of Europe, the European Commission, UNESCO and the Bureaus, but it might be useful to bring in some other actors.

The next meeting is scheduled for 3 December 2007, the next annual meeting for mid-June 2008, where it would be useful to have also participants from other regions.

**d. To look for ways of integrating the "OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Education" into the activities of the working group, especially by closely cooperating with ENQA in the seminar on "Transnational education (TNE) and the OECD/UNESCO-Guidelines for quality provision in cross-border higher education"**

Emmi Helle (ENQA) circulated an outline of the planned seminar, which will take place either in Oxford or in London, hosted by QAA. ENQA is cooperating closely with UNESCO, possibly also with Education International and the Council of Europe. The Observatory of Borderless Higher Education offered financial support.

The main aim of the seminar is to explore what has happened since the guidelines were adopted and how they are being used by different actors. The seminar will last for 1,5 days and will take place during same week as the British Council's bi-annual conference.

It is not clear yet how many people will be able to participate. Given that transnational education is a hot issue, the seminar can be expected to attract a lot of interest. Therefore, the group advised the organisers to work with quotas to ensure a regional balance and to allow people from all countries and organisations participating in the Bologna Process to attend.

Sjur Bergan (Council of Europe) mentioned another reason to have a close look at the registrations, namely to avoid that non-serious providers use the conference registration as quality label.

ENQA might invite some international students but will also cooperate with ESU to make sure student representatives are involved. EURASHE would also be willing to make a contribution.

**e. To Liaise with the European Commission on EU initiatives and programmes on global promotion and cooperation,**

This item was partly discussed during the earlier tour de table, where it was agreed that the group would receive a written update from the European Commission on relevant EU initiatives.

In addition, Diego Sammaritano (European Commission) explained that the purpose of the envisaged portal was not to promote the Bologna Process but rather to promote Europe as study destination and that only the 32 countries of the Lifelong Learning Programme would be covered. The portal is planned to go online at the beginning of 2008 and maintenance is foreseen until 2009. So as not to duplicate what already exists at national level, the website will consist of a common introductory format for all 32 countries coupled with links to relevant pages at national level.

Bernd Wächter (ACA) pointed out that this meant that in contrast to the European Researcher's Mobility Portal, where the detailed web resources do not exist at national level, there will be gaps.

Sjur Bergan (Council of Europe) advised that the website should not be called "study in Europe" if it only covered half of the continent. For the sake of transparency and to avoid confusion, a reference to the EU should be used instead.

In the discussion the following points were made:

- The question is how to assure a certain level of quality and how to cover all 46 countries participating in the Bologna Process.
- The expectations around this small pilot project should not be too high.
- In general, those portals cannot be expected to answer every single question but should rather guide the users as to where they can find more information.
- OECD is also developing a portal with information on various countries.



- It might be helpful to encourage Mostra (the company in charge of developing the "study in Europe" portal), to interact with the ENIC-NARIC networks to avoid mistakes.

The discussion then moved on to the task of the working group in promoting the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA. As a starting point, it might be useful to find out which activities exist already and to see what might be possible for all 46 countries.

Bernd Wächter (ACA) recommended distinguishing the promotion of the EHEA from the information part. The information is targeting decision-makers, administrators, etc. to make clear what Bologna is and what it is not. Promoting the EHEA as study location is also about information but not necessarily the same information, or not in same order. Websites are one way of promoting the EHEA but there could be more, such as promotion campaigns, higher education fairs etc. The target group would be mainly present or potential students.

Some countries, such as the Netherlands, the UK or the Nordic countries, have excellent websites and campaigns. The group could think about how those that have a lot of experience could help those that still are at the very beginning.

Rafael Bonete (Spain) reminded the group that promotion had a lot to do with competition, since countries or in fact higher education institutions do not want to attract students to Europe but rather to London or Barcelona.

Others reacted that most European countries were too small to be visible at the international level and that they all could benefit from a common promotion, even though they were also competing with each other.

Sorin Popescu (Romania) proposed the following analysis:

- What are the target groups (students, governments, employers, other organisations, individuals...)?
- What are their expectations?
- What are our expectations?
- What are the best channels or institutions?
- What are the best instruments to use?

Rachel Green (UK) raised the question what they were actually promoting. Promotion usually implied a brand or a product, but in her view such a European brand did not exist. She also warned not to put the cart before the horse. Countries could still do a lot to make European higher education more attractive by implementing the necessary reforms.

## **7. First discussion on the preparation of the report (input for and cooperation with the stocktaking working group)**

Together with the stocktaking group and the Secretariat, the Chair will propose an outline of the report as input for the discussion in January 2008. The tour de table revealed a lot of information concerning activities at European level. More difficult would be to bring in the institutional viewpoint. The students' point of view might come from the envisaged 2009 Bologna With Students Eyes, if they include the global dimension.

As far as the national level is concerned, the group could possibly draw on the national reports. The number of questions the various working groups can have included in the template is, however, limited. The group therefore needs to think about what could be covered in the national reports and what could come from different other sources, websites, data bases etc. The Chair will put down some questions and ideas to be discussed in January as input for the BFUG meeting in

March, keeping in mind that the group should focus on what is really relevant for ministers.

## **8. Definition of concrete next steps and work packages**

### **It was agreed**

- (1) To set up a subgroup dealing with the information part.
  - This group will be coordinated by the Bologna Secretariat and will include Council of Europe, European Commission, Education International, EUA, Holy See, Montenegro, Norway, and the United Kingdom (especially regarding language issues).
  - The group is tasked to develop the Bologna Secretariat website for a global audience, a leaflet, which can also be downloaded from the website, and a set of slides that can be used by those wanting to give a presentation on the Bologna Process.
- (2) To set up a subgroup dealing with the promotion part.
  - This group will be led by Bernd Wächter (ACA) and will include Bologna Secretariat, European Commission, ESU, EUA, EURASHE, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain, UNESCO-CEPES.
  - Until January, the group will try to describe existing promotion activities at European level, to map very roughly the activities of the countries participating in the Bologna Process, and to propose one or two actions for the future.
- (3) Sjur Bergan (Council of Europe) will keep the group updated on developments in the field of recognition.
- (4) ENQA will continue with the preparations of the seminar by way of bilateral consultations.
- (5) The Bologna Secretariat will put all the meeting documents and other relevant texts "behind the curtains" on the password protected part of the Bologna website.
- (6) By 10 December 2007, participants will send to the Bologna Secretariat:
  - Information about activities to be included in the list with elements of possible future action so that an updated list can be added to the minutes.
  - Contact details of partner organisations in other parts of the world, which could then be forwarded to organisers of Bologna seminars.
- (7) The European Commission will provide a separate and more detailed overview of the various activities taking place under the umbrella of Erasmus Mundus that are related to the EHEA in a global setting.
- (8) Also in the future, the Bologna Secretariat should be informed of any upcoming events, policy dialogue with other regions, and other activities related to the EHEA in a global setting.
- (9) The results of the virtual groups should be sent to the Bologna Secretariat ([secr@bologna2009benelux.org](mailto:secr@bologna2009benelux.org)) in time for them to be circulated by **7 January 2008**.

## **9. Any other business**

### **a. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on **11 January 2008 in Vienna**, from 9 to 15 hrs.

Since there was no other business to attend to, the Chair thanked the participants for all their work and enthusiasm and closed the meeting.