



MEETING OF THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP PRAGUE, 12-13 FEBRUARY 2009

Draft outcome of proceedings

Welcome and introduction to the meeting

The Czech Chair, Vera Štastná, welcomed the participants.

Jakub Dürr, Vice-Minister for Higher Education, introduced the priorities of the Czech Presidency.

He drew the attention to the flagship Presidency conference on partnership between employers and the education system, which will be held 6-7 April 2009 and to which BFUG members are also invited.

Apart from the issue of partnership between education and other strands in society, especially business, the agenda of the EU Education Council will be dominated by the discussion on the future strategic framework for European cooperation in the field of education and training.

In the context of the BFUG, reference was made to the seminar on university classification and ranking to be held following day, 13 February 2009.

The Czech Presidency considers the action line of mobility of crucial importance in the Bologna Process.

1. Adoption of the agenda

Documents: BFUG (CZ) 15_1a [draft agenda] BFUG (CZ) 15_1b [draft annotated agenda]

ESU made a remark on the agenda items regarding the reports of BFUG working and coordination groups. It would like to change the proposed actions and to take note of instead of endorsing the working group and coordination group reports.

The Chair pointed out that working groups operate under mandate of the BFUG and moreover have done hard work. So it would not be possible to only take note of all the reports. Moreover, there would be only one BFUG meeting left after this meeting to reach consensus. The Chair stressed that the majority of reports were ready for endorsement at the present meeting.

The agenda was adopted.

2. Outcome of proceedings of the last BFUG and Board meetings

Documents: BFUG (CZ) 15_2a [BFUG Paris outcome of proceedings] BFUGBoard (CZ) 19_2a [Board Prague minutes]

The Chair explained that written comments had been received and incorporated in the text.

ESU found that the format of outcome of proceedings was not detailed enough to reflect the discussion and would like the Secretariat to provide a more detailed text. The Chair insisted on keeping the format of "outcome of proceedings", concentrating on





content and outcome of the discussions.

In contrast, the reports of the BFUG Board – which is not a decision-making body, unlike the BFUG - are written in the format of "minutes" for transparency reasons (informing those not there).

Answering to the remark of EUA stating that e.g. for the university ranking issue it would have been interesting to note the different positions of the delegations, the Chair replied that in future outcomes of proceedings of BFUG, individual positions will be mentioned if no consensus was reached on a certain issue. It should also be observed that the outcome of proceedings is to reflect the state of affairs at the BFUG meeting and cannot be rewritten in the light of later events.

The outcome of proceedings of the BFUG meeting, Paris, 14-15 October 2008 was adopted. The BFUG took note of the minutes of the BFUG Board meeting, Prague, 13 January 2009.

3. Information by the Czech Presidency

The Chair referred to recent Bologna seminars and Bologna related events.

She attended a Forum in Kazakhstan, hosted by the Kazakh Ministry of Education and Science and major local universities. To this event, which was connected with applications to join the Bologna Process, the Council of Europe, the Observatory of the Magna Charta Universitatum and several BFUG representatives were invited to provide information on the Bologna Process. The BFUG representatives were impressed by the seriousness of the way the reforms of the Kazakh higher education system are carried out in alignment with the Bologna objectives. In answer to the repeated requests of Kazakhstan to all BFUG countries to become a member of the Bologna Process, the BFUG members at the Forum gave the clear answer that the membership criteria would not be changed. The same answer has been given to Israel. Both countries have been invited to the Bologna Policy Forum April 29.

Concerning the eligible European countries that previously expressed their interest to join the Bologna Process, the Secretariat was informed that San Marino withdrew the application. Monaco and Belarus did not react so far, although the deadline for application of 31 December 2008 had been clearly communicated to these two countries. Furthermore seminars had taken place in Luxemburg on employability, in Budapest on equality, in Tbilisi on self-certification, in London on transnational education and in Amsterdam on Recognition of Prior Learning.

4. Reports of the BFUG coordination and working groups

4.1 Stocktaking and analysis of the national strategies on the social dimension

BFUG (CZ) 15_4.1a [draft stocktaking report] BFUG (CZ) 15_4.1b [update social dimension CG]

Stocktaking

Documents:

Andrejs Rauhvarges (Latvia), Chair of the stocktaking working group presented the draft report (see slides in annex) and pointed to the difficult situation caused by the late replies of many countries and the fact that some reports are still missing.





The report is still to be finalised. The stocktaking working group was entrusted to the following tasks in view of finalisation of the report:

- integrate the results of other groups
- integrated chapter for QF, LO, ECTS, RPL
- finalise conclusions.

In the meantime the validation process for the scorecards will go on.

The report will be finalised at the stocktaking working group meeting, Riga, 13 March 2009 and made ready for endorsement at next BFUG.

Social dimension

Efstathios Michael (Cyprus), chair of the social dimension coordination group presented the first conclusions on the analysis of the national strategies on the social dimension on the basis of the update document provided to BFUG.

> The BFUG took note of the update. The finalised analysis will be presented for endorsement at the next BFUG.

4.2 Data collection steering group

Document: BFUG (CZ) 15_4.2 [data collection WG report]

Germain Dondelinger (Luxembourg), Chair of the steering group introduced the report prepared by Eurostat and Eurostudent. He thanked both for incorporating all Bologna countries.

The main message is that data are based on past performance. The question is how much progress there is in the field of LLL, social dimension (equitable participation) and mobility. It is considered a rich treasure of data, though some data are not completely understood and some more explanation in the text would be preferred.

The BFUG endorsed the report.

In the next BFUG meeting decisions should be taken on which follow-up actions to the report are to be taken.

4.3 Working group on European higher education in a global setting

Document: BFUG (CZ) 15_4.3 [final global WG report]

Barbara Weitgruber (Austria), Chair of the working group presented the report.

The BFUG endorsed the report of the working group on European higher education in a global setting with two minor amendments. Given that there was widespread agreement that no specific formal status would be given to the participants of the Bologna Policy Forum, it was agreed not to mention it in the report. As the recommendations that resulted from the seminar on quality assurance in transnational education were not supported by all BFUG members, it was decided to include them as recommendations of the seminar rather than recommendations of the group.

4.4 Working group on employability

Document: BFUG (CZ) 15_4.4 [final employability WG report]





The report was presented by Peter Baldwinson (UK) on behalf of the chair of the working group (see slides in annex).

BFUG endorsed the report of the employability working group.

4.5 Mobility coordination group

Document: BFUG (CZ) 15_4.5 [draft mobility CG report]

In absence of the Chair of the coordination group, the Bologna Secretariat presented the main conclusions and recommendations (see annex).

The report was endorsed by BFUG with the following amendments:

- Rephrase the recommendation on providing opportunities for mobility in all curricula to put more emphasis on the need to integrate them into the *structure* of the programmes;
- Instead of reward mechanisms to encourage academic and administrative staff to facilitate mobility or to be mobile themselves, specifically refer to recognition in terms of career advancement and teaching load;
- Include explicit references to early stage researchers and to credit transfer;
- Add to the list of recommendations from the group:
 - the recommendation that all students should have the opportunity to learn at least two foreign languages
 - the recommendation to make special provisions for HE staff and students to allow them to get visas and work permits relatively easily.

The mobility coordination group was mandated to finalise the report among those lines.

4.6 Student support network

Document: BFUG (CZ) 15_4.6 [report of student support network]

Ann McVie (UK-Scotland) presented the report and the recommendations.

Concerning the recommendation to provide a section for the network on a permanent Bologna website, it was clarified that the information of this section would thus be publicly available.

The BFUG endorsed the report.

4.7 Lifelong learning coordination group

Document: BFUG (CZ) 15_4.7 [LLL CG report]

Ann McVie (UK-Scotland), chair of the coordination group, presented the report and its recommendations, which was then endorsed by the BFUG.

4.8 Coordination group on qualifications frameworks

Documents: BFUG (CZ) 15_4.8a [QF CG final report] BFUG (CZ) 15_4.8b [Synthesis of NQF reports]

The BFUG took note of the synthesis of the replies received from national QF correspondents on the state of affairs in countries regarding national qualifications





Frameworks.

Sjur Bergan (Council of Europe) presented the report of the coordination group on qualifications frameworks.

In addition it was agreed that contact persons for national qualifications frameworks should be directly in touch in the future. This will be added to the report.

The BFUG endorsed the report.

The work on qualifications frameworks will continue after the Ministerial conference in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve. The connection with quality assurance and a deadline for self-certification will be discussed with the draft communiqué.

5. Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Draft Communiqué

Documents: BFUG (CZ) 15_5a [Communiqué draft 1] BFUG (CZ) 15_5b [comments on draft 1 by 02/02/09]

The Vice-Chair presented the draft Communiqué.

The document was drafted from a political perspective and is not going into details. It is not a technical Bologna work programme document. It has been edited as a document of Ministers and in the context of the Europe of knowledge. Its style should match this perspective.

The Communiqué can be divided in 5 parts.

- 1. Achievements of the Bologna Process and consolidation (par. 1-4)
- 2. Objectives for the future (par. 5-9). In this part large attention is given to the demographic issue.
- 3. Thematic Priorities (par.10-23), which include lifelong learning, social dimension, employability, international openness, mobility, data collection and transparency (tools) and funding. The basic assumption is that we will have to give more precision to these issues in the coming years, e.g. on how to make lifelong learning a reality.
- 4. Operational goals (par. 24)
- 5. Structural considerations (par. 25-28)

General discussion

The structure of the Communiqué was welcomed by most delegations.

Some delegations expressed doubt about the appropriateness to set out the political orientations for the next decade already in 2009. Shouldn't we wait until 2010 when the results of the independent assessment will be available? UK and Denmark, followed by several delegations, called for more prioritisation of the action lines and for a clear definition on what we hope to reach with the Bologna Process before starting to define concrete action lines. 2009 could be the moment of defining the goals, while the definition of operational objectives could wait until 2010.

Austria, as one of the hosts of the 2010 Ministerial meeting clarified that the 2010 meeting will be a celebration event and moreover discuss the outcome of the independent assessment and other inputs, e.g. from the conventions of consultative members. They voiced the opinion that, nevertheless, we could not wait with setting out the framework for the next decade.

This opinion was followed by the Chair and several delegations, who considered that there was already enough information on the progress of the implementation of the Bologna Process (e.g. from the recent data collection report) which allow to define





political orientations for the coming years.

Concerning the ambitions for the next decade, different opinions were put forward. Some countries (Finland, Slovenia) were sceptical about new strategic goals. They pointed out that the next few years will be more like a prolongation of the old objectives, which still didn't come to realisation. Should this process still last for 10 years? Do we really have something new to put on the table?

Education International and Norway, followed by several delegations, drew the attention to the fact that the Ministerial meeting will take place against the background of the financial crisis. This should be clear in the Communiqué from the start of the text.

All delegations agreed that the financial crisis should be mentioned clearly in the text but several delegations expressed doubts whether the financial crisis should be mentioned as the first contextual topic for the decade to come (up to 2020). Austria followed by several delegations added that the Communiqué should provide good arguments to convince governments to continue to invest in higher education.

Nearly all consultative members wished to give more visibility in the text of the necessity of stakeholder involvement and cooperation.

EUA pointed to the link between the Communiqué and the Bologna Beyond 2010 report. In the latter more information, like tables with figures, should illustrate the financial and demographical context.

ESU followed by several delegations called for a less optimistic tone in describing the achievements. Especially for the social dimension, countries displayed lack of ambition.

Other topics which were proposed for inclusion in the text were doctoral education and the link between higher education and research, the European dimension and linguistic and cultural diversity in Europe, technological changes (communication, innovation) as one of the main challenges for the new decade.

Romania, followed by several delegations, recommended to take due account of the fact that the Communiqué will also be read in other parts of the world.

Conclusion of the Vice-Chair on the general debate

In the context of the current economical crisis, the message of Ministers for higher education should be "business as usual". Higher education has a function independent from the economical context and will need the necessary funding for the sake of the future generations. He pleas for a subdued approach to the crisis,

The time perspective for the Communiqué should have 2 reference years/ deadlines: 2020 and 2012. The independent assessment will be necessary for adjustment but the information to set the goals is already on the table. "One does not wait with strategic planning until an external audit has been completed".

The rhetoric of the Communiqué will be amended with a broader vision including the elements proposed by BFUG and a more critical distance to achievements.

Also the structure will have to be adapted according to comments.

Concerning the question why to continue if we have no new goals, it should be stressed that some older goals like lifelong learning and social dimension will be more valid than ever, especially in the demographical context. If we want our societies to remain inclusive, we have to maintain the number of overall participation and look into





underrepresented groups.

Italy commented that the transition between the first and second decade of the Bologna Process can be expressed in the following image:

In the first years we have been busy with creating the EHEA. Now step 2 has come. We should make our creation function.

The BFUG Board, acting as a drafting group will adjust the text in the light of the discussions.

Detailed comments

The Chair opened the debate by announcing that the written comments already provided by delegations will be taken into account in redrafting.

Countries that did not react in writing or want to add something new were invited to take the floor.

Most attention went to par. 24 (transparency tools) where no consensus could be found.

Belgium (Flemish Community), Netherlands and France stressed the need for the creation of a transparency tools providing more objective information on HEIs than the current rankings. They even saw possibility of the Bologna Process to take ownership of this instrument.

The European Commission referred to the current feasibility study they had launched on which the seminar organised by the Presidency would bring more clarification.

The majority of the delegations were doubtful about the urgency of creating this instrument and the necessity to take this on board in the context of the Bologna Process. The Council of Europe, followed by several delegations (Croatia, Malta, UK, Denmark) pointed out that a transparency instrument is an instrument, meaning a tool to achieve something. The goals should be defined before designing the instrument.

Education International, followed by several delegations, pointed out that the Bologna Process has other priorities for the moment, in particular, coping with the results of the financial crisis.

EURASHE agreed with France that there was a need for a system of multidimensional ranking, which would not be exclusively based on research performance. But in order to design an instrument for multidimensional ranking, we should agree on the methodology.

Finland, followed by several delegations expressed doubts on the possibility to define an instrument that can map all aspects of performance and profiles of HEIs. ESU feared the consequences of a ranking instrument on the funding of higher education. EUA doubted the necessity for governments to interfere in the creation of rankings.

Germany saw the merit of developing a tool which could avoid European HEIs to be ranked from outside.

ENQA supported by Denmark stressed the necessity to discuss the issue in the light of the general framework for quality assurance as adopted in the context of the Bologna Process.

The Vice-Chair did an appeal for consistency to the delegations.





The AHELO pilot project launched by OECD will also entail a kind of ranking and nevertheless it was approved by countries also represented at the BFUG. The AHELO "ranking" will have a powerful effect. We should have the ambition to creating something better.

The Chair concluded that there were quite strong opinions against the formulation of the paragraph. Only few colleagues could agree with the text. The recommendations should therefore be made clearer. The seminar of university classification and ranking could be an input towards a better formulation. This seminar is no part of the BFUG meeting but can provide information for BFUG members, who can address questions to the invited experts.

In the course of the discussion, several topics were mentioned for further clarification/redrafting

- Reference to human "resources" (ESU) to be deleted
- Reference to the EUA Charter for Lifelong Learning should be corrected
- Par. 15 is ill-placed, should move further up
- Stress connection between mobility and demography
- Benchmarks for mobility: Estonia, UK and Norway objected while the EC stressed that 20 % is not overambitious in the light of the prognosis on growing numbers
- Distinction to be made between goals for 2020 and 2012
- Include reference to results of stocktaking and data collection
- Quality as solid base to build the EHEA on
- Relation between research and innovation
 - The BFUG Board, acting as a drafting group will adjust the text in the light of the discussions and written comments received before this BFUG meeting.
 - > The Chair presented the roadmap for the Communiqué (see annex)
 - A new draft will be available shortly after the BFUG Board meeting of 23 February.
 - > Deadline for comments on the new draft: 9 March
 - > The updated road map was presented.

23 Feb 2009	BFUG-Board, Ostend-Preparing Draft Communiqué (2)
25 Feb 2009	Draft Communiqué (2) to BFUG
09 March 2009	Deadline written amendments from BFUG on Draft Communiqué (2)
16 March 2009	Compilation of proposed amendments and Draft Communiqué (3) to BFUG
26 March 2009	BFUG, Prague - Discussion on Draft Communiqué (3)
27 March 2009	BFUG, Prague -Endorsement of amended Draft
	Communiqué (3) as basis for ministerial meeting
27 April 2009	BFUG, Leuven - Last preparations for ministerial meeting
28-29 April 2009	Discussion and adoption of Communiqué by the ministers

6. Bologna Beyond 2010 Report

Document: BFUG (CZ) 15_6a [Bologna Beyond 2010 report]





Due to time constraints, the discussion was postponed to next BFUG meeting. In the meantime the Secretariat will enrich the text with outcomes of the different BFUG working and coordination groups.

7. Ministerial conferences

7.1 Ministerial meeting in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve, 28-29 April 2009

Document:

BFUG (CZ) 15_7.1a [programme ministerial conf.] BFUG (CZ) 15_7.1b [forum background document] BFUG (CZ) 15_7.1c [update on applications]

The BFUG took note of the written information provided by the Benelux hosts. The Secretariat provided more details on the practicalities of the meeting. Deadline for registration is 15 March 2009.

The Bologna Policy Forum, to be held in Louvain-la-Neuve on 29 April 2009 will be organised back-to-back with the preceding meeting. The BFUG received a list of the 20 countries from other parts of the world which were invited apart from the International Association of Universities. These countries were selected on the basis of two considerations. A large part of the countries have repeatedly been expressing their interest in a dialogue with Bologna member countries. Other countries were invited for reasons of geographical balance and the consideration to have all world regions (e.g. Sub-Saharan Africa) covered by the invitations.

In answer to the questions for clarification of BFUG members, the following elements were pointed out.

- The Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué cannot be distributed to the non-European Ministers in advance as it will be adopted in the morning of 29 April. This Communiqué of the European Ministers should not incorporate the results of the Bologna Policy Forum, as both meetings are arranged back-to-back.
- There will be a separate statement concluding the Forum. This statement could contain reference to issues for further cooperation and the necessity to involve the academic community and other stakeholders but these issues have to be identified during the discussions and cannot be written beforehand by European parties only.
- All participants to the conference of European Ministers are welcome to attend the Forum but only the Heads of delegation of countries and consultative member organisations will take the floor.
- Members who would wish so were invited to submit written suggestions for the Forum to the secretariat.
- For the composition of the delegations of the countries from outside Europe, the formulation has been kept open with the expression of a preference for accompanying expert from the academic community, which could include rectors, students, etc.

7.2 Ministerial conference 2010

The BFUG took note of the information provided by the hosts of the 2010 ministerial conference (Austria and Hungary).

Austria presented the event in a nutshell and stressed the fact that the organisational structure will be in line with previous Bologna ministerial conferences, i.a. concerning the





size of delegations. Several conventions of consultative members will take place at the same time. At the end of the ministerial meeting a statement (or declaration) will be adopted. In the afternoon of 12 March 2010 the second Bologna Policy Forum with participants from different parts of the world will take place.

More detailed information can be provided at the March BFUG meeting.

7.3 Ministerial conference 2012

Document: BFUG (CZ) 15_7.3 [letter from Romania]

The BFUG agreed to advise Ministers to accept the offer from Romania to hold the 2012 ministerial conference in Bucharest and to host the Bologna Secretariat from 1 July 2010 until 30 June 2012.

8. Work programme beyond 2009

Document: BFUG (CZ) 15_8 [work programme beyond 2009]

The BFUG took note of the document provided by the Secretariat. Due to time constraints, this agenda item will be taken up at the March BFUG meeting. The BFUG members were invited to send their comments and suggestions in writing.

9. General Report of the Bologna Secretariat

Document: BFUG (CZ) 15_9 [Secretariat report outline]

The BFUG took note of the written information provided by the Secretariat The draft report will be on the agenda of the March BFUG meeting.

10.EQAR - Results of the first round of applications

Document: BFUG (CZ) 15_10 [EQAR update] The BFUG took note of the written information provided by E4. Due to time constraints, this agenda item will be taken up at the March BFUG meeting, also in the light of the EQAR General Assembly in Prague, 25 March 2009.

11.Updates from EC and consultative members (written contributions only) Documents: BFUG (CZ) 15 11a [EURASHE update]

BFUG (CZ) 15_11a [EURASHE update] BFUG (CZ) 15_11b [CoE update] BFUG (CZ) 15_11c [EI update]

The BFUG took note of the information.

12.Next BFUG meeting

The next meeting will take place in Prague, 26 (full day) - 27 March 2009 (closing with lunch). It will follow the EQAR General Assembly of 25 March and precede the Advisory Board for the Independent Assessment of the Bologna Process in the afternoon of 27 March.

13.Any other business





The Russian Federation invited the BFUG members to active participation in the Bologna seminar on joint programmes to be held at the South-Ural University in Chelyabinsk, 16-17 March 2009.





Participants

Name	Surname	Country
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Gottfried	Bacher	Austria
Chantal	Kaufmann	Belgium
Kevin	Guillaume	Belgium
Noël	Vercruysse	Belgium
Luka	Juroš	Croatia
Efstathios	Michael	Cyprus
Ivana	Schafferova	Czech Republic
Jakub	Dürr	Czech Republic
Věra	Šťastná	Czech Republic
Karolína	Gondková	Czech Republic
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Helle	Otte	Denmark
Heli	Aru	Estonia
Maija	Innola	Finland
Birgitta	Vuorinen	Finland
Hélène	Lagier	France
Marc	Foucault	France
Yves	Vallat	France
Nino	Svanadze	Georgia
Andrea	Herdegen	Germany
Birger	Hendriks	Germany
Foteini	Asderaki	Greece
László	Csekei	Hungary
Janos	Csirik	Hungary
Laura	Casey	Ireland
Maria	Sticchi Damiani	Italy





Marzia	Foroni	Italy
Andrejs	Rauhvargers	Latvia
Helmut	Konrad	Liechtenstein
Rimvydas	Labanauskis	Lithuania
Germain	Dondelinger	Luxembourg
Matthew	Tabone	Malta
James	Calleja	Malta
Elena	Petrov	Moldova
Slobodanka	Koprivica	Montenegro
Ljubisa	Stankovic	Montenegro
Denise	Heiligers	Netherlands
Tone Flood	Strøm	Norway
Toril	Johansson	Norway
Maria	Boltruszko	Poland
Tomasz	Saryusz-Wolski	Poland
Sebastiao	Feyo de Azevedo	Portugal
Mihai	Korka	Romania
Victor	Chistokhvalov	Russia
Mirjana	Vesovic	Serbia
Vera	Dondur	Serbia
Jozef	Jurkovič	Slovakia
Janja	Komljenovic	Slovenia
Darinka	Vrečko	Slovenia
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Jose Gines	Mora	Spain
Myrna	Smitt	Sweden
Silvia	Studinger	Switzerland
OMER	DEMIR	Turkey
Viktoriya	Lykova	Ukraine
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Bruno	Curvale	ENQA
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