



Ministry of Education, Culture and
Science of the Netherlands



Ministry of Education
of the Republic of Moldova

Doc. Code: BFUG_NL_MD_50_4e
Last modified: 29.02.2016

Paper on work progress of Working Group 1

Name of AG/WG: **WG on Monitoring (WG1)**

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Date: February 2016

Update of the work (will be updated for all BFUG meetings)

WG 1 held its first meeting in Oslo 19 February 2016.

The meeting focused on evaluating the 2015 report, both the structure of the report and the various indicators, as well as on discussing the new issues arising from the Yerevan Communiqué and how these could best be included in the report for 2018. The WG kept in mind that the previous report was 300 pages, and the importance of not expanding the report even further.

The role of the WG was seen as giving advice to the "data collectors" on all aspects of the report on a general level. It will not be the task of the WG to go into all the details and the questions in the questionnaire.

With regard to this specific meeting the task was to evaluate the 2015 report so that a new proposal for the 2018 report could be drafted and agreed at the next meeting.

The structure of the 2018 report

There was general agreement that while the report does not require major structural change, it should nevertheless be modified in order to focus better on the issues arising from the Yerevan Communiqué. The WG felt that it would be more relevant to include a separate chapter on teaching and learning, and to cut the chapter on lifelong learning, relocating its key indicators in other chapters. The WG also recommended expanding the focus of the chapter on Quality Assurance to include Recognition, thus better reflecting the symbiotic relationship between the two topics. The WG also felt that indicators related to completion might fit better in a chapter on the social dimension/ inclusion than in a chapter on employability.

The WG also looked into whether it would be possible to incorporate information collected by other stakeholder organisations in the next Monitoring report, in particular whether it would be possible to incorporate perspectives from ESU's "Bologna with Student Eyes" and EUA's reports such as Trends

and the Autonomy Scoreboard. The representatives of ESU and EUA were both very supportive to this idea.

The WG felt that this approach would be meaningful for particular areas of the Monitoring report. For example, for indicators that are opinion-based, i.e. where the conclusions are based on opinions or perspectives expressed by the countries/Ministries through the questionnaires, it would make sense to compare perspectives of other stakeholders.

There was agreement in the WG that this approach could improve the report, better reflecting the government and stakeholder cooperation in the EHEA.

In order to make the report more reader friendly, the group discussed whether some tables that are currently in the report itself, could be moved to an annex. The group also considered that it would be a good idea to develop country sheets for a selection of key indicators, in order to get a clearer picture of (non-)implementation for certain areas.

Issues arising from the Yerevan Communiqué

One of the new issues arising from the Yerevan Communiqué is the question of "fundamental values". The terms of reference for WG1, states, under "specific tasks" that the WG should "integrate the fundamental values of the EHEA in the reporting".

Until now, the Implementation report has given little attention to core academic values and institutional autonomy. However, as Belarus is to be monitored specifically on issues related to these core values, all other countries should also come under some scrutiny. There cannot be double standards. It was agreed upon that a good starting point for the discussions on this matter could be the Council of Europe Recommendation 2012/7 on the responsibility of public authorities for academic freedom and institutional autonomy. It was also felt that EUA's Autonomy Scoreboard would be an important source of information on fundamental values in higher education.

The fundamental values of the EHEA is an important issue also for AG 2 on support for the Belarus roadmap and AG 3 on dealing with non-implementation, so there was agreement within the group that for this matter WG1 has to be in close contact with WG AG2 and AG3, and open to their suggestions and proposals.

The Yerevan Communiqué also puts a strengthened focus on teaching and learning, and this is the reason why the WG felt that this topic merits its own chapter. The content of the chapter would include indicators from previous reports – such as those on student-centred learning – but would also try to develop new indicators, including on digital learning.

Other policy issues highlighted in the Yerevan Communiqué where the report will attempt to be more innovative concern the concept of relevance in a broad sense, employability for holders of first cycle degrees especially in relation to public employment, and staff mobility.

Indicators in the 2015 report

The WG went through the indicators of the 2015 report, chapter-by-chapter, looking into what should be kept, what to get rid of and what to add. Suggestions were made for all three "categories".

The WG identified quite a few of areas where the 2015 indicators should be strengthened, as well as areas where new indicators could be developed, and additional data could be included.

Calendar ((what have you done and what is planned to + indicate which events you want to include in the general tentative schedule)

The next meeting is scheduled for September 2016.

1st meeting: First discussion on structure, indicators and new issues to be covered

2nd meeting: Proposal for the 2018 report (structure and indicators) to be presented for discussion and agreement.

General Comment: the WG is fully committed to cooperation with all newly established working and advisory groups, and is ready to support activities and developments as best it can. The WG is also ready to consider all comments, requests and proposals related to the 2018 report coming from other groups and the BFUG.