

WORKING GROUP 2 – IMPLEMENTATION

Progress Report November 2016

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Since the BFUG meeting in Amsterdam March 2016 two meetings have been held:

2nd meeting WG 2 Tbilisi, 3 June 2016

During the Tbilisi meeting we discussed the following topics:

- ▶ Procedure proposed by AG 3 with regard to non-implementation: take note of the three key commitments; questions from the participants: does the document of WG 1 reflect the actual situation? What is the rationale behind the clustering of countries;
- ▶ Template for describing the initiatives: aims, audience, reporting outcomes; asking the organisers to focus a part of the programme on the implementation of the key commitments
- ▶ Concept note on Reversed Peer Review

Also during the Tbilisi meeting we had two thematic sessions, one dedicated to the Short Cycle and one to the Social Dimension.

- ▶ Short cycle
 - ▶ After a discussion we came to the conclusion not to revise substantially the QF for the EHEA but to propose to delete the wording 'within the first cycle' in the Dublin descriptors; we would like to avoid too much new administrative procedures such as a new self-referencing exercise;
 - ▶ Crucial is that credit transfer between the short cycle and the first cycle will be facilitated;
 - ▶ Permeability and recognition of SCHE are topics that have to be addressed. WG2 encourages BFUG members to organize PLA on those topics.
- ▶ Social dimension:
 - ▶ Presentation by Martin Unger (Institute for Advanced Studies). Challenges identified:
 - ▶ Lack of evidence and evaluation of the effects and impact of measures aiming at the SD at national and institutional levels;
 - ▶ Involvement of central bodies of HEIs in order to go from small initiatives to institution-wider larger scale initiatives;
 - ▶ The development of a financial support system is important;
 - ▶ Stronger link between the secondary education system and the higher education system is needed to keep students from lower SES on track;
 - ▶ Role of soft factors: social habits, interests and motivation as well as different educational background.
 - ▶ Presentation of the Austrian approach regarding the development of a national strategy. The national strategy on the Social Dimension aims at remedying such problems as a lack of national platform, lack of definition criteria for underrepresented groups, the imbalance in the representation of students with academic parents and those with lower SES parents and the disparity in access to HE among the Austrian provinces.
 - × National strategy will be presented in December 2016 or January 2017. The Austrian Bologna Day 2017, March 23rd will be dedicated to the dissemination of the Strategy and mainstreaming the Social Dimension in Austrian Higher Education.

- ▶ Related activities:
 - ✗ AT: PLA: Mainstreaming the Social Dimension, Vienna, March 22nd, 2017
 - ✗ UK: annual HE Equality summit: November 2017
 - ✗ Hungary: presentation of the impact of SD measures, late Spring 2017
- ▶ Here we could refer to the two events that be organized by the Flemish Community of Belgium with regard to automatic recognition and the permeability between the different categories of higher education (short cycle to bachelor and to master). The outcomes of those initiatives will be taken on board in writing the final report.

3rd meeting: Nice: 9-10 November 2016

- ▶ First day: thematic session on 'The internationalisation of QA':
 - Quality assurance of cross-border HE (CBHE): the QACHE project and From GATS to the services directive
 - Cross border activities of QAA : French QAA CTI ; Estonian QAA EKKA and the Lithuanian QAA SKVC
 - QA of joint degrees
- ▶ Discussions on the first day allowed for mapping current key challenges in implementation of commitments regarding cross-border QA and the European approach for quality assurance of joint programmes as well as dilemmas concerning quality assurance of CBHE.
- ▶ Some conclusions of the first day :
 - QA of CBHE:
 - CBHE cannot be subject of lower bar in the QA process, regardless whether the course is provided in EHEA countries or outside EHEA, ESG also encompass QA of CBHE.
 - communication between all players is crucial (legislative, procurement as well as language and cultural differences should be taken into account)
 - Significance of follow-up procedure in case of QA of CBHE should not be underestimated
 - CBHE is widening access to higher education and shall therefore have an impact on SD
 - Cross-border QA: there is still a challenge of maintaining reliability of quality in the processes operated by EQAR-registered QA agencies abroad, however the situation is being improved in this regard
 - QA of joint programmes: implementation of the 'European approach' needs time.
 - Examples of more general comments:
 - Relation of QA and student-centred learning? Why is this so controversial?
 - Link between teaching and research needs to be stressed
- ▶ 2nd day:
 - A first discussion on reporting the outcomes of WG 2: 1)timetable was agreed; 2) structure of WG report discussed – it will be revamped following comments from the WG members 3) Some members signaled willingness to contribute (D, EKKA, UK, SWE, EUA; Georgia, Poland; Austria); Coordination of contributions and preparation of the report will be the responsibility of co-chairs.
 - Liaison with other WG and AG in particular WG 3 and AG 3: exchange of information is important
- ▶ Conclusions of the second day:
 - UK offered to organize RPR on social mobility
 - Romania will host a Bologna Process researchers' Conference; (equity, SD, "ethics in academia" are hot topics in Romani).
 - Greece: free access to HE → important for refugees
 - Georgia: legislative changes to support Internalisation of Quality Assurance; Revised external QA standards and procedures based on ESG 2015
 - Poland: limiting bureaucratic burden in higher education, including one related to QF and QA, is one of priorities.

Following the Berlin meeting of the co-chairs in September 2016 a template has been sent to all members of WG 2 and WG 3 in order to get a more standardized description of the different initiatives: Working Group 2 and Working Group 3 organisation and report of country initiatives in support of EHEA Commitment Implementation and formulation of New Goals for the EHEA.

Calendar

Next meeting: 21 and 22 March 2017 in Austria

At least one further meeting will be needed to draft the report: Autumn 2017