



Last updated 31/01/2018

PARIS COMMUNIQUÉ DRAFT 3.0

Please note that titles and sub-titles are tentative

Preamble/Introduction

We, Ministers, meeting in Paris on 24 and 25 May 2018, 20 years after the Sorbonne Declaration¹, are proud to recognise that the vision which inspired our predecessors has given rise to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) where 48 countries with different political, cultural and academic backgrounds cooperate on the basis of open dialogue, shared goals and common commitments.

The Bologna Process has enabled dialogue leading to greater mutual understanding and enhanced cooperation among our higher education systems and has become a point of reference for other regions in the world. We have paved the way for greater student mobility, improved comparability and transparency and thus increased quality and competitiveness of our European higher education systems.

We underline the central role of higher education institutions, their staff and students as partners in the Bologna Process. Their role in the implementation of higher education reforms is of outmost importance and we encourage them to continue and intensify their efforts to strengthen up the EHEA and to develop more joint transnational programmes to further our collaboration

We acknowledge the support of organisations representing business and the social partners for the Bologna Process and look forward to intensified cooperation in reaching the goals set for the EHEA. We also welcome the contributions of the international institutions and organisations that are partners to the Bologna Process.

Since the Sorbonne and the Bologna² Declarations, our societies have undergone significant changes which, in many regards, challenge the fundamental values of higher education in Europe and beyond. Wealth is more unevenly distributed, and unemployment especially among the young is high in many countries, while intolerance, populism, polarisation and radicalisation have increased.

In these challenging times it is essential that we renew our vision for the EHEA and agree on new ambitions that will consolidate and unlock the full potential of the EHEA in the future.

¹ <http://www.ehea.info/cid100203/sorbonne-declaration-1998.html>

² http://media.ehea.info/file/Ministerial_conferences/02/8/1999_Bologna_Declaration_English_553028.pdf

43 **I. Roles and Objectives of Higher Education**

44
45 Higher education has a key role to play in overcoming these challenges, offering individuals the
46 opportunity to fully develop themselves throughout their lives, to improve their employment
47 prospects, and therefore their active participation in an inclusive society. Participation in higher
48 education also contributes to furthering intercultural understanding, civic engagement, ethical
49 awareness, tolerance and respect of others.

50
51 Achieving these goals across the EHEA and ensuring high level teaching and research requires
52 public authorities to assume their full responsibilities, embedding the implementation of the
53 Bologna Process values, principles and renewed tools in 48 different contexts. It also requires
54 recognising the key role and responsibility of higher education institutions with their multiple
55 missions and the contribution they make to society, strengthening the fundamental values of
56 higher education based on academic freedom, institutional autonomy and participation of staff
57 and students, and enhancing social responsibility and equitable access.

58
59 We will ensure that higher education promotes effective and active citizenship and is equally
60 accessible to all students, irrespective of social, economic or cultural backgrounds.

61
62 We encourage the further contribution of autonomous higher education institutions to society
63 and to continuously improving their governance systems geared to accountability and quality
64 enhancement and based on student and staff participation.

65
66 We will therefore ensure that our national policy measures are compatible with and further the
67 fundamental values of higher education across the EHEA.

68
69
70 **II. Challenges of the EHEA**

71
72
73 ***Furthering implementation***

74
75 The success of the Bologna Process depends on the commitment to its full implementation by
76 all parties in each of the 48 EHEA member States: it relies on national authorities, higher
77 education institutions, staff, students and other stakeholders to keep strengthening further the
78 EHEA. Progress has been made over the last decade and quality assurance systems play a
79 crucial role for both quality enhancement and accountability, thus creating the necessary trust
80 across the EHEA. At the same time, the successful implementation of key higher education
81 reforms varies among our diverse 48 EHEA member countries.

82
83 We recognise that the implementation of our common commitments is complex, and
84 acknowledge that the task may be more difficult for some topics and for some members.
85 However, we also underline the importance of the role and responsibility of national authorities
86 and higher education institutions in contributing to reach these goals to make the EHEA more
87 effective and attractive.

88
89 In order to improve further implementation across the EHEA, we reaffirm our commitment to
90 focusing attention on the issues identified in the 2018 Bologna Process Implementation Report.
91 *[Pending information from the 2018 BPIR report]*

92
93 We also identify three key commitments to strengthen up the EHEA and we will enhance closer
94 collaboration inside the EHEA for more capacity building and promote quality further: (i) a three-
95 cycle system compatible with the revised EHEA qualifications framework of the EHEA which we

96 adopt (ii) recognition practices in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention; and (iii) quality
97 assurance practices based on the 2015 European Standards and Guidelines (ESGs).

98
99 To do so, we adopt... *[waiting for joint approach from AG3-WG2- as decided in Tartu meeting - in*
100 *collaboration with WG1] an approach (annex) based on reversed peer reviews ..*

101
102 We take note of the conclusions of the report on the Belarus roadmap since this country joined
103 the EHEA in 2015, and in order to help Belarus implementing further higher education reforms,
104 we undertake to... *[waiting for recommendations and debates from next BFUG on AG2 reports and*
105 *propositions]*

106 107 108 **The transformation of Learning and Teaching**

109
110 We will address the challenges of equality in the access and success to higher education and
111 strive to build a more inclusive learning and teaching community by ensuring integration of
112 diverse student populations and addressing their needs by enabling academics to contribute to
113 the design and implementation of new pedagogical initiatives.

114
115 We will ensure that higher education institutions will support both the development of new
116 teaching and digitally-based methods in a student-centered approach to ensure the best student
117 learning experience and the enhancement of teaching and learning practices.

118
119 We are also determined to promote teaching enhancement and ensure the attractiveness of the
120 teaching environment.

121
122 We recognise the importance of the digital transformation of our societies and the need to
123 enhance the digital competences of students and staff.

124
125 Higher education and research are key to develop critical and creative thought. Quality teaching
126 rests on quality research; the principle that higher education should be research-based should
127 be reinforced as well as the initiation of undergraduates into research.

128
129 We will ensure that synergies are made between teaching, learning and research in a more
130 systematic way in all our higher education systems in order developing high quality research
131 and maintaining a high level of knowledge-based competences and skills.

132
133 We will improve the development of life-long learning as part of a more flexible access to higher
134 education and to take into account the changing employment landscape

135
136 We support the link of short cycles education to higher education in order to both promote more
137 flexible study paths and to contribute to improve employment prospects.

138
139 We will promote recognition of prior learning as it is crucial in helping all learners in acquiring
140 new qualifications and migrants in getting their skills recognised at international level and
141 national level in their new country.

142
143 We will further promote recognition practices in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and
144 we will step up our efforts in developing procedures in particular for refugees and persons in a
145 refugee-like situation³.

³ 2017 Recommendation on the recognition of refugees' qualifications under the Lisbon Recognition Convention, adopted by the Lisbon recognition committee on November 14th 2017

146
147 We call upon the Council of Europe, the European Commission and UNESCO to adopt along
148 the same lines the proposed Diploma supplement template with its updated guidelines for its
149 better implementation across the EHEA and a wider use by higher education institutions and
150 employers.

151
152 Besides, we encourage higher education institutions to embark on the digitalization of Diploma
153 supplement and student data exchange, with a commitment to collect student data in a secure,
154 machine-readable format, in line with data protection legislation, and in line with the promotion
155 of student mobility.

156
157 We want to further develop student and staff mobility and therefore further encourage higher
158 education institutions to develop more joint programs and joint degrees, and underline the
159 importance of exchanges of knowledge and information among the EHEA higher education
160 systems.

161
162
163 ***International cooperation in the field of higher education,***

164
165 The increasing pace and complexity of globalisation and the growth of internationalisation have
166 a major impact specifically on higher education. In recent years, higher education has opened
167 up to the world even further, supported by national policies, the higher education community,
168 digital developments and with the increase in migration in several regions. This is also a time
169 when there is a backlash against globalisation in some parts of the world, combined with
170 changing geopolitical relations with potential negative consequences. As a space for dialogue
171 and co-construction, the EHEA encompasses a wide geographical area and contributes to the
172 geopolitical interactions among countries, both in and beyond EHEA.

173
174 Although there is still work to be done across the EHEA to enhance students mobility, the model
175 of dialogue and cooperation between national systems fostered by EHEA based on voluntary
176 exchanges and mutual adjustment among members has proved to be practical and workable
177 and is still an appealing one for other regions .

178
179 We support the idea of a Bologna Policy Forum in order to help us entering into dialogue with
180 other international fora and to promote international staff and student exchanges, and foster
181 joint teaching programs and research programs.

182
183 We want the EHEA to develop new perspectives for a sustainable international dialogue and
184 more systematic approach of international cooperation based on closer dialogue with other
185 regional or international higher education organizations.

186
187
188

189 **III. A new ambition for the EHEA and its future beyond 2020**

190
191 We encourage higher education institutions to promote actively their multiple partnerships and
192 interactions with society in its different components, and to develop strategies that make sense
193 in their respective environment and communities thus emphasising the importance of the civic
194 and social role of higher education.

195
196 We will promote increasing collaboration between teaching and research and we encourage
197 more dialogue and further interactions between the EHEA and the European Research Area.

198
199 The quality of higher education has proven to be at the heart of the setting up of the European
200 Higher Education Area and the ESGs have proven to be a robust and European framework for
201 quality assurance, including across borders. The perspective of increased joint programmes,
202 joint degrees and closer collaborations between higher education institutions across the EHEA
203 calls for more development and substantial compliance with quality assurance criteria.

204
205 We, Ministers, therefore commit to supporting further development of quality assurance at
206 institutional, national and European level.

207
208
209 **• A renewed vision for the EHEA**

210
211 Joint programmes and mobility should be further developed as a way to participate to a better
212 understanding of each other and as contributing to strengthen up a shared European culture.
213 Digitally-based technologies should be further used to foster wider mobility.

214
215 We welcome that higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies are increasingly
216 cooperating across borders, which strengthens their international profiles and allows increasing
217 partnerships.

218
219 We call for the promotion of more ambitious goals for joint programmes and joint degrees, for
220 the mobility of staff and students and for joint research programmes in the perspective of the
221 development of European Universities across the EHEA.

222
223 To do so, while European Universities will need truly European external quality assurance
224 based on the 2015 ESGs and provided by EQAR-registered agencies with international
225 experiences, we will promote genuine cooperation between higher education institutions at
226 regional and international levels in order to contribute to growth, creativity and societal
227 development.

228
229 We call for major reflection from the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) on improving the
230 collaboration with other stakeholders including a wider international audience at the international
231 level in order to improve the visibility of the EHEA

232
233 We welcome Italy as the host for our next EHEA Conference and Bologna Policy Forum in
234 2020.

235
236 We mandate the BFUG to report to us in 2020 about implementation issues going beyond the
237 national level only and taking account of the reality of cross-border exchanges in higher
238 education, and to engage in a major reflection upon its own governance, and structure in order
239 to identify effective solutions to the period after 2020.

241 We also call on the BFUG to present to us, at our next Ministerial Conference in 2020 in Italy, a
242 proposal on how to take the EHEA further beyond 2020, in particular with a new governance
243 and revised working modes with a view of improving effectiveness and ownership by including
244 higher education institutions and stakeholders to a larger extent.
245
246
247
248
249

250 **Annexes : (tbd)**

251
252 Transformation of Learning and Teaching:

- 253
254 - The ministers agree to monitor the implementation of the revised DS at the national and
255 institutional level.
256 o *“(….)call upon HEIs to revisit how Diploma Supplement can support the further
257 development of student-centered learning and better communication of learning
258 outcomes and to monitor the implementation of the DS at national level while
259 continuing the regular monitoring and reporting exercise”*
260

- 261 - Short cycles
262

- 263 - Digitalisation /dematerialization/student mobility
264

- 265 - European universities:
266
267

- 268 - New Implementation approach:
269

- 270 - Quality assurance:
271

- 272 - The framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area:
273

- 274 - The Paris Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education 24-25
275 May 2018 adopted the revised overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA,
276 implementing the commitment in the Yerevan Communiqué. The revised overarching
277 framework for qualifications in the EHEA comprises the short cycle, the first cycle, the
278 second cycle and the third cycle generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning
279 outcomes and competences, and credit ranges in the short cycle, first and second
280 cycles.
281 - Ministers committed themselves to elaborating national frameworks for qualifications
282 compatible with the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA and strongly
283 suggest to incorporate short qualifications in the national qualifications frameworks for
284 higher education although it is up to the countries to decide upon such an incorporation.
285
286
287