



## Appendix I: Structured peer-based support for the implementation of the Bologna key commitments

### SUPPORT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF KEY BOLOGNA COMMITMENTS

#### *Proposed support for the implementation of key Bologna commitments*

Support for the implementation of key Bologna commitments takes place through a programme with dedicated peer groups, which aim to improve the implementation of specific key commitments of the Bologna Process. It is based on the established reporting mechanisms of the Bologna Process and the principles of collaboration, equality, mutual learning, peer support and peer-counselling. Its main purpose is to improve full and effective implementation of key Bologna commitments throughout the EHEA.

The three key commitments BFUG has identified as the focus for further work in the period 2018-2020 are:

- A Three-Cycle System compatible with the QF-EHEA and first and second cycle degrees scaled by ECTS: Programmes are structured according to the three cycle-system of the Bologna model and scaled by the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). Qualifications achieved in each cycle are defined in a National Qualification Framework (NQF) which is compatible with the Qualification Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA).
- Compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC): Cross-border recognition practices are in compliance with the Lisbon Recognition convention, including promoting through the national information centres or otherwise, the use of the UNESCO/Council of Europe Diploma Supplement or any other comparable document by the higher education institutions of the Parties
- Quality Assurance in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG): Institutions granting degrees assure the quality of their programmes leading to degrees within the three-cycle system following the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015). External quality assurance (be it at programme or institutional level) is performed by Agencies that have demonstrably complied with the standards and guidelines stipulated in the current ESG. This is best ensured where only those agencies registered on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) are allowed to operate in the country.

The proposal follows the Bologna philosophy of peer- and process review which fits well with the collegiate and improvement-oriented ethos of the EHEA and aims to make implementation of key commitments more transparent.

The timeframe proposed for a single round is the period between Ministerial Conferences, thus following the normal monitoring timeframe in the EHEA. The programme will be supported by the facilitating Bologna Implementation Coordination Group, which includes but is not limited to the chairs of the peer groups involved and appointed during the Ministerial Conference.

## Steps of support for implementation of key Bologna commitments



- 1. Survey:** The level of implementation of the key commitments is surveyed based on data submitted during the BFUG's normal monitoring procedures, using the scoreboard indicators in the Bologna Process Implementation Report. The implementation of the key commitments is addressed in a supplementary report thereon.
- 2. Invite:** The BFUG delegates of all EHEA countries are formally invited by the BFUG Co-chairs to take part in one or more thematic peer group, each focusing on one key commitment. Based on the information surveyed and reported in step 1, countries will be asked to self-identify their needs and expertise to commit to the mode through which they can contribute to the improved implementation of key commitments of the Bologna Process in the EHEA as a whole.
  - (a) Countries that self-identify as having **successfully implemented a key commitment** (indicated by none of the relevant scoreboard indicators being red, and not more than one being orange) will be invited to suggest ways in which they are willing to support countries having difficulties with implementation of that key commitment, e.g. through peer-learning, reverse peer-review or other activities designed to share their examples of successful implementation and aid others in achieving the same.
  - (b) Countries that self-identify as **not or insufficiently having implemented** a key commitment (identified by having one or more red scoreboard indicators, and two or more that are orange) will be invited to indicate what peer support would be beneficial to aid implementation and how it aims to use that support.Each country is expected to join at least one of the peer groups.  
As it is possible to face implementation challenges in one or two key commitments while having implemented the other(s) successfully, countries could indicate a need for peer support in certain areas while offering peer support in others, as appropriate.
- 3. Response:** The BFUG delegate sends a reply to the Bologna Implementation Coordination Group indicating what the country's implementation goals are when it comes to the key commitments and nominates representatives to the peer groups in those areas where the country requires support or can offer support, respectively. The representative(s) should be people with responsibility for the key commitment concerned, and BFUG delegates are strongly encouraged to involve relevant stakeholders who could offer, or be the recipients of, peer support or peer counselling in the area. In the peer groups they will be able to obtain advice on how to reach these goals.
- 4. Peer support:** At this point peer support will start. The Bologna Implementation Coordination Group facilitates the grouping of countries offering peer support and those wishing to take advantage of such support into thematic peer groups. Each peer group will be dedicated to supporting the implementation of a single key Bologna commitment. These peer groups will include both countries that have sufficiently implemented the key commitment concerned and countries coping with challenges to be

addressed for full implementation. Based on the goals identified in step 3 each peer group designs its own action plan with specified activities and impacts for each country concerned, including the expected involvement of relevant stakeholders.

5. **Update:** Each peer group gives an annual update to the Bologna Implementation Coordination Group on how the countries collaborating in that group have used peer support to enhance or support implementation. The Bologna Implementation Coordination Group in turn produces a summary report for the BFUG.
6. **Data:** All EHEA countries submit their data for the next implementation report which will mark the starting point of a new round.  
The supplementary report on implementation of key commitments (see step 1) will show current implementation alongside level of implementation in the previous report for all countries. Submitted plans on implementation of specific key commitments will be highlighted in the supplementary report.

#### *Incentives for improved implementation of key commitments*

The normal reporting process and the proposed support programme act by their very nature as incentives for improved implementation, in the way that the Bologna Process Implementation Report highlights levels of implementation, and the programme supports improvements through targeted peer-learning and support. In addition, it is proposed that countries that have made significant progress will be offered the opportunity to highlight their work on implementation at the Ministerial Conference.

In the event that no action has been taken by a country and no improvement in implementation can be noted from the data submitted during two rounds, the lack of improvement will be brought to the attention of the Ministerial Conference. The Ministers will be asked for recommendations on how to proceed on a case by case basis.