

Minutes of the XCVII BFUG Meeting

15th - 16th of December 2025

Hosted by Denmark in Copenhagen

List of participants

No.	Country/Organisation	Name
1.	Andorra	Jordi Llobart
2.	Andorra	Maria del Mar Martinez Ramirez
3.	Austria	Stephan De Pasqualin
4.	Austria	Helga Posset
5.	Azerbaijan	Samir Hamidov
6.	Belgium Flemish Community	Liesbeth Hens
7.	Belgium French Community	Adriana Gonfroid
8.	Business Europe	Inga Lapina
9.	Council of Europe	Catherine Dolgova Dreyer
10.	Croatia	Loredana Maravić
11.	Cyprus	Kyriacos Charalambous
12.	Czech Republic	Tereza Vengřínová
13.	Czech Republic	Michal Karpisek
14.	Denmark (BFUG Co-Chair)	Anita Damsgaard Jensen
15.	Denmark	Sofie Linthoe Hastrup
16.	Denmark	Peter Qvist
17.	EHEA Secretariat	Horia Onița
18.	EHEA Secretariat	Lilia Parhomenco
19.	EHEA Secretariat	Irina Duma
20.	EI/ETUCE	Agnes Roman
21.	EI/ETUCE	Rob Copeland
22.	ENQA	Anna Gover
23.	ENQA	Cristina Ghițuică
24.	EQAR	Stéphane Lauwick
25.	EQAR	Aleksandar Šušnjar
26.	Estonia	Janne Pukk
27.	Eurydice	David Crossier
28.	Eurydice	Roland Farkas
29.	Eurodoc	Luka Savić
30.	EURASHE	Jakub Grodecki
31.	EURASHE	Ana Tecilazić
32.	European Commission	Susanne Conze
33.	European Commission	Kinga Szuly
34.	European Commission	Colin Tück
35.	European Students' Union (ESU)	Daciana Pop
36.	European Students' Union (ESU)	Arno Schrooyen
37.	European University Association (EUA)	Michael Gaebel
38.	European University Association (EUA)	Maria Kelo
39.	Finland	Jonna Korhonen
40.	France	Sara Thornton
41.	Georgia	Maia Shukhoshvii
42.	Germany	Andrea Herdegen
43.	Germany	Kristina Hauschildt
44.	Greece	Varvara Papathanasopoulou
45.	Greece	Alexandra Karvouni

No.	Country/Organisation	Name
46.	Holy See	Melanie Rosenbaum
47.	Hungary	András Báló
48.	Hungary	Zsolt Dános
49.	Iceland	Una Strand Viðarsdóttir
50.	Ireland	Padraig Hennigan
51.	Ireland	Marie Glynn
52.	Ireland	Siobhan Sleeman (Crombie)
53.	Italy	Chiara Finocchietti
54.	Kazakhstan	Banu Narbekova
55.	Latvia	Irena Komarova
56.	Latvia	Artūrs Čerņiševs
57.	Liechtenstein (BFUG Co-Chair)	Belgin Amann
58.	Liechtenstein (BFUG Co-Chair)	Eva Meier
59.	Lithuania	Neda Zutautaitė
60.	Luxembourg	Patricia Marx
61.	Malta	James Perry Maia
62.	Netherlands	Arthur Belle
63.	Netherlands	Charlotte Ruitinga
64.	North Macedonia	Borcho Aleksov
65.	Norway	Niclas Lindahl Trosdahl
66.	Norway	Tone Flood Strom
67.	Poland	Anna Biernacka-Rygiel
68.	Portugal	Ines Viegas
69.	Portugal	Afonso Oliveira-Martins
70.	Romania	Mihai Cezar Hâj
71.	Romania (Vice Chair)	Luminița-Mihaela Matei
72.	San Marino	Remo Massari
73.	Slovakia	Peter Ondreicka
74.	Slovenia	Jernej Širok
75.	Spain	José Ángel Piña Sánchez
76.	Sweden	Robin Moberg
77.	Türkiye	Aydın Aslan
78.	Türkiye	Serkan Gul
79.	Ukraine	Vitaliy Nosok
80.	UNESCO	Noah Sobe
81.	United Kingdom	Ella Williams
82.	United Kingdom	Catherine Wreyford
83.	United Kingdom - Scotland	Rob Stroud
84.	United Kingdom - Scotland	Jacqueline Brasted

Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Kazakhstan, and Switzerland sent their apologies. Serbia was absent.

1. Welcome and introduction

1.1. Welcome by Mr. Nils Agerhus, Deputy Permanent Secretary at the Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science

The Danish hosts welcomed everyone to Copenhagen and underlined the necessity of ensuring that the Bologna Process remains relevant in a world marked by a changing geopolitical situation, the rapid implementation of new technologies and the impact of the labour market on the higher education landscape. The Deputy Permanent Secretary also emphasised that the revision of the Bologna Process core tools, such as the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the ECTS Users' Guide should proceed carefully, as these documents are central to the Bologna common framework. The host highlighted the need to protect fundamental values

in higher education and stressed out the importance of selecting the right indicators for monitoring their implementation. He further considered that breaking the links between education, research and skills was essential for innovation, lifelong learning and European competitiveness, with the Bologna Process playing an essential role in this regard.

1.2. Welcome by the BFUG Co-chairs (Denmark and Liechtenstein)

The Liechtensteiner Co-Chair shared the enriching experience of their co-chairmanship and thanked Denmark for hosting the BFUG meeting. The Danish Co-Chair welcomed all participants to Copenhagen, and thanked the Liechtensteiner Co-Chair for their fruitful collaboration.

1.3. Welcome by the BFUG Vice Chair (Romania)

The Danish BFUG Co-chair introduced Ms. Luminița Matei as the new BFUG Vice-Chair on behalf of Romania. The BFUG Vice Chair thanked the BFUG Co-chairs, the EHEA Secretariat and the members of the working structures and introduced herself. She highlighted the importance of progressing in the implementation of the Work Plan in accordance with the Terms of Reference and her steadfast support in achieving the expected results in preparation for the upcoming Ministerial Conference.

2. Information from the outgoing BFUG Co-chairs (Poland and Albania)

The Albanian outgoing BFUG Co-chair could not attend the meeting. The Polish outgoing BFUG Co-Chair briefly presented the program and results of the Polish Presidency at the Council of the European Union. She expressed their gratitude for the support provided by the EHEA Secretariat and the excellent collaboration in preparing the previous BFUG meeting in Warsaw.

3. Information about the XCVI BFUG Board meeting in Liechtenstein

Documents: [BFUG Board DK LI 96 Minutes 03.12.2025](#)

The Liechtensteiner Co-chair informed the BFUG members about the Board meeting held in Vaduz, Liechtenstein, on the 4th of November 2025, where BFUG working structures had presented the state of their work and the Board prepared the BFUG meeting in Copenhagen. There were no other interventions on the agenda item.

4. Adoption of the agenda

Documents: [BFUG DK LI 97 4 1 Draft agenda 10.12.2025](#)
[BFUG DK LI 97 4 2 Draft annotated agenda 12.12.2025](#)

The Danish BFUG Co-chair presented the agenda and opened the floor for comments. Given the importance of both topics proposed by Task Force on the Future of Bologna, namely Vocational Education Training (VET) and European Research Area (ERA), and the rather short time at disposal for the afternoon, EUA suggested to only discuss the interconnectedness between EHEA and VET at this BFUG meeting, while the interconnectedness with ERA would be postponed for the upcoming BFUG meeting in Cyprus.

The agenda was adopted with EUA's suggestion.

5. Information from the EHEA Secretariat

Documents: [BFUG DK LI 97 5 1 Presentation 09.12.2025](#)
[BFUG DK LI 97 5 2 Updates Drafting Committee 02.12.2025](#)
[BFUG DK LI 97 5 3 Feedback BFUG XCV 09.12.2025](#)
[BFUG DK LI 97 5 4 Update on the National Action Plans 10.12.2025](#)

The Head of EHEA Secretariat gave updates on the activity of the Secretariat, mentioning that 26 meetings of the working structures had been held since the previous BFUG meeting, including 15 meetings in person. He indicated several procedures prepared by the Secretariat, including on supporting the organisation of meetings, the tracking of attendance rates or the delivery of minutes, informing about the state of implementation from the Secretariat's side. The Head of Secretariat further informed the BFUG that 40 national action plans had been received, with the Secretariat conducting various analysis of the actions, including a comparative overview with the 2024 Bologna Process Implementation Report which led to some revisions of the plans. On the communications side, he presented the design of the new EHEA website and reminded members about a 10-minute demo available on the UDrive. The Head of Secretariat further reported about planning a coordination meeting to align terminology in the documents to be adopted at the next Ministerial Conference, external engagements (e.g. with ASEM), dedicated support for the TF on establishing the long-term Secretariat and future support for analysing the ESG public consultation results. He also presented an update note on the Drafting Committee, informing that the consultative members proposed ESU as their representative and suggesting that the DC presents its roadmap at the next BFUG meeting.

The Danish Co-Chair thanked the EHEA Secretariat for their professionalism and continuous support and opened the floor. The Holy See appreciated the work of the Secretariat and the good communication, while suggesting to look into the compatibility issues on the UDrive and the certification of e-mail accounts, in order to be able to contribute to the documents shared online.

The Danish Co-chair announced that the BFUG took note of the updates, agreed with the composition of the Drafting Committee and expected its roadmap at the next BFUG meeting.

6. Updates on the Ministerial Conference and Global Policy Forum

Documents: [BFUG DK LI 97 6 1 Updates Ministerial Conference and GPF 01.12.2025](#)
[BFUG DK LI 97 6 2 Save the date MC GPF 01.12.2025](#)
[BFUG DK LI 97 6 5 ETUCE Letter 04.11.2025](#)

The Romanian BFUG Vice-Chair recalled the approval of the dates for the Ministerial Conference and the Global Policy Forum at the XCV BFUG Meeting in Warsaw, namely the 26th-27th of May 2027 in Iași and Chișinău. She highlighted that the draft Save-the-Date, priorly circulated to the BFUG, included two versions, one for EHEA and one for non-EHEA delegations. The Vice Chair thanked the Secretariat for collecting the information for the save-the-dates and the BFUG members for their inputs and comments on the list of countries and stakeholders to be invited to the Global Policy Forum. She informed that the hosts plan to send the save-the-date in January and also mentioned the ETUCE request to increase the size of delegations from EHEA members to the Ministerial Conference (to include trade unions), and the EUA request of increasing the size of delegations for the Global Policy Forum (to include university and student representatives). The Romanian Vice-Chair noted that a response to these requests would be offered by the next BFUG meeting, pending discussions on the logistics, and suggested to postpone the decision on whether to expand the size of delegations.

Upon a suggestion from EUA to invite other European organisations to the GPF, bearing in mind the high number of non-European organisations invited to the event, the Vice Chair considered that European organisations had already been represented through BFUG consultative members and EHEA partners. She nevertheless confirmed that the hosts would analyse the proposal.

Spain expressed their concern about sending the save-the-dates so early in the context of a changing political landscape, especially in certain countries, which could then pose political challenges for the

event. In particular, Spain disapproved of including Israel on the list of invitations, given the Israel's actions going against EHEA fundamental values and the objectives of fostering mutual trust, cooperation and peace which underpin the Global Policy Forum.

The United Kingdom - Scotland suggested to include a note, either in the Save-the-Date or in the Practical Information Note, that the transfer between the two locations (from Iași to Chișinău) would be covered by the organizers. The Head of Secretariat also mentioned Poland's written suggestion of including Timor Leste and Papua New Guinea to the list of countries to be invited to the Global Policy Forum.

The Danish BFUG Co-chair concluded that the BFUG adopted the list of countries and organisations to be invited to the Global Policy Forum.

7. Reporting from BFUG working structures

7.1. Working Group on Monitoring

Documents: [BFUG DK LI 97 7.1 1 WG on Monitoring Proposal of Structure and Indicators](#)
[BFUG DK LI 97 7.1 2 WG on Monitoring Draft Guidelines Narrative Texts 02.12.2025](#)
[BFUG DK LI 97 7.1 3 WG on Monitoring Presentation 05.12.2025](#)

The WG on Monitoring Co-Chairs from Eurydice and Austria presented updates since the previous BFUG Meeting and introduced the two documents. Eurydice emphasised that the BFUG had decided that BPIR 2027 would better mirror the 2024-2027 BFUG Work Programme and would also include a narrative section for each chapter. He recalled the intention to reduce burden, maintaining the most appropriate indicators while also ensuring comparability across time.

Eurydice agreed with a suggestion from Andorra, seconded by Belgium – Flemish Community, to have a broader understanding when monitoring the existence of 'strategies', including other top-level legislation or major policy plans.

The United Kingdom acknowledged that monitoring legislative provisions might be easier, yet suggested to rather focus on outcome-based indicators, which would better capture the reality on the ground. Eurydice mentioned that the proposal of having more outcomes-based approach could only be considered for the future monitoring rounds.

Italy asked for clarifying whether the data in the Annex would count towards the final score per country. Belgium - Flemish Community inquired about how would the narrative sections be validated to ensure their relevance. Eurydice emphasised that each working structure should propose an author by March 2026 and the structure would validate the narrative part before the document is sent for discussion to the BFUG.

For Chapter 1 on Degree structures, EURASHE proposed including short-cycle programmes in the monitoring, with Eurydice noting that the indicator covering the short cycle was intentionally eliminated since all the other indicators in the section were related to the key commitments.

Regarding Chapter 2 on recognition, Italy emphasized that *Figure 4.4 Scorecard indicator n°10: Enabling flexible modes of learning in higher education* would rather fit a different chapter, and proposed replacing this indicator with an indicator on recognition of TNE, in line with the [Code of good practice in the provision of transnational education](#). In this regard, Eurydice mentioned that the WG on Monitoring intentionally included recognition of prior learning (Figure 4.4) in the recognition chapter to broaden its understanding. Furthermore, Eurydice considered that it might be too late to add a completely new indicator on the recognition of TNE, which in any case would be discussed in the group. ENQA further explained that for the proposed new indicator on QA of TNE, they had agreed with the working group to

supply the data through ENQA's upcoming survey on the topic, which would include a question about other frameworks used for quality assurance of TNE, and the Code of good practice in the provision of transnational education could be included amongst the answer options.

Upon a question from the European Commission, Eurydice mentioned that the main concept analysed in Figure 2.15 was system-level recognition, with 'automatic' intentionally included in brackets.

Pertaining to Chapter 3 on quality assurance, UK asked whether the new indicator pertaining to the QA of TNE in line with ESG would also include aspects such as performing on-site visits during external reviews, with Eurydice responding that the indicator on the QA of TNE was still to be clarified based on the data received from ENQA.

Lastly, for Chapter 6 on Internationalisation and Mobility, Eurydice answered a question from Andorra about the difference between *Figure 6.9. Portability of public grants, first and second cycle, 2022/2023* and *Figure 6.11. Scorecard indicator n°18: Portability of public grants and publicly funded loans*, stating that Figure 6.9 would be included in the Annex and could be seen as a sub-indicator for the scorecard in Figure 6.11, which would reflect the situation of the portability of grants and loans.

7.2. Working Group on Fundamental Values

Documents: [BFUG DK LI 97 7.2 WG on FV Presentation 02.12.2025](#)

The Romanian WG on Fundamental Values Co-Chair presented the latest developments since the previous BFUG meeting, pointing out that four surveys (three for public authorities and one for stakeholders) and an open platform for the academic community would be launched in early 2026 to initiate the data collection phase.

The Romanian WG Co-chair distinguished between the BPIR monitoring process and the report to be produced by the WG. He invited BFUG members to confirm their national operators (NOs) and clarified their role. Upon a question from Belgium - Flemish Community, the Romanian WG Co-chair confirmed that the BFUG members would be able to amend the answers pre-filled by the national operators.

The European Commission called on BFUG members to support the selection of NOs in their countries and for a broad engagement of stakeholders to ensure that the national landscapes were captured properly. In the context of a deteriorating situation worldwide, they also underlined the importance of monitoring academic freedom and, supported by EUA, the necessity of capturing the *de facto* situation. The EC also suggested starting to discuss about how the future of monitoring FV would be ensured after this working period. The Council of Europe supported the exercise yet expressed hesitation about the NO selection process, which CoE would normally conduct either through nominations by governments or through an open call. They also raised the issue of the data sources based on which the NOs would fill in the questionnaires, proposing to reflect on how the WG would tackle a situation in which the NOs would be in disagreement with their national authorities.

EUA emphasised the sensitivity of the NO selection process and asked whether two NOs could be appointed if BFUG members reject the initial proposal in order to maintain an independent nomination. The Romanian WG Co-Chair clarified that the alternative NOs proposed by BFUG members would still have to comply with the independence criteria and, in any case, the NOs would pre-fill answers based on public sources, which would be triangulated by the WG.

7.3. Working Group on Internationalisation and Mobility

Documents: [BFUG DK LI 97 7.3 WG on IM Draft 2.2 Note on Terminology 01.12.2025](#)
[BFUG DK LI 97 7.3 WG on IM Presentation 01.12.2025](#)

The Dutch Working Group on Internationalisation and Mobility Co-chair gave updates from the WG, introducing the work on the Note on Terminology and the Action Plan. He emphasised the process of elaborating the Note on Terminology, its status as a living document to be annexed to the Action Plan and the alignment of its content with already existing widely accepted definitions, where available.

Slovakia supported the further elaboration of definitions and their added value in the context of supporting initiatives such as joint programmes, which some concept still lacking a common understanding. Germany consider that “balanced mobility” was defined very broadly, including both movement between countries and between institutions, and asked whether the WG discussed the potential implications. The Dutch WG Co-Chair emphasised that the concept had not been defined elsewhere, with two paradigms focusing on either a numerical approach or one focused on societal costs and benefits, with the opinion of the WG favouring the inclusion of both.

France highlighted their interest in embedded mobility windows and needs-based support schemes and informed about their work on the international label ‘Bienvenue en France’. They also suggested that the WG looks into mobility at regional level. The Dutch WG Co-Chair confirmed that normative elements would be considered when developing the Action Plan – including mobility flows per cycle, between regions and with the world, whereas the Note focused on descriptive definitions.

The European Commission noted that the terminology used should be aligned with the ECTS User’s Guide and other documents, suggesting further discussion of the newly developed terms to ensure consistency. They also mentioned missing definitions such as for automatic recognition or grade conversion. The Council of Europe further suggested to consult the recently adopted Code of Good Practice in the provision of TNE for definitions, which the group used for the definition of TNE.

Upon a remark from ETUCE, the Dutch WG Co-chair mentioned that the portability of student grants and support and staff mobility would be discussed when preparing the Action Plan on IM. In this context, Belgium - Flemish Community underlined the necessity of considering teaching and administrative staff mobility and revise definitions to analyse where this could be included. Finland noted the challenges of differentiating between the normative and descriptive parts of the document. They also suggested defining what “delivery” means in the framework of joint programmes and whether it should also be jointly organised.

7.4. Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue

Documents: [BFUG DK LI 97 7.4 CG GPD Presentation 10.12.2025](#)

The UNESCO Co-Chair of the CG on Global Policy Dialogue (CG GPD) reported on the work of the group and informed of the hybrid CG GPD meeting focusing on QA, Recognition and Digitalisation, organised in Bucharest in synergy with the SPHERE Conference. He informed that a drafting group for the Global Policy Forum Statement was established including EUA, the Holy See, Italy, Malta, Moldova, Norway, Romania and UNESCO. France referred to the recent discussions on vocational education and training (VET) and flexible learning pathways at the EU-ASEAN Forum in Kuala Lumpur, asking whether the CG GPD considered discussing these two elements at global level as well. UNESCO confirmed that the upcoming meeting to be held in Rome (February 2026) would include a peer-learning activity on lifelong learning, providing a good opportunity to address these topics.

7.6. Bologna Implementation Coordination Group

Documents: [BFUG DK LI 97 7.6 BICG Presentation 10.12.2025](#)

The EUA BICG Co-chair gave the presentation and informed about the activities of the BICG and the four TPGs. She informed that the action plans of the TPGs were well aligned with the priorities of the national action plans and all had supporting Erasmus+ project approved that would include additional policy work. The presentation also emphasised that not all countries with priorities for a key commitment joined the corresponding WG and that the participation of ministry representatives was still low. Finally, they pointed out the necessity to identify a structured approach for reporting on the national action plans and to identify a solution for handling the QF-EHEA self-certification process – with the proposal that the TPG A would take on this responsibility.

The Head of Secretariat called for synergies with the EQF certification process and mentioned that in the previous working cycles the self-certification process had been conducted by CoE's QF Network of National Correspondents. CoE clarified their readiness to continue supporting the TPG A in this field, as they considered the network to be duplicating TPG A's efforts. Supported by Italy and CoE, the HoS suggested that a formal procedure for submitting and handling the self-certification report be agreed by the BFUG, referencing the Guidelines prepared in the previous work cycle by TPG A.

Supported by Iceland, Andorra underlined the importance of the NAPs in supporting implementation, which led to the preparation of their self-certification report, recently submitted to the EHEA Secretariat. Italy commended the synergies between the working structures and exemplified with the ongoing work on TNE. They reassured that the additional work in the supporting projects do not create additional burden but rather increase their visibility.

Sweden informed that they did not have sufficient resources to allocate ministry representatives to all TPGs, yet they are kept informed through the Swedish representatives in the groups. Iceland underlined the necessity of nominating country representatives able to effectively influence national implementation. Iceland also recalled the initial expectation that BICG would provide an annual monitoring report based on the TPG work, with the EUA BICG Co-chair answering that such an activity was not included in their ToRs and that the EHEA Secretariat had already provided an analysis of the NAPs.

Slovenia supported a reporting exercise on the implementation of NAPs yet disagreed with a formal monitoring that would lead to traffic-light analysis or highlighting countries lagging behind. In reply, the EUA BICG Co-chair underlined the peer-learning nature of the TPG methodology that would indeed be unsuitable with such a monitoring effort. Finally, the Head of Secretariat considered that in the last cycle there was little visibility in compiling the results of the national actions implementing key commitments and offered the Secretariat's help in compiling the data from BFUG members for the sections of the NAPs to be filled in 2027.

7.7. Task Force on establishing a long-term Secretariat

Documents: [BFUG DK LI 97 7.7 1 TF long-term Secretariat Report 01.12.2025](#)
[BFUG DK LI 97 7.7 2 TF long-term Secretariat Concept Note 01.12.2025](#)
[BFUG DK LI 97 7.7 3 TF long-term Secretariat Comparative overview of applications 01.12.2025](#)
[BFUG DK LI 97 7.7 4 TF long-term Secretariat Aggregate scoring of applications 01.12.2025](#)
[BFUG DK LI 97 7.7 5 TF long-term Secretariat Presentation 12.12.2025](#)

The EUA Co-chair of the TF on Long-Term Secretariat outline the two parallel processes of the TF, namely working on the concept of the LTS to address remaining issues and concerns and respectively preparing a hosting arrangement. He mentioned the steps taken by the TF so far and thanked the five applicants (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Romania and Turkiye). The presentation emphasised that the TF considered an association more preferable to a foundation or a non-profit company, i.e. due to the alignment of the governance with the BFUG (serving as general assembly) and a Board. The EUA TF Co-

chair added that two applications offered different proposals, namely to locate the Secretariat within a public body or to establish an organisation of international nature.

Upon a question from Poland, the EUA TF Co-chair clarified that consultative members were not considered in the calculations for the membership fee, since they would not have voting rights. In this sense the Holy See mentioned that, from a legal point of view, consultative members could be given voting rights exclusively in relation to the LTS and thus be eligible for paying. The United Kingdom - Scotland raised the issue that several members could be unable or unwilling to cover the costs, affecting the ability of the Secretariat to retain its staff. The EUA TF Co-Chair informed that such a risk should be further discussed yet it had been presumed that the LTS would benefit from budget savings.

Italy supported a model of equal payments by all countries and also inquired about the potential length of the Head of Secretariat's term. Nonetheless, they emphasized the need of approving the final decision on establishing a LTS by ministers, as decided at the Tirana Ministerial Conference, in order to ensure the highest level of commitment and guarantee payment. The EUA TF Co-Chair informed that the period of appointment for the HoS had not been discussed, but presumably the intention would be to have someone appointed for more than a working cycle.

Upon a question from Portugal, the EUA TF Co-chair clarified that the option of establishing an international (intergovernmental) organisation had been discarded by the BFUG.

Belgium - Flemish Community requested that the budgetary calculations be ready in due time before the upcoming BFUG meeting. They also expressed their preference for following the BFUG structure and considered a separate Board for the LTS advantageous for not changing members every six months. Belgium - French Community considered that suspending the voting rights in relation to the LTS for those not paying would not be dissuasive enough. They also inquired about the text in the written report on the possibility of waiving membership fees, asking for explicit criteria. Slovakia considered that not being able to financially contribute to the LTS for a longer period would raise questions about the commitment of a BFUG member to the Bologna Process.

The United Kingdom - Scotland suggested to consider establishing a reserve fund at the beginning and asked for better explanations on the governance arrangements for the LTS.

The Danish Co-Chair explained the procedure for expressing the preference on shortlisting three out of five countries to potentially host the Long-Term Secretariat. The Icelandic TF Co-Chair underlined the importance of having a collective ownership on the hosting arrangements. She also recalled that all information related to the work of the TF and the applicants had been previously sent to the BFUG, in order to allow for a well informed decision.

The EUA TF Co-Chair reiterated the Principles for establishing the long-term Secretariat agreed by the BFUG in 2024 and the Call for applications agreed at the previous BFUG meeting. He detailed the analysis and exploratory process conducted by the TF, including the organisation of an online BFUG session. He further described the five applications received and criteria pertaining to the fulfilment of the Principles, legal flexibility, accessibility and in-kind support. The EUA TF Co-Chair clarified that the proposed shortlisting was aimed at providing the Task Force with a direction regarding the potential host. Until the next BFUG, the Task Force would clarify any remaining issues with the 3 remaining applicants.

The BFUG delegations were attributed two ballots each (one for the separate delegations of Belgium – French and Flemish Community and United Kingdom and UK – Scotland) to express their preference for applications to be followed-up upon. After counting, the Danish Co-Chair announced the number of ballots recorded for each applicant: 58 for Romania, 52 for Germany, 33 for Czech Republic, 24 for Cyprus, 10 for Turkiye and 2 abstentions. The Danish BFUG Co-chair concluded that consensus was achieved for

shortlisting Czech Republic, Germany and Romania, with a final go/no-go decision to be taken at the BFUG meeting in Cyprus.

8. Debate prepared by the Task Force on Future of Bologna on the topic of interconnectedness with VET

Documents: [BFUG DK LI 97 8 Background Paper Interconnectedness EHEA-VET-ERA 01.12.2025](#)
[BFUG DK LI 97 7.5 TF FoB Presentation 15.12.2025](#)

The Belgian-Flemish TF Co-chair informed about main conclusions from the debate organised at the BFUG meeting in Warsaw on the topic of lifelong learning, namely that the topic became more important yet still working in silos (e.g. for micro-credentials) rather than being mainstreamed. She added that the BFUG emphasised existing opportunities for reskilling and upskilling and how Bologna tools could be tailed to LLL, without a clear answer on whether they should be expanded to other sectors outside HE. The Belgian-Flemish TF Co-chair introduced the debate on EHEA-VET, adding that the TF would follow up with a report containing the outcomes of the debates.

For the first parallel group, Croatia underlined the broad agreement that interconnectedness between VET and EHEA was highly relevant and considered that Bologna tools, principles and future reforms should be open, flexible and connectable, enabling learners to move smoothly across an increasingly diverse European tertiary education landscape. Croatia also added that in the context of the Union of Skills of the European Commission, countries should take concrete actions in order to tackle the issues of progression and permeability between VET and higher education.

For Group 2, EURASHE reported that the group discussed the benefits of establishing bridges between VET and EHEA. Firstly, stronger connections would make it possible for a larger and more diverse student body to access different types of learning and qualifications. Secondly, the group emphasised the tools developed in the Bologna Process could also be applied outside of the traditional education sector. Thirdly, interconnectedness would allow better responses to the labour market needs. The rapporteur also underlined the different institutions responsible for the two sectors at European and national levels and the difference between VET in general and higher VET.

The European Commission reported for Group 3, where participants acknowledged the link between VET and EHEA, including the potential of using EHEA tools in VET. They also discussed the confusing state of the level 5 EQF, with different approaches on whether it was considered HE/offered clear paths to HE and its' governance. The situation of universities of applied sciences was also discussed, with some systems where half of the students are VET graduates. Nevertheless, the group noted that issues with general and basic skills persisted. The European Commission underlined the group's suggestion of further discussing the situation of level 5 EQF, as well as gathering the viewpoint of the employers.

For group 4, the Holy See reported the discussion on several topics such as the recognition of prior learning, integration of VET into the same national qualifications framework (NQF) as higher education, permeability and the match of learning outcomes between the two sectors at the same level. As possible bridging initiatives, the group identified the key policy documents from both sectors (Tirana Communique and Herning Declaration, among others) referencing each other, potentially the revised ECTS Users' Guide, as well as enforcing the same quality assurance mechanisms and the same principles for accreditation purposes. The group suggested that, through structured dialogue (that could start with an online joint meeting), through mapping and understanding each of the systems, the better integration and permeability could be fostered. They also underlined the need to avoid creating new tools and to retain the strengths of each sector.

End of Day 1

Start of Day 2

8. Discussion on the Draft 1 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in EHEA 2027

Documents: [BFUG DK LI 97_9_1 Draft 1 ESG 2027 17.11.2025](#)
[BFUG DK LI 97_9_2 Explanatory Note Draft 1 ESG 10.12.2025](#)
[BFUG DK LI 97_9_3 Discussion Note Draft 1 ESG 01.12.2025](#)
[BFUG DK LI 97_9_4 Presentation ESG 10.12.2025](#)

ENQA presented the Draft 1 of the revised ESG, on behalf of the Steering Committee, and announced that the public consultation would close on the 9th of January. ENQA gave an general overview of changes, including stronger links with research and societal mission, an additional purpose – supporting stakeholder involvement in QA and an additional principle – that QA supports and enables international cooperation based on trust, and then briefly presented changes standard by standard. The BFUG was informed that the first draft of the European Approach for the QA of Joint Programmes will be presented at the BFUG meeting in Ireland.

On the issue of site visits, Sweden would prefer that the ESGs not require that they are necessarily on-site, whereas the United Kingdom favoured not requiring site visits at all and allowing for a risk-based approach where site visits are facultative. ENQA, on behalf of the Steering Committee, clarified that a level of flexibility was maintained for the way in which site visits would take place, by introducing the reference to “normally on-site”.

France commended the introduction of more clear references to the learning outcomes and employability, but would welcome more focus on evidence-based research as the basis of education and training. United Kingdom - Scotland referred to the proposed Standard 2.1, underlining that clarification would be needed that QA agencies should not be required to evaluate the correct QF level of all study programmes, for example when the quality assurance model is based on institutional reviews. On the same note, expectations should be clarified for standard 2.6 referring to the necessity of publishing all documents considered as evidence for the external QA outcomes, which would be too burdensome and should be replaced with publishing a reference list of documents. UK – Scotland further suggested a stronger focus on enhancement in standard 3.3 and did not support the current wording of standard 3.5, proposing either to remove the standard or clearly specify what ‘in’ and ‘out of ESG scope’ means.

Slovenia appreciated that several standards were more demanding compared with the current version and commended that focus was kept on learning and teaching. When it comes to Standard 2.1, Slovenia emphasised that external QA should not only evaluate the existence of internal quality assurance procedures, but also their effectiveness and whether they produce relevant outcomes and safeguard quality. They highlighted their proposal as of particular importance especially in the context of new policies moving towards institutional accreditation, which should imply mature internal QA. Regarding Standard 2.6, Slovenia suggested that the ESG should require QA agencies to prove that their reports reflect not only procedural compliance with standards but whether quality had been truly demonstrated. Finally, they considered that the standard on thematic analysis had been diluted and emphasised the importance of maintaining system wide analyses for national QA agencies.

The United Kingdom welcomed the emphasis on professional and ethical conduct. They argued that the ESG should be future-proof and take into account particularly the technological developments and their

impact on the amount and type of data available, as well as the funding pressures. In this sense, UK argued for moving towards a risk-based, outcome-focused approach rather than standards regulating processes. Moreover, they considered that QA agencies should make evidence-based judgements relying on the best available data, which should come from various sources but without any unnecessary additional burden. Regarding Standard 2.1, UK called for evaluating whether the assessment conducted by QA agencies holistically addresses the compliance with the ESG.

Belgium - Flemish Community supported changes brought in terms of reporting, appeals and enhancement. They noted a need for more guidance and clarification on the issue of transparency and publicly available information. Supported by ENQA, Germany, Finland and Netherlands, they suggested assessing the standards where it should be made clear that there is room for flexibility with regards to stakeholder participation and/or emphasising specific stakeholder categories, in particular the engagement in the governance of QA agencies. They argued that for example students would rather see themselves involved in other aspects of the work of QA agencies, e.g. in designing and implementing the QA methodologies. The Belgian representative also emphasised the importance of ensuring staff participation and expressed caution about removing the standard of official status, with Andorra opposing such a removal.

ETUCE supported a broader scope of the ESG and claimed that the document should have a stronger focus on academic freedom, institutional autonomy and social dimension. They commended the references to continuous professional development, yet suggested adding more emphasis on working conditions for both teaching and support staff, in line with recent ministerial commitments. Furthermore, they proposed improving references to staff and trade unions' participation in QA.

The Netherlands proposed to maintain the emphasis of the current ESG on having a clear output expected for the thematic analyses, and suggested explaining the expectations of such activities. They also suggested removing the references to the societal mission and societal engagement from the standards and include them only in the chapter on context, considering them challenging to assess. The Netherlands also suggested highlighting the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder group, ensuring clear distinction between decision-making and implementation of the policies.

The European Commission argued for a more future-oriented ESG, that takes into account current and future developments such as the wide spread of AI and transnational education (supported by the Holy See), as well as joint educational provision through European University Alliances. They emphasised that the ESG should align with the ECTS User's Guide and other initiatives such as the Council Recommendation on QA. In the context of discussing the interconnectedness between EHEA and VET, the European Commission asked the Steering Committee whether discussions on aligning the ESG with other sectors have been taken into account. Supported by the Holy See, they also suggested that the Glossary of the ESG would be in alignment with other documents, and emphasized the need to address the words "should" and "must" for clarity. The European Commission also pointed out that the ESG should bear in mind the applicability to micro-credentials and alternative providers.

Latvia asked for clarifications in terms of transitional period, in the context of approving the ESG at the upcoming Ministerial Conference in 2027, and suggested that such transitional period also apply to HEIs. They expressed doubts on the usefulness of requiring reports to be produced following the enhancement activities in Standard 3.3. Regarding Standard 2.5, Latvia suggested emphasizing more the process leading to outcomes, as the current draft focused on criteria for outcomes. They also pointed out that the title of Standard 3.1 did not reflect its content entirely, therefore suggested renaming it. Regarding the transition period, ENQA mentioned ongoing work with EQAR to prepare a transition policy, in which agencies would be granted an extension of one year to their EQAR registration and ENQA membership to allow sufficient time for alignment.

Pointing out that some QA agencies were active at regional or global levels, the Holy See suggested that references to Bologna tools such as the ECTS User's Guide should not be absolute and that the ESG should look into global developments such as the development of a subsidiary text to the Global Recognition Convention on quality assurance of transnational education. They welcomed the references to fundamental values, but proposed adding explicit references to fraud and anti-fraud measures. The Holy See also suggested to include the responsible and ethical use of new technologies, particularly AI, acknowledging the wide spread of AI use in learning and teaching, as well as in developing policies at institutional level or even external review reports by agencies.

Germany noted that some guidelines read as standards through the use of "should" instead of "could", and proposed aligning these formulations throughout the document. They also requested clarifying that evaluation of staff by students focused on their teaching approaches.

Finland suggested improving the wording, particularly in the formulation of guidelines and avoiding overly detailed standards. Finland supported the involvement of students, yet suggested clarifying the role of stakeholders and revisit where general or specific formulations and categories of stakeholders should be mentioned. They also asked for a clarification related to the term "mobility" used in the document, noting that it should be clear whether it refers to the movement within an institution, between institutions or between systems.

Slovakia emphasised the importance of expanding the references to AI and elevating them to standards. They also noted the importance of the bullet points included in the guidelines of Standard 1.3, whereas the standard itself seemed underdeveloped. Furthermore, Slovakia asked for more guidance on how ESG could be used in the context of TNE and proposed expanding the coverage of the recognition of prior learning in the ESG.

ENQA confirmed their support for stakeholder involvement and its defining feature for the European QA model, however they underlined different interpretations of the Standard 3.1 in the past 10 years. ENQA suggested providing flexibility in addressing stakeholders' involvement in different bodies and structures of QA agencies, noting that some structures other than governance bodies may be more relevant for stakeholders. Looking at ENQA's membership, they underlined the various forms of organisations active under different legal frameworks which require various governance arrangements.

ESU highlighted the importance of stakeholder involvement in any QA structure and ensuring their meaningful participation. They noted that students were interested in contributing to decision-making and expected equal partnership, underlining subpar student participation despite the principle being agreed at European level for more than 20 years. On another note, ESU highlighted the importance of linking the ESG and the quality assurance with social dimension and fundamental values, especially considering academic integrity and stakeholder participation. They also highlighted that increased transparency and accountability through QA were the only way to ensure public trust in higher education and argued that the ESG should not be diluted to make it easier for QA agencies or national authorities to comply with it.

EQAR referred to their aggregate data pointing out to the growing number of entities that do not have official status yet they are substantially complying with the ESG without any particular issues, consequently they supported changing the requirement (in 3.2) to the transparency of QA outcomes. Regarding the site visits, they emphasised that apart from the importance of checking facilities and authentic interaction, the competitive environment between QA agencies in the context of increased cross-border QA may pressure QA as to give up site visits in order to reduce costs. EQAR also emphasised the importance of ensuring that QA agencies apply the same standards and rigour in cross-border QA, pointing out to the standard on professional conduct in this regard. The United Kingdom suggested focusing more on data-driven evaluations and their outcomes, instead of how visits were conducted.

Andorra pointed out that the last paragraph of Standard 1.4 mentions elements that ‘could’ be included in the Diploma Supplement, such as the qualification gained, the achieved learning outcomes, the level and the status of the studies, whereas the Diploma Supplement template already included these elements. Thus, they suggested reformulating the Standard into ‘This information must be included in the DS and it could be included in other relevant documents’.

9. Discussion on the Draft 2 of the ECTS Users’ Guide 2027

Documents: [BFUG DK LI 97 10 1 Draft 2 ECTS Guide 01.12.2025](#)
[BFUG DK LI 97 10 2 ECTS Presentation 11.12.2025](#)

The European Commission presented the work of the Advisory Group on ECTS Users’ Guide revision and the Draft 2 of the document. They introduced the findings of the research and proposed key changes, including the use of ECTS as the universal credit system for LLL and outside HE - while maintaining EHEA ownership, the applicability to micro-credentials, the distinction of mobility concepts, as well as the adjustments in the grade conversion methodology and on digitalisation.

Austria considered that the current proposed Draft adequately emphasised the developments over the last decade. They expressed a strong reservation for expanding the use of ECTS for non-higher education provision, highlighting consultations with the higher education sector in Austria on the matter. The main concern for Austria consisted of not having the same comparability and consistency for quality assurance tools of education provision beyond higher education, where ESG applies. In this sense, Austria noted that challenges reside particularly on businesses or individuals claiming to be able to award ECTS rather than allowing its use for the VET sector. Romania, Finland, Latvia and Norway also expressed reservations pertaining to the expansion of the ECTS beyond higher education, with Romania arguing that it might negatively impact the trust and transferability achieved by the system so far.

Slovakia underlined that the previous version of the ECTS Users’ Guide was not fully understandable and therefore not fully implemented by countries and institutions. They inquired how a better shared understanding and implementation could be ensured, given that in the case of ECTS there is no institution to evaluate its implementation as for the ESG. The European Commission noted that the aim was to make the ECTS Users’ Guide as accessible as possible, in order to become a useful tool to be used by HE systems. However, their research found that sometimes the Guide itself is not consulted by those supposed to use it.

Ireland strongly supported the use of ECTS on a broader range, opening more pathways and more possibilities for learners.

The Holy See referred to the expanding implementation of TNE, with institutions from EHEA collaborating with institutions outside of it, inquiring how implementation of ECTS could be facilitated in this context. Regarding terminology, they suggested using “should” instead of “must” for expressing obligation, in order to align with other documents. Nonetheless, regarding the proposal of awarding credits at a certain EQF level, the Holy See noted the difficulty in correctly linking those credits to EQF levels. In the context of inter- and trans-disciplinarity, they considered that a certain unit might be of different levels in distinct fields. The European Commission confirmed that there might be cases in which the same course could be delivered at different levels, leaving the issue of deciding and recognizing the EQF level to the education provider. On the TNE, the European Commission welcomed written suggestions on operationalizing the ECTS in the context brought up by the Holy See.

The United Kingdom welcomed the references to lifelong learning and flexible learning pathways, however from a recognition perspective they suggested leaving the decision to recognise ECTS credits outside the HE sector to the autonomy of each higher education institution.

EUA noted that the European higher education community might be divided on whether to support the expansion of the ECTS to other education sectors, as well as in relation to embracing different types of education providers and flexible learning pathways. EUA supported broadening the use of ECTS but under clear conditions for education providers. They also provided the example of other regions that use the same framework for different education systems. UNESCO supported the positive example that ECTS gave to other regions and the reference to the adaptability of the ECTS to other systems. However, UNESCO pointed out that the international use of ECTS should be carried out whilst maintaining synergies with other regional credit transfer systems.

Norway noted that the VET sector would be open to use ECTS, yet recalled that ECTS is a translation tool within EHEA, and its implementation has not been completed to its full potential yet in the higher education sector.

Latvia and Italy appreciated the references to digitalisation in the Draft 2 of the ECTS Users' Guide, with Italy particularly supporting the reference to artificial intelligence. Italy added that the use of ECTS should be strongly connected with solid digital infrastructure at institutional level, which has to be taken into account by users.

EUA asked whether the VET sector was consulted to explore their interest in using ECTS. The European Commission confirmed they organised a consultation session to explore the national context of the VET sector, and added that Cedefop is also involved in the Advisory Group.

The European Commission thanked the BFUG members for their valuable input, and also underlined the existence of diverging perspectives in the Advisory Group in the same line as discussed in the BFUG. The European Commission suggested further developing the discussion on opening the ECTS to VET and non-higher education sectors and the quality assurance underpinning this expansion.

10. Information from consultative members

Documents: [BFUG DK LI 97 11 1 Business Europe 10.12.2025](#); [BFUG DK LI 97 11 2 CoE 26.11.2025](#); [BFUG DK LI 97 11 3 EI-ETUCE 25.11.2025](#); [BFUG DK LI 97 11 4 ENQA 01.12.2025](#); [BFUG DK LI 97 11 5 ESU 01.12.2025](#); [BFUG DK LI 97 11 6 EUA 01.12.2025](#); [BFUG DK LI 97 11 7 EURASHE 09.12.2025](#); [BFUG DK LI 97 11 8 EQAR 03.12.2025](#); [BFUG DK LI 97 11 9 UNESCO 03.12.2025](#)

ENQA informed about their Guidelines on the responsible use of AI in external QA, while EURASHE informed about the upcoming seminar on student-centred learning and LLL organised in conjunction with the BFUG meeting in Cyprus. Council of Europe updated the BFUG on the organisation of their 27th session of the Standing Conference of European ministers of education in December 2026, with the theme 'Empowering educators for a democratic and digital Europe'. ETUCE asked to ensure that HE and research were not solely focusing on competitiveness and markets and updated on the Global Conference on AI organised by Education International.

ESU informed of recent policy papers, including on funding, quality of education, and Erasmus+. They raised awareness of alleged breaches of fundamental values in Serbia and Georgia and asked for further monitoring of the situation. UNESCO gave updates on the adoption of the 2-year workplan of the Global Recognition Convention, including a Guidance Note on QA and TNE, and the revision of the 1997 Recommendation on the status of HE teaching personnel. EUA informed that 2026 would spotlight

sustainability, with a publication on SDGs and greening launched in November. Finally, EQAR informed about a survey to be launched for the 5-year self-evaluation process.

11. Information by the incoming BFUG Co-Chairs (Cyprus and Norway)

Documents: [BFUG DK LI 97 12 1 BFUG XCVIII Norway 12.12.2025](#)
[BFUG DK LI 97 12 2 BFUG XCIX Cyprus 01.12.2025](#)

The incoming BFUG Co-Chairs presented the organizational status of the upcoming XCVIII BFUG Board meeting to take place in Oslo, Norway, on February 5th, 2026, and the upcoming XCIX BFUG Meeting to take place in Nicosia, Cyprus, between 9th-10th March, 2026. They also gave updates on their higher education systems and the priorities of the Cypriot EU presidency in the field of Education and Training and Higher Education.

The BFUG took note of the updates and thanked the incoming Co-Chairs for their presentations.

12. Any other business (AOB)

Documents: [BFUG DK LI 97 13 1 Eurostudent Call for expressions of interest 20.11.2025](#)
[BFUG DK LI 97 13 2 INSPIRE Project Announcement Selected Country Reviews 01.12.2025](#)
[BFUG DK LI 97 13 3 Info Sheet about Bologna Process for Learning and Teaching Project 09.12.2025](#)

The Danish BFUG Co-chair informed about the Call for nominating a BFUG representative as a Board member for Eurostudent, with one application received. The BFUG agreed with nomination of Loredana Maravic (Croatia) for the Eurostudent Board.

ESU gave updates on the Call for Country Reviews on Social Dimension within the INSPIRE project, informing that Lithuania, Austria and Portugal were selected. He added that Recommendations for national authorities to implement the Principles and Guidelines on Social Dimension would be ready for the Ministerial Conference.

At the end of the BFUG meeting, the Head of Secretariat thanked the hosts for the great organisation of the meeting, the BFUG Co-Chairs and the BFUG members for their collaboration, as well as the members of the EHEA Secretariat for their support. He ended by giving reminders to the BFUG members on pending issues and consultations.

The Danish and Liechtensteiner Co-Chairs expressed their gratitude for working with the BFUG for the past six months, thanked the EHEA Secretariat for the collaboration and everyone who attended the meeting.

End of meeting

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