

3rd Bologna Coordination Implementation Group meeting (BICG)

Online, 21st of October 2025

Hosted by the
EHEA Secretariat

Minutes of the
meeting

List of participants

Country	Name	Last Name
ESU (TPG D on SD Co-Chair)	Arno	Schrooyen
EUA (BICG Co-chair)	Maria	Kelo
European Commission	Yann-Maël	Bideau
Finland (BICG Co-chair)	Maija	Innola
France (TPG B on LRC Co-Chair)	Jingchao	Shi
Italy	Vera	Lucke
Kazakhstan	Rauza	Mendaliyeva
Latvia (TPG D on SD Co-Chair)	Artūrs	Čerņiševs
Latvia (representing TPG A on QF Co-chairs)	Gunta	Kinta
Romania (TPG C on QA Co-chair)	Antonela	Toma
EHEA Secretariat	Alexandrina	Druta
EHEA Secretariat (Head)	Horia	Onita

Albania, Azerbaijan, France, Georgia and Malta did not attend the meeting. The Bulgarian BICG Co-Chair sent her apologies.

The meeting started at 14:05 CEST.

1. Opening of the Meeting – Welcome by the BICG Co-Chairs

The meeting was opened by the Finnish BICG Co-Chair, who warmly welcomed participants and thanked them for their continuous commitment to and their engagement in the work of the BICG. She underlined that this was a particularly important meeting as the group approached a period of intensive reporting to the BFUG Board in Vaduz and subsequently to the BFUG meeting in Copenhagen. The EUA BICG Co-Chair joined in welcoming participants and emphasized the importance of this coordination platform for ensuring coherence between the different Thematic Peer Groups (TPGs) and for providing a space for peer exchange on implementation practices. She expressed appreciation for the Secretariat's support in preparing the analytical materials and documents circulated in advance.

2. Approval of the agenda

Documents: [Agenda of the meeting](#)

The proposed agenda for the meeting was presented to all participants for their consideration and approval. Given that no comments or suggested modifications were put forward by any attendee, the agenda was unanimously adopted.

3. Approval of the 2nd BICG Meeting Minutes

Documents: [BICG_PL_AL_2_Minutes](#)

Following the adoption of the agenda, the Finnish BICG Co-Chair invited comments on the minutes of the previous BICG meeting held in June 2025. As no remarks or further amendments were raised during the meeting, the minutes were acknowledged.

4. Updates from the EHEA Secretariat

Documents:

[BICG National commitments on ECTS and Qualifications Frameworks 07.10.2025](#)

[BICG National commitments on ECTS and Qualifications Frameworks only actions 07.10.2025](#)

[BICG National commitments on recognition 07.10.2025](#)

[BICG National commitments on recognition only action 07.10.2025](#)

[BICG National commitments on Quality assurance 07.10.2025](#)

[BICG National commitments on Quality assurance only actions 07.10.2025](#)

[BICG National commitments on social dimension 07.10.2025](#)

[BICG National commitments on social dimension only actions 07.10.2025](#)

The Head of the Secretariat (HoS) expressed gratitude to Alexandrina for her work in preparing the documents and conveyed appreciation to the BICG Co-Chairs and the Co-Chairs of the four Thematic Peer Groups (TPGs) for their close cooperation. Attention then turned to an overview of the status of the National Action Plans.

It was reported that, out of 49 expected National Action Plans (47 countries plus two each from Belgium and the United Kingdom), 39 had been received, while 10 remained pending. The HoS noted that this delay was of concern given that the submission deadline had been in May. The countries yet to submit their plans were Azerbaijan, Belgium (Flemish Community), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Holy See, Latvia, North Macedonia, San Marino, Serbia, and Ukraine.

He added that the received National Action Plans (NAPs) are available on the EHEA website, and the Secretariat has prepared several compilation and analytical documents to facilitate comparison and peer learning. The first set of documents—two tables per Thematic Peer Group—compile national commitments and actions reported by countries. These tables provide an overview of the current situation and key challenges, followed by proposed or ongoing actions. It was highlighted that in some instances, commitments were placed in NAPs under different sections but were nonetheless integrated in the tables into the relevant thematic areas for consistency.

Beyond the ten countries with pending submissions, a few others had not indicated specific commitments under certain TPGs, sometimes because those areas were already fully implemented according to the Bologna Process Implementation Report.

An additional analytical document was presented, prepared at the request of the TPG C Co-Chairs, mapping country commitments across the group's thematic areas. Participants were invited to indicate whether similar analyses would be useful for the other TPGs.

Furthermore, a comparative table was introduced, aligning information from the National Action Plans with data from the Bologna Process Implementation Report. This analysis identified policy areas where implementation was not yet complete and whether corresponding national actions had been outlined. It was underlined that the Secretariat had taken an inclusive and descriptive approach, reflecting all reported actions without assessing their coverage or level of detail.

To illustrate the methodology, the example of Austria was mentioned, where ongoing work on micro-credentials and other areas reflected actions focused on further enhancement rather than compliance.

In conclusion, participants were reminded of the call for contributions to the EHEA Newsletter, with a submission deadline of 10th of December, and were encouraged to share updates on TPG activities and related supporting projects. The Secretariat also invited TPGs implementing Erasmus+ supporting projects to make contact for the inclusion of their projects on the EHEA website.

The HoS closed the intervention by thanking participants for their attention and confirming the Secretariat's readiness to provide any further clarifications or follow-up information.

5. Updates from each TPG on Activities and Projects

5.1 TPG A on QF

The Latvian representative provided an overview of recent and planned activities of the group. The TPG A, composed of 31 participating countries and stakeholder representatives, held its first meeting in March 2025 in Riga, followed by intensified work since June on launching the supporting project for the TPG A, which began on the 1st of September 2025. The project includes four peer learning activities (PLAs), with topics identified through a survey of TPG members and guided by the Tirana Communiqué and related Bologna Process documents. The selected topics cover the self-certification process, transparency of qualifications frameworks, study programmes outside the Bologna structure, and databases and registers for national qualifications frameworks. The group also plans to establish two working groups—one on the recognition of higher education qualifications in relation to qualifications frameworks, and another one on the flexibility of learning within that context. The project consortium includes Latvia, Malta, San Marino, and EURASHE, with France and Georgia as associated partners.

A second TPG A meeting will take place online on the 26th of November 2025, during which project activities will be presented, and members invited to express interest in the thematic working groups. The Latvian representative expressed appreciation for the Secretariat's analytical work on the National Action Plans and raised a question regarding the reminders sent to countries yet to submit their plans, noting Latvia's own pending submission. In response, the HoS confirmed that the Secretariat had reminded the relevant members yet will circulate another reminder, and encouraged further national follow-up. The BFUG representative from Latvia clarified that the delay was due to personnel changes but confirmed that the National

Action Plan was in progress. Following the presentation, the EUA BICG Co-Chair invited comments and questions from the BICG members.

The Head of the Secretariat referred to information drawn from the National Action Plans, noting that several countries — Andorra, Armenia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Greece, Poland, and Moldova — had indicated their intention to submit self-certification reports within the current BFUG mandate. It was recalled that, under previous procedures, such reports were submitted to the EHEA Secretariat and then sent to the National QF Correspondents group under the Council of Europe, which had since been discontinued. Attention was drawn to the resulting absence of a designated body responsible for acknowledging self-certification reports. The Head of the Secretariat suggested that the BFUG may wish to consider options for addressing this procedural gap and for establishing a mechanism to ensure the continued consistency and transparency of the process.

The EUA BICG Co-Chair agreed that the matter should be brought to the attention of the BFUG for further consideration and clarification.

Subsequently, the Finnish BICG Co-chair expressed appreciation for the comprehensive and well-structured presentation delivered by the Latvian representative. Further clarification was requested on two aspects: first, regarding the planned peer learning activity on study programmes outside the Bologna structure, with particular interest in the types of national experiences to be shared and the intended areas of discussion; and second, concerning the extent of cooperation between TPG A and other BFUG working structures beyond the Implementation Reporting Group, in view of possible thematic linkages and shared objectives. The TPG A Co-chair explained that the continued prioritization of micro-credentials in National Action Plans indicate a need for further exploration. While the definitive PLA concept was still a work in progress, the TPG A plans to discuss study programmes operating in Bologna countries that fall outside the three-cycle structure, including micro-credentials or potentially longer programmes. Addressing the question of cooperation with other Bologna structures, the Co-chair clarified that TPG A maintains regular communication with TPG B and TPG C. Furthermore, TPG A and TPG B have foreseen common activities concerning cross-border education and transnational education, which was identified as a suitable horizontal topic for joint thematic analysis.

5.2 TPG B on LRC

Documents: [BICG_DK_LI_TPG_B_on_LRC_Update_3rd_Meeting](#)

The French Co-Chair of the TPG B on the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) then presented an update on the group's activities. The second TPG B meeting took place online on the 10th of June 2025, focusing on how recognition supports international mobility. The meeting included data sharing from both regional and global perspectives and updates from TPG A and TPG C, fostering cross-group cooperation. Up to now, the group has now held two meetings and will convene a third online meeting on 29 January 2026. The TPG B work is supported by the TPG LRC Plus umbrella project, co-funded by the European Union through Erasmus+, running for three years. The project's kick-off meeting took place online on the 13th of October 2025, outlining key activities such as the support to the institutional activities of the TPG B, peer support, staff mobility, and research leading to three thematic publications. In this light, four working groups have been established within the project consortium: on automatic recognition, transnational cooperation, alternative pathways (including micro-credentials), and digital transition, with the latter integrated across all publications. The timeline includes the four TPG B meetings through 2026–2027, alongside four webinars and related mobility actions organised in the framework of the project and open to TPG B member countries.

The EUA Chair commended the breadth and ambition of activities while advising that TPGs maintain clarity and distinction between the activities of the TPG in support of the key commitments versus activities initiated through supporting projects.

5.3 TPG C on QA

An update was then provided by the Romanian Co-chair of the TPG C on Quality Assurance. The presentation highlighted the group's third meeting, held in Braşov, Romania, on 8th-9th of October 2025, which brought together ministries, quality assurance agencies, and stakeholder organizations. The discussions centered on National Action Plans for 2024-2027, with breakout sessions facilitating peer exchange on challenges, progress, and good practices. The meeting also featured updates on key Bologna Process instruments, including the BPIR 2027 core indicators, the revision of the ECTS Users' Guide, and the ongoing revision of the ESG. A special focus was placed on stakeholder engagement, with insights from ENQA and EQAR's thematic analyses on involving students, employers, and external partners. Several project initiatives were also presented, such as SICQA, ROQA-TNE, SPICE, and the Bologna Peer Learning for Learning and Teaching project, which collectively address cross-border quality assurance and pedagogical enhancement. The meeting also included a session on Artificial Intelligence and Quality Assurance, exploring opportunities and risks related to AI-supported evaluation. Beyond its main meetings, TPG C organized an online webinar in September 2025 on the quality assurance of flexible learning pathways, involving representatives from the other TPG (A,B and D), from IIEP-UNESCO, FINEEC, and EUA, and conducted a survey on national practices. Upcoming activities include a seminar on the 24th of October in Brussels, a policy brief to map quality assurance practices for flexible learning pathways by the end of December 2025, and an open call for staff exchange and mobility.

The HoS commended the group's achievements but raised concern regarding the limited participation of ministries, recalling the importance of maintaining governmental involvement to ensure that peer learning translates into policy-level implementation. The Chair agreed to include this observation in the forthcoming report to the BFUG Board and BFUG meeting, underlining the need for balanced participation between agencies and ministries.

5.4 TPG D on SD

Finally, the ESU Co-Chair of the TPG D on Social Dimension provided an update on progress and next steps. Since June 2025, the group had focused on preparations for its upcoming TPG D meeting and peer learning activity, to be held in early November 2025, which will address Principles 2 and 3 of the Principles and Guidelines for the Social Dimension (PAGs), namely flexibility in learning and inclusivity across education systems. The Lifelong Learning Platform will contribute to this activity through a dedicated workshop. The next peer learning activity is planned for Austria in early 2026, focusing on Principles 3, 5, and 7. The InSPIRE project, which supports TPG D's work, had recently launched a call for peer country reviews of national social dimension policies. While interest had been expressed by a few countries, further engagement was being sought to ensure geographical balance.

The BICG Co-Chairs encouraged members to promote participation within their networks and suggested that ESU includes an estimate of time and resource requirements in future reminders to help countries assess feasibility. The HoS confirmed that the Secretariat could send another reminder to BFUG members and suggested referencing positive outcomes from the earlier ESU-led country reviews conducted a decade ago, which had inspired national policy developments in countries such as Armenia, Latvia, and Croatia.

In closing, the EUA BICG Co-Chair expressed appreciation for the comprehensive reports from all TPGs, noting the impressive scope of activities and collaborations underway. She reiterated the importance of ensuring that project-based initiatives remain aligned with the core implementation goals of the Bologna Process, and that findings from the different TPGs continue to inform collective progress within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

6. Possible BFUG thematic session on fostering the implementation of key commitments

The Finnish BICG Co-chair opened the discussion by providing background on the item, noting the strong emphasis from several countries on the need for proper implementation to ensure the functioning and relevance of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). She explained the goal was to shift away from process-centric reporting towards a more analytical approach focused on outcomes that could feed into content-oriented discussions within the BFUG. This session was designed to gather views that would help prepare a proposal for a thematic BFUG discussion on implementation and structure the first skeleton of the next final report. To facilitate this exchange, the Co-chair introduced three questions:

1. What specific issues or topics would you like to highlight if we have more time to discuss on the implementation, perhaps next year, either in the spring term or in the autumn period?
2. What is in the working methodology working well, what supports implementation? What, if anything, would you change in the approach?
3. What are the key remaining obstacles to implementation, and how should they be addressed in the BFUG in general, or in the next working period?

The HoS proposed that future discussions should center on the issue of trust, suggesting a bifocal debate to allow BFUG members who haven't implemented tools to explain their rationale, while also gathering stakeholder perspectives on institutional-level implementation barriers. Supported by the European Commission, the HoS further suggested that the BFUG should examine the mandate from the Tirana Communiqué to analyse future-proof development, dissemination and possible expansion of tools, specifically considering if successful initiatives like the Key Considerations for Cross-Border Quality Assurance should be elevated to a ministerial commitment. Finally, the HoS highlighted the need to discuss whether the Qualification Framework of the EHEA, which has not been fundamentally revised since 2005 (only adding the short cycle in 2018), remains fit for purpose.

Following this, the TPG C on QA representative emphasized that given the rise of European Alliances and joint programs, the discussion should also focus on automatic recognition and digitalization, particularly addressing interoperability barriers in national databases and digital credential verification systems. The EUA BICG Co-chair noted that this is a critical transversal topic affecting every TPG. The European Commission strongly supported the focus on digitalization, warning that without common standards and guidance, systems risk moving in different directions, potentially making the recognition of digital diplomas more difficult than paper ones.

On the methodological aspects (Question 2), the Latvian representative observed that the TPG methodology works well, especially with the smaller working groups that produce tangible recommendations. The suggestion was made, however, that the coordination process could be

improved if all TPG Co-Chairs were permitted to participate in the BICG meetings for quicker information exchange.

Addressing the obstacles (Question 3), the European Commission questioned the practical utility of asking such an open question, expecting un-actionable feedback such as "political priorities" or "lack of staff." The Finnish BICG Co-chair agreed on the challenge but argued that the goal was to understand the *reasons* why key commitments are not in place to strengthen trust. The EUA BICG Co-chair clarified that the intention was to address the "big elephant in the room" directly: the sector's frustration when a lot is promised but little is achieved in implementation. She stressed the importance of triggering a serious discussion to ensure that the future Communiqué's promises are realistic and backed by genuine intent.

In conclusion, the Finnish BICG Co-chair thanked the participants, confirming that the gathered ideas—including themes on the revision of the Qualification Framework, digital interoperability, and flexibility of learning—would be used to prepare a concept paper for a future content-focused BFUG discussion. She noted that this input would also form the basis for the more analytical final report preparation.

7. Next steps: Reporting to the BFUG Board (Vaduz, 4.11.2025) and to the BFUG (Copenhagen, 15-16.11.2025)

The EUA BICG Co-chair moved to the next agenda item, focusing on the upcoming reporting to the BFUG Board in Vaduz and the BFUG meeting in Copenhagen. She proposed a quick overview of the key activities, opting not to review the individual TPG reports as they had already been circulated. She outlined the main points for the report, which covered the long reporting period between the exceptionally early BFUG in February and the late one in December. The key activities to highlight included the drafting and completion of the template for the National Action Plans (NAPs) and the templates for the TPG Work Plans, noting a 100% response rate on the TPG plans versus the 39 out of 49 ratio for the NAPs. The report would also mention the Secretariat's subsequent analysis, which mapped priorities from the NAPs against the TPG Work Plans and confirmed that the TPGs had correctly identified the key areas for action. The analysis also revealed that some countries citing priorities in specific thematic areas did not have a member in the related TPG, a situation attributed to the challenges faced by smaller countries in stretching their resources. Additionally, the report would cover the two BICG meetings held since the last BFUG.

The EUA BICG Co-chair confirmed the reporting slides would be finalized and circulated to all members by Friday midday, requesting feedback by Tuesday midday for timely submission to the Secretariat by Wednesday. The Finnish BICG Co-chair suggested two additions to the report: a reminder to countries about the participation issue in the TPGs and an explicit mention of the procedural question regarding the formal acknowledgement and review of the self-certification reports for the Qualification Frameworks.

8. Next Meetings of the BICG

The discussion then turned to scheduling the next meeting. The HoS noted the difficulty of meeting before the February BFUG Board due to the December BFUG and the upcoming holidays, suggesting that a different strategy might be needed. The Finnish BICG Co-chair agreed that meeting in March, as originally planned, would be too late, suggesting a meeting in

February instead, which would allow the group to prepare new content for the BFUG in early March. It was decided to send around a Doodle poll to determine the exact date.

The group then revisited the suggestion raised earlier to allow all TPG Co-chairs to attend BICG meetings. The Secretariat clarified that the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the BICG stipulate that only one Co-chair per TPG usually attends Italy recalled the reasons for having only one co-chair from each TPG, explaining the role of the BICG as a high-level reporting body with a small membership. The HoS confirmed that the ToR would need formal BFUG approval to change the approach, though he noted that historical exceptions had been made, typically for the first or mid-term reflection meetings. The EUA BICG Co-chair proposed a compromise: maintain the principle of one Co-chair per TPG for the core BICG meeting but consider adding an optional, one-hour thematic session immediately following the BICG meeting, open to all TPG Co-chairs. This would allow for broader discussion on implementation while respecting the formal structure of the BICG.

9. Any other business (AOB)

Moving to Any Other Business, the Italian BICG Member asked for clarity on the proposed thematic session: when it would be formally proposed (at the Board or BFUG) and what support the core BICG members would be asked to provide. The HoS confirmed that the idea of a thematic session was already approved by the BFUG in the schedule of topics. Given that the agenda for the BFUG in Ireland agenda appeared to be heavy, the BFUG in Cyprus was deemed the more appropriate timing. The HoS suggested mentioning the preference for Cyprus in the report for the Board as it was not a new decision but an indication of timing.

The EUA BICG Co-chair welcomed volunteers from the core BICG group to help run the session, which would focus on the overarching theme of "how to make implementation move forward and work." The Finnish BICG Co-chair supported this approach and suggested that the Co-chairs should draft a first concept paper for the thematic session and circulate it to the BICG members via email for feedback before the next meeting.

The EUA BICG Co-chair concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for their participation and the Secretariat for their preparatory work and analysis.

The meeting ended at 16:08 CEST.