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## **BFUG MEETING**

**San Lawrenz, Gozo (Malta), 24-25 May 2017**

### Minutes

#### **0. List of Participants**

<b>Delegation</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>First Name(s)</b>
Andorra	Gallo Yanes	Maria Meritxell
Andorra	Martínez Ramírez	María del Mar
Armenia	Harutyunyan	Gayane
Austria	Neuhold	Andreas
Belarus	Betenya	Elena
Belarus	Rytov	Aliaksandr
Belgium - FR	Vanholsbeeck	Marc
Belgium - NL	Vercruysse	Noël
BFUG Secretariat	Profit	Françoise
BFUG Secretariat	Saad	Mariana
BFUG Secretariat	Steinmann	Marina
Business Europe	Seling	Irene
Council of Europe	Bergan	Sjur
Croatia	Tecilazić Goršić	Ana
Cyprus	Christophides	Stelios
Czech Republic	Trojanová	Lucie
Denmark	Johannesen	Jonas Husum
Denmark	Nielsen	Katrine
Education International	Keller	Andreas
Education International	Larsen	Louise Hoj
Education International	Roman	Agnes
ENQA	Kelo	Maria
ENQA	Walsh	Padraig
EQAR	Froment	Eric
EQAR	Galán	Fernando
EQAR	Pedroso	Julio

EQAR	Tück	Colin
Estonia	Haidak	Margus
Estonia	Pukk	Janne
Estonia	Rebassoo	Kadi
ESU	Meister	Lea
ESU	Schwitters	Helge Sander Lie
ESU	Sundberg	Caroline
ESU	Todorovski	Blazhe
EUA	Gaebel	Michael
EURASHE	Karpišek	Michal
EURASHE	Lauwick	Stéphane
European Commission	Andersen	Mette Moerk
European Commission	Lynch	Sarah
Eurostudent	Hauschildt	Kristina
Eurydice	Crosier	David
Finland	Hirsivaara	Sanna Kaarina
Finland	Innola	Maija
France	Desprésaux	Denis
France	Ott	Marie-Odile
Georgia	Margvelashvili	Maia
Germany	Greisler	Peter
Germany	Lüddeke	Barbara
Greece	Matsoukas	Panagiotis
Holy See	Rosenbaum	Melanie
Hungary	Keszei	Ernő
Iceland	Strand Vidarsdottir	Una
Ireland	Hennigan	Padraig
Italy	Castellucci	Paola
Italy	Cinquepalmi	Federico
Italy	Lantero	Luca
Kazakhstan	Akhmed-Zaki	Darkan
Kazakhstan	Nurmagambetov	Amantay
Latvia	Rauhvargers	Andrejs
Latvia	Upite	Linda
Liechtenstein	Miescher	Daniel
Lithuania	Viliūnas	Giedrius
Luxembourg	Diederich	Léon
Luxembourg	Kox	Corinne
Malta Co-Chair	Sammut-Bonnici	Tanya
Malta	Sant	Stefan

Montenegro	Mišović	Biljana
Netherlands	Bijvank	Tessa
Netherlands	Geleijnse	Ferdi
Norway Co-Chair	Johansson	Toril
Norway	Strøm	Tone Flood
Poland	Stolarczyk	Andrzej
Portugal	Queiroz	João
Romania	Haj	Cezar
Romania	Toma	Antonela
Russian Federation	Kamynina	Nadezda
Russian Federation	Valueva	Olga
Serbia	Mandic	Vesna
Slovak Republic	Jurkovič	Jozef
Slovenia	Rustja	Erika
Spain	de Lezcano-Mújica Núñez	Margarita
Sweden	Persson	Martin Olof
Switzerland	Meister-Gampert	Muriel
TFYROM	Aleksov	Borcho
Ukraine	Rashkevych	Yuriy
Ukraine	Zolotaryova	Iryna
UNESCO	Wells	Peter
United Kingdom	Robinson	Rebecca
United Kingdom	Wilkinson	Pamela
External (Moderator of a parallel session, Malta)	Borg	Martin
External (Moderator of a parallel session, Malta)	Camilleri	Raymond
External (Moderator of a parallel session, Malta)	Cassar	Edel
External (Rapporteur of a parallel session, Malta)	Grech	Angelique
External (Speaker)	Oliveira da Silveira	VanDyck
External (Rapporteur of a parallel session, Malta)	Sant	Stefan
External (Rapporteur of a parallel session, Malta)	Scholz	Christine
External (Rapporteur of a parallel session, Malta)	Vassallo	Lorraine
External (Moderator of a parallel session, Malta)	Vella	Godfrey

Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Moldova and Turkey had sent in apologies.

## **1. Welcome and introduction to the meeting**

The Co-chair from Malta welcomed the participants and shortly introduced the agenda. The Co-chair from Norway and the Vice-chair thanked Malta for hosting the meeting.

Professor Alfred J.Vella, Rector of the University of Malta underlined in his opening speech that many issues under consideration at this meeting will influence the 2018 conference and communiqué. He explained that the implementation of Bologna principles has been a very positive experience in Malta because the Bologna Process was meant to foster attractiveness and competitiveness of European higher education. Widening access to higher education is regarded as a key to meeting societal challenges. The EHEA should inspire policies of national higher education, institutions and students.

## **2. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was adopted.

## **3. Minutes of the last meetings**

The Co-chair from Norway gave a short oral report from the Board Meeting in Oslo on 30 March 2017.

Regarding the minutes of the BFUG Board meeting, the Council of Europe referred to the substantial comments made by several delegations. The BFUG concluded that in the future draft minutes would be recirculated if substantial changes are suggested. The Secretariat should also notify the BFUG when the minutes have been published online. There is a need for having shorter minutes focusing on the main points and the conclusions drawn. As for the minutes of the BFUG meeting in Bratislava, it was pointed out that in the reference to the discussion on AG 3 on non-implementation, the comments from France and the two Belgian delegations should be referred to as comments from three delegations rather than countries.

The Maltese Co-chair announced that the minutes of the Board meeting will be recirculated to all participants and published afterwards. Minutes will in the future be shorter and focusing on conclusions.

## **4. Applications for the 2020 conference**

Italy presented its proposal to host the ministerial meeting in 2020 and take responsibility for the BFUG Secretariat from July 2018 until July 2020. Italy proposed to organise the 2020 conference either in Rome or in Naples. The choice of Naples could be very evocative, giving the sense that the EHEA is moving towards the Mediterranean basin, connecting Europe, Asia and Africa, and extending its vision to the wider world. The Secretariat would be based in Rome and aim at including people from other countries including outside the EHEA. Some crucial topics suggested by Italy would be migrants and refugees and the related challenges for higher education, the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle and the EHEA's contribution to the global society.

The BFUG decided to advise the Ministers to accept the invitation from Italy to hold the 2020 conference and host the BFUG Secretariat.

## **5. Update concerning the Working Groups**

Deliverables and Contributions to the Ministerial Communiqué and the Bologna Policy Forum from ...

### **5.1. WG1 Monitoring**

The chairs of WG1 referred to the fact that the draft structure of the report had been adopted by the BFUG in Bratislava, and that the BFUG had also decided to include data from other sources such as EUA and ESU in the report. The data collection is going ahead as planned both from the countries and from the other sources. A large number of new indicators have been developed for the new report, and at its last meeting the WG discussed both the new thematic indicators and the new scorecard indicators. The new indicators will be presented to the BFUG at a later stage. A first draft of the report focusing on the key issues will be presented to the BFUG in Tartu. The next meeting of the working group will be held in mid-October in Brussels and will aim to discuss the preliminary draft of the report as well as to finalise the scorecard indicators.

All member countries were asked to make sure that they complete the two questionnaires.

The issue on whether an Implementation report for the 2018-2020 period will be needed was raised. The period leading up to the ministerial meeting in 2020 is shorter than the normal period of three years, and consequently a full Implementation Report encompassing all the present as well as new issues cannot be prepared for 2020. WG 1 informed the BFUG that a "lighter" Implementation Report could be prepared for 2020, but this would require a change in the mandate of the WG in order to start preparing a proposal for such a report. The Working Group was mandated by the BFUG to prepare a proposal for a 2020 report on which the BFUG should agree in November.

### *5.2. WG2 Fostering Implementation of Agreed Key Commitments*

This Working Group aims at providing support to member states to implement the key commitments through actions organised by members of WG2, and actions organised in the context of projects (e.g. in Erasmus+). Various stakeholders have been involved in peer learning activities.

For the November BFUG, the three following recommendations shall be proposed:

- To develop reversed peer-review as an instrument to bring different actors together
- To include the short cycle as an autonomous cycle in the QF EHEA and to have quality assurance according to the ESG.
- To integrate the social dimension in all higher education systems and by all institutions.

Various delegations welcomed the initiative to make the short cycle more visible in order to include mature learners and underrepresented groups. They underlined that it must be taken into account that it is voluntary for countries to offer short cycles; that descriptions of short cycle qualifications need to have the same degree of detail as those of first cycle descriptions in terms of academic knowledge and competences, and that there is no automatic access to the first cycle for those coming from short cycles in vocational education. The Council of Europe underlined that having an independent 5th cycle in EQF is possible and it is difficult to see why it should not be feasible within the first cycle of the QF EHEA. One delegation pointed out that there can be no automatic access for those coming from short cycles to higher education in countries which do not offer short cycles in their higher education system.

### *5.3. WG3 Policy Development for New EHEA Goals*

The WG3 chairs presented the recommendations of the group. At their last meeting in September 2017 the recommendations will be finalised.

The BFUG pointed out that the WG has not yet gone through all the topics it was supposed to work on. It expressed concern about several of the group's proposals especially about the "EHEA Teaching and Learning Institute", the individual right to professional development for teachers, digitalisation as a new goal, and virtual mobility as an alternative to physical mobility. Comments were also made underlining the need for the WG to come up with suggestions that are within the remit of the ministers and not the HEIs. It was also underlined that important elements were missing for EHEA:ERA (e.g. raising the quality of research) and that a more political approach would be needed for recommendations for this topic. It was also noted that there is a need for ambitious, new and concrete proposals.

The BFUG Co-chairs concluded that WG3 should provide the next BFUG with a few clearly defined goals, including concrete points for action.

### *5.4. AG1 EHEA International Co-operation*

Since the meeting which concentrated on partner regions, two of the three chairs of the AG have changed. Therefore, a recent meeting in Paris focussed on what to do with the Bologna Policy Forum. The AG pointed out that a Bologna Policy Forum is needed to demonstrate the EHEA's openness to international co-operation. A basic line about inclusiveness was proposed.

A discussion on the potential next Bologna Policy Forum followed. Some delegations voiced their concern about the low number of ministers attending the previous Bologna Policy Forums, and pointed out that a specific goal is needed if we are to convince the ministers to attend. Some delegations were in favour of having a policy forum, but the BFUG asked for more details on the Policy Forum, especially concerning the format and the organisation of the meeting.

The BFUG decided that AG1 should concentrate on the content of the event. It was proposed to involve the current and incoming Co-chairs of the BFUG in AG1 work.

France proposed to check the options with the new French government, and present a concrete proposal at the next meeting. A save-the-date message should be sent to international ministers.

#### *5.5. AG2 Support for the Belarus Roadmap*

The rapporteur for AG2 commented on the difficulties in receiving precise information from Belarus. Information has been made available, predominantly by providing the Education Code. A need for clear, targeted information was raised. AG 2 reported that while progress is clear in some areas, little or no progress can be seen in areas like fundamental values, and especially in the area of student participation. It was also pointed out that the timetable spelled out in the roadmap is challenging, and that full implementation before the end of 2017 is unlikely. He underlined that two substantial difficulties remain: the work placement system and questions related to fundamental values. No positive change is foreseen in these areas at present.

Several delegations expressed their concern about the lack of progress on fundamental values, especially related to institutional autonomy, academic freedom and student participation.

The Co-chair concluded that there is a clear expectation from the BFUG that the reporting from Belarus has to cover all the areas of the roadmap. The reporting has to be short and concise so as to be accessible to both the BFUG and the ministers, and it has to show what has been done and what remains to be done by Belarus in the various areas of the roadmap, including planned reforms. It is important to keep in mind that all the areas of the roadmap have been agreed upon and all are equally important.

#### *5.6. AG3 Dealing with Non-implementation*

The AG3 chairs underlined that the group had been mandated to propose instruments to tackle the challenges of non-implementation, and that the BFUG had previously agreed upon the three key commitments. The group had developed a cyclical procedure for dealing with non-implementation which was presented to the BFUG in Bratislava, and the procedure has been revised extensively taking into account the remarks received. The details concerning the proposed implementation committee had not been finalised. The procedure is to be understood as an incentivisation tool not an exclusion procedure. The chairs of AG3 requested the acceptance of the new revised model as presented.

Two delegations expressed concern about the cyclic procedure which they regarded as too bureaucratic, and a further delegation questioned the creation of an implementation committee whose organisation and authority had not yet been defined. It was also pointed out that the cost of such a procedure could be very high.

A majority of BFUG members agreed, however, with the proposed procedure and underlined it was a necessary step to get the EHEA the necessary credibility, and that it represented a good balance of pressure and support. It was also pointed out that implementation of the three key commitments is the minimum condition for the EHEA to function. A systematic approach could be based on action plans to be submitted by all countries.

The proposal for the "Cyclic Procedure" was approved. As the details of the establishment of an implementation committee had not yet been finalised, it was decided that the AG should come back to the BFUG on that part of the proposal at the next BFUG meeting in Tartu.

#### *5.7. AG4 Diploma Supplement Revision*

The AG4 chair explained that the group will propose a revised template and guidelines with the main changes in the guidelines. He explained that the Diploma Supplement (DS) is fully in line with the EU's New Skills agenda and could be used in the current format for doctoral cycle if institutions wish to do so.

Some delegations proposed to revise the wording for the duration (e.g. workload instead of study length). The Council of Europe reminded the BFUG that this document is a common tool shared by the Council of Europe, the European Commission and UNESCO. The recommendation of the group to the ministers has to take this specificity into consideration for the wording. The revised template will need to be adopted in both the Council

of Europe/UNESCO and EU frameworks, and it is important that identical versions be adopted in both frameworks.

BFUG members are invited to still send their feedback in writing. During the final meeting in Tirana the feedback received will be included and a final check will be carried out. The proposal for the next BFUG meeting will be to adopt the revised versions.

## **6. Fundamental values of the EHEA**

The BFUG Co-chair referred to the background documents provided for the meeting and pointed out that the previous communiqués had all referred to the fundamental values. For the ministerial meeting in Paris, however, the situation is different as WG1 (Monitoring) has been mandated to follow progress on fundamental values and the countries have for the first time been asked to report on the issues of academic freedom and institutional autonomy. Thus it will be possible to present a better picture of the state of affairs for the fundamental values than before, and the communiqué has to draw on that information and the other aspects which the BFUG in Bratislava decided to include.

It was suggested that ministers should have a discussion after having heard a keynote speaker, potentially from outside the EHEA. Most delegations agreed that a discussion amongst the ministers on fundamental values would make the conference more interesting and it could be linked to the data collection. Comments underlined that a discussion on fundamental values would be very important, but should not simply repeat old messages but make sure that the ministers state where we go from here. It could start e.g. from a discussion of the role of higher education for society, of freedom of thought, or of the core of academic education.

Most delegations supported having both a discussion at the conference and that the topic is included in the Communiqué. The topic was perceived as a very interesting topic for the ministers.

The BFUG concluded that fundamental values should be discussed at the Ministerial Conference and to integrate several aspects in the Communiqué. The topic might be put in the context of the social role and the responsibility of higher education institutions.

## **7. Thematic Discussion: Innovative Learning Methods in Higher Education**

On invitation of the Maltese host, VanDyck Silveira, CEO at Financial Times | IE Corporate Learning Alliance gave an introductory presentation<sup>1</sup> on "innovative learning methods in higher education". He explained how new formats of learning (e.g. a video wallroom) and new ways of thinking had been developed for the IE Corporate Learning Alliance to provide a diversity of training. Referring to recent trends and models, e.g. MOOCs, nano degrees or Spotify he asked questions like

- What can disrupt the traditional university model?
- How can we ensure lifelong learning for all?
- What if the Bologna reform creates degrees that are not accepted in the labour market, deteriorating the employability of graduates?

The Co-chair thanked the key speaker and underlined the quality of his presentation.

Several delegations expressed the view that the situation for traditional academic learning is different from training for employees and that diversity in the student body is an asset we should strive for. It was pointed out that higher education institutions deliver a service for society instead of service for business and that education should not be for employability only. They asked how the competences and skills mentioned in the presentation were different from learning outcomes and how social skills are addressed in this kind of training. They also challenged arrangements of quality assurance and student participation in the governance of such learning programmes. As digitalisation is to affect all sorts of higher education it might help to cope with the challenge of inclusion. Many delegations underlined the European Higher Education Area is based on the notion of higher education as a public good and a public responsibility.

### *7.2. Parallel sessions on "Innovative Learning Methods in Higher Education"*

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<sup>1</sup> [http://media.ehea.info/file/20170524-25-Gozo/58/1/BFUG\\_MT\\_NO\\_54\\_7cPresInnovativeLearning\\_771581.pdf](http://media.ehea.info/file/20170524-25-Gozo/58/1/BFUG_MT_NO_54_7cPresInnovativeLearning_771581.pdf)

Reports from the parallel sessions<sup>2</sup> are available on the webpage of the Gozo BFUG meeting.

#### **8. Information on the 2018 conference by the Secretariat**

The Secretariat gave a short overview of the planning for the Ministerial Conference on 23-25 May in Paris. The opening ceremony will take place on the evening of 23 May at Sorbonne University. The BFUG meeting, the Ministerial conference, the "Bologna Policy Forum" and bilateral meetings will take place on 24 and 25 May at the Palais Brongniart. A "note diplomatique" will be sent to all embassies by the end of summer 2017, the website should be available in autumn and on-line registration will start in February 2018. Information will be requested from each BFUG delegation.

#### **9. Report from the first meeting of the Drafting Committee for the 2018 Ministerial Communiqué and a potential Bologna Policy Forum Statement**

The Co-chair from Norway reported that the meeting in Oslo was held at the end of March, with the Vice-chair from France, the current Co-chairs Malta/Norway, the incoming Co-chairs Estonia/Russia, and the future Co-chairs Bulgaria/Serbia. These countries will draft a first version of the Communiqué on the basis of a skeleton provided by the Secretariat. A first draft will be presented at the November BFUG meeting. The Drafting Committee will next meet in June in Paris and in September in St. Petersburg.

The BFUG agreed with the arrangements and recommended to – like for the Yerevan Communiqué – aim at a political Communiqué (not a technical one),

Several delegations asked to fix the dates for the two BFUG spring meetings in 2018 and to also communicate deadlines for feedback from BFUG members regarding the different versions of the Communiqué.

#### **10. Reports from the Consultative Members**

Education International explicitly referred to the links included in the written report and underlined that status and recognition of teaching will be the main aspect of both the conference and resolution. The Social Dialogue for the Education Sector was also brought to the attention of the BFUG.

EUA advertised that BFUG members would be welcome at the 12th European Quality Assurance Forum in Riga (23-25 November) and at the First Learning and Teaching Forum in Paris (28-29 September).

EQAR announced a request to update information on the legal frameworks.

ESU apologised for not having sent a written report. The current president introduced her successor and new president of ESU Helge Schwitters, as well as Caroline Sundberg and Adam Gajek as new vice presidents from 1 July 2017.

#### **11. Information by the incoming Co-chairs**

##### *11.1. BFUG board meeting in Russia on 26 September 2017 in St. Petersburg*

The incoming Co-chair gave a presentation<sup>3</sup> on the country and its higher education system. The meeting will be hosted at the St. Petersburg University of Economy; the Practical Information shall be available on 1 June 2017.

##### *11.2. BFUG meeting in Estonia on 9/10 November 2017 in Tartu*

Since Estonia joined the European Union 13 years ago, this is the first time the country is taking the presidency. The incoming Co-chair presented<sup>4</sup> the country, and its higher education system and key focus areas for the Estonian presidency.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://media.ehea.info/file/20170524-25-Gozo/84/4/BFUG\\_MT\\_NO\\_54\\_7\\_3\\_777844.pdf](http://media.ehea.info/file/20170524-25-Gozo/84/4/BFUG_MT_NO_54_7_3_777844.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [http://media.ehea.info/file/20170524-25-Gozo/58/3/BFUG\\_MT\\_NO\\_54\\_11aPresRussia\\_771583.pdf](http://media.ehea.info/file/20170524-25-Gozo/58/3/BFUG_MT_NO_54_11aPresRussia_771583.pdf)

The BFUG meeting will take place at the University of Tartu on 9 -10 November. On 8 November, BFUG delegations are invited to join a reception hosted by the city of Tartu,

## **12. AOB**

Romania announced the 3rd researchers' conference with a tentative date of 27-29 November 2017.

The European Commission announced the publication of a Communication on a renewed EU agenda for higher education and proposal for a Council recommendation on graduate tracking on 30 May 2017.

The ENQA president gave notice of leaving his post in October and thanked the BFUG for the co-operation.

The Co-chair from Malta closed the meeting and thanked the Secretariat, the Ministry for Education and Employment and the National Commission for Higher Education in Malta for their support in organising this BFUG meeting.

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<sup>4</sup> [http://media.ehea.info/file/20170524-25-Gozo/58/5/BFUG\\_MT\\_NO\\_54\\_11bPresEstonia\\_771585.pdf](http://media.ehea.info/file/20170524-25-Gozo/58/5/BFUG_MT_NO_54_11bPresEstonia_771585.pdf)