



**FIFTH MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA
ADVISORY GROUP 4
ON THE DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT REVISION**

27 March 2017, Brussels, Belgium

Draft minutes

Last modified: 08/05/2017

List of participants

ARMENIA	Kristina Tsaturyan
AUSTRIA	Nicole Guthan
BELARUS	Valentina Simkhovich
BFUG Secretariat	Françoise Profit
Business Europe	Irene Seling
COUNCIL OF EUROPE	Jean-Philippe Restoueix
EI/ETUCE	Agnes Roman
ENIC-NARIC Networks	Wafa Triek
EU COMMISSION	Mette Moerk Andersen
EU COMMISSION	Klara Engels-Perenyi
EU COMMISSION	William O'Keeffe
EUA	Hanne Smidt
ESU	Blazhe Todorovski
FINLAND	Susanna Kärki
FRANCE	Jean Louis Gouju
ITALY	Maria Sticchi Damiani
Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee Vice-President	Allan Bruun Pedersen
ROMANIA, co-chair	Cezar Mihai Haj
ROMANIA	Antonela Toma
UNITED KINGDOM	Huw Morris

The representatives of Albania, Business Europe, EURASHE, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, UNESCO, and Russian Federation were excused.

The Advisory group welcomed the following experts Darius Bulnauskas, Donatas Poclus, Karolis Šaduikis and Justina Vaikutytė-Paškauskė from the Public Policy Management Institute (PPMI).

1. Welcome, introduction to the meeting and adoption of the agenda

Cezar Haj welcomed the participants and apologized for the Albanian co-chair.

After a short presentation of the agenda, it was adopted.

2. Updates

Update by the chair: the last changes to the template were made little before the meeting but will be discussed during the meeting. On March 30, the board will meet in Oslo and the chair will up-date the BFUG members about the work done. The main proposals from the group will be presented during the BFUG meeting in Malta on May 25.

- Council of Europe

Jean-Philippe Restoueix explained that the main topic currently under development regards the qualifications of refugees. The subsidiary texts are now formalized and will be presented at the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee (LRCC). He underlined that an extra meeting of the LRCC will be held this year. The next one will be take place in 2019.

- European Commission

Mette-Moerk Andersen, the representative of the European Commission (DGEAC) explained that the proposal of revision of the modernization agenda is ongoing. The European Commission expects its adoption in late May this year. Recognition and a focus on access for refugees are part of it.

William O’Keeffe, the representative of the European Commission (DG EMPL), presented the progress made concerning Europass. The European Qualifications Framework recommendation was adopted last summer. On the 12th of May a meeting will be held with the stakeholders on this subject.

3. Discussion on the template and guidelines

During this session, all the adjustments were directly and totally integrated in the documents themselves. The clean achieved template and guidelines resulting of the meeting are available on the EHEA website.

The group agreed on the following points concerning the **template**:

Chapter 5

- change the wording of section 5.2 from “Direct access” into “access”.

The group agreed on the following concerning the **explanatory notes**:

Main title and sub-title

- update the subtitle when the time comes

Introductory paragraphs

- Adopt the proposal made by EUA concerning the rephrasing of the first paragraphs as follow:

“The diploma supplement forms an important part of the development of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and is an important tool for graduates to ensure that their degrees are recognised by higher education institutions, public authorities and employers in their home countries and abroad. The diploma supplement should build on and include the use of common transparency tools such as learning outcomes, ECTS and how the degrees correspond to the national qualification framework(s) and external national quality assurance and/or accreditation.

The Diploma Supplement is jointly developed by the Council of Europe, European Commission and UNESCO and an updated version was adopted by the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee in 2007. Since the introduction of the Bologna Process in 1999 it has been adopted in the national legislations of the participating countries, and Ministers have committed themselves to issuing it to all graduates automatically, free of charge and in a widely spoken European language by 2005. The Diploma Supplement has also been incorporated in the Europass Framework established by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers in 2004 (foot note1).

The diploma supplements plays a particularly important role in relation to joint degrees (foot note 2) and transnational or crossborder higher education provision.”

- Foot notes for these paragraphs are as follows:

Foot note 1 up-dated: “See the Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint degrees, adopted by the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee in Paris on 29 February 2016 available at http://www.enic-naric.net/fileusers/Revised_Recommendation_on_the_Recognition_of_Joint_Degrees_2016.pdf”

Foot note 2 remains unchanged.

- Adopt a new sentence concerning the joint degrees that is: “A diploma supplement issued with a joint degree should clearly describe all parts of the degree, and it should clearly indicate at which institutions and/or in which study programmes the different parts of the degree have been earned”

Chapters 1, section 1.4

- Delete the last sentence

Chapter 2

Foot notes

- Up-date the foot note 1 with the current references: the Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint degrees, adopted by the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee in 2016 available at:

http://www.enic-naric.net/fileusers/Revised_Recommendation_on_the_Recognition_of_Joint_Degrees_2016.pdf

- Keep the foot note 3 as it is.
- section 2.2
 - o take out the sentence of 3.1 that was in 2.2 before also (on ISCED) as ISCED is used for statistics.
- Section 2.3
 - o delete the sentence and stop after “should be indicated”.
- Section 2.5
 - o Add “officially”

Chapter 3

- Title
 - o “Duration” has to replace “length” – same into the whole chapter
- section 3.1
 - o Delete the reference in 3.1 on ISCED section 3.2

Chapter 4

Section 4.3

The members of the group agreed not to add another example.

Chapter 6

- Section 6.1

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- adopt a new wording for the paragraph as follows:

“Indicate individual learning achievements gained outside of the programme and any additional information not included above that has been certified by the institution and is relevant to the purpose of assessing the nature, level and usage of the qualification. E.g. a mobility period abroad, a work placement, voluntary work etc. for which the student has not received credits or recognition, but which nonetheless is deemed to contribute to the learning outcomes defined for the qualification.”

Chapter entitled “Principles and general guidelines for those producing supplements”

This section was up-dated during the meeting. The group agreed on a new wording for this chapter, suggesting many simplifications. (Refer to the document itself).

Glossary

The group agreed to adopt the definition from the European Commission concerning joint and multiple degrees as follows:

“Joint degree programme: A single document awarded by higher education institutions offering the joint programme and nationally acknowledged as the recognised award of the joint programme.”

“Multiple degree programme: Separate degrees awarded by higher education institutions offering the joint programme attesting the successful completion of this programme (if two degrees are awarded by two institutions, this is a 'double degree').”

4. Digitalisation

4.1 “Study to support the revision of the Diploma Supplement and analyse the feasibility of its digitalisation at European level” by Karolis Šaduikis and Justina Vaikutytė-Paškauskė from the Public Policy Management Institute (PPMI).

The study is mandated by the European Commission and carried out by PPMI. It was launched in September 2016. The two representatives of PPMI presented the main outcomes of the study. They focused on the four different identified digitalisation options

- OP0 Standard data exchange format as a baseline
- OP1 Standalone certified electronic document as a simple solution
- OP2 User-oriented student data access solutions as a complex solution
- OP3 Open digital credentials as an additional option

They also identified the main strengths and weaknesses of each solution.

The members of the group welcomed the presentation and a short discussion run afterwards on the electronic signature, the top of the pyramid, the lessons learnt and the potential digital gap between countries.

The European Commission will circulate the conclusions and the study since it will be useful for national debates.

4.2 Discussion on the draft note concerning digitalisation

The chair reminded the members of the group that there is a possibility to do recommendations for the next ministerial conference and that digitalisation might be an issue. It was underlined that the format of digitalisation has to be determined by each institution referring to best practice.

The members of the group adopted the draft note on digitalisation with general remarks.

The members of the group agreed to recommend that:

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- ministers adopt a sort of roadmap for digitalization
- acknowledge the initiative of the EC and PPMI
- an easy access for the recommended format and electronic transmission will be used respecting data security

5. Diploma Supplement for doctoral level

It was reminded that in the Terms of Reference, AG4 has to investigate this question. Many countries are opposed to having a specific diploma supplement for doctoral studies. Some members of the group explained that some countries are already using and issuing the current template for doctoral studies without any changes. It was remarked that no competences framework has been established for doctoral studies and therefore it would be difficult, at this stage, to set up a specific diploma supplement for third cycle. In contrast, the UK representative explained that UK has developed a bespoke template because the current one was not suitable. The majority of the group was not in favour of changing the template. It was suggested to set up another group to consider this issue in greater detail. Members of the group could ask some institutions to fill it to have examples and see how it looks like. But this will remain for the internal work of the group. The chair proposed to test the reactions in the BFUG meeting in May.

6. Final report

The report of the AG4 will contain the proposal of the new version of the template and guidelines and some text on digitalisation that will be discussed during the next final meeting. A paragraph for the Communiqué can be discussed as well.

The report will contain in introduction a context analysis including the point of view of different stakeholders using minutes and presentations of the two first meetings of the group (especially the minutes of the Berlin meeting). The issue concerning implementation, already treated in the AG3 on "Non-implementation", will be included as well.

The structure of the report could be as follows:

- I. Brief introduction on the process

Template and guidelines

- II. Section on digitalisation

Conclusion from this meeting and reference of the study, recommendations on what ministers should take into consideration

- III. Section on DS for doctorat

The report will include clear recommendations for steps forward related to DS.

At this stage, the first identified recommendations are:

To promote the new template and its guidelines when adopted by the three bodies in charge of this document;

To suggest to monitor its implementation

To propose that institutions asking for funding from Erasmus+ programme issue the new template

To ask quality assurance agency to take into account issuing the new DS for accreditation process

To acknowledge the initiative of the European Commission with the study of PPMI

To encourage issuing a digital DS in the appropriate format such as pdf format since this is not an expensive solution.

Next and final meeting

The group proposed to hold its final meeting in Albania on 14-15 September 2017. The meeting will deal with the final report. The dates have to be approved by the Albanian co-chair. If it will not be possible to hold the meeting in Tirana, it will be held in Bucharest and dates will have to be confirmed.

FINAL VERSION