



Last modified: 21/03/2018

**BOARD MEETING**  
**Belgrade (Serbia), 24 January 2018**  
Minutes

**0. List of Participants**

<b>Delegation</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Surname</b>
BFUG Co-chair (Bulgaria)	Ivana	Radonova
BFUG Co-chair (Bulgaria)	Elizabeta	Lyubomirova
BFUG Co-chair (Serbia)	Katarina	Jočić
BFUG outgoing Co-chair (Estonia)	Janne	Pukk
BFUG outgoing Co-chair / WG3 Chair (Russia)	Nadezda	Kamynina
BFUG outgoing Co-chair (Russia)	Igor	Ganshin
BFUG incoming Co-chair (Austria)	Gottfried	Bacher
BFUG incoming Co-chair (Austria)	Stephan	Dulmovits
BFUG incoming Co-chair (Switzerland)	Muriel	Meister
BFUG Vice-chair (France) / AG1 Chair	Marie-Odile	Ott
Council of Europe	Sjur	Bergan
EURASHE	Michal	Karpisek
European Commission	Klara	Engels-Perenyi
European Commission	Kinga	Szuly
ESU	Helge	Schwitters
EUA	Michael	Gaebel
AG1 chair (United Kingdom)	Ella	Ritchie
AG2 chair (Germany)	Frank	Petrikowski
AG3 Chair (Iceland)	Una	Strand Viðarsdóttir
AG4 Chair (Romania)	Mihai Cezar	Haj
WG1 Chair (Norway)	Tone Flood	Strøm
WG2 Chair (Belgium fl.)	Noel	Vercruyse
BFUG Secretariat	Françoise	Profit
BFUG Secretariat	Mariana	Saad
BFUG Secretariat	Marina	Steinmann

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

The hosting Co-chair opened the meeting and gave an overview of the recent developments of Bologna process in Serbia. The Bulgarian Co-chair and the Vice-chair thanked the Serbian host for the organisation of the meeting.

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

The AG3 chair asked for a modification of the order of points in the agenda. The Board agreed and the agenda was adopted.

## **3. Feedback of the BFUG meeting in Tartu in November 2017**

The outgoing Co-chair (Estonia) referred to the BFUG meeting and the work of the Drafting Committee in Tartu and wished the current Co-chairs success with the continuation of the work. The outgoing Co-chair (Russia) thanked Estonia for the co-operation and underlined the necessity of further discussing implementation issues at the next BFUG meeting.

Many Board members expressed concern about the minutes of the Tartu meeting. The Secretariat promised providing a version which would be as neutral as possible with the contradicting remarks received.

## **4. Update and discussion of the AG/WG work: The Future of the EHEA**

### *4.1. Proposal for the Bologna Policy Forum (AG1 EHEA international co-operation)*

The AG1 chair (United Kingdom) explained that the main objective of the group was to design a BPF well-articulated with what will happen in the future and linked in the rest of the 2018 Ministerial. The group proposed one topic "Higher education in a changing society" which will be tackled through 2 round tables, first one on "widening access and ensuring success for all in higher education" and the 2nd one "HE social responsibility".

Then the concept note made in order to be sent to the round tables participants was presented and discussed. Some Board members asked for a change in the wording and to replace "universities" with "higher education institutions". In addition, broadening access to further degree programmes should be taken into account. It was proposed to include a reference to the COE recommendation on ensuring quality education<sup>1</sup>. Round tables in talk show format instead of a series of presentations were regarded as a good but challenging option for the organisation of the panels. The duration of initial inputs should be strictly limited in order to have time for lively discussions. On a broader perspective, Austria called for dealing with results from the Bologna Policy Forum in a way that would ensure commitment and would realisation. The BFUG should consider arrangements that would cater for presenting EHEA topics and achievements in relevant contexts outside of the EHEA. He proposed that the European Commission could include some support for this in KA3 of the Erasmus programme to finance co-operation between the BFUG and other higher education areas. ESU expressed some concerns about how all the countries could implement the issues and include students. Some Board members expressed concerns about focusing on international organisations instead of governments.

The AG1 chair (United Kingdom) agreed to integrate the proposals as far as possible and invited Board members to send concrete proposals for speakers. The AG1 chair (France) referred to the proposal of organising a workshop with international partners once a year.

The BFUG Co-chair (Bulgaria) reminded AG1 of the need to focus the discussion in Paris.

### *4.2. Summary of the Final Report and recommendations from AG4 (Diploma Supplement revision)*

The AG4 chair (Romania) referred to the documents presented at the Tartu BFUG meeting and announced some small changes to the template and explanatory notes. The final report should be provided for the BFUG meeting in Sofia.

Austria, the European Commission and EUA regretted that the document would no longer include the ISCED codes. They asked for an explanation to be included in the AG4 report in case this is

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result\\_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805c94fb](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805c94fb)

confirmed. The European Commission underlined the importance of digitalisation of the Diploma Supplement and the necessity of including informal and non-formal education in the document.

The AG4 chair (Romania) confirmed that the final adoption would be co-ordinated with the Council of Europe, UNESCO and the European Commission.

#### *4.3. Draft 2018 Bologna Process Implementation Report (WG1 Monitoring)*

The WG1 chair (Norway) explained that the work on the Implementation Report was progressing as planned. Currently existing data and countries' comments (received from 29 countries only) have been integrated. The Board members were reminded that a final check by BFUG had to take place in the week before the meeting in February with a very short deadline. The overall impression was that progress regarding the Bologna commitments was rather slow. Details regarding the content would be presented in Sofia.

#### *4.4. Proposal for a 2018-2020 Bologna Process Implementation report (WG1 Monitoring)*

The BFUG had decided to have a report for 2018-2020 and that it should be a less extensive report. Currently 190 indicators exist. Therefore, keeping the chapters and reducing indicators or looking only at some chapters would be options for this report. Having another type of report (overviewing long-term changes in certain areas) would be another option. WG1 proposed suggesting some guidelines for including priorities resulting from the Ministerial Conference/Communiqué.

Board members were in favour of looking at long-term changes because two years would be too short to observe major changes within the next work period. The WG1 chair (Norway) added that this view was shared by the group.

#### *4.5. Summary of the Final Report and recommendations from AG2 (Support for the Belarus roadmap)*

The AG2 chair (Germany) reported to have received some comments on the draft final report of the group which would be included in the version provided for the BFUG meeting in February. The Board was informed that two letters from the Belarus ministry had been received. The AG2 chairs recommended proposing a way to help Belarus follow up items on which implementation of the roadmap had been unsatisfactory, and that would not be subject to the AG3/WG2 procedure.

The COE underlined that no other AG2 member than Belarus had expressed the view that the roadmap had been fulfilled. Some kind of follow-up is needed, be it by prolongation of the roadmap or by other means. Other Board members supported the proposal of further following the co-operation with Belarus. The AG3 and AG4 chairs asked for not referring to the "cyclic procedure" in the AG2 report. The procedure might be renamed and in any case it is only addressing three key commitments and not all relevant aspects.

#### *4.6. Proposal from WG2 and AG3 on a renewed approach about implementation*

The AG3 chair (Iceland) explained that after the Tartu meeting, inputs from B (fl.)/WG2, Germany and Belarus had been received. New versions of the documents were commented on by AG3 members and WG2 chairs. The results were included in the latest revised version of the documents which was distributed to the Board meeting participants on the very day of this Board meeting. It described six steps for the procedure proposed to be discussed during this meeting: The nature of the support offered (bottom-up approach for offering or using peer support) was specified; it was explained that countries themselves would indicate the support they would wish to receive. Each country should gain and give/contribute at the same time. Goals should be identified by each country; the collective goal of the three groups will be to improve implementation in the EHEA. WG2 and AG3 had agreed on peer review by three peer groups (one for each key commitment), and on speeding up the process. Chairs of existing groups should be included in peer support groups. The AG3 chair proposed that the BFUG could ask these persons to start work immediately in order to make the peer groups capable of acting in September/October 2018. The definitive chairs would only be known then, depending on the groups set up for the next working period and the nominations received.

Board members underlined the importance of real improvement in implementation of the key commitments. They stated that a new process and/or structure was needed. The Implementation Reports over the years have demonstrated insufficient implementation; thus, for some members this meant that the activities already set up for that purpose had not been successful. The motivation of students and

staff should be in the centre of attention. They reminded that acknowledgement of existing challenges was necessary for both the functioning of the EHEA; and its perception and credibility outside EHEA. They stated that procedures needed to demonstrate seriousness. Some co-ordination of the peer groups would be needed to ensure that as minimum criteria.

Some Board members expressed the opinion that the "structure" should not be in place only until 2020, but piloting until then and become permanent from 2020 onwards. The BFUG should be realistic about how much improvement can be reached within 18 months and open to evaluate achievements, to agree on adjustments and to discuss what might happen if countries do not identify themselves with the common goals. For the time being, it should be decided how to work until the Ministerial Conference, and right from the Ministerial Conference. As in the new Erasmus+ call money might be earmarked for implementation purposes (proposals would be expected by August 2018), the structure should be in place before. The three groups could consist of current AG/WG chairs and additional experts', a facilitating group could ensure continuity, and allow individuals to change. It was reminded that the decision making lay with the BFUG who had to ensure the continuity of the process, as none of the groups' chairs had a mandate after May.

The Co-chair (Bulgaria) underlined that the proposal addressed a common EHEA problem, supporting the process of implementation in general and announced a common AG3/WG2 proposal for Sofia.

## **5. Draft for the 2018 Ministerial Communiqué**

The chair of the Drafting Committee (France) orally presented version 2.0 which was built on the basis of the comments received since the Tartu BFUG meeting, and on the discussions of the Drafting Committee the day before. She underlined that the main aims of the Drafting Committee were to keep the Communiqué brief, practical and political as well as accessible to all members. She announced that some of the received comments would be integrated in the annex and explained that the section on internationalization should be shorter and more concrete in the next draft. She also pointed that the section on the future of EHEA would comprise two different parts, one for the period 2018-2020 and another for "beyond 2020".

Board members remarked that in the present draft, part I was much stronger than part II, and that part II, in particular, should be shortened. The same issues should not be addressed in more than one part of the Communiqué. The Drafting Committee was reminded to take into account the decisions of Tartu and to include a reference to the revised qualifications framework. It was said that even if integrating all recommendations of all groups was not possible, these recommendations should not be lost as the Board and BFUG members needed to feel the ownership of the text. It was underlined that clearer messages to practitioners were needed.

The chair of the Drafting Committee acknowledges the comments and that some of them are clearly in line with most of those made the day before during the DC committee meeting.

The Secretariat announced that a version 3.0 would be provided for the February BFUG meeting and explained that the published roadmap fixed the deadlines for comments. The next deadline would be 19 February. Some Board members regretted that the version they were commenting upon was already outdated. Some Board members underlined that the comments made during the discussion in the BFUG should then be incorporated in an new version that should be sent to the BFUG for written comments by electronic consultation, and that this would require reviewing the roadmap.

The Co-chair (Serbia) concluded that the Secretariat would try to include all the comments on version 3.0.

## **6. Programme for the 2018 Ministerial Conference**

The Vice-chair explained that the programme had not changed since it was presented in Tartu. For the Bologna Policy Forum, AG1 decided to invite 60 countries and 20-40 international organisations. Letters should be sent by the end of January. AG1 is working on a Bologna Policy Forum Statement.

The Secretariat reminded participants of the new logo and the ongoing process for lists of delegations.

## **8. Draft agenda for the BFUG meeting in February**

The agenda of the meeting in Sofia was approved with minor changes of the timetable.

## **9. AOB**

The European Commission announced that they intend to invite at the upcoming BFUG meeting to invite delegations to join an Erasmus+ countries clusters meeting. This meeting would evaluate progress since 2014 and impact of the projects on national level.

The vice-chair proposed that as Austria and Switzerland were present to the Board meeting, Italy could be present too at the next Board meeting, in the same purpose to ensure continuity; no objection were made.

EUA asked to take out the word "reversed" whenever writing about peer review.

The Co-chair (Serbia) closed the meeting and thanked the participants for their contributions.