

Minutes of the XCIX BFUG Meeting

9th – 10th of March 2026

Hosted by Cyprus (online)

List of participants

No.	Country/Organisation	Name
1.	Albania	Anisa Subashi
2.	Andorra	Jordi Llobart
3.	Andorra	Maria del Mar Martinez Ramirez
4.	Armenia	Ani Virabyan
5.	Armenia	Karen Trchounian
6.	Austria	Stephan De Pasqualin
7.	Austria	Helga Posset
8.	Belgium Flemish Community	Liesbeth Hens
9.	Belgium French Community	Adriana Gonfroid
10.	Bulgaria	Ivana Radonova
11.	Bulgaria	Anna Varbanova
12.	Business Europe	Inga Lapina
13.	Council of Europe	Catherine Dolgova Dreyer
14.	Croatia	Loredana Maravić
15.	Cyprus (Co-chair)	Terpsa Constantinidou
16.	Cyprus	Kyriacos Charalambous
17.	Cyprus	Yiannis Kasoulides
18.	Czech Republic	Tereza Vengřínová
19.	Czech Republic	Michal Karpisek
20.	Czech Republic (Guest)	Michal Uhl
21.	Denmark	Anita Damsgaard Jensen
22.	EHEA Secretariat	Horia Onița
23.	EHEA Secretariat	Lilia Parhomenco
24.	EHEA Secretariat	Petrișor Laurențiu Țucă
25.	EHEA Secretariat	Oana Alexandra Țințar
26.	EI/ETUCE	Agnes Roman
27.	EI/ETUCE	Rob Copeland
28.	ENQA	Anna Gover
29.	ENQA	Cristina Ghițulică
30.	ENQA	Kristin Vinje
31.	EQAR	Stéphane Lauwick
32.	EQAR	Aleksandar Šušnjar
33.	Estonia	Janne Pukk
34.	Eurydice	David Crossier
35.	Eurydice	Roland Farkas
36.	EURASHE	John Edwards
37.	EURASHE	Jakub Grodecki
38.	EURASHE	Ana Tecilazić
39.	European Commission	Stefan Zotti
40.	European Commission	Kinga Szuly
41.	European Commission	Camille Odent
42.	European Commission (expert)	Colin Tück
43.	European Students' Union (ESU)	Lana Par
44.	European Students' Union (ESU)	Daciana Pop
45.	European Students' Union (ESU)	Arno Schrooyen
46.	European University Association (EUA)	Michael Gaebel
47.	European University Association (EUA)	Maria Kelo
48.	Finland	Jonna Korhonen

No.	Country/Organisation	Name
49.	Finland	Maija Innola
50.	France	Sara Thornton
51.	France	Nathalie Roques
52.	Georgia	Maia Shukhoshvii
53.	Germany	Michaela Böhme
54.	Germany	Fabiana Florczyk
55.	Greece	Varvara Papathanasopoulou
56.	Greece	Alexandra Karvouni
57.	Holy See	Melanie Rosenbaum
58.	Hungary	András Báló
59.	Hungary	Fanni Gál
60.	Iceland	Una Strand Viðarsdóttir
61.	Ireland	Padraig Hennigan
62.	Ireland	Marie Glynn
63.	Ireland	Siobhan Sleeman
64.	Italy	Lavinia Monti
65.	Italy	Chiara Finocchietti
66.	Kazakhstan	Rauza Mendaliyeva
67.	Latvia	Vita Jagorova
68.	Latvia	Artūrs Čerņiševs
69.	Liechtenstein	Belgin Amann
70.	Lithuania	Paulius Vaitiekus
71.	Lithuania	Neda Zutautaite
72.	Luxembourg	Patricia Marx
73.	Luxembourg	Tsui Méline
74.	Malta	James Perry Maia
75.	Malta	Josianne Farrugia
76.	Moldova	Adriana Cazacu
77.	Montenegro	Milica Kavedzic
78.	Montenegro	Dragana Četković
79.	Netherlands	Arthur Belle
80.	Netherlands	Charlotte Ruitinga
81.	Norway (BFUG Co-Chair)	Tone Flood Strom
82.	Norway	Niclas Lindahl Trosdahl
83.	Norway	Julie Park
84.	Poland	Maria Bołtruszko
85.	Poland	Monika Zuberek
86.	Portugal	Ines Viegas
87.	Portugal	Denise Matos
88.	Romania	Mihai Cezar Hâj
89.	Romania (Vice Chair)	Luminița-Mihaela Matei
90.	San Marino	Remo Massari
91.	Serbia	Ivona Vuckovic
92.	Slovakia	Peter Ondreicka
93.	Slovakia	Martina Kokavec
94.	Slovenia	Jernej Širok
95.	Spain	José Ángel Piña Sánchez
96.	Spain	Esther Esteban
97.	Sweden	Robin Moberg
98.	Sweden	Lelav Zandi
99.	Switzerland	Aurélia Robert-Tissot
100.	Switzerland	Régis Nyffeler
101.	Ukraine	Maryna Mruga
102.	UNESCO	Noah Sobe
103.	UNESCO	Leila Loupis
104.	United Kingdom	Ella Williams
105.	United Kingdom	Sean Shirley-Smith
106.	United Kingdom - Scotland	Jacqueline Brasted

Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkiye sent their apologies. North Macedonia was absent.

1. Welcome and introduction

Mr. Marios Panayides, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, opened the XCIX BFUG meeting, held in an online format. He expressed the regrets of the Cyprus Presidency for not being able to organise the meeting in person in Lefkosia (Nicosia), pointing out that while all the details had been thoroughly prepared, the security situation in the Middle East called for a transfer into the online format. He continued by expressing the steadfast commitment of Cyprus to the Bologna Process and its goals, policies and priorities for the period. The Permanent Secretary further wished participants a productive meeting ahead.

The Cypriot BFUG Co-chair welcomed participants to the 99th BFUG meeting, highlighting Cyprus's commitment to the EHEA goals and the importance of continued cooperation despite the online format. Furthermore, they expressed their appreciation to the Secretariat for their support in organising the BFUG meeting in an online format.

The Norwegian BFUG Co-chair and the Romanian Vice-Chair thanked the Cypriot hosts for all their support and preparation, as well as their understanding by taking the difficult decision to move the meeting online. They also wished for a productive meeting ahead.

2. Information from the outgoing BFUG Co-chairs (Denmark and Liechtenstein)

Documents: [Minutes of the BFUG Board XCVI meeting \(Vaduz\)](#) and [BFUG XCVII meeting \(Copenhagen\)](#)

The Liechtensteiner and Danish outgoing BFUG Co-chairs recalled the good discussions at the BFUG Board meeting in Vaduz and BFUG meeting in Copenhagen and thanked the BFUG members for their cooperation. The BFUG acknowledged the XCVII BFUG meeting minutes.

3. Information about the XCVIII BFUG Board meeting in Oslo

Documents: [BFUG_99_CY_NO_3_BFUG_Board_Oslo_Draft_Minutes_\(Oslo\)](#)

The Norwegian BFUG Co-chair emphasised the good discussions at the BFUG Board meeting in Oslo in preparation for the BFUG meeting.

4. Adoption of the agenda

Documents: [BFUG_99_CY_NO_4_1_Draft_BFUG_Agenda_06.03.2026](#)
[BFUG_99_CY_NO_4_2_Draft_annotated_agenda_06.03.2026](#)
[BFUG_99_CY_NO_4_3_Final_annotated_agenda_09.03.2026](#)

Iceland, supported by ETUCE, Denmark, Czech Republic, Finland, Holy See, EUA, Liechtenstein, Latvia, Sweden, Lithuania, Germany, Bulgaria, the United Kingdom, Malta and the Norwegian BFUG Co-chairs (16) proposed to defer the agenda item 'Debate on the Interconnectedness of EHEA with ERA' for the BFUG meeting in Ireland, where a two-day meeting could be considered. They also suggested shortening the time for the agenda item related to the ECTS User's Guide, with Holy See proposing deferring the item, supported by Finland, Denmark, France and Malta.

The EHEA Secretariat, supported by European Commission, Austria, Serbia, Liechtenstein, Holy See, Bulgaria, France, Poland, Latvia, Andorra, UK-Scotland, Business Europe, Portugal, Spain and Ireland (16) proposed changing the timing for the ECTS User's Guide from 90 to 60 minutes and replaced the proposed action from 'Adopting' to 'Discussing' the Guide. The EHEA Secretariat also emphasised the possibility to send comments in writing after the meeting.

The BFUG agreed to defer the agenda item 9 – Interconnectedness between EHEA and ERA, to replace 'Adopting the ECTS User's Guide' to 'Discussing the ECTS User's Guide' and to reduce its time allocation. The EHEA Secretariat circulated the final agenda to the BFUG members.

5. Information from the EHEA Secretariat

Documents: [BFUG 99 CY No 5 1 EHEA Secretariat Presentation 05.03.2026](#)
[BFUG 99 CY No 5 2 BFUG XCVII feedback 06.03.2026](#)

The Head of the EHEA Secretariat gave updates and started by informing that most BFUG working structures met since the BFUG meeting in Copenhagen, with the implementation of the Work Programme progressing smoothly according to schedule. He noted particular activities conducted by the Secretariat apart from the ongoing work, notably the support for setting up the Drafting Committee and preparing its Terms of Reference and Roadmap, the analysis conducted together with EQAR on the responses for the public consultation regarding the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG), the liaison with the BFUG on the Bologna Process Implementation Report (BPIR) questionnaires and the process of monitoring fundamental values, as well as for the practicalities regarding the Ministerial Conference. He highlighted that the Secretariat organised a coordination meeting on the terminology for the EHEA documents, with a comparison table to be kept as a live document ensuring consistence and comparability. The Secretariat kept updating the information sheets regarding the National Action Plans, with two more submitted since the last BFUG, and would finalise the analysis with the BPIR 2024. They also informed about the successful December 2025 issue of the EHEA newsletter and invited BFUG members to contribute to the next June 2026 edition. Regarding the social media activity, he emphasised that 132 posts had been published in the first half of the Secretariat's mandate, with over 150.000 views and an 590% increase in the number of likes. He highlighted the upcoming launch of the new EHEA website and presented its functionalities during the meeting, noting that BFUG members and working structures would be asked to confirm information. Finally, he noted the organisation of a Conference on enhancing knowledge sharing in September 2026, with a small study on the impact of and future trends for the Bologna Process supporting the event.

EUA congratulated the EHEA Secretariat on their work and the social media activity, supported by Bulgaria, UK-Scotland, Latvia, Czech Republic, Iceland, San Marino, Germany, Business Europe, ETUCE, Serbia, Austria, Denmark, Greece, Liechtenstein and Ireland (16). Andorra welcomed the new website and ETUCE announced that they would submit additional information for the new website regarding their trade union membership in national pages.

6. Updates on the Ministerial Conference and GPF

Documents: [BFUG 99 CY NO 6 1 Update note Ministerial Conference and GPF](#)
[BFUG 99 CY NO 6 2 Draft tentative agenda MC and GPF 24.02.2026](#)
[BFUG 99 CY NO 6 3 Draft Invitation MC and GPF 24.02.2026](#)

The Romanian BFUG Vice-Chair introduced the agenda item by updating the BFUG on the process of sending the save-the-dates, which had been shortly delayed due to changes in the ministry leadership. She then presented the draft invitation and tentative agenda, including secured locations. Finally, she informed that a separate call for side events would be launched, encouraging BFUG members to organise activities that would enrich the programme and announcing that BFUG members would be contacted for ideas on how to better engage ministers at the meeting.

Pertaining to the size of delegations, ETUCE welcomed the increase from five to six members and called on the BFUG members to allocate the extra seat for a representative of trade unions, highlighting their increasingly important role in the policy agenda at all levels. On a similar note, ETUCE raised the issue of the lack of involvement of trade unions in the elaboration of the national action plans. ENQA

appreciated that more than 20 QA agencies attended the Ministerial Conference in Tirana and recommended their inclusion in the upcoming delegations. ESU recalled that student participation in the national delegations is mandated by the EHEA Rules of Procedure and emphasised that student participation should also be ensured by covering the costs of attendance. Czech Republic, supported by Austria and Bulgaria, added that additional space should be ensured allowing the attendance of the working structures' co-chairs.

Regarding the agenda of the Ministerial Conference, ETUCE suggested that fundamental values be prominently included, also by engaging stakeholders on the topic of fundamental values. ENQA showed their support for organising a session on quality assurance and informed about their intention to organise a side event on the new ESG and European Approach for the QA of Joint Programmes, while ESU announced their traditional side event for students.

7. Updates from the Iași – Chișinău Drafting Committee

Documents: [BFUG_99_CY_NO_7_1_Draft_ToRs_Drafting_Committee](#)
[BFUG_99_CY_NO_7_1_ToRs_Drafting_Committee_Adopted_09.03.2026](#)
[BFUG_99_CY_NO_7_2_DC_Roadmap_24.02.2026](#)

The ESU Co-chair of the Drafting Committee introduced the Terms of Reference, mentioning the composition of the group. They also presented the Roadmap, noting that an in-person meeting would take place in Bucharest in June for preparing the Draft 1 of the Communique, to be firstly presented at the BFUG Board meeting in Podgorica.

Supported by ESU, UK-Scotland, Serbia, Belgium-Flemish, EUA, Liechtenstein, Ireland and Italy (9), Holy See suggested a short amendment for the ToRs, clarifying the membership of the group by adding the references in the provision '*The Drafting Committee is a working structure of the BFUG, composed according to Art IV RoP BFUG, entrusted with the task to prepare the Communique for the upcoming Ministerial Conference*'. ETUCE suggested allowing sufficient time between various drafts for submitting written contributions.

The BFUG adopted the Terms of Reference and Roadmap of the Drafting Committee, with the amendment proposed by the Holy See.

8. Reporting from the BFUG working structures

8.1 WG on Monitoring

Documents: [BFUG_99_CY_NO_8.1_WG_Monitoring_Presentation_06.03.2026](#)

The Eurydice Co-chair of the WG on Monitoring delivered the presentation and informed that the BPIR questionnaires had been sent to the BFUG members through the EHEA Secretariat, with the 4th of May as the deadline for filling them in. He thanked the EHEA Secretariat for their support, informed that one response from Iceland had already been submitted and presented the next steps for the process, with the first draft of the report to be submitted for the BFUG meeting in Ireland. He recalled the role of the authors of narrative texts from the working structures, with the proposals received from all bar TPG A.

8.2 WG on Fundamental Values

Documents: [BFUG_99_CY_NO_8.2_WG_FV_Presentation_05.03.2026](#)

The Romanian Co-Chair of the WG on Fundamental Values delivered the presentation, informing that the first training for national operators had been completed, with most operators already contracted. He pointed out that if no agreement would be reached on naming a national operator, the respective BFUG members would receive the questionnaires for monitoring FV without pre-filled responses. He announced that the previous WG meeting included a peer learning activity (PLA) on the public responsibility for higher education, with a planned PLA in June on the monitoring results where BFUG

members would also be invited. The Romanian WG Co-chair added that after this meeting the BFUG members and national stakeholders would receive the pre-filled questions, with the 15th of April as the deadline for submission and a first draft of the report presented at the BFUG meeting in Ireland. He emphasised that a public consultation on de facto monitoring would be open until the 10th of April, asking BFUG members and consultative members to share the news. Finally, he presented the new website on promoting fundamental values in the EHEA (fundamentalvalues.info), prepared in the NewFav2 project. Upon a question from ETUCE on how to increase the visibility of the survey to the wider academic community, the Romanian WG Co-chair informed that BFUG members, consultative members, EHEA website and social media channels and promotion through the WG members and national operators would be the main streams for ensuring visibility.

8.3 CG on Global Policy Dialogue

Documents: [BFUG 99 CY NO 8.3 CG GPD Presentation 04.03.2026](#)

The UNESCO Co-chair of the CG on Global Policy Dialogue gave updates on behalf of the group, informing that a second in-person CG meeting took place in Rome alongside a PLA on lifelong learning, including topics such as micro-credentials and recognition of prior learning. He added that an online meeting would take place in June, with the next in-person meeting taking place in December at UNESCO HQ with a PLA focusing on the right to education. The UNESCO CG Co-chair recalled that an informal group for drafting the Global Policy Forum statement had been established, with the Draft discussed in Rome and the next meeting scheduled for April. He explained that the draft would be discussed with partners from macro-regions in May and with the CG in June and pointed out that the current structure included an Introduction, the Vision, Actions and Outlook. He finished his presentation by stating that the first draft of the GPF Statement would be prepared for the BFUG meeting in Ireland, with the second deliverable of the group being an Action Plan on international cooperation post-2030 also to be presented in Ireland.

8.4 Task Force on establishing a long-term EHEA Secretariat

Documents: [BFUG 99 CY NO 8.4 TF LTS 1 Decisions on the EHEA LTS](#)
[BFUG 99 CY NO 8.4 TF LTS 2 Presentation 03.03.2026](#)
[BFUG 99 CY NO 8.4 TF LTS 3 Clarifications 04.03.2026](#)

The Norwegian BFUG Co-chair introduced the agenda item and presented the procedure. The Icelandic Co-chair of the TF on establishing a long-term EHEA Secretariat started the presentation by outlining the proposed action for the meeting, namely taking a decision on whether to establish a long-term Secretariat (Go/No-Go decision, including the financial model) and the selection of the host. She clarified that the first decision would be taken by a two-thirds majority of votes cast, while the second decision would be taken by a simple majority.

The Icelandic TF Co-chair outlined the activity of the TF since the BFUG meeting in Copenhagen, with 5 additional TF meetings ensuring smooth progress of the work. After the BFUG meeting in Copenhagen, the TF asked for additional information from the shortlisted candidates, which was received in due time in January. The TF identified no obstacle for establishing an association in Germany or Romania, while the TF required additional information for clarifying issues regarding the Czech proposal on governance, financial independence and transferring public funds to the Czech Internationalisation Agency (DZS).

She informed that in the meantime Germany decided to withdraw their application, leaving as remaining candidates Czech Republic and Romania.

The Icelandic TF Co-chair emphasised that at the BFUG meeting in Copenhagen the BFUG found the long-term Secretariat as feasible from a legal, organisational and financial point of view, provided the readiness of BFUG members to share the costs.

The Task Force co-chairs highlighted that a positive vote ('Go' decision) would imply the willingness to contribute financially to the long-term Secretariat. Furthermore, they informed that at the XCVIII BFUG Board meeting in Oslo, the Board decided to propose to the BFUG a differentiated fee model, as opposed to having all BFUG members paying equal fees. Upon a question from the UK, the Icelandic TF Co-chair clarified that UK and UK-Scotland would be expected to divide the fee amongst themselves.

Italy mentioned that they had previously raised concerns regarding the long-term Secretariat several times, including at the BFUG meetings and in writing. Italy considered that paying equal fees reflected the principles of equality and shared responsibility, even more so as the EHEA Secretariat provides the same assistance to BFUG members regardless of the size, population, or structure of the HE system. Moreover, Italy considered that since consultative members also benefit from the activity of the Secretariat, they should also contribute financially. On the matter of the differential fee model versus equal fee model, Sweden commented that the differentiated fee model expresses solidarity, supported by Germany, Austria, Ireland, Cyprus, UK-Scotland, Belgium-Flemish, Czech Republic, Denmark, Liechtenstein, Slovakia, Georgia, European Commission, Finland, Bulgaria, Norway, Greece, Spain, and Portugal (19). Pertaining to the contribution of the consultative members, Iceland considered that their engagement is to the benefit of the BFUG, while they also do not have similar resources as BFUG members to justify financial contributions.

Further on, Italy considered that so far, the Secretariat depended on the willingness of BFUG members to contribute, leading to resources invested by some countries. They further pointed out that European Union members would pay twice since the European Commission would contribute separately. Italy expressed their reservations about taking a decision on financial matters, which they argued were not sufficiently discussed and left several issues open, such as what happens in case of non-compliance. On a similar note, Holy See supported by Portugal and Italy considered that the legal basis for collecting contributions also remained an open issue, with Iceland replying that the EQAR model is already working and if this is the case BFUG members could possibly find solutions by paying through other national structures.

Italy also added that it was unclear what would happen in case of non-compliance with payment. They raised issues about the voting procedure as according to the Rules of Procedure the decisions should be taken as far as possible by consensus, asking for additional discussions before calling a vote on the Go/No-Go decision. In reply, the Norwegian Co-chair mentioned that the BFUG had already debated at length the proposed issues.

On another note, Italy pointed out that the proposed Roadmap included activities to be conducted before the Ministerial Conference, while the Tirana Communiqué mandated the BFUG to further investigate the issue in order to present a proposal on the long-term Secretariat for adoption and implementation by ministers in 2027. Italy considered that the BFUG could not work on preparing Statutes or selecting a Head of Secretariat before ministers agree to establish a long-term Secretariat, recalling that in line with the Communiqué, the adoption of the long-term secretariat should therefore be a decision taken by Ministers in 2027, followed only afterwards by its implementation. Finally, Italy raised a governance issue, related to the fact that the establishment of a new Steering Committee as an additional structure, would add another layer of representation and governance in the BFUG structure, contributing to create potentially more complexity rather than simplifying and streamlining processes and procedures, and questioned why consultative members would be included since they would not contribute financially. In reply, the EUA TF Co-chair clarified that discussions on governance arrangements could be continued and that the presence of consultative members in the proposed body would represent non-financial contributions.

As the BFUG had no further remarks, the meeting continued with short presentations from the two candidates for hosting. The Czech Republic presented their offer, informing that the Secretariat would be located in Prague and hosted by DZS, a public organisation under the Ministry of Education with strong autonomy. They highlighted their proposal combining both public sector stability and operational

autonomy, with a dual governance including the DZS director as formal legal representative and the BFUG for strategic oversight and budget approval. The Czech representatives considered the quick establishment an advantage as no legal entity would be established. They clarified that each BFUG member would sign an accession form to a memorandum that would be annexed to the Communique, triggering a consortium agreement. In relation to in-kind benefits, DZS would offer office premises, operational systems and administrative and technical services.

The Romanian BFUG Vice-Chair, presenting in her capacity as Romanian BFUG representative, gave an overview of the Romanian proposal of establishing an independent new legal entity through a non-profit association based in Bucharest. She highlighted that the proposal was based on a functioning model with proven track record ensuring a legally, financially and operationally independent Secretariat accountable solely to BFUG. Furthermore, the proposal emphasised the Romanian experience of successfully holding the EHEA Secretariat twice. The Romanian proposal explained that an association was easy to establish based on the Romanian national legal framework. In relation to in-kind contribution, Romania would offer premises at a public HEI in Bucharest with complete coverage of utility costs and equipped rooms for meetings and events.

The Head of the EHEA Secretariat presented the procedure for the online secret vote, carried through the Election Runner platform. Ballots were distributed only to BFUG members present at the online meeting. The following BFUG members were absent at the time of the vote and did not cast ballots: Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Kazakhstan, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Turkiye.

The Head of the EHEA Secretariat further announced the results. Out of the 82 votes cast, 65 were in favour of establishing a long-term Secretariat, 15 against and 2 ballots were spoilt, thus reaching the required two-thirds majority. As pertains the host, Romania received 54 votes, Czech Republic received 26 votes and two ballots were spoilt.

The Norwegian BFUG Co-chair announced the BFUG decision of going forward with establishing a long-term EHEA Secretariat in Romania from 1st of July 2027, to be established based on the Roadmap approved by the BFUG and re-evaluated in 2033.

The BFUG members congratulated Romania for the result and the Czech Republic for their valuable application, thanked all the countries which submitted applications for their interest and expressed appreciation to the Task Force for their work.

8.5 WG on Internationalisation and Mobility

Documents: [BFUG 99 CY NO 8.5 WG on IM Discussion Paper on IM Action Plan](#)
[BFUG 99 CY NO 8.5 WG on IM 2 Presentation 02.03.2026](#)

The Dutch WG on IM Co-chair gave updates on behalf of the WG, recalling that the WG presented the first draft of the Note on Terminology at the BFUG meeting in Denmark and that the first draft of the Action Plan on IM would be submitted for the BFUG meeting in Ireland. In this sense, he presented the discussion paper prepared for the XCIX BFUG meeting and its' purpose of gathering input and seeking guidance from the BFUG on the scope, objective and added value of the Action Plan. The Dutch WG Co-chair presented the three set of questions for the BFUG, focusing on i) the Leuven target – including whether the target should be changed, how it should be measured or whether focus should rather lie on barriers/qualitative aspects, ii) how to operationalise the balanced mobility goal, including whether to look more closely at incoming mobility figures since the Leuven 20% target was focused on outgoing mobility, and iii) how to address geopolitical development in relation to extra-EHEA dynamics, including value-based engagement with other countries and regions.

On the issue of the target, ESU supported Finland, Belgium-Flemish Community, ETUCE, EURASHE, Ireland and EUA emphasised that the plan should focus on the reasons that targets are not met and removing barriers rather than on the targets themselves. Particularly on the Leuven target, ESU supported by Finland, Italy, Switzerland, Armenia, EUA, Austria, Greece, Iceland, Norway, Lithuania, Andorra (12)

suggested keeping the EHEA target (20% mobile graduates with at least 15 ECTS physical mobility), while Belgium-Flemish Community supported by Belgium-French Community, Ireland and European Commission proposed using the EEA target (23% of mobile graduates with at least 3 ECTS physical or blended mobility) in order to avoid having two different targets. Austria highlighted the importance of targets for motivating the institutional leaderships and incentivising action. They recalled that the Bologna commitments refer to having 20% mobile graduates having a mobility experience irrespective of the study cycle.

On what to include in the target, ESU, supported by the Holy See, argued in favour of the EHEA target in consideration of its focus on physical mobility and its benefits, while Ireland supported by Austria, the European Commission and Belgium-Flemish Community considered that the EEA target was more inclusive for those finding it difficult to travel for longer periods, and paid attention to shorter and/or digital forms of mobility which were relevant and not available when the Leuven mobility target was set. Supported by Armenia, the Holy See considered that increasing the mobility target while significantly reducing the number of ECTS credits required for counting the mobility would not solve any issue and look like camouflaging instead. Supported by ESU, they were against counting blended mobility and virtual cooperation in the same target as this would create a second class of mobility. EUA agreed that while virtual and blended mobility formats should be supported, they should not be counted towards the physical mobility target. In this sense, supported by the Holy See, Bulgaria, Italy, Switzerland, Portugal, Germany and EQAR (8), they suggested having two targets – one for physical mobility only and one which includes blended and/or virtual experiences.

Supported by Armenia, the Holy See recalled the BFUG discussions in Strasbourg in 2022, arguing that a 20% mobility target for the first cycle would be unrealistic, thus suggesting to discuss separate targets for the first cycle in contrast with the second and third cycle, where the 20% target is met or to be met. Supported by the Belgium-French Community and Switzerland, the Holy See also highlighted the importance of national mobility, especially between different language groups or regional experiences in countries such as Germany or Belgium. Austria also proposed better focus on defining degree and credit mobility and working on methods to improve and monitor the quality of mobility.

In relation to other objectives and actions, Finland considered that the plan should focus on actions to support internationalisation in general, including virtual cooperation beyond mobility and promoting a broad understanding of the concept. They mentioned their set of recommendations prepared together with higher education institutions and stakeholders and, supported by Switzerland, Greece, Croatia, Latvia, Italy, Portugal, and Lithuania (8), proposed having different approaches between degree and credit mobility and between the different cycles. In this sense, Armenia proposed considering separate actions on research mobility, including for PhD students and attending international conferences. On the same note, ETUCE emphasised the importance of also targeting staff mobility and financial support for mobile staff.

France further pointed out the need to allow countries to design their own strategies for promoting mobility and highlighted the importance of inclusive mobility, including its link with achieving balanced mobility. EURASHE suggested to link internationalisations strategies to regional policies, innovation systems and the local context, which would in turn support balanced mobility as well. They considered that internationalisation plans should reflect the diversity and ambition of institutional missions, capacities, starting points and resources, with support and funding for those lagging behind expected to bring the most benefits.

On the issue of balanced mobility, France supported by Finland highlighted that the concept should continue to be explored, with Italy mentioning their existing work and welcoming guidelines in this regard and the European Commission considering that a quantitative definition focusing on incoming and outgoing numbers would be too narrow. In this sense, the Commission suggested to take a more qualitative approach, in line with their upcoming study on the topic. Belgium-Flemish Community considered that balanced mobility should also look into the potential of collaboration between higher

education institutions, including more sustainable relationships between both countries and HEIs to achieve balanced mobility. On the same note, EUA pointed out that balanced mobility could be achieved through interinstitutional approaches, as HEIs sometimes achieved balanced mobility not in reciprocal relations but through promoting the diversification of their partnerships. Finally, Austria considered that balanced mobility can relate to regional particularities, brain drain or even differences into how national higher education systems operate. They mentioned that at the EU level they advocated for a principle that only EU citizens having access to a study place in their home country would be able to receive a study place in another EU country.

Finally, on the topic of geopolitical developments, ETUCE expressed their concern in the increase difference of treatment between EU and non-EU students, including nationalistic views on international students. They advocated against two-tier systems for international students from outside the EHEA. Italy mentioned their work on better integrating students with a migration background, and suggested to exchange practices and data on national policies for migrant students, leading to EHEA guidance to overcome associated challenges. UNESCO supported the efforts of the group to discuss mobility outside EHEA and offered to ensure liaison with the CG on Global Policy Dialogue.

The Dutch WG Co-Chair welcomed the idea of linking inclusive mobility to balanced mobility and confirmed that the group would treat different cycles and degree/credit mobility differently. He recalled that the group had already agreed to a more qualitative approach to balanced mobility in the proposed Note on Terminology.

8.6 Bologna Implementation Coordination Group

Documents: [BFUG 99 CY NO 8.6 BICG 1 Proposals on Self-certification process 24.02.2026](#)

[BFUG 99 CY NO 8.6 BICG 2 Revised ToRs 24.02.2026](#)

[BFUG 99 CY NO 8.6 BICG 3 Discussion Paper on Implementation and KC](#)

[BFUG 99 CY NO 8.6 BICG 4 Presentation 04.03.2026](#)

The EUA Co-chair of the Bologna Implementation Coordination Group gave updates on the activity of the BICG and the four Thematic Peer Groups (TPGs) under its coordination. She presented the various initiatives of the TPGs and their umbrella projects, including peer learning activities, webinars and working groups supporting policy implementation and development. She mentioned that the flexible learning pathways emerged as a transversal topic, which was later supported by EURASHE, and that a thematic publication could be prepared by the TPGs on the topic.

The Finnish BICG Co-chair presented the proposed actions regarding the QF-EHEA self-certification process and their rationale. She outlined that the BFUG was invited to endorse the Guidelines prepared by TPG A, to adjust the Terms of Reference of the BICG in order to mandate TPG A to receive and discuss the self-certification reports, and to advise BFUG members to revisit the self-certification report every 10 years, informing the EHEA Secretariat.

Denmark, supported by Andorra, Belgium-Flemish Community, UK-Scotland, the Council of Europe, Ireland, and Switzerland (7) endorsed the proposal of mandating TPG A for the QF self-certification process, with the Council of Europe pointing out that they decided not to continue the activity of the National Correspondents' on QF group since it was duplicating TPG A's work. On the other side, the Holy See pointed out that since 2012 each BFUG member was expected to send representatives to the National Correspondents' Group, whereas the TPG A had a different remit and membership. The Holy See questioned whether a dedicated Task Force or Coordination Group would not be more appropriate in consideration of the Rules of Procedure. The Head of Secretariat, supported by EUA, Finland and Andorra, emphasised that mandating the TPG A would be a pragmatic approach since reports had been submitted without any structure to consider them. Furthermore, he emphasised that TPG A remains open for members to join and had already worked on the self-certification process. The BFUG endorsed the Guidelines and agreed to revise the BICG Terms of Reference for the 2024-2027 and mandate the TPG A

for receiving the self-certification reports, while recalling that the solution would be reassessed for the next cycle.

On the timeline for revisiting self-certification reports, Denmark supported by Andorra, UK-Scotland, Ireland, and Switzerland (5) asked to clarify that a 10-year timeframe was not a mandatory deadline for revising the self-certification reports, since in some countries the NQFs were stable and a new report would be too burdensome if changes do not require it.

Belgium-Flemish Community and the European Commission agreed with the 10-year timeframe and proposed a light revision procedure if only minor changes occur. Belgium-Flemish Community further proposed to stagger the preparation of reports to avoid too many BFUG members presenting them at the same moment, while the European Commission proposed to consider a shorter timeframe and recalled the importance of maintaining compatibility with the EQF.

The Head of Secretariat informed that under the current arrangement in which there was no timeframe for revising the reports, only a handful of countries reviewed the reports in the last 18 years, while it would be difficult to imagine that no substantial changes occurred in almost all countries. He pointed out that the proposal expected the BFUG members to consider each 10 years whether a revision was needed, with the outcome either a new self-certification report or a communication to the EHEA Secretariat that a revision was not necessary, due to lack of substantial changes.

Finland proposed to consider the 10-year framework as guidance for now and then consider in the BICG final report whether to propose making it mandatory and how to detail the process. Moving further, the Finnish BICG Co-chair explained the second set of questions from the BICG, focusing on the key commitments and tools. She explained that progress in closing the implementation gap remained steady yet slow, with new elements in this cycle including a new TPG on social dimension and the use of national action plans. The three questions included sharing experiences on the national action plans, how to examine the mandate of the Tirana Communique to analyse the future-proofness of Bologna tools and how should digital interoperability of HE systems be supported.

BFUG members supported the use of national action plans, with Denmark, United Kingdom, Holy See, Ireland, UK-Scotland, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Latvia, Germany, Switzerland (10) supported the national action plan while arguing that a new separate monitoring mechanism for them would not be necessary. On the same issue, Iceland emphasised that NAPs explained how existing reforms were linked with the EHEA and thus providing an useful exercise. Supported by EUA, she considered that monitoring the NAPs would not be an onerous exercise. The Holy See inquired who would do the monitoring of the implementation of the NAPs, including for other topics than the key commitments.

Andorra emphasised the added value of the analysis prepared by the Secretariat comparing the plans with the BPIR, suggesting that the analysis could be done earlier in order to present it to national authorities and revising the plans. ETUCE emphasised that few trade unions had been engaged in the elaboration of the plans, despite their interest, while ENQA noted the good cooperation with QA agencies on the key commitment related to QA. The EHEA Secretariat considered that normally the national action plans should arrive before the TPGs create their own action plans and that the Secretariat analysis could indeed be done earlier the next time so that countries can adjust their plans. He added that the last two columns of the national action plans included reporting in 2027 on implementation, which countries should fill in in order to close the feedback loop and use it as evidence for the next action plan. In this regard, the Secretariat agreed to support in collecting and centralising this reporting.

On the future-proofness of Bologna tools, ENQA proposed to reference common principles on the implementation of cross-border QA procedures, through the Key Considerations for CBQA, in the next Communique, while the EHEA Secretariat suggested to consider whether the documents adopted in Paris (revised QF-EHEA 2005 with new short cycle introduced, Diploma Supplement) could be mandated for revision by 2030. In the end, the Holy See inquired whether the BICG or the Task Force on the Future of Bologna would follow-up on this issue.

The BICG co-chairs thanked for the interventions and mentioned that an in-person BICG meeting would be organised to discuss recommendations.

8.7 Task Force on the Future of Bologna

Documents: [BFUG_99_CY_NO_9_Background_paper_Interconnectedness_with_ERA_23.02.2026](#)
(postponed)
[BFUG_99_CY_NO_9_2_Presentation_TF_FoB_09.03.2026](#)

The Belgian-Flemish Co-chair of the Task Force informed about the discussions at the previous TF meeting in January, which drew conclusions from the BFUG debate in Copenhagen on the interconnectedness between EHEA and VET. She pointed out that the BFUG members focused on avoiding creating new tools but rather considering how the Bologna tools could be used more wider, allowing flexible approaches and permeability. She pointed out that quality assurance arrangements and national qualification frameworks serve as bridging tools at national level, with the short cycle as a stepping stone between sectors. In this regard, the ECTS and potentially the ESG could serve as Bologna tools ensuring interconnectedness. In the end, the TF suggested having an online joint meeting on the interlinks between the Tirana Communiqué and Herning Declaration.

At the end of Day 1, on the occasion of David Crosier's retirement, the BFUG members thanked him for his longstanding contribution to the EHEA and the stewardship of the Bologna Process Implementation Report.

Start of Day 2

10. Discussion on the Draft 3 of the ECTS User's Guide 2027

Documents: [BFUG_99_CY_NO_10_1_ECTS_Draft_3.1_Track_Changes_06.03.2026](#)
[BFUG_99_CY_NO_10_1_ECTS_Draft_3.1_Clean_06.03.2026](#)
[BFUG_99_CY_NO_10_2_ECTS_Presentation_10.03.2026](#)

The European Commission provided a brief introduction to the topic, appreciating the cooperation in the Advisory Group and with the BFUG members for proposing substantial improvements to the ECTS User's Guide. The European Commission expert, Colin Tück, delivered a presentation outlining the main changes in the proposed Draft 3 in comparison with the version discussed at the previous BFUG meeting in Denmark. He recalled the two rounds of comments for BFUG members since the previous BFUG meeting and informed that the core cluster of comments received had been on the scope of the use of ECTS outside the higher education sector. In this sense, he mentioned that BFUG members articulated strong positions both in favour and against such expansion, with the solution proposed in the Guide being to clarify that the focus remains higher education, with using ECTS in other sectors left optional and at the discretion of national authorities. Furthermore, the revised Draft explained that only formally recognised education institutions can award credits, including through validation of non-formal and informal learning, and that decisions on credit recognition were in the competence of recognising authority, provided that applicable treaties are respected. On the issue of micro-credentials, the revised draft offered additional guidance on the indication of QF level and distinguish their transparency role to the more formal QF level status given to full qualifications. In relation to the grade transparency, the Commission proposed maintaining the reference grades while leaving grade conversion through grade distribution as an optional feature.

Sweden thanked the Commission and the Advisory Group for their work and suggested that section 5.4 be renamed as "Recognition of Credits" and proposed including a paragraph on quality assurance, noting the close relationship between recognition processes and QA. In response, the European Commission agreed that the link could be further strengthened yet emphasised that recognition of credits should no

longer mainly depend on QA if the ESG are followed and should rather look at the learning outcomes and the purpose for seeking recognition.

The Holy See noted that their previous comments had not been incorporated and recalled the use of ECTS as their single credit system in their institutions spanning more than 80 countries. In this context, she expressed concern that several formulations in the draft seem to move towards stronger standardisation rather than harmonisation, which could create difficulties for institutions outside the EU or EHEA applying the Guide. Supported by the United Kingdom, UNESCO and Bulgaria, they suggested minor changes clarifying that EU policies (such as Europass) are not expected to be applied to all EHEA and that requirements for QF-EHEA and Lisbon Recognition Convention compliance are applicable only when awarding ECTS in the EHEA. In this sense, the Commission confirmed that the provisions will be revisited to integrate comments and maintain applicability, while further clarifying that the Guide did not prevent linking ECTS with both QF-EHEA/EQF and other qualification frameworks.

Supported by EQAR, Malta, EUA, ENQA, ESU, Cyprus and Romania (8), EURASHE requested reintroducing the provision that EQF levels 6–8 should be quality assured in line with the ESG. EURASHE noted that while ideally ESG and EQAVET should be merged for an integrated tertiary QA system, for the time being the levels 6–8 should be quality assured based on ESG in order not to create false expectations for recognition. On the same topic, ENQA recalled that ESG should also apply to the short cycle while EQAR emphasised that no other comparable QA framework would apply to levels 6–8 which are not considered higher education.

Norway supported extending the use of ECTS to VET and lifelong learning, stressing that the other EHEA tools such as ESG and QF-EHEA should remain reserved for higher education. They also considered that opening ECTS beyond higher education required further adjustments in the draft to address remaining inconsistencies.

Supported by Romania, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Germany, Croatia, Poland and Portugal (8), Austria supported the direction of the revisions yet reiterated their concerns regarding the extension of ECTS outside higher education institutions. He warned that this could create misleading expectations among learners, who might assume that ECTS credits automatically correspond to academic qualifications. However, they clarified that they would not block consensus on this matter since the Guide left the decision of expanding the ECTS use to the national authorities.

The Commission reminded that ESG were applicable only to higher education while other types of qualifications exist at levels 6–8. They indicated that the paragraph would be reviewed again, including in light of the ongoing ESG revision. The Commission would liaise with DG EMPL to find a solution for mitigating the issues regarding the QA of tertiary VET, allowing the expansion of the ECTS to ensure the permeability between higher education and tertiary. They recalled the BFUG discussion in Copenhagen on the interconnectedness with VET which considered the opening up of higher education tools to other sectors as the best way to advance. The European Commission invited members to submit additional written comments to the Draft 3 by the 24th of March 2026 and for the revised Draft 4 by mid-July.

11. Discussion on the Draft 2 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in EHEA 2027

Documents: [BFUG_99_CY_NO_11_1_ESG_Draft_2_24.02.2026](#)
[BFUG_99_CY_NO_11_2_ESG_Background_note_25.02.2026](#)
[BFUG_99_CY_NO_11_3_ESG_Presentation_03.03.2026](#)

ENQA delivered a presentation on behalf of the ESG Steering Committee introducing the second draft of the revised ESG. She mentioned that the responses received in the public consultation phase included constructive and detailed feedback. While the group provided a revised draft, she noted that reviews on clarity, language, and consistency were still ongoing. The responses received showed an overall endorsement of the direction pursued in the revision process, with notable requests for increased

references to digitalisation and AI. A further clear set of comments referred to the consistency between standards and guidelines and their role, as well as questions for clarification on new requirements. ENQA then continued by presenting the main changes in each of the four blocks (Introduction, Part I, Part II, and Part III) with the floor open for BFUG comments after each section.

In relation to the Introduction (Context, Scope, Purposes and Principles), ETUCE considered that while the latest draft strengthened references to fundamental values, further reinforcement should be considered, particularly regarding collegial governance, staff and student participation, and academic freedom. He also observed that trade unions were not explicitly mentioned among stakeholders in the glossary, despite their role in quality assurance processes. In addition, ETUCE suggested that references to the learning environment could better acknowledge the importance of supportive working conditions for academic staff in ensuring quality in higher education.

France noted a perceived imbalance as some guidelines appear overly detailed and closer to evaluation criteria. Supported by Finland, Belgium – Flemish Community further considered that the distinction between standards and guidelines was not always clear. Furthermore, they noted inconsistencies in the use of ‘stakeholders’, which either refers exclusively to external stakeholders (such as the labour market) or all stakeholders, whereas in some cases students and staff are also mentioned separately.

Supported by Cyprus, the European Commission welcomed the additional references to micro-credentials and AI, which in their opinion should nevertheless be strengthened even more, which was also the case for fundamental values. Seconded by UK-Scotland and Lithuania, they were concerned that the definition of programmes as those leading to QF-EHEA qualifications would de facto exclude micro-credentials from the scope of the ESG, which should be rectified. Finally, the Commission emphasised that the draft did not take into account the specificities of transnational education, such as joint responsibility in curricula design, which could perpetuate duplication of QA procedures even between countries in compliance with the ESG.

In relation to Part I, Romania supported the direction of reducing the burden on HEIs and appreciated the merger and elimination of overlaps between standards related to the development and revision of programmes. Finland, supported by Sweden, considered that some standards in Part I were too detailed and deemed the current version preferable.

Regarding Standard 1.1, Sweden considered it too detailed and thus increasing administrative burden. They also shared a concern on the overly prescribed focus on employability which might affect institutional autonomy. Supported by Finland, Belgium-Flemish Community advised against the explicit reference to AI in standards, which would be better suited in a broader approach to digital transformation.

In relation to Standard 1.2, Germany supported by Belgium-Flemish Community, Romania, Netherlands, Holy See, Slovakia, Austria, EUA, Liechtenstein, Ireland and Portugal (11) suggested to clarify what are the expectations regarding student participation as at one point they were referred to as relevant stakeholders whereas afterwards were mentioned as equal partners. They further pointed out the importance of not conveying false expectations in this regard. On the same standard, Belgium – Flemish Community suggested to move the information related to public information to Standard 1.8.

Regarding Standard 1.4, Belgium-Flemish Community inquired whether provisions on data related to student progression would require general statistics or tracking individual student progress, preferring the former interpretation. Pertaining to Standard 1.5, UK-Scotland, supported by Armenia, asked who and in which way the share of core staff under permanent employment would be determined sufficient, also in the context of decreasing staff sizes due to financial pressures. Finally, UK-Scotland suggested adding a reference in Standard 1.6 that technological support offered is appropriate and asked for any intended implications derived from changing ‘in line with the ESG’ to ‘demonstrating compliance with the ESG’ in the Standard 1.9 on external QA reviews.

Moving to Part II, Romania highlighted their support for the peer review approach and welcomed the reinforcement of the need for site visits. She further appreciated the flexibility in stakeholder participation in order to enhance their participation and emphasised the need for transparency in terms of how the results of procedures can be used in different national contexts.

In relation to Standard 2.1, UK-Scotland asked whether the change stating that 'education corresponds to the correct level of QF-EHEA' would require institutions to map their provision to QF-EHEA more explicitly, which would later be checked as part of external QA. They argued that an approach requiring checking the level for each programme, as opposed to sampling and testing, would be too burdensome and duplicate the processes for programme approval.

Pertaining to Standard 2.2, Belgium-Flemish Community noted that the role of stakeholders was not clearly defined and it was unclear which stakeholders were referred to. She emphasised that stakeholders should not only be consulted but should also agree on the final objectives of external QA, suggesting a return to the stronger wording of the original formulation.

The United Kingdom supported the general direction of the ESG, with particular suggestions on Standard 2.3. More precisely, they suggested to highlight how quality assurance agencies can make greater use of data in their processes. The UK indicated that a stronger role for data could support a more proportionate approach that balances in-person site visits when needed with evidence derived from institutional data analysis.

Supported by Netherlands, Austria, Belgium-Flemish Community, Lithuania, UK-Scotland, Ireland, Liechtenstein and Netherlands (9), Germany requested an improved formulation for Standard 2.6 that clarifies which documents must be published as a minimum requirement, avoiding confusion in this regard. Finally, regarding Standard 2.7 Belgium-Flemish Community requested that procedural errors continue to be recognised as valid grounds for appeal.

In relation to Part III, ENQA clarified that discussions continued in the Steering Committee on whether Standard 3.5 would be retained as separate or merged back with Standard 3.6 on internal QA as in the current ESG.

Belgium - Flemish Community, raised a point regarding Standard 3.1, suggesting that students should be explicitly included in the sentence referring to stakeholder participation, namely that "depending on the structure and mission of the agency, stakeholders, including students, may be involved in different ways".

On the same standard, Italy believes that students should play a meaningful consultative role in quality assurance. At the same time, it is important to recognize that decisions on quality within national agencies require specific expertise and responsibilities. Therefore, Italy suggests retaining the wording adopted in 2015, which provides a balanced approach to the various needs expressed.

ESU reiterated that student participation in QA had long been a core commitment of the Bologna Process, with the principle agreed by ministers in EHEA even before the ESG were created. ESU expressed the existing agreement having students as equal partners in QA and hoped that this would be reflected in practice and in the governance of QA agencies.

Regarding Standard 3.2, Belgium-Flemish Community suggested to reinstate the requirement regarding 'Official status', noting that the provisions in the standard on independence did not offer sufficient safeguards against accreditation mills.

Hungary, supported by ENQA, Romania, Latvia, Holy See, Belgium-French Community, Ireland, Norway, Germany, and Lithuania (10) suggested merging back Standard 3.5 and Standard 3.6. ENQA argued that adding a new standard on professional integrity was superfluous in consideration of existing evidence and trust, noting the contribution of QA agencies to EHEA. Furthermore, Hungary proposed that the aspects related to integrity move from guidelines to standards.

UK-Scotland, supported by the UK, suggested that the section on the QA agencies' activities outside the scope of ESG are moved from standards into guidelines in Standard 3.5 Furthermore, supported by the UK and Germany, she asked that the meaning of 'in scope' and 'out of scope' of ESG be defined. UK-Scotland stressed that national quality assurance frameworks should continue to be able to allow agencies to undertake activities such as thematic reviews on specific issues, which represent non-cyclical quality assurance work rather than consultancy. She explained that since ESG processes focus on cyclical review activities, such initiatives could technically fall outside the ESG scope, even though they remain part of quality assurance work. She warned that the current formulation of Standard 3.5 could risk undermining the intentions of the ESG and may contradict Standard 3.3, which addresses enhancement activities. UK-Scotland also expressed concern about possible duplication between Standards 3.3, 3.5 and 3.6, which could negatively affect agencies' ability to conduct enhancement-led work. Finally, she stressed that the ESG should remain the primary reference framework, without external documents defining interpretations that determine compliance.

The ENQA representative thanked delegations for the constructive feedback provided during the discussion. Delegations were invited to submit additional written comments by the 17th of March, ahead of the Steering Committee meeting scheduled for the 25th of March, after which an update would be provided.

12. Information from consultative members

Documents: [BFUG_99_CY_NO_12_1_BusinessEurope_03.03.2026](#)
[BFUG_99_CY_NO_12_2_CoE_27.02.2026](#)
[BFUG_99_CY_NO_12_3_EI_ETUCE_05.03.2026](#)
[BFUG_99_CY_NO_12_4_ENQA_23.02.2026](#)
[BFUG_99_CY_NO_12_8_EQAR_19.02.2026](#)
[BFUG_99_CY_NO_12_9_UNESCO_25.02.2026](#)
[BFUG_99_CY_NO_12_5_ESU_06.03.2026](#)

ETUCE informed that the trade unions adopted a set of demands for the EHEA in preparation for the ministerial conference, focusing on fundamental values, particularly academic freedom, public investment, decent working conditions, but also the regulations of artificial intelligence. ENQA reminded the BFUG delegates of the survey on the QA of TNE, the results of which would also feature in the BPIR. They also informed about an upcoming PLA on TNE for national authorities, to be organised in June in Rome.

ESU pointed out their work on social dimension, noting that the trends on student housing and student poverty remained concerning. They also informed about starting working on the Bologna with Student Eyes 2027. UNESCO emphasised their upcoming event focused on the launch of the new [Roadmap on Transforming Higher Education](#), and reminded of the ongoing work on preparing three subsidiary texts under the Global Recognition Convention, covering the recognition of qualifications for refugees and displaced persons; QA including transnational education; and the relation between the global and the regional recognition conventions. EQAR informed the BFUG about the publication of the transition policy for QA agencies for the new ESG, in coordination with ENQA.

The Council of Europe informed about an upcoming event on the European Qualifications' Passport for Refugees in Moldova and the work on preparing a CoE Student Rights' Charter in collaboration with ESU. They noted that academic freedom would be one of the three topics for the upcoming CoE Standing Conference of ministers in December and highlighted that the Committee of Ministers agreed to pursue the drafting of a convention on the conditions of transparency and quality for automatic recognition. The Netherlands recalled that in the Multilateral Treaty signed by the Baltics and Benelux countries the conditions for automatic recognition were the Bologna commitments.

In this context, they asked to what extent the convention proposed by CoE would actually imply the codification of Bologna commitments and, if so, suggested a discussion with the BFUG in this regard. On the same note, Sweden asked whether a new group would be established to draft such a Convention and requested additional information noting several questions left open about the initiative. CoE explained that the new legal instrument was considered relevant by their committee after consultations with students, HEIs, and experts, with the convention working in synergy with the multilateral treaty on automatic recognition and the Lisbon Recognition Convention. They added that the convention would not establish automatic recognition itself but would instead define the conditions required to build sufficient trust between national systems. CoE further pointed out that the new instrument would be an open convention, potentially accessible beyond Council of Europe or EHEA member states, to be drafted by an intergovernmental group created for this purpose. She acknowledged that communication on the initiative could be further strengthened and expressed openness to dialogue by organising a consultation with the BFUG and determining the best modalities to ensure close coordination during the process.

13. Information by the incoming co-chairs

Documents: [BFUG_99_CY_NO_13_1_Montenegro_BFUG_Board_C_06.03.2026](#)
[BFUG_99_CY_NO_13_2_Ireland_BFUG_CI_04.03.2026](#)

The incoming Montenegrin BFUG Co-chairs presented their higher education system and the objectives of the Strategy for higher education 2024-2027. They also gave updates on the BFUG Board meeting to be held in Podgorica on the 29th of September.

The incoming Irish BFUG Co-chairs presented their higher education system and anticipated a new tertiary education strategy leveraging synergies across further and higher education systems. They informed about the provisional dates for the BFUG meeting in Dublin being the 5th to 6th of November. Finally, they noted the provisional priorities of the Irish Council Presidency, namely the Erasmus+ file, Council Conclusions on STEM Education and Council Conclusions on Skills and Competencies for AI.

14. Any other business

The EHEA Secretariat informed about the request of Spain to join the Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue, which was accepted through no opposition raised. He further informed about Czech Republic resuming their role as co-chairs of the Task Force on establishing the long-term Secretariat, which they had suspended themselves during the application process.

ESU raised concerns regarding actions that they consider breaches of fundamental values in the EHEA, referring specifically to developments in Serbia and Georgia. In the case of Serbia, ESU informed of developments in which they found students being stripped of their rights as a result of student led-protests. ESU also highlighted recent developments in Georgia, where reforms in higher education were reportedly adopted without consultation with stakeholders and which may affect institutional autonomy, academic freedom and student participation. ESU called on EHEA members to monitor both situations, remain informed and publicly support academic freedom, institutional autonomy and the academic community from the two countries. Supported by EUA, Germany, Czech Republic, UK-Scotland, Iceland, Lithuania, Finland, Austria, France, EURASHE and ETUCE (12), ESU also requested that the BFUG co-chairs engage with the Serbian and Georgian delegations, seek clarifications on the developments and their impact on fundamental values and share updates with BFUG members. The BFUG Co-chairs confirmed that they would follow-up on the issue.

EURASHE gave reminders on the online peer learning activity on learning and teaching and lifelong learning, with upcoming PLAs to be organised in Amsterdam (on the 19th of June) and Dublin (on the 4th of November, back-to-back with the BFUG meeting).

The EHEA Secretariat gave reminders and informed about the social media promotion of the BFUG meeting. He thanked the Secretariat team, the BFUG Co-chairs and the BFUG for the good collaboration.

At the end of the meeting, the BFUG co-chairs from Cyprus and Norway thanked participants for their active engagement and constructive contributions throughout the discussions and closed the meeting.