

FIRST MEETING OF THE BFUG WG 1 ON MONITORING

Kirkegt 18, Oslo (Norway) 19 February 2016

Venue: Ministry of Education and Research

Draft Minutes

Country/organisations	Name
Albania	Lejda Bana
Armenia	Lusine Fljyan
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Cyprus	Andreas Orphanides
Czech Republic	Jakub Drbolav
EI/ETUCE	Ilze Trapenziere
EQAR	Melinda Szabo
ENQA	Padraig Walsh/ <i>apologies</i>
EUA	Henriette Stoeber
Eurydice (Co-chair)	David Crosier
ESU	Rebecka Stenkvis
Eurostudent	Hauschildt Kristina
France	Hélène Lagier
Germany	Frank Petrikowski/ <i>apologies</i>
Germany	Kathleen Ordnung
Latvia (Co-Chair)	Andrejs Rauhvargers
Lithuania	Laura Stračinskiene
Luxembourg	Elisa Mazzucato
Moldova	Nadejda Velisco
Montenegro(Co-Chair)	Aleksandar Vujovic/ <i>apologies</i>
Norway(Co-Chair)	Tone Flood Strøm

Poland	Renanta Korzeniowska- Pucuek/ <i>apologies</i>
Russian Federation	Nadezda Kamynina/ <i>apologies</i>

There were 18 participants present at the 1st meeting of the Working Group 1.

Welcome and introduction by the WG1 Co-Chairs

Ms. Tone Flood Strøm, the Norwegian Co-Chair and the host of the meeting of the working group welcomed the participants. Roundtable introduction of the members of the working group followed taking into account that it was the first meeting of the group. The main goal of the meeting was to evaluate the 2015 report, what are the strengths and the weaknesses of the 2015 report, and what should be done differently for the 2018 report, and what are the new issues arising from the 2015 Yerevan Communiqué. The overall structure of the “2018 report”, and the various indicators, as well as the terms of reference of the working group, were also important topics to be addressed. It was suggested to break into smaller groups for discussion of the indicators.

2. Adoption of agenda

Document: Draft Agenda

The Agenda of the meeting was adopted including one item in “AOB”, i.e. information to the working group regarding election of a BFUG representative to the EUROSTUDENT Steering Board.

3. Brief feedback from the recent meetings.

On behalf of the BFUG Secretariat, its representative Ms. Gayane Harutyunyan briefed on the recent meetings:

- In November, 2015, the BFUG Secretariat organized a coordination meeting of all the Co-Chairs. The aim of this meeting was to plan activities of the groups with special attention to the issues that required coordination among them. The meeting was very fruitful in the view of ‘mechanics of cooperation’ and it was suggested to organize similar coordination meetings on annual basis in order to check how things are progressing.
- In January, the BFUG Board meeting was held in Chisinau, Moldova.
- During January-February 2016, were held the first meetings of the WGs and AGs.

As the group does not really deal with implementation, the present name of the group ‘monitoring’ is more logical than the previous one (“Implementation”). There are areas where the working groups overlap and the working groups need to coordinate between them.

4. Role of WG1 and roadmap to 2018

Document: Terms of Reference

The Co-Chairs explained that the initial task of WG1 is to analyze the “2015 Implementation Report” with an intention to use the best of it, improve its methodology, and include the new issues arising from the Yerevan Communiqué in the next 2018 report. It should also be kept in mind that the previous report was 300 pages long and it is important not to make the “2018 report” longer. The resources to produce the report are limited.

It was stressed that the role of the WG is to support the ‘data collectors’ and advise them on all aspects of the report without going into the details of the questionnaire. The major policy issues, including indicators, have to be referred to the BFUG, while the technical issues are to be left to the data collectors. During the WG/AG co-chairs’ meeting in November the idea of using the data from the ESU report “Bologna with Students Eyes” was discussed. Sometimes the information provided by the countries through the questionnaires and the information in ESU report “Bologna with Student Eyes”

does not comply. Comparing the two perspectives will enrich and broaden the 2018 Monitoring report as well as better reflect the government and stakeholder co-operation in the EHEA. The WG members favoured the idea of using the data from the ESU report. It was also suggested to include in the next 2018 report data from EUAs Trends-report, i.e. perspective of the universities, especially on such issues as the internationalisation of universities. The representatives of ESU and EUA were both very much in favour of this idea.

The WG agreed that this innovative approach would be important for particular areas of the Report. For example, for indicators that are opinion-based (i.e. when the perspectives are expressed by the countries through the questionnaires), it would make sense to compare with the perspectives of other stakeholders.

The Terms of Reference of the WG were approved with inclusion in ‘Specific Tasks’ for preparation of the 2018 Monitoring Report integrating data collected by ESU and EUA.

5. Yerevan Communiqué, and issues arising from it

Document: Yerevan Communiqué

The structure of the “2018 Monitoring Report” was discussed in relation to the Yerevan Communiqué and the new issues arising from it. The Co-Chairs emphasised that the Yerevan Communiqué has an impact on the structure of the next Monitoring Report and on the new topics to be taken into account. The working group members in general agreed that:

- While the report does not require major structural changes, it should nevertheless be modified in order better to focus on the new topics.
- In order to make the report more reader-friendly, some tables that are currently in the report itself, could be moved to an annex.
- The existing indicators should be strengthened.
- It would be more relevant to include a separate chapter on teaching and learning.
- The chapter on lifelong learning should be cut, relocating its key indicators in other chapters.
- The chapter on “Quality Assurance” should include “Recognition”, in order to reflect relationships between the two topics.
- Indicators related to completion might fit better in a chapter on social dimension/inclusion than in a chapter on employability.
- It will be good to develop country sheets for selection of key indicators in order to have a clearer view of implementation.
- “2018 Monitoring Report” should precisely demonstrate what the areas of non-implementation of the member countries are

The WG agreed that the 2018 report has to focus on the priorities of the Yerevan Communiqué: “teaching and learning”, “employability”, “inclusive higher education” and “implementation”. In addition, the Yerevan Communiqué puts forward new issues like ‘fundamental values’, digital learning, staff mobility, relevance in a broad sense, increased focus on ‘teaching and learning’ etc. It is important to find the best way to include these issues into the questionnaire.

Issues concerning the “fundamental values”:

Until now, the “Implementation Report” has given little attention to core academic values and institutional autonomy. However, as Belarus is to be monitored in particular on issues related to these core values, all other countries should also come under some scrutiny. There cannot be two different standards. The WG discussed how the WG could fulfill its task to “integrate the fundamental values of the EHEA in the reporting”. It was agreed among the group members that a good starting point for the discussions on this matter could be the Council of Europe Recommendation 2012/7 on “the responsibility of public authorities for academic freedom and institutional autonomy”¹. It was also felt

¹Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the responsibility of public authorities for academic freedom and institutional autonomy:
<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1954741&Site=CM>

that EUA's Autonomy Scoreboard would be an important source of information on fundamental values in higher education.

The fundamental values of the EHEA is an important issue also for AG 2 "Support for the Belarus roadmap" and AG3 "Dealing with non-implementation", so there was agreement within the group that for this matter WG1 has to be in close contact with WG2 "Implementation", AG2 and AG3, and open to their suggestions and proposals.

Issues concerning "teaching and learning":

The Yerevan Communiqué also puts a strengthened focus on "teaching and learning", and this is the reason why the WG felt that this topic merits its own chapter. The content of the chapter would include indicators from previous reports – such as those on student-centered learning – but would also try to develop new indicators, including digital learning.

Other issues:

Other policy issues highlighted in the Yerevan Communiqué where the report will attempt to be more innovative concern the concept of relevance in a broad sense, employability for holders of first cycle degrees especially in relation to public employment, and staff mobility.

6. Discussion on 2015 Implementation Report

For the discussion on the "2015 Implementation Report" and its indicators, the Co-Chairs prepared the *Working Document: Guidelines to the evaluation of the 2015 Bologna Implementation Report*. The WG went through the indicators of the "2015 Report", chapter-by-chapter, looking into what should be kept, what to get rid of and what should be added. Suggestions were made for all three "categories". The WG identified quite a few of areas where the 2015 indicators should be strengthened, as well as areas where new indicators could be developed, and additional data could be included.

7. Date of the next meeting

It was agreed to schedule the next meeting in September 2016 taking into account that the next BFUG meeting is planned in December 2016.

The meeting will mainly discuss a proposal for the 2018 Monitoring Report, its structure and indicators. In this regard, the WG is ready to consider comments, requests and proposals related to the 2018 report coming from other groups and the BFUG.

8. AOB

The representative of EUROSTUDENT introduced the process concerning the nomination of a BFUG member for the Steering Board. The Steering Board representative will be nominated during the BFUG meeting in March in Amsterdam.